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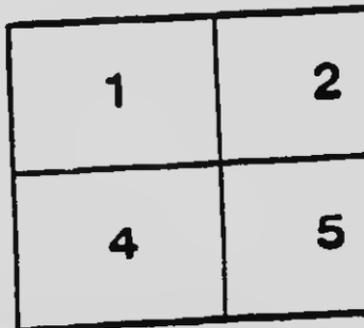
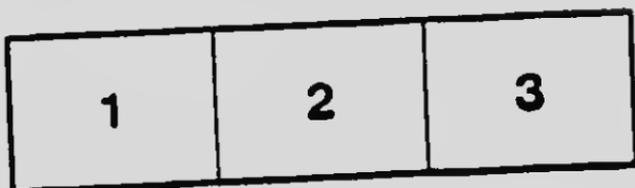
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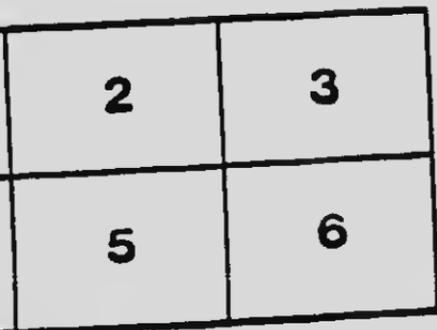
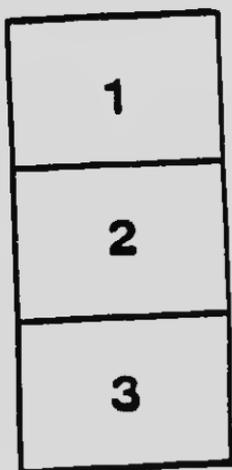
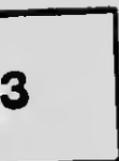
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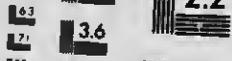
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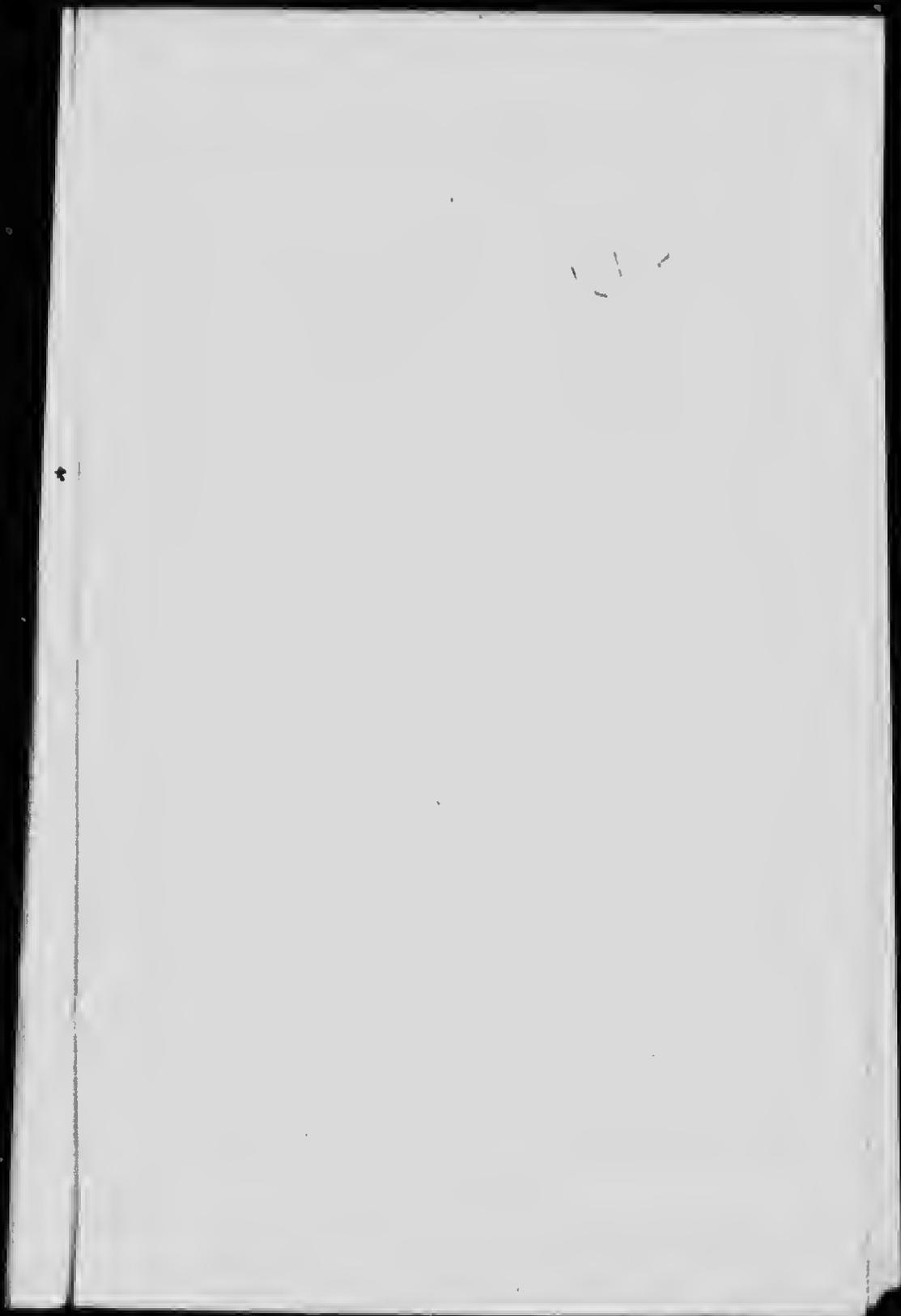
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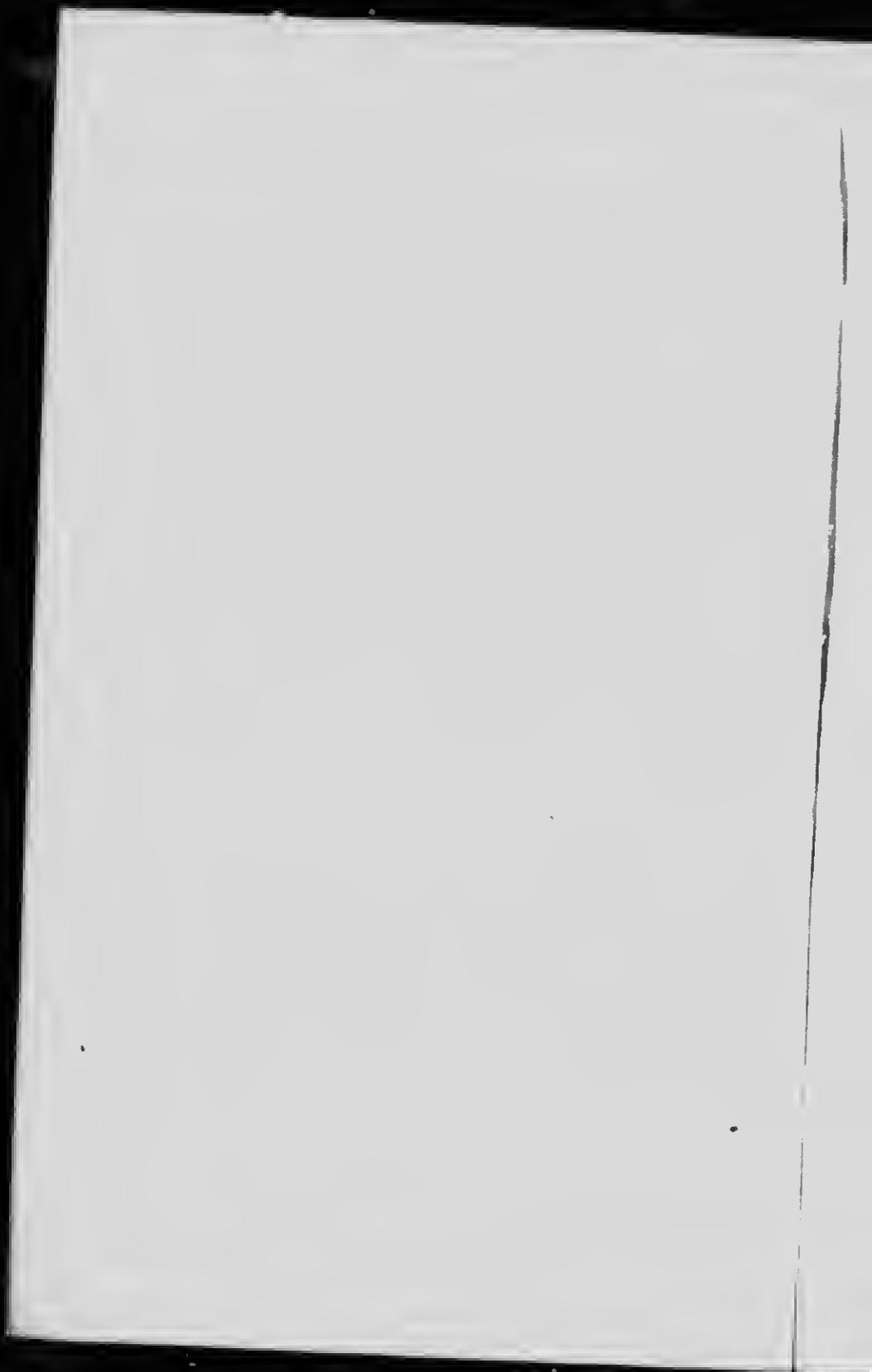
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**THE HOOSIER BOOK**

PS 2704

H6

1916

\* \* \*

# The Hoosier Book

Containing Poems in Dialect

By

James Whitcomb Riley

Collected and Arranged by

Hewitt Hanson Howland

CANADIAN BRANCH  
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
TORONTO

PS 2704

H6

1916

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## INTRODUCTION

When James Whitcomb Riley was a very small boy, too young to read, he fell in love at first sight with a book, and like all intense lovers he at once desired to possess the object of his affection. By thrift and careful hoarding he got together pennies equal to the price, and the little red and gold "poetry book" fell into his eager, outstretched, freckled hands.

Now he did not love this early treasure for what it contained, but for its look, for the feel of it in his hand, as he afterward said. These same emotions were stirred when in 1911 he was presented with the first copy of *The Lockerbie Book*. "I like its look and the feel of it," he said, and thereupon repeated the story of his first literary love.

So it came about that, at the proper time, he suggested and even urged a companion volume, to contain only dialect verse, and with that spontaneous genius for nomenclature which was so remarkably his, instantly christened the new collection: *The Hoosier Book—The Hoosier Book of Riley Verse*. This was but a short time after his return to Indianapolis from a winter in the South, and only a few months before he departed on that last great journey to the land where it is always afternoon.

His never imposed but always unerring taste, his gentle criticism, his tactful suggestions, all so helpful in the preparation of *The Lockerbie Book*, have been wanting in the selection of poems for this volume, but the poems them-

selves, every line, every word, had the final touch of his careful hand.

Whether he is smiling over my labors, wondering at the inclusion of this or the exclusion of that, pleased over the order here or displeased over the lack of it there—the certainty of one thing cheers me: he would like the look of *The Hoosier Book* and the feel of it in his hand.

Mr. Riley's verse written in the native tongue of his native state is the verse that brought him first into public regard, is the verse by which he is most widely known, and on which his claim to immortality will unquestionably rest.

Finer stanzas he may have written in the English of Elizabeth, but in the idiom of the Hoosier he has sung the songs of a people.

H. H. H.

THE HOOSIER BOOK



# THE HOOSIER BOOK

## NEIGHBORLY POEMS

I

### *My Philosophy*

I AIN'T, ner don't p'tend to be,  
Much posted on philosophy;  
But there is times, when all alone,  
I work out idees of my own.  
And of these same there is a few  
I'd like to jest refer to you—  
Pervidin' that you don't object  
To listen clos't and rickollect.

I allus argy that a man  
Who does about the best he can  
Is plenty good enough to suit  
This lower mundane institute—  
No matter ef his daily walk  
Is subject fer his neighbor's talk,  
And critic-minds of ev'ry whim  
Jest all git up and go fer him!

I

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

I knowed a feller onc't that had  
The yellor-janders mighty bad,—  
And each and ev'ry friend he'd meet  
Would stop and give him some receet  
Fer cuorin' of 'em. But he'd say  
He kindo' thought they'd go away  
Without no medicin', and boast  
That he'd git well without one doste.

He kep' a-yellerin' on—and they  
Perdictin' that he'd die some day  
Before he knowed it! Tuck his bed,  
The feller did, and lost his head,  
And wundered in his mind a spell—  
Then rallied, and, at last, got well;  
But ev'ry friend that said he'd die  
Went back on him eternally!

It's natchurl enugh, I guess,  
When some gits more and some gits less,  
Fer them-uns on the slimmest side  
To claim it ain't a fare divide;  
And I've knowed some to lay and wait,  
And git up soon, and set up late,  
To ketch some feller they could hate  
Fer goin' at a faster gait.

The signs is bad when folks commence  
A-findin' fault with Providence,  
And balkin' 'cause the earth don't shake  
At ev'ry prancin' step they take.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

No man is grate tel ne can see  
How less than little he would be  
Ef stripped to self, and stark and bare  
He hung his sign out anywhere.

My doctern is to lay aside  
Contentions, and be satisfied:  
Jest do your best, and praise er blame  
That follers that, counts jest the same.  
I've allus noticed grate success  
Is mixed with troubles, more or less,  
And it's the man who does the best  
That gits more kicks than all the rest.

2

### *The Clover*

**S**OME sings of the lilly, and daisy, and rose,  
And the pansies and pinks that the Summer time throws  
In the green grassy lap of the medder that lays  
Blinkin' up at the skyes through the sunshiney days;  
But what is the lilly and all of the rest  
Of the flowers, to a man with a hart in his brest  
That was dipped brimmin' full of the honey and dew  
Of the sweet clover-blossoms his babyhood knew?

I never set eyes on a clover-field now,  
Er fool round a stable, er climb in the mow,  
But my childhood comes back jest as clear and as plane  
As the smell of the clover I'm sniffin' again;

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And I wunder away in a bare-footed dream,  
Where I tangle my toes in the blossoms that gleam  
With the dew of the dawn of the morning of love  
Ere it wept o'er the graves that I'm weepin' above.

And so I love clover—it seems like a part  
Of the sacerdest sorrows and joys of my hart;  
And wherever it blossoms, oh, there let me bow  
And thank the good God as I'm thankin' Him now;  
And I pray to Him still fer the stren'th when I die,  
To go out in the clover and tell it good-bye,  
And lovin'ly nestle my face in its bloom  
While my soul slips away on a breth of perfume.

3

### *The Tree-Toad*

"'SCUR'OUS-LIKE," said the tree-toad,  
"I've twittered fer rain all day;  
And I got up soon,  
And hollered tel noon—  
But the sun, hit blazed away,  
Tel I jest clumb down in a crawfish-hole,  
Weary at hart, and sick at soul!

"Dozed away fer an hour,  
And I tackled the thing ag'in:  
And I sung, and sung,  
Tel I knowed my lung  
Was jest about give in;  
And *then*, thinks I, ef hit don't rain *now*,  
They's nothin' in singin', anyhow!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

"One't in a while some farmer  
Would come a-drivin' past;  
And he'd hear my ery,  
And stop and sigh—  
Tel I jest laid back, at last,  
And I hollered rain tel I thought my thro'at  
Would bust wide open at ever' note!

"But I *fetch*ed her!—O *I fetch*ed her! -  
'Cause a little while ago,  
As I kindo' set,  
With one eye shet,  
And a-singin' soft and low,  
A voice drapped down on my fevered brain,  
A-sayin',—'*Ef you'll jest hush I'll rain!*'"

### 4      *The Old Swimmin'-Hole*

**O**H! the old swimmin'-hole! whare the erick so still and  
deep  
Looked like a baby-river that was laying half asleep,  
And the gurgle of the worter round the drift jest below  
Sounded like the laugh of something we onc't ust to know  
Before we could remember anything but the eyes  
Of the angels lookin' out as we left Paradise;  
But the merry days of youth is beyond our controle,  
And it's hard to part ferever with the old swimmin'-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! In the happy days of yore,  
When I ust to lean above it on the old sickamore,  
Oh! it showed me a fae in its warm sunny tide  
That gazed back at me so gay and glorified,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

It made me love myself, as I leaped to caress  
My shadder smilin' up at me with sich tenderness,  
But them days is past and gone, and old Time's tuck his toll  
From the old man come back to the old swimmin'-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! In the long, lazy days  
When the humdrum of school made so many run-a-ways,  
How pleasant was the juncy down the old dusty lane,  
Whare the tracks of our bare feet was all printed so plane  
You could tell by the lent of the heel and the sole  
They was lots o' fun a hands at the old swimmin'-hole.  
But the lost joys is past! Let your tears in sorrow roll  
Like the rain that ust to dapple up the old swimmin'-hole.

Thare the bullrushes growed, and the cattails so tall,  
And the sunshine and shadder fell over it all;  
And it mottled the worter with amber and gold  
Tel the glad lilies rocked in the ripples that rolled;  
And the snake-feeder's four gauzy wings fluttered by  
Like the ghost of a daisy dropped out of the sky,  
Or a wovnded apple-blossom in the breeze's controle  
As it cut acrost some orchurd to'rds the old swimmin'-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! When I last saw the place,  
The scenes was all changed, like the change in my face;  
The bridge of the railroad now crosses the spot  
Whare the old divin'-log lays smk and fergot.  
And I stray down the banks whare the trees ust to be—  
But never again will theyr shade shelter me!  
And I wish in my sorrow I could strip to the soul,  
And dive off in my grave like the old swimmin'-hole.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

5

*How It Happened*

I GOT to *thinkin'* of her—both her parnts dead and gone—

And all her sisters married off, and none but her and John  
A-livin' all alone thare in that lonesome sorto' way,  
And him a blame old bachelor, confirmd'er ev'ry day!  
I'd knowed 'em all, from children, and theyr daddy from  
the time

He settled in the neighborhood, and hadn't ary a dime  
Er dollar, when he married, fer to start housekeepin' on!—  
So I got to *thinkin'* of her—both her parnts dead and gone'

I got to *thinkin'* of her; and a-wundern what *she* done  
That all *her sisters* kep' a-gittin' married, one by one,  
And her without *no* chances—and the best girl of the pack—  
A' old maid, with her hands, you might say, tied behind her  
back!

And *Mother*, too, afore she d—,—*she* ust to jest take on,  
When none of 'em wuz lea., you know, but Evaline and  
John,

And jest declare to goodness 'at the young men must be  
blin'

To not see what a wife they'd git ef they got Evaline!

I got to *thinkin'* of her: In my great affliction she  
Wuz sich a comfert to us, and so kind and neighborly,—  
She'd come, and leave her housework, fer to he'p out little  
Jane,

And talk of *her own* mother 'at she'd never see again—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

They: sometimes *cry* together—though, fer the most part,  
she

Would have the child so rickoneiled and happy-like 'at we  
Felt lonesomer'n ever when she'd putt her bonnet on  
And say she'd railly *haf* to be a-gittin' back to John!

I got to *thinkin'* of her, as I say,—and more and more  
I'd think of her dependence, and the burdens 'at she bore,—  
Her parunts both a-bein' dead, and all her sisters gone  
And married off, and her a-livin' thare alone with John—  
You might say jest a-toilin' and a-slavin' out her life  
Fer a man 'at hadn't pride enough to git hisse'f a wife—  
'Less some one married *Ezaline* and packed her off some  
day!—

So I got to *thinkin'* of her—end—It happened *thataway*.

### 6 *Thoughts fer the Discouraged Farmer*

**T**HE summer winds is sniffin' round the bloomin' locus'  
trees;

And the clover in tue pastur is a big day fer the bees,  
And they been a-swigin' honey, above board and on the  
sly,

Tel they stutter in theyr buzzin' and stagger as they fly.  
The flicker on the fence-rail 'pears to jest spit on his wings  
And roll up his feathers, by the sassy way he sings;  
And the hoss-fly is a-whettin'-up his forelegs fer biz,  
And the off-mare is a-sw'tchin' all of her tale they is.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

You can hear the blackbirds jawin' as they foller up the  
plow—

Oh, theyr bound to git theyr brekfast, and theyr not a-carin'  
how;

So they quarrel in the furies, and they quarrel on the  
wing—

But theyr peaceabler in pot-pies than any other thing:

And it's when I git my shotgun drawed up in stiddy rest,

She's as full of tribbellation as a yellor-jacket's nest;

And a few shots before dinner, when the sun's a-shinin'  
right,

Seems to kindo'-sorto' sharpen up a feller's appetite!

They's been a heap o' rain, but the sun's out to-day,

And the clouds of the wet spell is all cleared away,

And the woods is all the greener, and the grass is greener  
still;

It may rain again to-morry, but I don't think it will.

Some says the crops is ruined, and the corn's drowneded  
out,

And prophasy the wheat will be a failure, without doubt;

But the kind Providence that has never failed us yet,

Will be on hands onc't more at the 'leventh hour, I bet!

Does the medder-lark complane, as he swims high and dry  
Through the waves of the wind and the blue of the sky?

Does the quail set up and whissel in a disappointed way,

Er hang his head in silunce, and sorrow all the day?

Is the chipmuck's health a-failin'?—Does he walk, er does  
he run?

Don't the buzzards ooze around up thare jest like they've  
allus done?

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Is they anything the matter with the rooster's lungs er  
voice?  
Ort a mortul be complanin' when dumb animals rejoice?

Then let us, one and all, be contentud with our lot;  
The June is here this mornin', and the sun is shining hot.  
Oh! let us fill our harts up with the glory of the day,  
And banish ev'ry doubt and care and sorrow fur away!  
Whatever be our station, with Providence fer guide,  
Sich fine circumstances ort to make us satisfied;  
Fer the world is full of roses, and the roses full of dew,  
And the dew is full of heavenly love that drips fer me and  
you.

7

### *A Summer's Day*

**T**HE Summer's put the idy in  
My head that I'm a boy ag'in;  
And all around's so bright and gay  
I want to put my team away,  
And jest git out whare I can lay  
And soak my hide full of the day!  
But work is work, and must be done—  
Yit, as I work, I have my fun,  
Jest fancyin' these furrics here  
Is childhood's paths one't more so dear:—  
And so I walk through madder-lands,  
And country lanes, and swampy trails  
Whare long bullrushes bresh my hands;  
And, tilted on the ridered rails

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Of deadnin' fences, "Old Bob White"  
Whissels his name in high delight,  
And whirrs away. I wonder still,  
Whichever way a boy's feet will—  
Whare trees has fell, with tangled tops  
Whare dead leaves shakes, I stop fer breth,  
Heerin' the acorn as it drops—  
H'istin' my chin up still as deth,  
And watchin' clos't, with upturned eyes,  
The tree where Mr. Squirrel tries  
To hide hisse'f above the limb,  
But lets his own tale tell on him.  
I wonder on in deeper glooms—  
Git hungry, hearin' female cries  
From old farm-houses, whare perfumes  
Of harvest dinners seems to rise  
And ta'nt a feller, hart and brane,  
With memories he can't explane.

I wonder through the underbresh,  
Whare pig-tracks, pintin' to'rds the crick,  
Is picked and printed in the fresh  
Black bottom-lands, like wimmern pick  
Theyr pie-crusts with a fork, some way,  
When bakin' fer camp-meetin' day.  
I wonder on and on and on,  
Tel my gray hair and beard is gone,  
And ev'ry wrinkle on my brow  
Is rubbed clean out and shadded now  
With curls as brown and fare and fine  
As tenderls of the wild grape-vine

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

That ust to climb the highest tree  
To keep the ripest ones fer me.  
I wunder still, and here I am  
Wadin' the ford below the dam—  
The worter chucklin' round my knee  
At hornet-welt and bramble-scratch,  
And me a-slippin' 'crost to see  
Ef Tyner's plums is ripe, and size  
The old man's wortermelon-patch,  
With juicy mouth and drouthy eyes.  
Then, after sich a day of mirth  
And happiness as worlds is wurth—  
So tired that Heaven seems nigh about,—  
The sweetest tiredness on earth  
Is to git home and flatten out—  
So tired you can't lay flat enough,  
And sorto' wish that you could spread  
Out like molasses on the bed,  
And jest drip off the aidges in  
The dreams that never comes ag'in.

8

### *A Hymn of Faith*

O THOU that doth all things devise  
, And fashion fer the best,  
He'p us who sees with mortul eyes  
To overlook the rest.

They's times, of course, we grope in doubt,  
And in afflictions sore;  
So knock the louder, Lord, without,  
And we'll unlock the door.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Make us to feel, when times looks bad  
And tears in pitty melts,  
Thou wast the only he'p we had  
When they was nothin' else.

Death comes alike to ev'ry man  
That ever was borned on earth;  
Then let us do the best we can  
To live fer all life's wurth.

Ef storms and tempusts dred to see  
Makes black the heavens ore,  
They done the same in Galilee  
Two thousand yee . . . before.

But after all, the golden sun  
Poured out its floods on them  
That watched and waited fer the One  
Then borned in Bethlyham.

Also, the star of holy writ  
Made noonday of the night,  
Whilse other stars that looked at it  
Was envious with delight.

The sages then in wurship bowed,  
From ev'ry clime so fare;  
O, sinner, think of that glad crowd  
That congergated thare!

They was content to fall in ranks  
With One that knowed the way  
From good old Jurden's stormy banks  
Clean up to Jedgmunt Day.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

No matter, then, how all is mixed  
In our near-sighted eyes,  
All things is for the best, and fixed  
Out straight in Paradise.

Then take things as God sends 'em here,  
And, ef we live er die,  
Be more and more contenteder,  
Without a-astin' why.

O, Thon that doth all things devise  
And fashion fer the best,  
He'p us who sees with mortul eyes  
To overlook the rest.

9

### *Wortermelon Time*

**O**LD wortermelon time is a-comin' round ag'in,  
And they ain't no man a-livin' any tickleder'n me,  
Fer the way I hanker after wortermelons is a sin—  
Which is the why and wharefore, as you can plainly see.

Oh! it's in the sandy soil wortermelons does the best,  
And it's thare they'll lay and waller in the sunshine and  
the dew  
Tel they wear all the green streaks clean off of theyr  
breast;  
And you bet I ain't a-findin' any fault with them; air  
you?

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

They ain't no better thing in the vegetable line;  
And they don't need much 'tendin', as ev'ry farmer  
knows;

And when theyr ripe and ready fer to pluck from the vine,  
I want to say to you theyr the best fruit that grows.

It's some likes the yeller-core, and some likes the red,  
And it's some says "The Little Californy" is the best;  
But the sweetest slice of all I ever wedged in my head,  
Is the old "Edingburg Mounting-spront," of the West.

You don't want no pinkins nigh your wortermelon vines—  
'Cause, some-way-another, they'll spite your melons,  
shore;—

I've seed 'em taste like pinkins, from the core to the rines,  
Which may be a fact you have heerd of before.

But your melons that's raised right and 'tended to with  
care,

You can walk around amongst 'em with a parent's pride  
and joy,

And thump 'em on the heads with as fatherly a air  
As ef each one of them was your little girl er boy.

I joy in my hart jest to hear that rippin' sound  
When you split one down the back and jolt the halves in  
two,

And the friends you love the best is gethered all around—  
And you says unto your sweethart, "Oh, here's the core  
fer you!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And I like to slice 'em up in big pieces fer 'em all,  
Especially the childern, and watch theyr high delight  
As one by one the rines with theyr pink notches falls,  
And they holler fer some more, with unquenched appetite.

Boys takes to it natchurl, and I like to see 'em eat—  
A slice of wortermelon's like a frenchharp in theyr hands,  
And when they "saw" it through theyr mouth sich music  
can't be beat—  
'Cause it's music both the sperit and the stummick understands.

Oh, they's more in worter melons than the purty-colored  
meat,  
And the overflowin' sweetness of the worter squshed  
betwixt  
The up'ard and the down'ard motions of a feller's teeth,  
And it's the taste of ripe old age and juicy childhood  
mixed.

Fer I never taste a melon but my thoughts flies away  
To the summertime of youth; and again I see the dawn,  
And the fadin' afternoon of the long summer day,  
And the dusk and dew a-fallin', and the night a-comin'  
on.

'And there's the corn around us, and the lispin' leaves and  
trees,  
And the stars a-peekin' down on us as still as silver mice,  
And us boys in the worter melons on our hands and knees,  
And the new-moon hangin' ore us like a yeller-corea  
slice.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Oh! it's wortermelon time is a-comin' round ag'in,  
And they ain't no man a-livin' any tickleder'n me,  
Fer the way I hanker after wortermelons is a sin—  
Which is the why and wharefore, as you can plainly see.

### 10 *When the Frost Is on the Punkin*

**W**HEN the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in  
the shock,  
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-  
cock,  
And the clackin' of the guicys, and the cluckin' of the  
hens,  
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;  
O, it's then's the times a feller is a-feelin' at his best,  
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful  
rest,  
As he leaves the house, bare-headed, and goes out to feed  
the stock,  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the  
shock.

They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmufere  
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is  
here—  
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossums on the  
trees,  
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the  
bees;

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the  
haze

Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airy autumn days  
Is a pietur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the  
shock.

The husky, rusty russel of the tassels of the corn,  
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves, as golden as the  
morn;

The stubble in the furrics—kindo' lonesome-like, but still  
A-preachin' sermons to us of the barns they growed to fill;  
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;  
The hosses in theyr stalls below—the clover overhead!—  
O, it sets my hart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the  
shock!

Then your apples all is getherd, and the ones a feller keeps  
Is poured around the celler-floor in red and yeller heaps;  
And your cider-makin' 's over, and your wimmern-folks is  
through

With their mince and apple-butter, and theyr souse and  
sausage, too! . . .

I don't know how to tell it—but ef sich a thing could be  
As the Angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on  
*me*—

I'd want to 'emmodate 'em—all the whole-indurin' flock—  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the  
shock!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

II *On the Death of Little Mahala  
Ashcraft*

"LITTLE Haly! Little Haly!" cheeps the robin in the  
tree;  
"Little Haly!" sighs the clover, "Little Haly!" moans the  
bee;  
"Little Haly! Little Haly!" calls the killdeer at twilight;  
And the katydids and crickets hollers "Haly!" all the night.  
The sunflowers and the hollyhaws droops over the garden  
fence;  
The old path down the garden walks still holds her foot-  
prints' dents;  
And the well-sweep's swingin' bucket seems to wait fer her  
to come  
And start it on its wortery errant down the old bee-gum.  
The beehives all is quiet; and the little Jersey steer,  
When any one comes nigh it, acts so lonesome-like and  
queer;  
And the little Banty chickens kindo' cutters faint and low,  
Like the hand that now was feedin' 'em was one they didn't  
know.  
They's sorrow in the wavin' leaves of all the apple-trees;  
And sorrow in the harvest-sheaves, and sorrow in the  
breeze;  
And sorrow in the twitter of the swallers 'round the shed;  
And all the song her redbird sings is "Little Haly's dead!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

The medder 'pears to miss her, and the pathway through  
the grass,  
Whare the dewdrops ust to kiss her little bare feet as she  
passed;  
And the old pin in the gate-post seems to kindo'-sorto'  
doubt  
That Haly's little sunburnt hands'll ever pull it out.

Did her father er her mother ever love her more'n me,  
Er her sisters er her brother prize her love more tendurly?  
I question—and what answer?—only tears, and tears alone,  
And ev'ry neighbor's eyes is full o' tear-drops as my own.

"Little Haly! Little Haly!" cheeps the robin in the tree;  
"Little Haly!" sighs the clover, "Little Haly!" moans the  
bee;  
"Little Haly! Little Haly!" calls the killdeer at twilight,  
And the katydids and crickets hollers "Haly!" all the night.

12

### *The Mulberry Tree*

O, IT'S many's the scenes which is dear to my mind  
As I think of my childhood so long left behind;  
The home of my birth, with its old puncheon-floor,  
And the bright morning-glorys that growed round the door;  
The warped clabboard roof whare the rain it run off  
Into streams of sweet dreams as I laid in the loft,  
Countin' all of the joys that was dearest to me,  
And a-thinkin' the most of the mulberry tree.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And to-day as I dream, with both eyes wide-awake,  
I can see the old tree, and its limbs as they shake,  
And the long purple berries that rained on the ground  
Where the pastur' was bald where we trumpt it around.  
And again, peekin' up through the thick leafy shade,  
I can see the glad smiles of the friends when I strayed  
With my little bare feet from my own mother's knee  
To foller them off to the mulberry tree.

Leanin' up in the forks, I can see the old rail,  
And the boy climbin' up it, claw, tooth, and toe-nail,  
And in fancy can hear, as he spits on his hands,  
The ring of his laugh and the rip of his pants.  
But that rail led to glory, as certin and shore  
As I'll never climb thare by that rout' any more—  
What was all the green laurns of Fame unto me,  
With my brows in the boughs of the mulberry tree!

Then it's who can 'e git the old mulberry tree  
That he knowed in the days when his thoughts was as free  
As the flutterin' wings of the birds that flew out  
Of the tall wavin' tops as the boys come about?  
O, a crowd of my memories, laughin' and gay,  
Is a-climbin' the fence of that pastur' to-day,  
And a-pantin' with joy, as us boys ust to be,  
They go racin' acrost fer the mulberry tree.



THE HOOSIER BOOK

We set thare by the smoke-house—me and you out thare  
alone—

Me a-thinkin'—you a-talkin' in a soothin' midertone—  
You a-talkin'—me a-thinkin' of the summers long ago,  
And a-writin' "Marthy—Marthy" with my finger in the  
snow!

William Leachman, I can see you jest as plane as I could  
then;

And your hand is on my shoulder, and you rouse me up  
again;

And I see the tears a-drippin' from your own eyes as you  
say:

"Be rickonciled and bear it—we but linger for a day!"

At the last Old Settlers' Mectin' we went j'intly, you and  
me—

Your hosses and my wagon, as you wanted it to be;  
And sence I can remember, from the time we've neighbored  
here,

In all sich friendly actions you have double-done your  
sheer.

It was better than the mectin', too, that nine-mile talk we  
had

Of the times when we first settled here and travel was so  
bad;

When we had to go on hoss-back, and sometimes on  
"Shanks's mare,"

And "blaze" a road fer them behind that had to travel  
thare.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And now we was a-trottin' 'long a level gravel pike,  
In a big two-hoss road-wagon, jest as easy as you like—  
Two of us on the front seat, and our wimmern-folks be-  
hind,  
A-settin' in theyr Winsor-cheers in perfect peace of mind!

And we pinte out old landmarks, nearly faded out of  
sight:—  
Thare they ust to rob the stage-coach; thare Gash Morgan  
had the fight  
With the old stag-deer that pronged him—how he battled  
fer his life,  
And lived to prove the story by the handle of his knife.

Thare the first griss-mill was put up in the Settlement,  
and we  
Had tuck our grindin' to it in the Fall of Forty-three—  
When we tuck our rifles with us, techin' elbows all the way,  
And a-stickin' right together ev'ry minute, night and day.

Thare ust to stand the tavern that they called the "Trav-  
elers' Rest,"  
And thare, beyent the covered bridge, "The Counterfitters'  
Nest"—  
Whare they claimed the house was ha'nted—that a man was  
murdered thare,  
And burried nderneath the floor, er 'round the place some-  
whare.

And the old Plank-road they laid along in Fifty-one er  
two—  
You know we talked about the times when the old road  
was new:

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

How "Uncle Sam" put down that road and never taxed  
the State  
Was a problem, don't you rickollect, we couldn't *dimon-*  
*strate?*

Ways was devius, William Leachman, that me and you has  
past;  
But as I found you true at first, I find you true at last;  
And, now the time's a-comin' mighty nigh our jurney's end,  
I want to throw wide open all my soul to you, my friend.

With the stren'th of all my bein', and the heat of hart and  
branc,  
And ev'ry livin' drop of blood in artery and vane,  
I love you and respect you, and I venerate your name,  
Fer the name of William Leachman and True Manhood's  
jest the same!

14

### *My Fiddle*

**M**Y fiddle?—Well, I kindo' keep her handy, don't you  
know!  
Though I ain't so much inclined to tromp the strings and  
switch the bow  
As I was before the timber of my elbows got so dry,  
And my fingers was more limber-like and caperish and  
spry;  
Yit I can plunk and plunk and plink,  
And tune her up and play,  
And jest lean back and laugh and wink  
At ev'ry rainy day!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

My playin' 's only middlin'—tunes I picked up when a boy—  
The kindo'-sorto' fiddlin' that the folks calls "cordaroy";  
"The Old Fat Gal," and "Rye-straw," and "My Sailyor's on  
the Sea,"

Is the old cowtillions I "saw" when the ch'ice is left to me;  
And so I plunk and plunk and plink,  
And rosum-tup my bow  
And play the tunes that makes you think  
The devil's in your toe!

I was allus a romancin', do-less boy, to tell the truth,  
A-fiddlin' and a-dancin', and a-wastin' of my youth,  
And a-actin' and a-cuttin'-up all sorts o' silly pranks  
That wasn't worth a botton of anybody's thanks!  
But they tell me, when I ust to plunk  
And plunk and plunk and play,  
My music seemed to have the kink  
O' drivin' cares away!

That's how this here old fiddle's won my hart's indurin'  
love!  
From the strings acrost her middle, to the schreechin' keys  
above—  
From her "aperu," over "bridge," and to the ribbon round  
her throat,  
She's a woin', cooin' pigeon, singin' "Love me" ev'ry note!  
And so I pat her neck, and plink  
Her strings with lovin' hands,—  
And, list'nin' clos't, I sometimes think  
She kindo' understands!

*Erasmus Wilson*

**'R**AS WILSON, I respect you, 'cause  
 You're common, like you allus was  
 Afore you went to town and s'prised  
 The world by gittin' "reckonized,"  
 And yit perservin', as I say,  
 Your common hoss-sense ev'ry way!  
 And when that name o' yourn occurs  
 On hand-bills, er in newspapers,  
 Er letters writ by friends 'at ast  
 About you, same as in the past,  
 And neighbors and relations 'low  
 You're out o' the tall timber now,  
 And "gittin' thare" about as s'pry's  
 The next!—as *I say*, when my eyes,  
 Er ears, lights on your name, I mind  
 The first time 'at I come to find  
 You—and my *Rickollection* yells,  
 Jest jubilant as old sleigh-bells—  
 "'Ras Wilson! Say! Hold up! and shake  
 A paw, fer old acquaintanee sake!"  
 My *Rickollection*, more'n like,  
 Hain't overly too apt to strike  
 The what's-called "cultehurd public eye"  
 As wisdom of the deepest dye,—  
 And yit my *Rickollection* makes  
 So blame lots fewer bad mistakes,  
 Regardin' human-natur' and  
 The fellers 'at I've shook theyr hand,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Than my *best jedgemunt's* done, the day  
I've met 'em—'fore I got away,—  
'At—Well, 'Ras Wilson, let me grip  
Y'our hand in warmest pardnership!

Dad-burn ye!—Like to jest haul back  
A' old flat-hander, jest che-whaek!  
And take you 'twixt the shoulders, say,  
Sometime you're lookin' t'other way!—  
Er, maybe whilse you're speakin' to  
A whole blame Court-house-full o' 'thu-  
Syastic friends, I'd like to jest  
Come in-like and break up the nest  
Afore you hatched another eheer,  
And say: "'Ras, I can't stand litchted here  
All night—ner wouldn't ef I could!—  
But Little Bethel Neighborhood,  
You ust to live at, 's sent some word  
Fer you, ef ary chance occurred  
To git it to ye,—so ef you  
Kin stop, I'm waitin' fer ye to!"

You're common, as I said afore—  
You're common, yit oncommon *more*.—  
You allus kindo' 'pear, to me,  
What all mankind had ort to be—  
Jest *natchurl*, and the more hurraus  
You git, the less you know the cause—  
Like as ef God Hisse'f stood by  
Where best on earth hain't half knee-high,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And *seein'* like, and knowin' *He*  
'S the Only Grate Man really,  
You're jest content to size your hight  
With any feller man's in sight.—  
And even then they's scrubs, like me,  
Feels stuck-up, in your company!

Like now:—I want to go with you  
Plum out o' town a mile er two  
Clean past the Fair-ground whare's some hint  
O' pennyrife er peppermint,  
And bottom-lands, and timber thick  
Enugh to sorto' shade the crick!  
I want to *see* you—want to set  
Down somers, whare the grass hain't wet,  
And kindo' *breathe* you, like puore air—  
And taste o' your tobacker thare,  
And talk and chaw! Talk o' the birds  
We've knocked with cross-bows.—Afterwards  
Drop, mayby, into some dispute  
'Bout "pomgrannies," er cal'mus-root—  
And how *they* growed, and *whare?*—on tree  
Er vine?—Who's best boy-memory!—  
And wasn't it *gingsang*, insted  
O' cal'mus-root, growed like you said?—  
Er how to tell a coon-track from  
A mussrat's;—er how milksick come—  
Er ef *cows* brung it?—Er why now  
We never see no "muley"-cow—  
Ner "frizzly"-chicken—ner no "clay-  
Bank" mare—ner nothin' thataway!—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And what's come o' the yellow-core  
Old worter melons?—hain't no more.—  
Tomattusus, the same—all red-  
Uns nowadays—All past joys fled—  
Each and all jest gone k-whizzl  
Like our days o' childhood is!

Dag-gone it, 'Ras! they hain't no friend,  
It 'pears-like, left to comperhend  
Sich things as these but you, and see  
How dratted sweet they air to me!  
But you, 'at's loved 'em allus, and  
Kin sort 'em out and understand  
'Em, same as the fine books you've read,  
And all fine thoughtits you've writ, er said,  
Er worked out, through long nights o' rain,  
And doubts and fears, and hopes, again,  
As bright as morning when she broke,—  
You know a tear-drop from a joke!  
And so, 'Ras Wilson, stop and shake  
A paw, fer old acquaintance sake!

16

### *My Ruthers*

*[Writ durin' State Fair at Indanoplis, whilse visitin' a  
Soninlaw then residin' thare, who has sence got back to the  
country whare he says a man that's raised there ort to  
a-stayed in the first place.]*

**I** TELL you what I'd ruther do—  
Ef I only had my ruthers,—  
I'd ruther work when I wanted to  
Than be bossed round by others;—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

I'd ruther kin'do' git the swing  
O' what was *needed*, first, I jing!  
Afore I *sweet* at anything!—  
Ef I only had my ruthers;—  
In fact I'd aim to be the same  
With all men as my brothers;  
And they'd all be the same with *me*—  
Ef I only had my ruthers.

I wouldn't likely know it all—  
Ef I only had my ruthers;—  
I'd know *some* sense, and some baseball—  
Some *old* jokes, and—some others:  
I'd know *some* *politics*, and 'low  
Some tarif-speeches same as now,  
Then go hear Nye on "Branes and How  
To Detect Theyr Presence." *T'others*,  
That stayed away, I'd *let 'em* stay—  
All my dissentin' brothers  
Could chuse as shore a kill er cuore,  
Ef I only had my ruthers.

The pore 'ud git theyr dues *sometimes*—  
Ef I only had my ruthers,—  
And be paid *dollars* 'stid o' *dimes*,  
Fer childern, wives and mothers:  
Theyr boy that slaves; theyr girl that sews—  
Fer *others*—not herself, God knows!—  
The grave's *her* only change of clothes!  
. . . Ef I only had my ruthers,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

They'd all have "stuff" and time enough  
To answer one-another's  
Appealin' prayer fer "lovin' care"—  
Ef I only had my ruthers,

They'd be few folks 'ud ast fer trust,  
Ef I only had my ruthers,  
And blame few business men to bu'st  
Theyselves, er harts of others:  
Big Guns that come here durin' Fair-  
Week could put up jest anywhare,  
And find a full-and-plenty thare,  
Ef I only had my ruthers:  
The rich and great 'nd 'sociate  
With all theyr lowly brothers,  
Feelin' *we* done the honorn—  
Ef I only had my ruthers.

### 17      *A Old Played-Out Song*

**I**T'S the curiousest thing in creation,  
Whenever I hear that old song  
"Do They Miss Me at Home," I'm so bothered,  
My life seems as short as it's long!—  
Fer ev'rything 'pears like adzackly  
It 'peared in the years past and gone,—  
When I started out sparkin', at twenty,  
And had my first neckercher on!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Though I'm wrinkleleder, older and grayer  
Right now than my parents was then,  
You strike up that song "Do They Miss Me,"  
And I'm jest a youngster again!—  
I'm a-standin' back thare in the furies  
A-wishin' fer evening to come,  
And a-whisperin' over and over  
Them words "Do They Miss Me at Home?"

You see, *Marthy Ellen* she sung it  
The first time I heerd it; and so,  
As she was my very first sweetheart,  
It reminds me of her, don't you know;—  
How her face ust to look, in the twilight,  
As I tuck her to Spellin'; and she  
Kep' a-hummin' that song tel I ast her,  
Pint-blank, ef she ever missed me!

I can shet my eyes now, as you sing it,  
And hear her low answerin' words;  
And then the glad chirp of the crickets,  
As clear as the twitter of birds;  
And the dust in the road is like velvet,  
And the ragweed and fennel and grass  
Is as sweet as the scent of the lilies  
Of Eden of old, as we pass.

"Do They Miss Me at Home?" Sing it lower—  
And softer—and sweet as the breeze  
That powdered our path with the snowy  
White bloom of the old locus'-trees!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Let the whipperwills he'p you to sing it,  
And the echoes 'way over the hill,  
Tel the moon boolges out, in a chorus  
Of stars, and our voices is still.

But, oh! "They's a chord in the music  
That's missed when *her* voice is away!"  
Though I listen from midnight tel morning,  
And dawn tel the dusk of the day!  
And I grope through the dark, lookin' up'ards  
And on through the heavenly dome,  
With my longin' soul singin' and sobbin'  
The words "Do They Miss Me at Home?"

18

### "Coon-Dog W'ess"

"COON-DOG WESS"—he allus went  
'Mongst us here by that-air name.  
Moved in this-here Settlement  
From next county—he laid claim,—  
Lived down in the bottoms—whare  
*Ust* to be some coons in thare!—

In nigh Clayton's, next the crick,—  
Mind old Billy ust to say  
Coons in thare was jest that thick,  
He'p him corn-plant any day!—  
And, in rostneer-time, be then  
Aggin' him to plant again!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Well,—In Spring o' '67,  
This-here "Coon-dog Wess" he come—  
Fetchin' 'long 'bout forty-'leven  
Orriest-lookin' honnds, I gmm!  
Ever mortul-man laid eyes  
On senre dawn o' Christian skies!

Wife come traipsin' at the rag-  
Tag-and-bobtail of the crowd,  
Dogs and childern, with a bag  
Corn-meal and some side-meat,—*Proud*  
And as *independunt—My!*—  
Yit a mild look in her eye.

Well—this "Coon-dog Wess" he jest  
Moved in that-air little pen  
Of a pole-shed, aidgin' west  
On "The Shies o' Death," called then.—  
Otter- and mink-hunters nst  
To camp thare 'fore game van-moost.

Abul-bodied man,—and lots  
Call fer *choppers*—and fer hands  
To git *cross-ties* out.—But he's  
*Work* to sich as understan' it.  
Ways appinted and is hence  
Under special providence?—

"Coon-dog Wess's" holts was *hounds*  
And *coon-huntin'*; and he knowed  
*His* own range, and stayed in bounds  
And left work fer them 'at showed  
*Talents* fer it—same as his  
Gifts regardin' coon-dogs is.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Hounds of ev'ry mungerd breed  
Ever whelped on earth!—Had these  
Yeller kind, with punkin-seed  
Marks above theyr eyes—and fleas  
Both to sell and keep!—Also  
These-here lop-yeerd hounds, you know.—

Yes-and *brindle* hounds—and long,  
Ga'nt hounds, with them eyes they' got  
So blame *sorry*, it seems wrong,  
'Most, to kick 'em as to not l  
Man, though, wouldn't dast, I guess,  
Kick a hound fer "Coon-dog Wess"!

'Tended to his own affairs  
Stric'ly;—made no brags,—and yit  
You could see 'at them hounds' cares  
'Peared like *his*,—and he'd 'a' fit  
Fer 'em, same as wife er child!—  
Them facts made folks rickonciled,

Sorto', fer to let him be  
And not pester him. And then  
Word begin to spread 'at he  
Had brung in as high as ten  
Coon-pelts in one night—and yit  
Didn't 'pear to boast of it!

Neghborhood made some complaints  
'Bout them plague-gone hounds at night  
Howlin' fit to wake the saints,  
Clean from dusk tel plum daylight!  
But to "Coon-dog Wess" them-thare  
Howls was "music in the air"!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Fetcht his pelts to Gilson's Store—  
Newt he shipped fer him . . . d said,  
Sence *he'd* cooned thare, I . . . d shipped more  
Than three hundred pelts!—"By Ned!  
Git shet of my *store*," Newt says,  
"T'd go in with 'Coon-dog Wess'!"

And the feller 'peared to be  
Makin' best and most he could  
Of his rale prospairity;—  
Bought some household things—and *good*,—  
Likewise, wagon-load onc't come  
From wharever he'd moved from.

But pore feller's huntin'-days,  
'Bout them times, was glidin' past!—  
Goes out onc't one night and *stays!*  
. . . . Neighbors they turned out, at last,  
Headed by his wife and one  
Half-starved hound—and search begun.

Boys said, that blame homd, he led  
Searchin' party, 'bout a half  
Mile ahead, and bellerin', said,  
Worse'n ary yearlin' calf!—  
Tel, at last, come fur-off sounds  
Like the howl of other hounds.

And-sir, shore enough, them signs  
Fetcht 'em—in a' hour er two—  
Whare the *pack* was;—and they finds  
"Coon-dog Wess" *right thare*;—And you  
Would admitted he was right  
*Stayin'*, as he had, *all night!*

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Facts is, cuttin' down a tree,  
The blame thing had sorto' fell  
In a twist-like—*mercy me!*  
And had ketched him.—Couldn't tell,  
Wess said, *how* he'd managed—yit  
He'd got both legs under it!

Fainted and come to, I s'pose,  
'Bout a dozen times whilse they  
Chopped him out!—And wife she froze  
To him!—bresh his hair away  
And smile cheerful'—only when  
He'd faint.—Cry and kiss him *then*.

Had *his* nerve!—And nussed him through,—  
Neighbors he'pped her—all she'd stand.—  
Had a loom, and she could do  
Carpet-weavin' raily grand!—  
"Sides," she ust to laugh and say,  
"She'd have Wess, now, *night* and day!"

As fer *him*, he'd say, says-ee,  
"I'm resigned to bein' lame:—  
They was four coons up that tree,  
And hounds got 'em, jest the same!"  
'Peared like, one er two legs less  
Never worried "Coon-dog Wess"!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

19

*A Tale of the Airly Days*

O H! tell me a tale of the airly days—  
Of the times as they used to be;  
“Piller of Fi-er” and “Shakespeare’s Plays”  
Is a’ most too deep fer me!  
I want plane facts, and I want plane words,  
Of the good old-fashioned ways,  
When speech run free as the songs of birds  
‘Way back in the airly days.

Tell me a tale of the timber-lands—  
Of the old-time pioneers;  
Somepin’ a pore man understands  
With his feelin’s ’s well as ears.  
Tell of the old log house,—about  
The loft, and the puncheon flore—  
The old fi-er-place, with the crane swung out,  
And the latch-string through the door.

Tell of the things jest as they was—  
They don’t need no excuse!—  
Don’t tetch ’em up like the poets does,  
Tel’ they all too fine fer use!—  
Say they was ’leven in the fambily—  
Two beds, and the chist, below,  
And the trundle-beds that each helt three,  
And the clock and the old burean.

Then blow the horn at the old back-door  
Tel the echoes all halloo,  
And the childern gethers home one’t more,  
Jest as they ust to do:

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Blow fer Pap tel he hears and comes,  
With Tomps and Elias, too,  
A-marchin' home, with the fife and drums  
And the old Red White and Blue!

Blow and blow tel the sound draps low  
As the moan of the whipperwill,  
And wake up Mother, and Ruth and Jo,  
All sleepin' at Bethel Hill:  
Blow and call tel the faces all  
Shine out in the back-log's blaze,  
And the shadders dance on the old hewed wall  
As they did in the airy days.

20

### "Mylo Jones's Wife"

"MYLO JONES'S wife" was all  
I heerd, mighty near, last Fall—  
Visitun relations down  
T'other side of Morgantown!  
Mylo Jones's wife she does  
This and that, and "those" and "thus"—  
Can't bide babies in her sight—  
Ner no childern, day and night,  
Whoopin' round the premises—  
*Ner no nothin' else, I guess!*

Mylo Jones's wife she 'lows  
She's the boss of her own house!—  
Mylo—consequences is—  
Stays whare things seem *some* like *his*,—  
Uses, mostly, with the stock—  
Coaxin' "Old Kate" not to balk,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Ner kiek hoss-flies' branes out, ner  
Act, I s'pose, so much like *her!*  
Yit the wimern-folks tells you  
She's *perfection*.—Yes they dol

Mylo's wife she says she's found  
Home hain't home with *men-folks* round  
When they's work like *hern* to do—  
Picklin' pears and *butcher'n'*, too,  
And a-render'n' lard, and then  
Cookin' fer a paek of men  
To come trackin' up the flore  
She's scrubbed *tel* she'll serub no *more!*—  
Yit she'd keep things clean ef they  
Made her serub tel Jedgmunt Day!

Mylo Jones's wife she sews  
Carpet-rags and patches clothes  
Jest year *in* and *out!*—and yit  
Whare's the livin' use of it?  
She asts Mylo that.—And he  
Gits baek whare he'd ruther be,  
With his team;—jest *plows*—and don't  
Never sware—like some folks won't!  
Think ef *he'd cut loose*, I gum!  
'D he'p his heavenly chances some!

Mylo's wife don't see no use,  
Ner no reason ner excuse  
Fer his pore relations to  
Hang round like they allus dol  
Thare 'bout one't a year—and *she*—  
She jest *ga'nts* 'em, foll's tell me,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

On spiced pears l—Pass Mylo one,  
He says “No, he don’t ehuse none l”  
Workin’ men like Mylo they  
’D ort to have *meat* ev’ry day l

Dad-burn Mylo Jones’s wife l  
Ruther rake a blame case-knife  
’Crost my wizen than to see  
Sich a womern rulin’ *me!*—  
Ruther take and turn in and  
Raise a fool mule-colt by hand l  
*Mylo*, though—od-rot the man l—  
Jest keeps ca’m—like some folks *can*—  
And ’low sich as her, I s’pose,  
Is *Man’s he’pmeet!*—Mercy knows l

### 21 *Old John Clevenger on Buckeyes*

**O**LD John Clevenger lets on,  
Allus, like he’s purty rough  
Timber.—He’s a grate old John l—  
“Rough?”—don’t swaller no sich stuff!  
Moved here, sence the war was through  
From Ohio—somers near  
Old Bueyrus,—loyal, too,  
As us “Hoosiers” is to *here!*  
Git old John stirred up a bit  
On his old home stompin’-ground—  
Talks same as he lived thare yit,  
When some subject brings it round—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Like, fer instunee, Sund'y last,  
Fetched his wife, and et and stayed  
All night with us.—Set and gassed  
Tel plum midnight—'cause I made  
Some remark 'bout "buckeyes" and  
"What was buckeyes good fer?"—So,  
Like I 'lowed, he waved his hand  
And lit in and let me know:—  
"What is Buckeyes good fer?"—What's  
*Pincys* and *fer-git-me-nots*?—  
Honeysuckles, and sweet peas,  
And sweet-wil'iamsuz, and these  
Johnny-jump-ups ev'rywhare,  
Growin' round the roots o' trees  
In Spring-weather?—what air *they*  
Good fer?—kin you tell me—*Hey?*  
'Good to look at?' Well they air!  
'Specially when *Winter's* gone,  
Clean *dead-cert'in!* and the wood's  
Green again, and sun feels good's  
June!—and shed your blame boots on  
The back poreh, and lit out to  
Roam round like you ust to do,  
Bare-foot, up and down the crick,  
Whare the buckeyes growed so thick,  
And witch-hazel and pop-paws,  
And haekberries and black-haws—  
With wild-pizen vines jis knit  
*Over* and *en-nunder* it,  
And wove round it all, I jing!  
Tel you couldn't hardly stiek  
A durn *case-knife* through the thing!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Wriggle round through *that*; and then—  
All het-up, and scratched and tanned,  
And muskeeter-bit and mean-  
Feelin'—all at onc't again,  
Come out suddent on a clean  
Slopin' little hump o' green  
Dry soft grass, as fine and grand  
As a pollor-sofy!—And  
Jis pile down thare!—and tell *me*  
*Anywhares* you'd ruther be—  
'Ceptin' *right thare*, with the wild-  
Flowers all round ye, and your eyes  
Smilin' with 'em at the skies,  
Happy as a little child!  
Well!—right here, *I* want to say,  
Poets kin talk all they please  
'Bout 'wild-flowrs, in colors gay,'  
And 'sweet blossoms flauntin' theyr  
Beauteous fragrunce on the breeze'—  
But the sight o' *buckeyes* jis  
Sweet to me as *blossoms* is!

"I'm *Ohio-born*—right whare  
People's *all* called 'Buckeyes' *thare*—  
'Cause, I s'pose, our buckeye crap's  
Biggest in the world, perhaps!—  
Ner my head don't stretch my hat  
Too much on account o' *that*!—  
'Cause it's Natchur's ginerus hand  
Sows 'em broadcast ore the land,  
With eye-single fer man's good  
And the ginerall neighborhood!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

So buckeyes jis natchurly  
'Pears like *kith-and-kin* to me!  
'S like the good old sayin' wuz,  
'*Purty is as purty does!*'—  
We can't *cat* 'em, cookd er raw—  
Yit, I mind, *tamattusuz*  
Wuz considered *pizenus*  
*One't*—and dasent eat 'em!—*Pshaz*—  
'Twouldn't take me by supprise,  
Someday, ef we et *buckeyes!*  
That, though, 's nuther here ner there!—  
*Jis the Buckeye* whare we air,  
In the present times, is what  
Ockuppies my lovin' care  
And my most perfondest thought!  
. . . Gness, this *minnte*, what I got  
In my pocket, 'at I've packed  
Part' nigh forty year.—A dry,  
Slick and shiny, warped and cracked,  
Wilted, weazened old *buckeye!*  
What's it *thare* fer? What's my hart  
In my *brast* fer?—'Cause it's part  
Of my *life*—and 'tends to biz—  
Like this *buckeye's* bound to act—  
'Cause it 'tends to *Rhumatis!*

“ . . . Ketched more *rhumatis* than fish,  
Seinen', one't—and pants froze on  
My blame legs!—And ust to wish  
I wuz well er *dead and gone!*

## THE HOOSHER BOOK

Doe give up the case, and shod  
His old hoss again and stayed  
On good roads!—*And thare I laid!*  
Pap he tuck some bluegrass sod  
Steeped in whisky, bilin'-hot,  
And socked *that* on! Then I got  
Sorto' holt o' him, *somehow*—  
Kindo' crazy-like, they say—  
And I'd *killed* him, like as not,  
Ef I hadn't swooned away!  
*Smell my scortcht pelt purt' nigh now!*  
Well—to make a long tale short—  
I hung on the blame disease  
Like a shavin'-hoss! and sort  
O' wore it out by slow degrees—  
Tel my legs wuz straight enough  
To poke through my pants again  
And kick all the doctor-stuff  
In the fi-er-place! Then turned in  
And tuck Daddy Craig's old enore—  
*Jis a buckeye*—and that's *shorc*.—  
Hain't no case o' rhematiz  
Kin subsist whare buckeyes is!"

THE hoss he is a splendud beast;  
He is man's friend, as heaven desined,  
And, search the world from west to east,  
No honester you'll ever find!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Some calls the hoss "a pore dumb brute,"  
And yit, like Him who died fer you,  
I say, as I theyr charge refute,  
"Fergive; they know not what they do!"

No wiser animal makes tracks  
Upon these earthly shores, and hence  
Arose the axium, true as facts,  
Extol'd by all, as "Good hoss-sense!"

The hoss is strong, and knows his stren'th,—  
You hitch him up a time er two  
And lash him, and he'll go his len'th  
And kick the dashboard out fer you!

But, treat him allus good and kind,  
And never strike him with a stick,  
Ner aggervate him, and you'll find  
He'll never do a hostile trick.

A hoss whose master tends him right  
And woters him with daily care,  
Will do your biddin' with delight,  
And act as docile as you air.

He'll paw and prance to hear your praise,  
Because he's learnt to love you well;  
And, though you can't tell what he says,  
He'll nicker all he wants to tell.

He knows you when you slam the gate  
At early dawn, upon your way  
Unto the barn, and snorts elate,  
To git his corn, er oats, er hay.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

He knows you, as the orphan knows  
The folks that loves her like they own,  
And raises her and "finds" her clothes,  
And "schools" her tel a womern-grown l

I claim no hoss will harm a man,  
Ner kick, ner run away, cavort,  
Stump-suck, er balk, er "catamaran,"  
Ef you'll jest treat him as you ort.

But when I see the beast abused,  
And' clubbed around as I've saw, some,  
I want to see his owner noosed,  
And jest yanked up like Absolum:

Of course they's difference in stock,—  
A hoss that has a little yee;  
And slender build, and shaller hock,  
Can beat his shadder, mighty near l

Whilse one that's thick in neck and chist  
And big in leg and full in flank,  
That tries to race, I still insist  
He'll have to take the second rank.

And I have jest laid back and laughed,  
And rolled and wallered in the grass  
At fairs, to see some heavy-draft  
Lead out at *first*, yit come in *last*!

Each hoss has his appinted place,—  
The heavy hoss should plow the soil;—  
The blooded racer, he must race,  
And win big wazes fer his toil.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

I never bet—ner never wrought  
Upon my feller man to bet—  
And yit, at times, I've often thought  
Of my convietions with regret.

I bless the hoss from hoof to head—  
From head to hoof, and tale to mane!—  
I bless the hoss, as I have said,  
From head to hoof, and back again!

I love my God the first of all,  
Then Him that perished on the cross,  
And next, my wife,—and then I fall  
Down on my knees and love the hoss.

23

### *W'et-W'cather Talk*

I T hain't no use to grumble and complane;  
It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice.—  
When God' sorts out the weather and sends rain,  
W'y, rain's my choice.

Men gincerly, to all intents—  
Although they're apt to grumble some—  
Puts most theyr trust in Providence,  
And takes things as they come—  
That is, the commonality  
Of men that's lived as long as me  
Has watched the world enough to learn  
They're not the boss of this concern.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

With *some*, of course, it's different—  
I've saw *young* men that knowed it all,  
And didn't like the way things went  
On this terrestchul ball;—  
But all the same, the rain, some way,  
Rained jest as hard on picnic day;  
Er, when they raily *wanted* it,  
It mayby wouldn't rain a bit!

In this existance, dry and wet  
Will overtake the best of men—  
Some little skift o' clouds'll shet  
The sun off now and then.—  
And mayby, whilse you're wundern who  
You've fool-like lent your umbrell' to,  
And *want* it—out'll pop the sun,  
And you'll be glad you hain't got none!

It aggervates the farmers, too—  
They's too much wet, er too much sun,  
Er work, er waitin' round to do  
Before the plowin' 's done:  
And mayby, like as not, the wheat,  
Jest as it's lookin' hard to beat,  
Will ketch the storm—and jest about  
The time the corn's a-jintin' out.

These-here *cy-clones* a-foolin' round—  
And back'ard crops l—and wind and rain l—  
And yit the corn that's wallerd down  
May elbow up again l—

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## THE HOOSIER BOOK

They hain't no sense, as I can see,  
Fer mortuls, sich as us, to be  
A-faultin' Natchur's wise intents,  
And lockin' horns with Providence!

It hain't no use to grumble and complane;  
It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice.—  
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,  
W'y, rain's my choice.

24

### *Ezra House*

[These lines was writ, in ruther high sperits, jest at the close of what's called the Anti Bellum Days, and more to be a-foolin' than anything else,—though they is more er less facts in it. But some of the boys, at the time we was all a-singin' it, fer Ezry's benefit, to the old tune of "The Oak and the Ash and the Bonny Willer Tree," got it struck off in the weekly, without leave er liscence of mine; and so sence they's allns some of 'em left to rigg me about it yit, I might as well claim the thing right here and now, so here goes. I give it jest as it appeared, fixed up and grammatised consider'ble, as the editer told me he took the liburty of doin', in that sturling old home paper THE ADVANCE—as sound a paper yit to-day and as stanch and abul as you'll find in a hunderd.]

COME listen, good people, while a story I do tell,  
Of the sad fate of one which I knew so passing well;  
He enlisted at McCordsville, to battle in the South,  
And protect his country's union; his name was Ezra House.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

He was a young school-teacher, and educated high  
In regards to Ray's arithmetic, and also Algebra:  
He give good satisfaction, but at his country's call  
He dropped his position, his Algebra and all.

"It's oh, I'm going to leave you, kind scholars," he said—  
For he wrote a composition the last day and read;  
And it brought many tears in the eyes of the school,  
To say nothing of his sweetheart he was going to leave so  
soon.

"I have many recollections to take with me away,  
Of the merry transpirations in the schoolroom so gay;  
And of all that's past and gone I will never regret  
I went to serve my country at the first of the outset!"

He was a good penman, and the lines that he wrote  
On that sad occasion was too fine for me to quote,—  
For I was there and heard it, and I ever will recall  
It brought the happy tears to the eyes of us all.

And when he left, his sweetheart she fainted away,  
And said she could never forget the sad day  
When her lover so noble, and gallant and gay,  
Said "Fare you well, my true love!" and went marching  
away.

But he hadn't been gone for more than two months,  
When the sad news come—"he was in a skirmish once,  
And a cruel Rebel ball had wounded him full sore  
In the region of the chin, through the canteen he wore."

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But his health recruited up, and his wounds they got well,  
But whilst he was in battle at Bull Run or Malvern Hill,  
The news come again, so sorrowful to hear--  
"A sliver from a bombshell cut off his right ear."

But he stuck to the boys, and it's often he would write,  
That "he wasn't afraid for his country to fight."  
But oh, had he returned on a furlough, I believe  
He would not, to-day, have such cause to grieve.

For in another battle--the name I never heard--  
He was guarding the wagons when an accident occurred,--  
A comrade who was under the influence of drink,  
Shot him with a musket through the right cheek, I think.

But his dear life was spared; but it hadn't been for long,  
Till a cruel Rebel colonel come riding along,  
And struck him with his sword, as many do suppose,  
For his cap-rim was cut off, and also his nose.

But Providence, who watches o'er the noble and the brave,  
Snatched him once more from the jaws of the grave;  
And just a little while before the close of the war,  
He sent his picture home to his girl away so far.

And she fell into decline, and she wrote in reply,  
"She had seen his face again and was ready to die";  
And she wanted him to promise, when she was in her tomb,  
He would only visit that by the light of the moon.

But he never returned at the close of the war,  
And the boys that got back said he hadn't the heart;  
But he got a position in a powder-mill, and said  
He hoped to meet the doom that his country denied.

25 *A Pen-Pictur' of a Cert'in Frivolus Old Man*

**M**OST ontimely old man yit!  
 'Pear-like sometimes he jest *tricc*  
 His fool-self, and takes the bitt  
 In his teeth and jest de-fies  
 Ali perpryties!—Lay and swet  
 Doin' *nothin'*—only jest  
 Sorto' speckillatun on  
 Whare old summer-times is gone,  
 And 'bout things that he loved best  
 When a youngster! Heerd him say  
*Spring-times* made him thataway—  
 Speshully on *Sund'ys*—when  
 Sun shines out and in again,  
 And the lonesome old hens they  
 Git off under the old kern-  
 Bumes, and in deep concern  
*Talk-like to theyrselves*, and scratch  
 Kindo' absunt-minded, jest  
 Like theyr thoughts was fur away  
 In some neghbor's gyarden-patch  
 Folks has tended keerfullest!  
 Heerd the old man dwell on these  
 Idys time and time again!—  
 Heerd him claim that orchurd-trees  
 Bloomin', put the mischief in  
 His old hart : sometimes that bad  
 And owdacious that he "*had*  
 To break loose *someway*," says he,  
 "Ornry as I ust to be!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Heerd him say one time—when I  
Was a sorto' standin' by,  
And the air so still and clear,  
Heerd the bell fer church clean here!—  
Said: "Ef I could elimb and set  
On the old three-cornered rail  
Old home-place, nigh Maryette',  
Swop my soul off, hide and tale!"  
And-sir I blame ef tear and laugh  
Didn't ketch him half and half!  
"Oh!" he says, "to wake and be  
Barefoot, in the airly dawn  
In the pastur' l—thare," says he,  
"Standin' whare the cow's slep' on  
The cold, dewy grass that's got  
Print of her jest steamy hot  
Fer to warm a feller's heels  
In a while!—How good it feels!  
Sund'y!—Country!—Morning!—Hear  
Nothin' but the *silunce*—see  
Nothin' but green woods and clear  
Skies and unwrit poetry  
By the aere! . . . Oh!" says he,  
"What's this voice of mine?—to seek  
To speak out, and yit *can't* speak!  
  
"Think!—the lazyest of days"—  
Takin' his contrairyest leap,  
He went on,—"git up, er sleep—  
Er whilse feedin', watch the haze  
Dancin' crost the wheat,—and keep

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

My pipe goin' laisurely—  
Puff and whiff as pleases me,—  
Er I'll leave a trail of smoke  
Through *the house!*—no one'll say  
'*Throw that nasty thing away!*'  
'Pear-like nothin' sacerd's broke,  
Goin' barefoot ef I chuse!—  
I *have fiddled;*—and dug bait  
And *went fishin';*—pitched hoss-shoes—  
Whare they couldn't see us from  
The main road.—And I've *beat* some.  
I've set round and had my joke  
With the thrashers at the barn—  
And I've swapped 'em yarn fer yarn!—  
Er I've he'pped the childern poke  
Fer hens'-nests—agged on a match  
'Twixt the boys, to watch 'em scratch  
And paw round and rip and tare,  
And bu'st buttons and pull hair  
To theyr rompin' harts' content—  
And me jest a-settin' thare  
Hatchin' out more devilment!

"What you s'pose now ort to be  
Done with sich a man?" says he—  
"Sich a fool-old-man as me!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

26

*Thoughts on a Pore Joke*

I LIKE fun—and I like jokes  
'Bout as well as most o' folks!—  
Like my joke, and like my fun;—  
But a joke, I'll state right here,  
'S got some p'int—er I don't keer  
Fer no joke that hain't got none.—  
I hain't got no use, I'll say,  
Fer a pore joke, anyway!

F'r instunee, now, when *some* folks gits  
To relyin' on theyr wits,  
Ten to one they git too smart  
And *spile* it all, right at the start!  
Feller wants to jest go slow  
And do his *thinkin'* first, you know.  
'F I can't think up somepin' good,  
I set still and ehaw my cood!  
'F you *think* nothin'—jest keep on,  
But don't *say* it—er you're gone!

27

*A Mortul Prayer*

O H! Thou that veileth from all eyes  
The glory of Thy faec,  
And setteth throned behind the skies  
In Thy abiding-place:  
Though I but dimly reeo'nize  
Thy purposes of grace;

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And though with weak and wavering  
Deserts, and vexed with fears,  
I lift the hands I can not wring  
All dry of sorrow's tears,  
Make puore my prayers that daily wing  
Theyr way unto Thy cars!

Oh! with the hand that tames the flood  
And smooths the storm to rest,  
Make ba'mmy dews of all the blood  
That stormeth in my brest,  
And so refresh my hart to bud  
And bloom the loveliest.  
Lull all the clammer of my soul  
To silunce; bring release  
Unto the branc still in controle  
Of doubts; bid sin to cease,  
And let the waves of passion roll  
And kiss the shores of peace.

Make me love my feller man—  
Yea, though his bitterness  
Doth bite as only adders can—  
Let *me* the fault confess,  
And go to him and clasp his hand  
And love him none the less.  
So keep me, Lord, ferever free  
From vane concete er whim;  
And he whose pious eyes can see  
My faults, however dim,—  
Oh! let him pray the least fer me,  
And me the most fer him.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

28

*The First Bluebird*

**J**EST rain and snow! and rain again!  
And dribble! dripl and blow!  
Then snow! and thaw! and slush! and then—  
Some more rain and snow!

This morning I was 'most afeard  
To wake up—when, I jing!  
I seen the sun shine out and heerd  
The first bluebird of Spring!—  
Mother she'd raised the winder some;—  
And in acrost the orchurd come,  
Soft as a' angel's wing,  
A breezy, treesy, beesy hum,  
    So sweet fer anything!

The winter's shroud was rent apart—  
The sun bu'st forth in glee,—  
And when *that bluebird* sung, my hart  
Hopped out o' bed with me!

29 *On Any Ordinary Man In a High  
State of Inebriety and Delight*

**A**S it's give' me to perecive,  
I most cert'in'y believe  
When a man's jest glad plum through,  
God's pleased with him, same as you.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

30

*Town and Country*

THEY'S a predjudice allus 'twixt country and town  
Which I wisht in my hart wasent so.  
You take *city* people, jest square up and down,  
And they're mighty good people to know:  
And whare's better people a-livin', to-day,  
Than us in the *country*?—Yit good  
As both of us is, we're divorsed, you might say,  
And won't compermise when we could!

Now as nigh into town fer yer Pap, ef you please,  
Is what's call'd the sooburbs.—Fer thare  
You'll at least ketch a whiff of the breeze and a sniff  
Of the breth of wild-flowrs ev'rywhare.  
They's room fer the childern to play, and grow, too—  
And to roll in the grass, er to climb  
Up a tree and rob nests, like they *orient* to do,  
But they'll do *anyhow* ev'ry time!

My Son-in-law said, when he lived in the town,  
He jest natchurly pined, night and day,  
Fer a sight of the woods, er a acre of ground  
Whare the trees wasent all cleared away!  
And he says to me one't, whilse a-visitin' us  
On the farm, "It's not strange, I declare,  
That we can't coax you folks, without raisin' a fuss,  
To come to town, visitin' thare!"

And says I, "Then git back whare you sorto' *belong*—  
And *Madaline*, too,—and yer three  
Little childern," says I, "that don't know a bird-song,  
Ner a hawk from a chicky-dee-dee!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Git back," I-says-I, "to the blue of the sky  
And the green of the fields, and the shine  
Of the sun, with a laugh in yer voice and yer eye  
As harty as Mother's and mine!"

Well—long-and-short of it,—he's conpermissid *some*—  
He's moved in the sooburbs.—And now  
They don't haf to coax, when they want us to come,  
'Cause we turn in and go *anyhow!*  
Fer thare—well, they's room fer the songs and perfume  
Of the grove and the old orchurd-ground,  
And they's room fer the childern out thare, and they's  
room  
Fer theyr Gran'pap to waller 'em round!

### 31      *Decoration Day on the Place*

**I**T'S lonesome—sorto' lonesome,—it's a *Sund'y-day*, to  
me,  
It 'pears-like—more'n any day I nearly ever see!—  
Yit, with the Stars and Stripes above, a-flutterin' in the air,  
On ev'ry Soldier's grave I'd love to lay a lily thare.  
They say, though, Decoration Day is giner'ly observed  
'Most *ev'rywhares*—especially by soldier-boys that's  
served.—  
But me and Mother's never went—we seldom git away,—  
In p'int o' fact, we're *allus* home on *Decoration Day*.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

They say the old boys marches through the streets in  
column's grand,  
A-follerin' the old war-times they're playin' on the band—  
And citizins all jinin' in—and little childern, too—  
All marchin', under shelter of the old Red White and  
Blue.—

With roses | roses | roses |—ev'rybody in the town!—  
And crowds o' little girls in white, jest fairly loaded  
down!—  
Oh! don't THE BOYS know it, from their camp acrost the  
hill?—  
Don't they see their com'ards comin' and the old flag  
wavin' still?

Oh! can't they hear the bugul and the rattle of the drum?—  
Ain't they no way under heavens they can rickollect us  
some?  
Ain't they no way we can coax 'em, through the roses, jest  
to say  
They know that ev'ry day on earth's their Decoration Day?

We've tried that—me and Mother,—whare Elias takes his  
rest,  
In the orchurd—in his uniform, and hands acrost his brest,  
And the flag he died fer, smilin' and a-rippin' in the bree :  
Above his grave—and over that,—*the robin in the trees!*

And *jit* it's lonesome—lonesome!—It's a *Sund'y-day*, to me,  
It 'pears-like—more'n any day I nearly ever see!—  
Still, with the Stars and Stripes above, a-flutterin' in the  
air,  
On ev'ry Soldier's grave I'd love to lay a lily thare.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

32      *The Rossville Lectur' Course*

[Set down from the real facts of the case that come under notice of the author whilse visitin' far distunt relatives who wuz then residin' at Rossville, Mich.]

FOLKS up here at Rossville got up a Lectur' Course:—  
All the leadin' citizens they wuz out in force;  
Met and talked at Williamses', and 'greed to meet ag'in;  
And helt another corkus when the next reports wuz in;  
Met ag'in at Sammelses'; and met ag'in at Moore's  
And Johnst putt the shutters up and jest barr'd the door!—  
And yit, I'll jest be dagg-don'd! ef't didn't take a week  
'Fore we'd settled whare to write to git a man to speak!

Found out whare the "Bureau" wuz; and then and thare  
agreed

To strike whilse the iron's hot and foller up the lead.—  
Simp wuz Secatary; so he tuk his pen in hand,  
And ast 'em what they'd tax us fer the one on "Holy  
Land"—

"One of Colonel J. De-Koombs's Abelust and Best  
Lectnr's," the circ'lar stated, "Give East er West!"  
Wanted fifty dollars and his kyar-fare to and from,  
And Simp wuz hence instructed fer to write him not to  
come.

Then we talked and jawed aronnd another week er so,  
And writ the "Bureau" 'bout the town a-bein' sorto' slow—  
Old-fogey-like, and pore as dirt, and lackin' interprise  
And ignornter'n any other, 'cordin' to its size:

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Tel finully the "*Bureau*" said they'd send a cheeper man  
fer forty dollars, who would give "A Talk About Japan"—  
"A reg'lar Japance hise'f," the pamphlet claimed; and so,  
Nobody knowed his languige, and of course we let him go!

Kindo' then let up a spell—but rallied one't ag'in,  
And writ to price a feller on what's called the "violin"—  
A Swede, er Pole, er somepin'—but no matter what he wuz,  
Doc Cooper said he'd heerd him, and he wuzn't with a  
kuss!

And then we ast fer *Swingse's* terms; and *Cook*, and  
*Ingersoll*—

And blame! ef forty dollars looked like anything at all!  
And then *Burdette*, we tried fer *him*; and Bob he writ to  
say

He wuz busy writin' ortographs and couldn't git away.

At last—along in Aprile—we signed to take this-here  
Bill Nye of Californy, 'at wuz posted to appear  
"The Comicalest Funny Man 'at Ever Jammed a Hall!"  
So we made big preperations, and swep' ont the church and  
all!

And night he wuz to lectur', and the neighbors all wuz  
thare,

And strangers packed along the aisles 'at come front ev'ry  
whare,

Committee got a telegraphit the preacher read, 'at run—  
"Got off at Rossville, *Indiandy*, 'stid of *Michigun*."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

33

*A Dos't o' Blues*

I GOT no patience with blues at all  
And I ust to kind o' talk  
Ag'inst 'em, and claim, tel along last Fall,  
They wuz none in the fambly stock;  
But a nephew of mine, from Eelinoy,  
That visitud us last year,  
He kind o' convinct me differunt  
Whilse he wuz a-stayin' here.

From ev'ry-which-way that blues is from,  
They'd pester him *ev'ry*-ways;  
They'd come to him in the night, and come  
On Sund'ys, and rainy days;  
They'd tackle him in corn-plantin' time,  
And in harvest, and airly Fall,—  
But a dos't o' blues in the *Winter*-time,  
He 'lowed, wuz the worst of all!

Said "All diseases that ever *he* had—  
The mumps, er the rhumatiz—  
Er ev'ry-other-day-aigger—bad  
As ever the blame thing is!—  
Er a cyarbuncle, say, on the back of his neck,  
Er a felon on his thumb,—  
But you keep *the blues* away from him,  
And all o' the rest could come!"

And he'd moan, "They's nary a leaf below!  
Ner a spear o' grass in sight!  
And the whole wood-pile's clean under snow!  
And the days is dark as night!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

You can't go out—ner you can't stay in—  
Lay down—stand up—ner set!"  
And a tetch o' regular tyfoïd-blues  
Would double him jest clean shet!

I writ his parunts a postal-kyard  
He could stay tel Spring-time come;  
And Aprile—*first*, as I rickollect—  
Wuz the day we shipped him home!  
Most o' his *relatives*, sence then,  
Has eether give up, er quit,  
Er jest died off; but I understand  
*He's* the same old color yit!

34

### *Pap's Old Sayin'*

PAP had one old-fashioned sayin'  
That I'll never quite fergit—  
And they's seven growed-up childern  
Of us rickollects it yit!—  
Settin' round the dinner-table,  
Talkin' 'bout our friends, perhaps,  
Er abusin' of our neighbors,  
I kin hear them words o' Pap's—  
"Shet up, and eat yer vittels!"

Pap he'd never argy with us,  
Ner cut any subject short  
Whilse we all kep' clear o' gossip,  
And wuz actin' as we ort:

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But ef we'd git out o' order—  
Like sometimes a fambly is,—  
Faultin' folks, er one another,  
Then we'd hear that voice o' his—  
"Shet up, and eat yer vittels!"

Wuz no hand hisse'f at talkin'—  
*Never* hadn't *much* to say,—  
Only, as I said, pervidin'  
When we'd rile him thataway:  
Then he'd allus lose his temper  
Spite o' fate, and jerk his head  
And slam down his ease-knife vieious'  
Whilse he glared around and said—  
"Shet up, and eat yer vittels!"

Mind last time 'at Pap was ailin'  
With a misery in his side,  
And had hobbled in the kitchin—  
Jest the day before he died,—  
Laury Jane she ups and tells him,  
"Pap, you're pale as pale kin be—  
Hain't ye 'feard them-air coweumbers  
Hain't good fer ye?" And says he,  
"Shet up, and eat yer vittels!"

Well! I've saw a-many a sorrow,—  
Forty year', through thick and thin;  
I've got best,—and I've got *worsted*,  
Time and time and time ag'in!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But I've met a-many a trouble  
That I hain't run on to twice,  
Haltin'-like and thinkin' over  
Them-air words o' Pap's advice:  
"Shet up, and eat yer vittels!"

35 *An Old Man's Memory*

**T**HE delights of our childhood is soon passed away,  
And our gloryus youth it departs,—  
And yit, dead and burried, they's blossoms of May  
Ore theyr medderland graves in our harts.  
So, friends of my barefooted days on the farm,  
Whether truant in city er not,  
God prosper you same as He's prosperin' me,  
Whilse your past hain't despised er forgot.

Oh! they's nothin', at morn, that's as grand unto me  
As the glorys of Natchur so fare,—  
With the Spring in the breeze, and the bloom in the trees,  
And the hum of the bees ev'rywhare!  
The green in the woods, and the birds in the boughs,  
And the dew spangled over the fields;  
And the baw of the sheep and the bawl of the cows  
And the call from the house to your meals!

Then ho! fer your brekfast! and ho! fer the toil  
That waiteth alike man and beast!  
Oh! it's soon with my team I'll be turnin' up soil,  
Whilse the sun shoulders up in the East

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THE HOOSIER BOOK

Ore the tops of the ellums and beeches and oaks,  
To smile his Godspeed on the plow,  
And the furry and seed, and the Man in his need,  
And the joy of the swet of his brow!

36 Lines to Perfesser John Clark Ridpath

A. M., LL. D. T-Y-TY!

[Composed by A Old Friend of the Fambily sence 'way  
back in the Forties, when they Settled nigh Fillmore, Put-  
nam County, this State, whare John was borned and growed  
up, you might say, like the wayside flower.]

**Y**OUR neglibors in the country, whare you come from,  
hain't fergot!—  
We knowed you even better than your own-self, like as not.  
We profissied your runnin'-geers 'ud stand a soggy load  
And pull her, purty stiddy, up a mighty rocky road:  
We been a-watchin' your career sence you could write your  
name—  
But way you writ it *first*, I'll say, was jest a burnin'  
shame!—  
Your "J. C." in the copy-book, and "Ridpath"—mercy-  
sakes!—  
Quiled up and tide in dubble bows, lookt like a nest o'  
snakes!—  
But you could read it, I suppose, and kindo' gloted on  
A-bein' "J. C. Ridpath" when we only called you "John."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But you'd work's well as fool, and what you had to do was  
*done:*

We've watched you at the wood-pile—not the *wood-shed*—  
wasent none,—

And snow and sleet, and haulin', too, and lookin' after  
stock,

And milkin', nights, and feedin' pigs,—then turnin' back the  
clock,

So's you could set up studyin' your 'Rethmatic, and fool  
Your Parents, whilse a-piratin' your way through winter  
school!

And I've heerd tell—from your own folks—you've set and  
baked your face

A-readin' Plutark Slives all night by that old fi-er-place.—

Yit, 'bout them times, the blackboard, one't, had on it, I  
*de-clare,*

“Yours truly, *J. Clark Ridpath.*”—And the teacher—left  
it thare!

And they was other symptums, too, that pinte, plane as  
day,

To nothin' short of *College!*—and *one* was the lovin' way  
Your mother had of cheerin' you to efforts brave and  
strong,

And puttin' more faith in you, as you needed it along:  
She'd pat you on the shoulder, er she'd grab you by the  
hands,

And *laugh* sometimes, er *cry* sometimes.—They's few that  
understands

Jest *what* they mother's drivin' at when they act that-  
away;—

But I'll say this fer *you*, John-Clark,—you answered, night  
and day,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

To ev'ry trust and hope of hers—and half your College  
fame  
Was battled fer and won fer her and glory of her name.

The likes of *you* at *College!* But you went thare. How  
you paid

Your way nobody's astin'—but you *worked*,—you hain't  
afraid,—

Your *clothes* was, more'n likely, kindo' out o' style, perhaps,  
And not as snug and warm as some 'at hid the other  
chaps;—

But when it come to *Intullect*—they tell me you'n was  
dressed

A *leetle* mite *superber*-like than any of the rest!  
And there you *stayed*—and thare you've made your rickord,  
fare and square—

Tel *now* it's *Fame* 'at writes your name, approvin', *ev'ry-*  
*whare*—

Not *jibblits* of it, nuther,—but all John Clark Ridpath,  
set

Plum at the dashboard of the whole-endurin' Alfabet!

### 37 *Us Farmers in the Country*

**U**S farmers in the country, as the seasons go and  
come,

Is purty much like other folks,—we're apt to grumble some!  
The Spring's too back'ard fer us, er too for'ard—ary one—

We'll jaw about it anyhow, and have our way er none!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

The thaw's set in too sudden; er the frost's stayed in the  
soil

Too long to give the wheat a chance, and crops is bound to  
spoil.

The weather's eether most too mild, er too outrageous  
rough,

And altogether too much rain, er not half rain enough!

Now what I'd like and what you'd like is plane enough to  
see:

It's jest to have old Providence drop round on you and me  
And ast us what our views is first, regardin' shine er rain,

And post 'em when to shet her off, er let her on again!

And yit I'd ruther, after all—consider'n' other chores

I' got on hands, a-tendin' both to my affares and yours—

I'd ruther miss the blame I'd git, a-rulin' things up thare,

And spend my extry time in praise and gratitude and  
prayer.

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## AFTERWHILES

38

### *A Home-Made Fairy Tale*

**B**UD, come here to your unele a spell,  
And I'll tell you something you mustn't tell—  
For it's a secret and shore-'nuf true,  
And maybe I oughtn't to tell it to you!—  
But out in the garden, under the shade  
Of the apple-trees, where we romped and played  
Till the moon was up, and you thought I'd gone  
Fast asleep,—That was all put on!  
For I was a-watchin' something queer  
Goin' on there in the grass, my dear!—  
'Way down deep in it, there I see  
A little dnde-Fairy who winked at me,  
And snapped his fingers, and laughed as low  
And fine as the whine of a mus-kee-to!  
I kept still—watchin' him closer—and  
I noticed a little guitar in his hand,  
Which he leant 'g'inst a little dead bee—and laid  
His cigarette down on a clean grass-blade,  
And then climbed up on the shell of a snail—  
Carefully dusting his swallowtail—  
And pulling up, by a waxed web-thread,  
This little guitar, you remember, I said!  
And there he trinkled and thrilled a tune,—  
"My Love, so Fair, Tans in the Moon!"  
Till, presently, out of the clover-top  
He seemed to be singing to, came, k'pop!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

The purtiest, daintiest Fairy face  
In all this world, or any place!  
Then the little ser'nader waved his hand,  
As much as to say, "We'll excuse *you!*" and  
I heard, as I squinted my eyelids to,  
A kiss like the drip of a drop of dew!

39

### *Old-Fashioned Roses*

**T**HEY ain't no style about 'em,  
And they're sort o' pale and faded,  
Yit the doorway here, without 'em,  
Would be lonesomer, and shaded  
With a good 'eal blacker shadder  
Than the morning-glories makes,  
And the sunshine would look sadder  
Fer their good old-fashion' sakes.

I like 'em 'cause they kind o'  
Sort o' *make* a feller like 'em!  
And I tell you, when I find a  
Bunch out whur the sun kin strike 'em,  
It allus sets me thinkin'  
O' the ones 'at used to grow  
And peek in thro' the chinkin'  
O' the cabin, don't you know!

And then I think o' mother,  
And how she ust to love 'em—  
When they wuzn't any other,  
'Less she found 'em up above 'em!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And her eyes, afore she shut 'em,  
Whispered with a smile and said  
We must pick a bunch and putt 'em  
In her hand when she wuz dead.

But, as I wuz a-sayin',  
They ain't no style about 'em  
Very gaudy er displayin',  
But I wouldn't be without 'em—  
'Cause I'm happier in these posies,  
And the hollyhawks and sich,  
Than the hummin'-bird 'at noses  
In the roses of the rich.

40

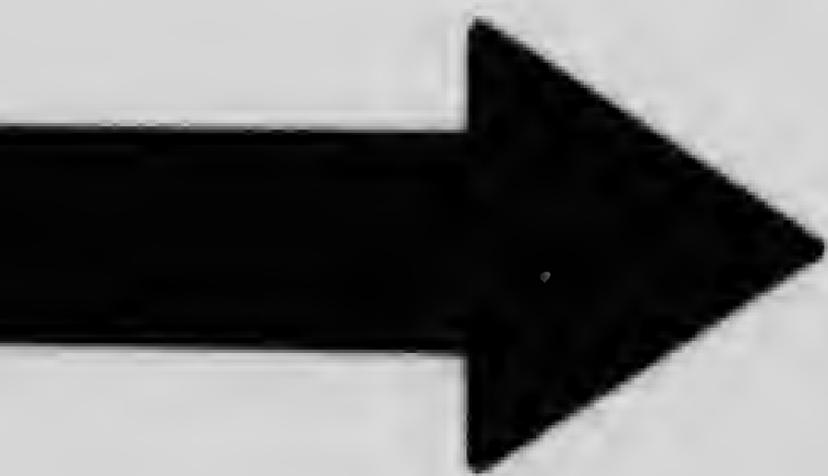
### *Griggsby's Station*

PAP'S got his patten-right, and rich as all creation;  
But where's the peace and comfort that we all had  
before?

Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—  
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

The likes of us a-livin' here! It's jest a mortal pity  
To see us in this great big house, with cyarpets on the  
stairs,  
And the pump right in the kitchen! And the city! city!  
city!—  
And nothin' but the city all around us ever'wheres!





# MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

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## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Climb clean above the roof and look from the steeple,  
And never see a robin, nor a beech or ellum tree!  
And right here in ear-shot of at least a thousan' people,  
And none that neighbors with us or we want to go and  
see!

Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—  
Back where the latch-string's a-hangin' from the door,  
And ever' neighbor round the place is dear as a relation—  
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

I want to see the Wiggenses, the whole kit-and-bilin',  
A-drivin' up from Shallor Ford to stay the Sunday  
through;  
And I want to see 'em hitchin' at their son-in-law's and  
pilin'  
Out there at 'Lizy Ellen's like they ust to do!

I want to see the piece-quilts the Jones girls is makin';  
And I want to pester Laury 'bont their freckled hired  
hand,  
And joke her 'bont the widower she come purt' nigh  
a-takin',  
Till her Pap got his pension 'lowed in time to save his  
land.

Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—  
Back where they's nothin' aggervatin' any more,  
Shet away safe in the woods around the old location—  
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

I want to see Marindy and he'p her with her sewin',  
And hear her talk so lovin' of her man that's dead and  
gone,  
And stand up with Emanuel to show me how he's growin',  
And smile as I have saw her 'fore she putt her mournin'  
on.

And I want to see the Samples, on the old lower eighty,  
Where John, our oldest boy, he was tuk and burried—for  
His own sake and Katy's,—and I want to cry with Katy  
As she reads all his letters over, writ from The War.

What's in all this grand life and high situation,  
And nary pink nor hollyhawk a-bloomin' at the door?—  
Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—  
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

### 41 *Knee-Deep in June*

I

**T**ELL you what I like the best—  
'Long about knee-deep in June,  
'Bout the time strawberries melts  
On the vine,—some afternoon  
Like to jes' git out and rest,  
And not work at nothin' else!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

### II

Orehard's where I'd ruther be—  
Needn't fence it in fer me!—  
    Jes' the whole sky' overhead,  
And the whole airth underneath—  
Sort o' so's a man kin breathe  
    Like he ort, and kind o' has  
Elbow-room to keerlessly  
    Sprawl out len'thways on the grass  
        Where the shadders thiek and soft  
As the kirvers on the bed  
    Mother fixes in the loft  
Allus, when they's company!

### III

Jes' a-sort o' lazii' there—  
    S'lazy, 'at you peek and peer  
        Through the wavin' leaves above,  
    Like a feller 'at's in love  
And don't know it, ner don't keer!  
Ever'thing you hear and see  
    Got some sort o' interest—  
        Maybe find a bluebird's nest  
Tucked up there convenently  
    Fer the boy 'at's ap' to be  
    Up some other apple-tree!  
Watch the swallers skootin' past  
'Bout as peert as you could ast;  
    Er the Bob-white raise and whiz  
    Where some other's whistle is.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

### IV

Ketch a shadder down below,  
And look up to find the crow—  
Er a hawk,—away up there,  
'Pearantly *frose* in the air!—  
Hear the old hen squawk, and squat  
Over ever' ehiek she's got,  
Suddent-like!—and she knows where  
That-air hawk is, well as you!—  
You jes' bet yer life she do!—  
Eyes a-glitterin' like glass,  
Waitin' till he makes a pass!

### V

Pee-wees' singin', to express  
My opinion, 's second class,  
Yit you'll hear 'em more er less;  
Sapsucks gittin' down to biz,  
Weedin' out the lonesomeness;  
Mr. Bluejay, full o' sass,  
In them base-ball clothes o' h's,  
Sportin' round the orchard jes'  
Like he owned the premises!  
Sun out in the fields kin sizz,  
But flat on yer back, I guess,  
In the shade's where glory is!  
That's jes' what I'd like to do  
Stiddy fer a year er two!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

### VI

Plague! ef they ain't somepin' in  
Work 'at kind o' goes ag'in'  
My convictions!—'long about  
Here in June especially!—  
Under some old apple-tree,  
Jes' a-restin' through and through,  
I could git along without  
Nothin' else at all to do  
Only jes' a-wishin' you  
Wuz a-gittin' there like me,  
And June was eternity!

### VII

Lay out there and try to see  
Jes' how lazy you kin be!—  
Tumble round and souse yer head  
In the clover-bloom, er pull  
Yer straw hat acrost yer eyes  
And peek through it at the skies,  
Thinkin' of old chums 'at's dead,  
Maybe, smilin' back at you  
In betwixt the beautiful  
Clouds o' gold and white and blue!—  
Month a man kin railly love—  
June, you know, I'm talkin' of!

42  
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# THE HOOSIER BOOK

VIII

March ain't never nothin' new l—  
Aprile's altogether too  
Brash fer me l and May—I jes'  
'Bominate its promises,—  
Little hints o' sunshine and  
Green around the timber-land—  
A few blossoms, and a few  
Chip-birds, and a sprout er two,—  
Drap asleep, and it turns in  
'Fore daylight and *snows* ag'in!—  
But when *June* comes—Clear my th'out  
With wild honey l—Rench my hair  
In the dew l and hold my coat!  
Whoop out loud! and th'ow my hat!—  
June wants me, and I'm to spare!  
Spread them shadders anywhere,  
I'll git down and waller there,  
And obleeged to you at that l

## 42 *When the Hearse Comes Back*

**A** THING 'at's 'bout as tryin' as a healthy man kin meet  
Is some poor feller's funeral a-joggin' 'long the street:  
The slow hearse and the hosses—slow enough, to say the  
least,  
Fer to even tax the patience of the gentleman deceased!  
The low scrunch of the gravel—and the slow grind of the  
wheels,—  
The slow, slow go of ev'ry woe 'at ev'rybody feels!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

So I ruther like the contrast when I hear the whip-lash  
crack

A quickstep fer the hosses,

When the

Hearse

Comes

Back!

Meet it goin' to'ards the cimet'ry, you'll want to drap yer  
eyes—

But ef the plumes don't fetch you, it'll ketch you other-  
wise—

You'll haf to see the caskit, though you'd ort to look away  
And 'conomize and save yer sighs fer any other day!

Yer sympathizin' won't wake up the sleeper from his rest—

Yer tears won't thaw them hands o' his 'at's froze acrost  
his breast!

And this is why—when airth and sky's a-gittin' blurred and  
black—

I like the flash and hurry

When the

Hearse

Comes

Back!

It's not 'cause I don't 'preciate it ain't no time fer jokes,  
Ner 'cause I' got no common human feelin' fer the folks;—  
I've went to funerals mys'ef, and tuk on some, perhaps—  
Fer my heart's 'bout as mal'able as any other chap's,—  
I've buried father, mother—But I'll haf to jes' git y' " "  
To "excuse *me*," as the feller says.—The p'int I'm drivin' to

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Is, simply, when we're plum broke down and all knocked  
out o' whack,

It he'ps to shape us up, like,

When the

Hearse

Comes

Back!

The idyl wadin' round here over shoe-month deep in woe,  
When they's a graded 'pike o' joy and sunshine, don't you  
know!

When evening strikes the pastur', cows'll pull out fer the  
bars,

And skittish-like from out the night'll prance the happy  
stars.

And so when *my* time comes to die, and I've got ary friend  
'At wants expressed my last request—I'll, mebby, rickou-  
mend

To drive slow, ef they haf to, goin' 'long the *out'ard* track,  
But I'll smile and say, "You speed 'em

When the

Hearse

Comes

Back!"

43

### *A Canary at the Farm*

FOLKS has be'n to town, and Sahry  
Fetched 'er home a pet canary,—  
And of all the blame', contrary,  
Aggervatin' things alive!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

I love music—that's I love it  
When it's *free*—and plenty of it;—  
But I kindo' git above it,  
At a dollar-eighty-five!

Reason's plain as I'm a-sayin'—  
Jes' the idy, now, o' layin'  
Out yer money, and a-payin'  
Fer a willer-eage and b' J,  
When the medder-larks is wingin'  
Round you, and the woods is ringin'  
With the beautifullest singin'  
That a morta! ever heard!

Sahry's sot, tho'.—So I tell her  
He's a purty little feller,  
With his wings o' ereumy-yeller,  
And his eyes keen as a eat;  
And the twitter o' the critter  
'Pears to absolutely glitter!  
Guess I'll haf to go and git her  
A high-priceter cage 'n that!

44

### *A Lis-Town Humorist*

**S**ETTIN' round the stove, last night,  
Down at Wess's store, was me  
And Mart Strimples, Tink, and White,  
And Doe Bills, and two er three  
Fellers o' the Mudsoek tribe  
No use tryin' to describe!  
And says Doc, he says, says he,—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Talkin' 'bout good things to eat,  
Ripe mushmillon's hard to beat!"

I chewed on. And Mart he 'lowed  
Wortermillon beat the mush.—  
"Red," he says, "and juicy—Hush!—  
I'll jes' leave it to the crowd!"  
Then a Mudsock chap, says he,—  
"Punkin's good enough fer me—  
Punkin pies, I mean," he says,—  
"Them beats millons!—What say, Wess?"

I chewed on. And Wess says,—  
"Well,  
You jes' fetch that wife of mine  
All yer wortermillon-rine,—  
And she'll bile it down spell—  
In with sorghum, I suppose,  
And what else, Lord only knows!—  
But I'm here to tell all hands  
Them p'serves meets my demands!"

I chewed on. And White he says,—  
"Well, I'll jes' stand in with Wess—  
I'm no hog!" And Tunk says,—  
"I  
Guess I'll pastur' out on pie  
With the Mudsock boys!" says he;  
"Now what's yourn?" he says to me  
I chewed on—fer—quite a spell—  
Then I speaks up, slow and dry,—  
"Jes' tobacker!" I-says-I.—  
And you'd ort o' heerd 'em yell!

*Kingry's Mill*

O N old Brandywine—about  
 Where White's Lots is now laid out  
 And the old erick narries down  
 To the ditch that splits the town,—  
 Kingry's Mill stood. Hardly see  
 Where the old dam ust to be;  
 Shallor, long, dry trought o' grass  
 Where the old race ust to pass!

That's be'n forty years ago—  
 Forty years o' frost and snow—  
 Forty years o' shade and shine  
 Sence them boyhood-days o' mine!—  
 All the old landmarks o' town  
 Changed! about, er rotted down!  
 Where's the Tanyard? Where's the Still?  
 Tell me where's old Kingry's Mill?

Don't seem funder back, to me,  
 I'll be dogg'd! than yisterd'y,  
 Since us fellers, in bare feet  
 And straw hats, went through the wheat,  
 Cuttin' 'crost the shortest shoot  
 Fer that-air old ellum root  
 Jest above the mill-dam—where  
 The blame' cars now crosses there!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Through the willers down the crick  
We could see the old mill stick  
Its red gable up, as if  
It jest knowed we'd stol'd the skiff!  
See the winders in the sun  
Blink like they wuz wunderun'  
What the miller ort to do  
With sich boys as me and you!

But old Kingry!—who could fear  
That old chap, with all his cheer?—  
Leanin' at the winder-sill,  
Er the half-door o' the mill,  
Swappin' lies, and pokin' fun,  
'N' jigglin' like his hoppers done—  
Laughin' grists o' gold and red  
Right out o' the wagon-load!

What did *he* keer where we went?—  
"Jest keep out o' devilment,  
And don't fool around the belts,  
Bolts, ner burrs, ner nothin' else  
'Bont the blame *machinery*,  
And that's all I ast!" says-ee.  
Then we'd climb the stairs, and play  
In the bran-bins half the day!

Rickollect the dusty wall,  
And the spider-webs, and all!  
Rickollect the trimblin' spout  
Where the meal come josslin' out—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Stand and comb yer fingers through  
The fool-truck an hour er two—  
Felt so sort o' warm-like and  
Soothin' to a feller's hand!

Climb, high up above the stream,  
And "eoon" out the wobbly beam  
And peek down from out the lof'  
Where the weather-boards was off—  
Gee-inun-nee! w'y, it takes grit  
Even jest to think of it!—  
Lookin' way down there below  
On the worter roarin' so!

Rickollect the flume, and wheel,  
And the worter slish and reel  
And jest ravel out in froth  
Flossier'n satin cloth!  
Rickollect them paddles jest  
Knock the bubbles galley-west,  
And plunge under, and come up,  
Drippin' like a worter-pup!

And, to see them old things gone  
That I onc't was bettin' on,  
In rale p'int o' fact, I feel  
Kind o' like that worter-wheel,—  
Sort o' drippy-like and wet  
Round the eyes—but paddlin' yet,  
And, in mem'ry, loafin' still  
Down around old Kingry's Mill!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

46

Joney

HAD a harelip—Joney had:  
Spiled his looks and Joney knowed it:  
Fellers tried to bore him, bad—  
But ef ever he got mad,  
He kep' still and never showed it.  
'Druther have his mouth all pouted  
And split up, and like it wuz,  
Than the ones 'at laughed about it.—  
Purty is as purty does!

Had to listen ruther clos't  
'Fore you knowed what he wuz givin'  
You; and yet, without no boast,  
Joney he wuz jest the most  
Entertainin' talker livin'!  
Take the Scriptur's and run through 'em,  
Might say, like a' auctioneer,  
And 'ud argy and review 'em  
'At wuz beautiful to hear!

Harelip and impediment,  
Both wuz bad and both ag'in' him—  
But the *old folks* where he went,  
'Peared like, knowin' his intent,  
'Scused his mouth fer what wuz in him.  
And the *children* all loved Joney—  
And he loved 'em back, you bet!—  
Putt their arms around him—on'y  
None had ever kissed him yet!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

In young company, someway,  
Boys 'ud grin at one another  
On the sly; and girls 'ud lay  
Low, with nothin' much to say,  
Er leave Joney with their mother.  
Many and many a time he's fetched 'em  
Candy by the paper-sack,  
And turned right around and ketched 'em  
Makin' mouths behind his back!

S'prised, sometimes, the slurs he took,—  
Chap said' ene't his mouth looked sorter  
Like a fish's mouth 'ud look  
When he'd be'n jerked off the hook  
And plunked back into the worter,—  
Same durn feller—it's su'prisin',  
But it's facts—'at stood and cherrered  
From the bank that big babtizin'  
'Pike-bridge accident occurred!—

Cherrered for Joney while he give  
Life to little childern drowndin'!  
Which wuz fittenest to live—  
Him 'at cherrered, er him 'at'div'  
And saved thirteen lives? . . . They found one  
Body, three days later, floated  
Down the by-o, eight mile' south,  
All so colored-up and bloated—  
On'y knowed him by his mouth!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Had a harelip—Joney had—  
Folks 'at filed apast all knowed it.—  
Them 'at ust to smile looked sad,  
But ef *he* thought good er bad,  
He kep' still and never showed it.  
'Druther have that mouth, all pouted  
And split up, and like it wuz,  
Than the ones 'at laughed about it.—  
Purty is as purty does!

47

### Granny

**G**RANNYS come to our house,  
And hol my lawzy-daisy!  
All the childern round the place  
Is ist a-runnin' crazy!  
Fetched a cake fer little Jake,  
And fetched a pie fer Nanny,  
And fetched a pear fer all the pack  
That runs to kiss their Granny!

Lucy Ellen's in her lap,  
And Wade and Silas Walker  
Both's a-ridin' on her foot,  
And 'Pollos on the rocker;  
And Marthy's twins, from Aunt Marinn's,  
And little Orphant Annie,  
All's a-eatin' gingerbread  
And giggle-un at Granny!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Tells us all the fairy tales  
Ever thought er wondered—  
And 'bundance o' other stories—  
Bet she knows a hunderd!—  
Bob's the one fer "Whittington,"  
And "Golden Locks" fer Fanny!  
Hear 'em laugh and clap their hands,  
Listenin' at Granny!

"Jack the Giant-Killer" 's good;  
And "Bean-Stalk" 's another!—  
So's the one of "Cinderell"  
And her old godmother;—  
That-un's best of all the rest—  
Bestest one of any,—  
Where the mices scampers home  
Like we runs to Granny!

Granny's come to our house,  
Ho! my lawzy-daisy!  
All the childern round the place  
Is ist a-runnin' crazy!  
Fetched a cake fer little Jake,  
And fetched a pie fer Nanny,  
And fetched a pear fer all the pack  
That runs to kiss their Granny!

*The Train-Misser*

AT UNION STATION

'L where in the world my eyes has bin—  
 Ef I hain't missed that train ag'in I  
 Chuff I and whistle I and toot! and ring I  
 But blast and blister the dasted train!—  
 How it does it I can't explain!  
 Git here thirty-five minutes before  
 The durn thing's due!—and, drat the thing!  
 It'll manage to git past—shore I

The more I travel around, the more  
 I got no sense!—To stand right here  
 And let it beat me! 'L ding my melts!  
 I got no gumption, ner nothin' else!  
 Ticket Agent's a dad-burned bore!—  
 Sell you a ticket's all they keer I—  
 Ticket Agents ort to all be  
 Prosecuted—and that's jes' what I—  
 How'd I know which train's fer me?  
 And how'd I know which train was not?—  
 Goern and comin' and gone astray,  
 And backin' and switchin' ever'-which-way I

Ef I could jes' sneak round behind  
 Myse'f, where I could git full swing,  
 I'd lift my coat, and kick, by jing I  
 Till I jes' got jerked up and fined I—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Fer here I stood, as a durn fool's apt  
To, and let that train jes' chuff and choo  
Right apast me—and mouth jes' gapped  
Like a blained old sandwitch warped in two!

### 49 *Like His Mother Used to Make*

"UNCLE JAKE'S PLACE," ST. JO, MISSOURI, 1874

"I WAS born in Indiany," says a stranger lank and slim,  
As us fellers in the restarunt was kind o' gysin' him,  
And Unele Jake was slidin' him another punkin pie  
And a' extry cup o' coffee, with a twinkle in his eye,—  
"I was born in Indiany—more'n forty year' ago—  
And I hain't be'n back in twenty—and I'm workin' back-  
'ards slow;  
But I've et in ever' restarunt 'twixt here and Santy Fee,  
And I want to state this coffee tastes like gittin' home, to  
me!

"Pour us out another, Daddy," says the feller, warmin' up,  
A-speakin' 'erost a saucerful, as Unele tuk his cup,—  
"When I seed yer sign out yander," he went on, to Uncle  
Jake,—

"Come in and git some coffee like yer mother used to  
make'—

I thought of my old mother, and the Posey County farm,  
And me a little kid ag'in, a-hangin' in her arm,  
As she set the pot a-bilin', broke the eggs and poured 'em  
in"—

And the feller kind o' halted, with a trimble in his chin:

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And Uncle Jake he fetched the feller's coffee back, and  
stood  
As solemn, fer a minute, as a' undertaker would;  
Then he sort o' turned and tiptoed to'rds the kitchen door  
and n. s',  
Here comes his old wife out with him, a-rubbin' of her  
specs—  
And she rushes fer the stranger, and she hollers out, "It's  
him!—  
Thank God we've met him comin'!—Don't you know yer  
mother, Jim?"  
And the feller, as he grabbed her, says,—“You bet I hain't  
forgot—  
But,” wipin' of his eyes, says he, “yer coffee's mighty hot!”

50

### *Old October*

OLD October's purt' nigh gone,  
And the frosts is comin' on  
Little *heavier* every day—  
Like our hearts is thataway!  
Leaves is changin' overhead  
Back from green to gray and red  
Brown and yeller, with their stems  
Loosenin' on the oaks and e'ms;  
And the balance of the trees  
Gittin' balder every breeze—  
Like the heads we're scratchin' on!  
Old October's purt' nigh gone.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

I love Old October so,  
I can't bear to see her go—  
Seems to me like losin' some  
Old-home relative er chum—  
'Pears like sort o' settin' by  
Some old friend 'at sigh by sigh  
Was a-passin' out o' sight  
Into everlastin' night!  
Hiekernuts a feller hears  
Rattlin' down is more like tears  
Drappin' on the leaves below—  
I love Old October so!

Can't tell what it is about  
Old October knocks me out!—  
I sleep well enough at night—  
And the blamedest appetite  
Ever mortal man possessed,—  
Last thing et, it tastes the best!—  
Warnuts, butternuts, pawpaws,  
'Hes and limbers up my jaws  
Fer raal service, sich as new  
Pork, spareribs, and sausage, too.—  
Yit, fer all, they's somepin' 'bout  
Old October knocks me out!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

51

*Jim*

**H**E was jes' a plain, ever'-day, all-round kind of a jour,  
Consumpted-lookin'—but la l  
The jokeiest, wittiest, story-tellin', song-singin', laughin'est,  
jolliest  
Feller you ever saw!  
Worked at jes' coarse work, but you kin bet he was fin.  
enough in his talk,  
And his feelin's too l  
Lordy l ef he was on'y back on his bench ag'in to-day,  
a-carryin' on  
Like he ust to do l  
Any shopmate'll tell you, there never was, on top o' dirt,  
A better feller'n Jim l  
You want a favor, and couldn't git it anywheres else—  
You could git it o' him l  
Most free-heartedest man thataway in the world, I guess l  
Give up ever' nickel he's worth—  
And, ef you'd a-wanted it, and named it to him, and it was  
his,  
He'd 'a' give you the earth!  
Allus a-reachin' out, Jim was, and a-he'ppin' some  
Pore feller on to his feet—  
He'd 'a' never 'a' keered how hungry he was hisse'f,  
So's *the feller* got somepin' to eat l  
Didn't make no differ'nee at all to him how *he* was dressed,  
He ust to say to me,—  
"You: togg out a tramp purty comfortable in winter-time,  
a-huntin' a job,  
And he'll git along!" says he.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Jim didn't have, ner never could git ahead, so overly much  
O' this world's goods at a time.—

'Fore now I've saw him, more'n one't, lend a dollar, and  
haf to, more'n likely,

Turn round and borry a dime!

Mebby laugh and joke about it hisse'f fer a while—then  
jerk his coat,

And kind o' square his chin,

Tie on his apern, and squat hisse'f on his old shoe-bench,  
And go to peggiu' ag'in!

Patientest feller, too, I reckon, 'at ever jes' natchurly  
Coughed hisse'f to death!

Long enough after his voice was lost he'd laugh in a whis-  
per and say

He could git ever'thing but his breath—

"*You fellers,*" he'd sort o' twinkle his eyes and say,

"Is a-pilin' on to me

A mighty big debt fer that-air little weak-chested ghost o'  
mine to pack

Through all Eternity!"

Now there was a man 'at jes' 'peared-like, to me,

'At ortn't 'a' never 'a' died!

"But death hain't a-showin' no favors," the old boss said—

"On'y to *Jim!*" and eried:

And Wigger, who puts up the best sewed-work in the  
shop—

Er the whole blame neighborhood,—

*He* says, "When God made Jim, I bet you He didn't do  
anything else that day

But jes' set around and feel good!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

52 *A New Year's Time at Willards's*

I

THE HIRED MAN TALKS

**T**HERE'S old man Willards; an' his wife;  
An' Marg'et—S'repty's sister;—an'  
There's me—an' I'm the hired man;  
An' Tomps McClure, you bet yer life!

Well, now, old Willards hain't so bad,  
Considerin' the chance he's had.

Of course, he's rich, an' sleeps an' eats

Whenever he's a mind to: Takes

An' leans back in the Amen-seats

An' thanks the Lord fer all he makes.—

That's purty much all folks has got

Ag'inst the old man, like as not!

But there's his woman—jes' the turn

Of them-air two wild girls o' hern—

Marg'et an' S'repty—allus in

Fer any cuttin'-up concern—

Church festibals, and foolishin'

Round Christmas-trees, an' New Year's sprees—

Set up to watch the Old Year go

An' New Year come—sieh things as these;

An' turkey-dinners, don't you know!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

S'repty's younger, an' more gay,  
An' purtier, an' finer dressed  
Than Marg'et is—but, lawsy-day!  
She hain't the independentest!—  
"Take care!" old Willards used to say,  
"Take care!—Let Marg'et have 'er way,  
An' S'repty, you go off an' play  
On your melodeum!"—But, best  
Of all, comes Toms! An' I'll be bound,  
Ef he hain't the beatin'est  
Young chap in all the country round!  
Ef you knowed Toms you'd like him, shore!  
They hain't no man on top o' ground  
Walks into my affections more!—  
An' all the Settlement'll say  
That Toms was liked jes' thataway  
By ever'body, till he tuk  
A shine to S'repty Willards.—Then  
You'd ort 'o see the old man buck  
An' h'ist hisse'f, an' paw the dirt,  
An' hint that "common workin'-men  
That didn't want their feelin's hurt  
'Ud better hunt fer 'comp'ny' where  
The folks was pore an' didn't care!"—  
The pine-blank facts is,—the old man,  
Last Christmas was a year ago,  
Found out some *presents* Toms had got  
Fer S'repty, an' hit made him hot—  
Set down an' tuk his pen in hand  
An' writ to Toms an' told him so

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

On legal cap, in white an' black,  
An' give him jes' to understand  
"No Christmas-gifts o' 'lily white"  
An' bear's-ile could fix matters right,"  
An' wropped 'em up an' sent 'em back I  
Well, S'repty cried an' snuffled round  
Consid'able. But Marg'et she  
Toed out another sock, an' wound  
Her knittin' up, an' drawed the tea,  
An' then set on the supper-things,  
An' went up in the loft an' dressed—  
An' through it all you'd never guessed  
What she was up to! An' she brings  
Her best hat with her an' her shawl,  
An' gloves, an' redicule, an' all,  
An' injirubbers, an' comes down  
An' tells 'em she's a-goin' to 'own  
An' help the Christmas goin's-on  
Her church got up. An' go she does--  
The best hosswoman ever was I  
"An' what'll we do while you're gone?"  
The old man says, a-tryin' to be  
Agreeable. "Oh! you?" says she,—  
"You kin jaw S'repty, like you did,  
An' slander Toms!" An' off she rid I

Now, this is all *I'm* goin' to tell  
Of this-here story—that is, I  
Have done my very level best  
As fur as this, an' here I "dwell,"  
As auctioneers says, winkin' sly:  
Hit's old man Willards tells the rest.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

II

### THE OLD MAN TALKS

Adzackly jes' one year ago,  
This New Year's day, Toms comes to me—  
In my own house, an' whilse the folks  
Was gittin' dinner,—an' he pokes  
His nose right in, an' says, says he:  
"I got yer note—an' read it *slow!*  
You don't like *me*, ner I don't *you,*"  
He says,—"we're even there, you know!  
But you've said, funder, that no gal  
*Of* yourn kin marry me, er shall,  
An' I'd best shet off *comin'*, too!"  
An' then he says,—"Well, them's *your* views;—  
But, havin' talked with *S'repty*, we  
Have both agreed to disagree  
With your peculiar notions—some;  
An' *that's* the reason, I refuse  
To quit a-comin' here, but come—  
Not fer to threat, ner raise no skeer  
An' spile yer turkey-dinner here,—  
But jes' fer *S'repty's* sake, to sheer  
Yer New Year's. Shall I take a cheer?"

Well, blame-don! ef I ever see  
Sich impidence! I couldn't say  
Not nary word! But Mother she  
Sot out a cheer fer Toms, an' they  
Shuk hands an' turnt their back on me.  
Then I riz—mad as mad could be!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But Marg'et says,—“Now, Pap! you set  
Right where you're settin'!—Don't you fret!  
An', Toms—you warm yer feet!” says she,  
“An' throw yer mitts an' eomfert on  
The bed there! Where is S'repty gone?—  
The cabbage is a-seortchin'! Ma,  
Stop eryin' there an' stir the slaw!”  
Well!—what was *Mother cryin' fer?*—  
I half riz up—but Marg'et's ehin  
Hit squared—an' I set down ag'in—  
I allus was afeard o' her,  
I was, by jucks! So there I set,  
Betwixt a sinkin'-elill an' sweat,  
An' scuffled with my wrath an' shet  
My teeth to mighty tight, you bet!  
An' yit, fer all that I could do,  
I *ecched* to jes' git up an' whet  
The carvin'-knife a rasp er two  
On Toms's ribs—an' so would you!—  
Fer he had riz an' faced around,  
An' stood there, smilin', as they brung  
The turkey in, all stuffed an' browned—  
Too sweet fer nose er tooth er tongue!  
With sniffs o' sage, an' p'r'aps a dash  
Of old burnt brandy, steamin'-hot,  
Mixed kind o' in with apple-mash  
An' mince-meat, an' the Lord knows what!  
Nobody was a-talkin' then,  
To 'filiate any awk'ardness—  
No noise o' any kind but jes'  
The rattle o' the dishes when  
They'd fetch 'em in an' set 'em down,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' fix an' change 'em round an' round,  
Like women does—till Mother says,—  
“Vittels is ready; Abner, call  
Down S'repty—she's up-stairs, I guess.”—  
And Marg'et *she* says, “Ef you haw!  
Like that, she'll not come down at all!  
Besides, we needn't wait tili *she*  
Gits down! Here, Toms, set down by me,  
An' Pap: say grace!” . . . Well, there I was!—  
What *could* I do! I drapped my head  
Behind my fists an' groaned, an' said:—  
“Indulgent Parent! in Thy cause  
We bow the head an' bend the knee,  
An' break the bread, an' pour the wine,  
Feelin'”—(The stair-door suddently  
Went bang! an' S'repty flounced by me)—  
“Feelin',” I says, “this feast is Thine—  
This New Year's feast”—an' *rap-rap-rap!*  
Went Marg'et's case-knife on her plate—  
An' next, I heerd a sasser drap,—  
Then I looked up, an', strange to state,  
There S'repty set in Toms's lap—  
An' huggin' him, as shore as fate!  
An' Mother kissin' him k-slap!—  
An' Marg'et—she chips in to drap  
The ruther peert remark to me:—  
“That 'grace' o' yourn,” she says, “won't 'gee'—  
This hain't no 'New Year's feast,'” says she,—  
“This is a' *INFAIR-Dinner, Pap!*”

An' so it was!—he'n married fer  
Purt' nigh a week!—'Twas Marg'et planned

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

The whole thing fer 'em, through an' through,  
I'm rickoneiled; an', understand,  
I take things jes' as they occur,—  
Ef *Marg'et* liked Tomps, Tomps 'ud do!—  
But I-says-I, a-holt his hand,—  
"I'm glad you didn't marry HER—  
'Cause *Marg'et's* my *guarden*—yes-sir!—  
An' S'repty's good enough fer you!"

53

### *Regardin' Terry Hut*

**S**ENCE I tuk holt o' Gibbse's Churn  
And be'n a-handlin' the concern,  
I've traveled round the grand old State  
Of Indiana, lots, o' late!—  
I've canvassed Crawferdsville and sweat  
Around the town o' Layfayette;  
I've saw a many a Comnty-seat  
I *ust* to think was hard to beat:  
At constant drenage and expense  
I've worked Greencastle and Vincenne—  
Dropped out o' Putnam into Clay,  
Owen, and on down thataway  
Plum into Knox, on the back-track  
Fer home ag'in—and glad I'm back!—  
I've saw these towns, as I say—but  
They's none 'at beats old Terry Hut!

It's more'n likely you'll insist  
I claim this 'cause I'm predjudist,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Bein' born'd here in ole Vygo  
In sight o' Terry Hut;—but no,  
Yer clean dead wrong!—and I maintain  
They's nary drap in ary vein  
O' mine but what's as free as air  
To jes' take issue with you there!—  
'Cause, boy and man, fer forty year,  
I've argied *ag'inst* livin' here,  
And jawed around and traded lies  
About our lack o' enterprise,  
And tuk and turned in and agreed  
All other towns was in the lead,  
When—drat my melts!—they couldn't cut  
No shine a-tall with Terry Hut!

Take, even, statesmanship, and wit,  
And gineral git-up-and-git,  
Old Terry Hut is sound clean through!—  
Turn old Dick Thompson loose, er Dan  
*Vorches*—and where's they any man  
Kin even hold a candle to  
Their eloquence?—And where's as clean  
A fi-nan-seer as Rile' McKeen—  
Er puorer, in his daily walk,  
In railroad er in racin' stock!  
And there's 'Gene Debs—a man 'at stands  
And jes' holds out in his two hands,  
As warm a heart as ever beat  
Betwixt here and the Judgment Seat!—  
All these is reasons why I putt  
Sich bulk o' faith in Terry Hut.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

So I've come back, with eyes 'at sees  
My faults, at last,—to make my peace  
With this old place, and truthful' swear—  
Like General Tom Nelson does,—  
“They hain't no city anywhere  
On God's green earth lays over us!”  
Our city government is *grand*—  
“Ner is they better farmin'-land  
Sun-kissed”—as Tom goes on and says—  
“Er dower'd with sich advantages!”  
And I've come back, with welcome tread,  
From journeyin's vain, as I have said,  
To settle down in ca'm content,  
And cuss the towns where I have went,  
And brag on ourn, and boast and strut  
Around the streets o' Terry Hut!

### 54      *Down on Wriggle Crick*

“Best time to kill a hog's when he's fat.”—OLD SAW.

**M**OSTLY, folks is law-abidin'  
Down on Wriggle Crick,—  
Seein' they's no Squire residin'  
In our bailywick;  
No grand juries, no suppeenies,  
Ner no vested rights to pick  
Out yer man, jerk up and jail ef  
He's outragin' Wriggle Crick!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Wriggle Crick hain't got no 'win',  
Ner no suits to beat;  
Ner no court-house gee-and-hawin'  
Like a County-seat;  
Hain't no waitin' round fer verdicks,  
Ner non-gittin' witness-fees;  
Ner no thieves 'at gits "new hearin's,"  
By some lawyer slick as grease!

Wriggle Crick's leadin' spirit  
Is old John's Culwell,—  
Keeps post-office, and right near it  
Owns what's called "The Grand Hotel"—  
(Warehouse now)—buys wheat and ships it;  
Gits out ties, and trades in stock,  
And knows all the high-toned drummers  
'Twixt South Bend and Mishawauk.

Last year comes along a feller—  
Sharper 'an a lancee—  
Stovepipe-hat and silk umbreller,  
And a boughten all-wool pants,—  
Tinkerin' of clocks and watches;  
Says a trial's all he wants—  
And rents out the tavern-office  
Next to Uncle John's.

Well.—He tacked up his k'dentials,  
And got down to biz.—  
Captured John's by cuttin' stenchils  
Fer them oid wheat-sacks o' his.—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Fixed his clock, in the post-office—  
Painted fer him, clean and slick,  
'Crost his safe, in gold-leaf letters,  
"J. Culwell's, Wriggle Crick."

Any kind o' job you keered to  
Resk him with, and bring,  
He'd fix fer you—jes' appeared to  
Turn his hand to anything!—  
Rings, er carbobs, er umbrellers—  
Glue a cheer er chany doll,—  
W'y, of all the beatin' fellers,  
He jes' beat 'em all!

Made his friends, but wouldn't stop there,—  
One mistake he learnt,  
That was, sleepin' in his shop there.—  
And one Sund'y night it burnt!  
Come in one o' jes' a-sweepin'  
All the whole town high and dry—  
And that feller, when they waked him,  
Suffocatin', mighty nigh!

Johnts he drug him from the buildin',  
He'pless—'peared to be,—  
And the women and the childern  
Drenchin' him with sympathy!  
But I noticed Johnts helt on him  
With a' extry lovin' grip,  
And the men-folks gathered round him  
In most warmest pardnership!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

That's the whole mess, grease-and-dopin' I  
Johns's safe was saved—  
But the lock was found sprung open,  
And the inside caved.  
Was no trial—ner no jury—  
Ner no jedge ner court-house-click.—  
Circumstances alters cases  
Down on Wriggle Crick I

55      *The Little Town o' Tailholt*

**Y**OU kin boast about yer cities, and their stiddy growth  
and size,  
And brag about yer County-seats, and business enterprise,  
And railroads, and factories, and all sich foolery—  
But the little Town o' Tailholt is big enough fer me I  
  
You kin harp about yer churches, with their steeples in the  
clouds,  
And gas about yer graded streets, and blow about yer  
crowds;  
You kin talk about yer "theaters," and all you've got to  
see—  
But the little Town o' Tailholt is *show* enough fer me I  
  
They hain't no *style* in our town—hit's little-like and  
small—  
They hain't no "*churches*," nuther,—jes' the meetin'-house  
is all;  
They's no sidewalks, to speak of—but the highway's allus  
free,  
And the little Town o' Tailholt is wide enough fer me I

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Some find it discommodin'-like, I'm willing to admit,  
To hev but one post-office, and a womern keepin' hit,  
And the drug-store, and shoe-shop, and grocery, all three—  
But the little Town o' Tailholt is handy 'nough fer me!

You kin smile and turn yer nose up, and joke and hev yer  
fun,

And laugh and holler "Tail-holts is better holts'n none!"  
Ef the city suits you better, w'y, hit's where you'd ort'o  
be—

But the little Town o' Tailholt's good enough fer me!

56

### *Little Orphant Annie*

**L**ITTLE Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay,  
An' wash the cups an' saucers up, an' brush the  
crumbs away,  
An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the hearth, an'  
sweep,  
An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her board-  
an'-keep;  
An' all us other childern, when the supper things is done,  
We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun  
A-list'nin' to the witch-tales 'at Annie tells about,  
An' the Gobble-uns 'at gits you  
Ef you  
Don't  
Watch  
Out!

## THE HICOSIER BOOK

Wunst they wuz a little boy wouldn't say his prayers,—  
An' when he went to bed at night, away up-stairs,  
His Mammy heerd him holler, an' his Daddy heerd him  
bawl,

An' when they tra'n't the kiewers down, he wuzn't there at  
all!

An' they seeked him in the rafter-room, an' cubby-hole, an'  
press,

An' seeked him up the climbly-flue, an' ever'wheres, I  
guess;

But all they ever found wuz thist his pants an' round-  
about:—

An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you

Ef you

Don't

Watch

Out!

An' one time a little girl 'ud allus laugh and grin,  
An' make fun of ever'one, an' all her blood-an'-kin;  
An' wunst, when they was "company," an' ole folks wuz  
there,

She mocked 'em an' shocked 'em, an' said she didn't care!  
An' thist as she kicked her heels, an' turn't to run an' hide.  
They wuz two great big Black Things a-standin' by her  
side,

An' they snatched her through the ceilin' 'fore she knowed  
what she's about!

An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you

Ef you

Don't

Watch

Out!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' little Orphant Annie says, when the blaze is blue,  
An' the lamp-wick sputters, an' the wind goes woo-oo!  
An' you hear the crickets quit, an' the moon is gray,  
An' the lightnin'-bugs in dew is all squenched away,—  
You better mind yer parunts, an' yer teachurs fond an' dear,  
An' churish them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's tear,  
An' he'p the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about,  
Er the Gobble-uns 'll git you

Ef you

Don't

Watch

Out!

## PIPES O' PAN AT ZEKESBURY

57

*Down 'Round the River*

**N**OON-TIME and June-time, down around the river!  
Have to furse with Lizzy Ann—but lawzy! I fergive  
her!

Drives me off the place, and says 'at all 'at she's a-wishin',  
Land o' gracious! time'll come I'll git enough o' fishin'!  
Little Dave, a-choppin' wood, never 'pears to notice;  
Don't know where she's hid his hat, er keerin' where his  
coat is,—

Specalatin', more'n like, he hain't a-goin' to mind me,  
And guessin' v'here, say twelve o'clock, a feller'd likely  
find me.

Noon-time and June-time, down around the river!  
Clean out o' sight o' home, and skulkin' under kiver  
Of the sycamores, jack-oaks, and swamp-ash and ellum—  
Idies all so jumbled up you kin hardly tell 'em!—  
*Tired*, you know, but *lovin'* it, and smilin' jes' to think 'at  
Any sweeter tiredness you'd fairly want to *drink* it.  
*Tired* o' fishin'—*tired* o' fun—line out slack and slacker—  
All you want in all the world's a little more tobacker!

Hungry, but *a-hidin'* it, er jes' a-not a-keerin':—  
Kingfisher gittin' up and skootin' out o' hearin';  
Snipes on the t'other side, where the County Ditch is,  
Wadin' up and down the aidge like they'd rolled their  
britches!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Old turkle on the rook ki. d o' sort o' drappin'  
Intoo th' worter like he don't know how it happen!  
Worter, shade and all so mixed, don't know which you'd  
orter

Say, th' worter in the shadder—*shadder* in the worter.

Somebody hollerin'—'way around the bend in  
Upper Fork—where yer eye kin jes' ketch the endin'  
Of the shiny wedge o' wake some muss-rat's a-makin'  
With that pesky nose o' his! Then a sniff o' bacon,  
Corn-bread and 'dock-greens—and little Dave a-shinnin'  
'Crost the rocks and mussel-shells, a-limpin' and a-grinnin',  
With yer dinner fer ye, and a blessin' from the giver.  
Noon-time and June-time down around the river!

58

### *Romancin'*

I' B'EN a-kinde' "*musin'*," as the feller says, and I'm  
About o' the conclusion that they hain't no better time,  
When you come to cipher on it, than the times we used to  
know

When we swore our first "dog-gonc-it" sort o' solen'-like  
and low!

You git my idy, do you?—*Little tads*, you understand—  
Jest a-wishin' thue and thue you that you on'y wuz a *man*.—  
Yit here I am, this minute, even sixty, to a day,  
And fergittin' all that's in it, wishin' jes' the other way!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

I hain't no hand to lectur' on the times, er *dimonstrate*  
Whare the trouble is, er hector and domineer with Fate,—  
But when I git so flurried, and so pestered-like and blue,  
And so rail owdacious worried, let me tell you what I do!—

I jest gee-haw the ho. ses, and unhook the swingle-tree,  
Whare the hazel-bushes tosses down theyr shadders over me,  
And I draw my plug o' navy, and climb the fence, and set  
Jest a-thinkin' here, i gravy; tel my eyes is wringin' wet!

Tho' I still kin see the trouble o' the *presunt*, I kin see—  
Kindo' like my sight wuz double—all the things that *ust*  
to be;

And the flutter o' the robin, and the teeter o' the wren  
Sets the willer-branches bobbin' "howdy-do" thum *Now* to  
*Then!*

The dear nin' and the thicket's jest a-bilin' full of June,  
Thum the rattle o' the cricket, to the yallar-hammer's tune;  
And the catbird in the bottom, and the sap-suck on the  
snag,

Seems ef they can't--od-rot 'em!--jest do nothin' else but  
brag!

They's music in the twitter of the bluebird and the jay,  
And that sassy little critter jest a-peekin' all the day;  
They's music in the "flicker," and they's music in the  
thrush,

And they's music in the snicker o' the chipmunk in the  
brush!

They's music *all around* me!-- And I go back, in a dream  
Sweeter yit than ever found me fast asleep,—and in the  
stream

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

That ust to split the medder where the dandylions grewed  
I stand knee-deep, and redder than the sunset down the  
road.

Then's when I' b'en a-fishin'!—and the other fellers too,  
With theyr hickry poles a-swishin' out behind 'em; and a  
few

Little "shiners" on our stringers, with their tails tiptoein'  
bloom,

As we dance 'em in our fingers all the happy day home.

I kin see us, true to Natur', thum the time we started out

With a biscnit and a 'tater in our little "roundabout" I

I kin see our lines a-tanglin', and our elbows in a jam,

And our naked legs a-danglin' thum the aporn o' the dam.

I kin see the honeysuckle climbin' up around the mill;

And kin hear the worter chuckle, and the wheel a-growlin'  
still;

And thum the bank below it I kin steal the old canoe,

And jest git in and row it like the miller ust to do.

W'y, I git my fancy focused on the past so mortal plain

I kin even smell the locus'-blossoms bloomin' in the lane;

And I hear the cow-bells clinkin' sweeter tunes'n "Money-  
musk"

For the lightnin'-bugs a-blinkin' and a-dancin' in the dusk.

And when I've kep' on "musin'," as the feller says, tel I'm

Firm-fixed in the conclusion that they hain't no better time,

When you come to cipher on it, than the *old* times,—I

de-clare,

kin wake and say "dog-gone-it!" jest as soft as any  
prayer!

*Somep'n Common-Like*

SOME P'N 'at's common-like, and good  
 And plain, and easy understood;  
 Somep'n 'at folks like me and you  
 Kin understand, and relish, too,  
 And find some sermint in 'at hits  
 The spot, and sticks and benefits.  
 We don't need nothin' extry fine;  
 'Cause, take the run o' minds like mine,  
 And we'll go more on good horse-sense  
 Than all your flowery eloquence;  
 And we'll jedge best of honest acts  
 By Nature's statement of the facts.  
 So when you're wantin' to express  
 Your misery, er happiness,  
 Er anything 'at's wuth the time  
 O' telling in plain talk er rhyme—  
 Jes' sort o' let your subject run  
 As ef the Lord wuz listenun.

*The Little Tiny Kickshaw*

*"—And any little tiny kickshaw."—SHAKESPEARE.*

THE little tiny kickshaw that Mither sent tae me,  
 'Tis sweeter than the sugar-plum that reepens on the  
 tree,  
 Wi' denty flavorin's o' spice an' musky rosemarie,  
 The little tiny kickshaw that Mither sent tae me.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Tis luscious wi' the stalen tang o' fruits frae ower the sea,  
An' e'en its fragrance gars we laugh wi' langin' lip an' ee,  
Till a' its frazen scheen o' white maun melten hinnie be—  
Sae weel I luv the kickshaw that Mither sent tae me.

O I luv the tiny kickshaw, an' I smack my lips wi' glee  
Aye mickle do I luv the taste o' sic a luxourie,  
But maist I luv the luvein' han's that could the giftie gie  
O the little tiny kickshaw that Mither sent tae me.

61

*The Stepmother*

**F**IRST she come to our house,  
Tommy run and hid;  
And Emily and Bob and me  
We cried jus' like we did  
When Mother died,—and we all said  
'At we all wisht 'at we was dead!  
  
And Nurse she couldn't stop us,  
And Pa he tried and tried,—  
We sobbed and shook and wouldn't look,  
But only cried and cried;  
And nen some one—we couldn't jus'  
Tell who—was cryin' same as us!  
  
Our Stepmother! Yes, it was her,  
Her arms around us all—  
'Cause Tom slid down the bannister  
And peeked in from the hall.—  
And we all love her, too, because  
She's purt' nigh good as Mother was!

62 *Want to Be Whur Mother Is*

"**W**ANT to be whur mother is! Want to be whur mother is!"

Jeemses Rivers! won't some one ever shet that howl o' his?  
That-air yellin' drives me wild!  
Cain't none of ye stop the child?  
Want yer Daddy? "Naw." Gee whizz!  
"Want to be whur mother is!"

"Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur mother is!"  
Coax him, Sairy! Mary, sing somepin' fer him! Lift him,  
Liz—

Bang the clock-bell with the key—  
Er the *meat-ax!* Gee-mun-nee!  
Listen to them lungs o' his!  
"Want to be whur mother is!"

"Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur mother is!"  
Preacher guess'it pound all night on that old pulpit o' his;  
'Pears to me some winnin' jest  
Shows religious interest  
Mostly 'fore their fambly's riz!  
"Want to be whur mother is!"

"Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur mother is!"  
Nights like these and whipperwills allus brings that voice  
of his!

Sairy; Mary; 'Lizabeth;  
Don't set there and ketch yer death  
In the dew—er rheumatiz—  
Want to be whur mother is?

THE HOOSIER BOOK

63

*Marthy Ellen*

THEY'S nothin' in the name to strike  
A feller more'n common like!  
'Taint liable to git no praise  
Ner nothin' like it nowadays;  
An' yit that name o' her'n is jest  
As purty as the purtiest—  
And more'n that, I'm here to say  
I'll live a-thinkin' thataway  
And die fer Marthy Ellen!

It may be I was prejudust  
In favor of it from the fust—  
'Cause I kin ricollect jest how  
We met, and hear her mother now  
A-callin' of her down the road—  
And, aggervatin' little toad!—  
I see her now, jest sort o' half-  
Way disapp'inted, turn and laugh  
And mock her—"Marthy Ellen!"

Our people never had no fuss,  
And yit they never tuck to us;  
We neighbored back and foreds some;  
Until they see she liked to come  
To our honse—and me and her  
Was jest together ever'whur  
And all the time—and when they'd see  
That I liked her and she liked me,  
They'd holler "Marthy Ellen!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

When we growed up, and they sliet down  
On me and her a-runnin' roum'  
Together, and her father said  
He'd never leave her nary red,  
So he'p him, ef she married me,  
And so on—and her mother she  
Jest agged the gyrl, and said she 'lowed  
She'd ruther see her in her shroud,  
I writ to Marthy Ellen—

That is, I kind o' tuck my pen  
In hand, and stated whur and when  
The undersigned would be that night,  
With two good hosses, saddled right  
Fer lively travelin', in case  
Her folks 'ud like to jine the race.  
She sent the same note back, and writ  
"The rose is red!" right under it—  
"Your'n allus, Marthy Ellen."

That's all, I reckon—Nothin' more  
To tell but what you've heerd afore—  
The same old story, sweeter though  
Fer all the trouble, don't you know.  
Old-fashioned name! and yit it's jest  
As purty as the purtiest;  
And more'n that, I'm here to say  
I'll live a-thinkin' that away,  
And die fer Marthy Ellen!

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THE HOOSIER BOOK

64

*Who Santy Claus Wuz*

JES' a little bit o' feller—I remember still,—  
Ust to almost cry fer Christmas, like a youngster will.  
Fourth o' July's nothin' to it!—New-Year's ain't a smell:  
Easter-Sunday—Circus-Day—jes' all dead in the shell!  
Lordy, though! at night, you know, to set around and hear  
The old folks work the story off about the sledge and deer,  
And "Santy" skootin' round the roof, all wrapped in fur  
and fuzz—  
Long afore

I knowed who

"Santy-Claus" wuz!

Ust to wait, and set up late, a week or two ahead:  
Couldn't hardly keep awake, ner wouldn't go to bed:  
Kittle stewin' on the fire, and Mother settin' here  
Darnin' socks, and rockin' in the skreeky rockin'-ehcer;  
Pap gap', and wunder where it wuz the money went,  
And quar'l with his frosted heels, and spill his liniment:  
And me a-dreamin' sleigh-bells when the clock 'ud whir  
and buzz,  
Long afore

I knowed who

"Santy-Claus" wuz!

Size the fireplace up, and figger how "Old Santy" could  
Manage to come down the chimbley, like they said he would:  
Wisht that I could hide and see him—wundered what he'd  
say  
Ef he ketched a feller layin' fer him thataway!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But I *bet* on him, and *liked* him, same as ef he had  
Turned to pat me on the back and say, "Look here, my lad,  
Here's my pack,—jes' he'p yourse'f, like all good boys  
does!"

Long afore

I knowed who

"Santy-Claus" wuz!

Wisht that yarn was *true* about him, as it 'peared to be—  
Truth made out o' lies like that-un's good enough fer me!—  
Wisht I still wuz so confidin' I could jes' go wild  
Over hangin' up my stockin's, like the little child  
Climbin' in my lap to-night, and beggin' me to tell  
'Bout them reindeers, and "Old Santy" that she loves so  
well

I'm half sorry fer this little-girl-sweetheart of his—

Long afore

She knows who

"Santy-Claus" is!

65

### *This Man Jones*

**T**HIS man Jones was what you'd call  
A feller 'at had no sand at all;  
Kind o' consumpted, and undersize,  
And sailor-complected, with big sad eyes,  
And a kind-of-a sort-of-a hang-dog style,  
And a sneakin' sort-of-a half-way smile  
'At kind o' give him away to us  
As a preacher, maybe, or somepin' wuss.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Didn't take with the gang—well, no—  
But still we managed to use him, though,—  
Co'ldin' the gilly along the rout',  
And drivin' the stakes 'at he pulled out—  
Fer I was one of the bosses then,  
And of course stood in with the canvassmen;  
And the way we put up jobs, you know,  
On this man Jones jes' beat the show!

Ust to rattle him scandalous,  
And keep the feller a-dodgin' us,  
And a-shyin' round half skeered to death,  
And afeerd to whimper above his breath;  
Give him a cussin', and then a kick,  
And then a kind-of-a back-hand lick—  
Jes' fer the fun of seein' him climb  
Around with a head on most the time.

But what was the curioust thing to me,  
Was along o' the party—let me see,—  
Who was our "Lion Queen" last year?—  
Mamzelle Zanty, or De La Pierre?—  
Well, no matter—a stunnin' mash,  
With a red-ripe lip, and a long eyelash,  
And a figger sich as the angels owns—  
And one too many fer this man Jones.

He'd allns wake in the afternoon,  
As the band waltzed in on the lion-tune,  
And there, from the time 'at she'd go in  
Till she'd back out of the cage ag'in,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

He'd stand, shaky and limber-kneed—  
'Specially when she come to "feed  
The beasts raw meat with her naked hand"—  
And all that business, you understand.

And it was resky in that den—  
Fer I think she juggled three cubs then,  
And a big "green" lion 'at used to smash  
Collar-bones fer old Frank Nash;  
And I reckon now she hain't fergot  
The afternoon old "Nero" sot  
His paws on *her!*—but as fer me,  
It's a sort-of-a mixed-up mystery:—

Kind o' remember an awful roar,  
And see her back fer the bolted door—  
See the cage rods—heard her call  
"God have mercy!" and that was all—  
Fer they ain't no livin' man can tell  
*It's* like when a thousand yell  
In female tones, and a thousand more  
Howl in bass till their throats is sore!

But the keeper said 'at dragged her out,  
They heerd some feller laugh and shout—  
"Save her! Quick! I've got the cuss!"  
And yit she waked and smiled on *us!*  
And we daren't flinch, fer the doctor said,  
Secin' as this man Jones was dead,  
Better to jes' not let her know  
Nothin' o' that fer a week er so.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

66      *When the Green Gits Back in  
          the Trees*

I N spring, when the green gits back in the trees,  
And the sun comes out and *stays*,  
And yer boots pulls on with a good tight squeeze,  
And you think of yer barefoot days;  
When you *ort* to work and you want to *not*,  
And you and yer wife agrees  
It's time to spade up the garden-lot,  
When the green gits back in the trees—  
Well work is the least o' my idees  
When the green, you know, gits back in the trees!

When the green gits back in the trees, and bees  
Is a-buzzin' aroun' ag'in,  
In that kind of a lazy ge-as-you-please  
Old gait they bum roun' in;  
When the groun's all bald where the hay-rick stood,  
And the crick's riz, and the breeze  
Coaxes the bloom in the old dogwood,  
And the green gits back in the trees,—  
I like, as I say, in sich scenes as these,  
The time when the green gits back in the trees!

When the whole tail-feathers o' Winter-time  
Is all pulled out and gone!  
And the sap it thaws and begins to climb,  
And the swet it starts out on

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

A feller's forred, a-gittin' down  
At the old spring on his knees—  
I kindo' like jest a-loaferin' rom'  
When the green gits back in the trees—  
Jest a-potterin' rom' as I—durn—please—  
When the green, you know, gits back in the trees!

67

### Doc Sifers

**O**F all the doctors I could cite you to in this-'ere town  
Doc Sifers is my favorite, jes' take him up and down!  
Count in the Bethel Neighberhood, and Rollins, and Big  
Bear,  
And Sifers' standin's jes' as good as any doctor's there!

There's old Doc Wick, and Glenn, and Hall, and Wurgler,  
and McVeigh,  
But I'll buck Sifers 'g'inst 'em all and down 'em any day!  
Most old Wick ever knowed, I s'pose, was *whisky!* Wurg-  
ler—well,  
He et morphine—ef actions slows, and facts' reliable!

But Sifers—though he ain't no sot, he's got his faults;  
and yit  
When you *git* Sifers onc't, you've got a *doctor*, don't  
fergit!  
He ain't much at his office, er his house, er anywhere  
You'd natchually think certain fer to ketch the feller there.—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But don't blame Doc: he's got all sorts o' curious notions—as

The feller says, 'his odd-come-shorts, like smart men mostly has.

He'll more'n like be potterin' 'round the Blacksmith Shop; er in

Some back lot, spadin' up the ground, er gradin' it ag'in.

Er at the work bench, planin' things; er buildin' little traps  
To ketch birds; galvenizin' rings; er graftin' plums, per-  
haps.

Make anything! good as the best!—a gun-stock—er a flute;  
He whittled out a set o' chesstmen onc't o' laurel root,

Durin' the Army—got his trade o' surgeon there—I own  
To-day a finger-ring Doc made out of a Sesesh bone!  
An' glued a fiddle onc't fer me—jes' all so busted you  
'D 'a' throwed the thing away, but he fixed her as good as  
new!

And take Doc, now, in *ager*, say, er *biles*, er *rheumati'*,  
And all afflictions thataway, and he's the best they is!  
Er janders—mill 'eck—er don't keer—k-yore anything he  
tries—

A abscess; getherin' in yer yeer; er granulated eyes!

There was the Widder Daubenspeck they all give up fer  
dead;

A blame cowbuncle on her neck, and clean out of her  
head!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

First had this doctor, what's-his-name, from "Puddles-  
burg," and then  
This little red-head, "Burnin' Shame" they call him—Dr.  
Glenn.

And they "consulted" on the ease, and claimed she'd haf  
to die,—  
I jes' was joggin' by the place, and heerd her dorter ery,  
And stops and calls her to the fence; and I-says-I, "Let me  
Send Sifers—bet you fifteen cents he'll k-yore her!"  
"Well," says she,

"Light out!" she says: And, lipp-tec-cut I loped in town,  
and rid  
'Bout two hours more to find him, but I kussed him when  
I did!  
He was down at the Gunsmith Shop a-stuffin' birds! Says  
he,  
"My sulky's broke." Says I, "You hop right on and ride  
with me!"

I got him there.—"Well, Aunty, ten days k-yores you,"  
Sifers said,  
"But what's yer idy livin' when yer jes' as good as dead?"  
And there's Dave Banks—jes' back from war without a  
scratch—one day  
Got ketched up in a sickle-bar, a reaper runaway.—

His shoulders, arms, and hands and legs jes' sawed in  
strips! And Jake  
Dunn starts fer Sifers—feller begs to shoot him fer God-  
sake.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Doc, 'course, was gone, but he had penned the notice, "At  
Big Bear—  
Be back to-morry; Gone to 'tend the Bee C. vention  
there."

But Jake, he tracked him—rid and rode the whole en-  
durin' night!  
And 'bout the time the roosters crowed they both hove  
into sight.

Doc had to amputate, but 'greed to save Dave's arms, and  
swore  
He could 'a' saved his legs ef he'd b'en there the day before.

Like when his wife's own mother died 'fore Sifers could  
be found,  
And all the neighbors fer and wide a' all jes' chasin' round;  
Tel finally—I had to laugh—it's jes' like Doc, you know,—  
Was learnin' fer to telegraph, down at the old deepo.

But all they're faultin' Sifers fer, there's none of 'em kin  
say  
He's biggoty, er keerless, er not posted anyway;  
He ain't built on the common plan of doctors now-a-days,  
He's jes' a great, big, brainy man—that's where the trouble  
lays!

### 68 *Whatever the Weather May Be*

"**W**HATEVER the weather may be," says he—  
"Whatever the weather may be,  
It's plaze, if ye will, an' I'll say me say,—  
Supposin' to-day was the winterest day,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Wud the weather be changing because ye cried,  
Or the snow be grass were ye crucified?  
The best is to make yer own summer," says he,  
"Whatever the weather may be," says he—  
"Whatever the weather may be!

"Whatever the weather may be," says he—  
"Whatever the weather may be,  
It's the songs ye sing, an' the smiles ye wear,  
That's a-makin' the sun shine everywhere;  
An' the world of gloom is a world of glee,  
Wid the bird in the bush, an' the bud in the tree,  
An' the fruit on the stim o' the bough," says he,  
"Whatever the weather may be," says he—  
"Whatever the weather may be!

"Whatever the weather may be," says he—  
"Whatever the weather may be,  
Ye can bring the Spring, wid its green an' gold,  
An' the grass in the grove where the snow lies cold;  
An' ye'll warm yer back, wid a smiling faec,  
As ye sit at yer heart, like an owld fireplace,  
An' toast the toes o' yer sowl," says he,  
"Whatever the weather may be," says he—  
"Whatever the weather may be!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

69

*The Way It Wuz*

L AS' July—and, I persume  
'Bout as hot  
As the ole Gran'-jury room  
Whare they sot!—  
Fight 'twixt Mike an' Doc McGreff . . .  
'Pears to me jes' like as ef  
I'd a-drempt' the whole blame thing—  
Allus ha'nts me roun' the gizzard  
When they's nightmares on the wing,  
And a feller's blood's jes' friz!  
Seed the row from A to Izzard—  
'Cause I wuz a-standin' as clos't to 'em  
As me and you is!

Tell you the way it wuz—  
And I don't want to see,  
Like *some* fellers does,  
When they's goern to be  
Any kind o' fuss—  
On'y makes a rumpus wuss  
Fer to *interfere*  
When theyr dander's riz—  
Might as lif to *cheer!*  
But I wuz a-standin' as clos't to 'em  
As me and you is!

I wuz kind o' strayin'  
Past the blame saloon—  
Heerd some fiddler playin'  
That ole "*hec-cup* tune!"

THE HOOSHER BOOK

I'd *stopped*-like, you know,  
Fer a minit er so,  
And wuz jes' about  
Settin' down, when—*Jeems* whizz!  
Whole durn winder-sash fell out!  
And there laid Doc McGreff, and Mike  
A-straddlin' him, all bloody-like,  
And both a-gittin' down to biz!—  
And I wuz a-standin' as clos't to 'em  
As me and you is!

I wuz the on'y man aroum'—  
(Durn old-fogey town!  
'Peared more like, to me,  
*Sund'y* than *Saturd'y*!)  
I beg come 'erost the road  
And tuk a smell  
And putt right back;  
Mishler driv by 'ith a load  
O' cantalo'pes he couldn't sell—  
Too mad, 'i jack!  
To even ast  
What wuz up, as he went past!  
Weather most outrageous hot!—  
Fairly hear it sizz  
Roun' Dock and Mike—till Dock he shot—  
And Mike he slacked that grip o' his  
And fell, all spraddled out. Dock riz  
'Bout half up, a-spittin' red,  
And shuck his head—  
And I wuz a-standin' as clos't to 'em  
As me and you is!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And Dock he says,  
A-whisperin'-like,—  
"It hain't no use  
A-tryin'!—Mike  
He's jes' ripped my daylight's loose!—  
Git that blame-don fiddler to  
Let 'em, and come out here—You  
Got some burryin' to do,—  
Mike makes *one*, and, I expects,  
'Bout ten seconds I'll make *two*!"  
And he drapped back, whare he riz,  
'Crost Mike's body, black and blue,  
Like a great big letter X!—  
And I wuz a-standin' as clos't to 'em  
As me and you is!

70

*Tom Johnson's Quit*

A PASSEL o' the boys last night—  
An' me amongst 'em—kind o' got  
To talkin' Temper'nee left an' right,  
An' workin' up "blue-ribbon," *hot*;  
An' while we was a-countin' jes'  
How many hed gone into hit  
An' signed the pledge, some feller says,—  
"Tom Johnson's quit!"

We laughed, of course—'cause Tom, you know,  
Has spiled more whisky, boy an' man,  
And seed more trouble, high an' low,  
Than any chap but Tom could stand:

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And so, says I, "He's too nigh dead  
Fer 'Temper'nce to benefit!"  
The feller sighed ag'in, and said—  
"Tom Johnson's quit!"

We all *liked* Tom, an' that was why  
We sort o' simmered down ag'in,  
And ast the feller ser'ously  
Ef he wa'n't tryin' to draw us in:  
He shuck his head—tuck off his hat—  
Helt up his hand an' opened hit,  
An' says, says he, "I'll *swear* to that—  
Tom Johnson's quit!"

Well, we was stumpt, an' tickled too,—  
Because we knowed ef Tom *hed* signed  
There wa'n't no man 'at wore the "blue"  
'At was more honest' inclined:  
An' then and there we kind o' riz,—  
The hull dern gang of us 'at bit—  
An' th'owed our hats and let 'er whizz,—  
"Tom Johnson's quit!"

I've heerd 'em holler when the balls  
Was buzzin' 'round us wus'n bees,  
An' when the ole flag on the walls  
Was flappin' o'er the enemy's,  
I've heerd a-many a wild "hooray"  
'At made my heart git up an' git—  
But Lord!—to hear 'em shout that way!—  
"Tom Johnson's quit!"

71  
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## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But when we saw the chap 'at fetched  
The news wa'n't jimin' in the cheer,  
But stood there solemn-like, an' reched  
An' kind o' wiped away a tear,  
We someway sort o' stilled ag'in,  
And listened—I kin hear him yit,  
His voice a-wobblin' with his chin,—  
“Tom Johnson's quit—

“I hain't a-givin' you no game—  
I wisht I was I . . . An hour ago,  
This operator—what's his name—  
The one 'at works at night, you know?—  
Went out to flag that Ten Express,  
And sees a man in front of hit  
Th'ow up his hands an' stagger—yes,—  
*Tom Johnson's quit.*”

### 71 *The Old Home by the Mill*

**T**HIS is “The old Home by the Mill”—fer we still call it so,  
Although the *old mill*, roof and sill, is all gone long ago.  
The old home, though, and old folks—and the old spring,  
and a few  
old cattails, weeds and hartychokes, is left to welcome  
you!

Here, Marg'et, fetch the man a tin to drink out of! Our  
spring  
keeps kindo'-sorto' cavin' in, but don't “*taste*” anything!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

She's kindo' *agin'*, Marg'et is—"the *old* process," like me,  
All ham-stringed up with rheumatiz, and on in seventy-  
three.

Jes' me and Marg'et lives alone here—like in long ago;  
The childern all putt off and gone, and married, don't you  
know?

One's millin' way out West somewhare; two other miller-  
boys

In Minnyopolis they air; and one's in Illinois.

The *oldest* gyrl—the first that went—married and died  
right here;

The next lives in Winn's Settlement—for purt' nigh thirty  
year!

And youngest one—was allus fer the old home here—but  
no!

Her man turns in and packs *her* 'way off to Idyho!

I don't miss them like *Marg'et* does—'cause I got *her*, you  
see;

And when she pines for them—that's 'cause *she's* only jes'  
got *me*!

I laugh, and joke her 'bout it all.—But talkin' sense, I'll say.  
When she was tuk so bad last Fall, I laughed then t'other  
way!

I hain't so favor'ble impressed 'bout *dyin'*; but ef I  
Found I was only second-best when *us two* come to die,  
I'd 'dopt the "new process," in full, ef *Marg'et* died, you  
see,—

I'd jes' crawl in my grave and pull the green grass over  
me!

## POEMS OF CHILDHOOD

72

### *Uncle Sidney*

SOMETIMES, when I bin bad,  
An' Pa "currecks" me nen,  
An' Uncle Sidney he comes here,  
I'm allus good again;

'Cause Uncle Sidney says,  
An' takes me up an' smiles,—  
*The goodest mens they is ain't good  
As baddest little childst!*

73

### *Waitin' Fer the Cat to Die*

LAWZY! don't I rickollect  
That-air old swing in the lane!  
Right and proper, I expect,  
Old times *can't* come back again;  
But I want to state, ef they  
*Could* come back, and I could say  
What *my* pick 'ud be, i jing!  
I'd say, Gimme the old swing  
'Nunder the old locus'-trees  
On the old place, ef you please!—  
Danglin' there with half-shet eye,  
Waitin' fer the cat to die!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

I'd say, Gimme the old gang  
O' barefooted, hungry, lean,  
Ornry boys you want to hang  
When you're growed up twic't as mean!  
The old gyarden-patch, the old  
Truants, and the stuff we stol'd!  
The old stompin'-groun', where we  
Wore the grass off, wild and free  
As the swoop o' the old swing,  
Where we ust to climb and cling,  
And twist roun', and fight, and lie—  
Waitin' fer the cat to die!

'Pears like I 'most allus could  
Swing the highest of the crowd—  
Jes' sail up there tel I stood  
Downside-up, and screech out loud,—  
Ketch my breath, and jes' drap back  
Fer to let the old swing slack,  
Yit my towhead dippin' still  
In the green bouglis, and the chill  
Up my backbone taperin' down,  
With my shadder on the groun'  
Slow and slower trailin' by—  
Waitin' fer the cat to die!

Now my daughtler's little Jane's  
Got a kind o' baby-swing  
On the porch, so' when it rains  
She kin play there—little thing!  
And I'd limped out t'other day  
With my old cheer thisaway,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Swingin' *her* and rockin' too,  
Thinkin' how *I* ust to do  
At *her* age, when suddently,  
"Hey, Gran'pap!" she says to me,  
"Why you rock so slow?" . . . Says I,  
"Waitin' fer the cat to die!"

74      *The Happy Little Cripple*

I 'M thist a little crippled boy, an' never goin' to grow  
An' git a great big man at all!—'cause Aunty told me so.  
When I was thist a baby one't I falled out of the bed  
An' got "The Curv'ture of the Spine"—'at's what the Doc-  
tor said.

I never had no Mother nen—fer my Pa runned away  
An' dassn't come back here no more—'cause he was drunk  
one day

An' stobbed a man in thish-ere town, an' couldn't pay his  
fine!

An' nen my Ma she died—an' I got "Curv'ture of the  
Spine"!

I'm nine years old! An' you can't guess how much I weigh,  
I bet!—

Last birthday I weighed thirty-three!—An' I weigh thirty  
yet!

I'm awful litle fer my size—I'm purt' nigh littler nan  
Some habies is!—an' neighbors all calls me "The Little  
Man"!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' Doc one time he laughed an' said: "I 'spect, first thing  
you know,  
You'll have a little spike-tail coat an' travel with a show!"  
An' nen I laughed—till I looked round an' Amty was  
a-cryin'—  
Sometimes she acts like that, 'cause I got "Curv'ture of the  
Spine"!

I set—while Amty's washin'—on my little long-leg stool,  
An' watch the little boys an' girls a-skipin' by to school;  
An' I peck on the winder, an' holler out an' say:  
"Who wants to fight The Little Man 'at dares you all to-  
day?"  
An' nen the boys climbs on the fence, an' little girls peck  
through,  
An' the all says: "'Cause you're so big, you think we're  
'feard o' you!"  
An' nen they yell, an' shake their fist at me, like I shake  
mine—  
They're thist in fun, you know, 'cause I got "Curv'ture of  
the Spine"!

At evening, when the ironin' 's done, an' Amty's fixed the  
fire,  
An' filled an' lit the lamp, an' trimmed the wick an' turned  
it higher,  
An' fetched the wood all in fer night, an' locked the kitchen  
door,  
An' stuffed the old crack where the wind blows in up  
through the floor—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

She sets the kittle on the coals, an' biles an' makes the tea,  
An' fries the liver an' the mush, an' cooks a egg fer me;  
An' sometimes—when I cough so hard—her elderberry  
wine

Don't go so bad fer little boys with "Curv'ture of the  
Spine"!

An' nen when she putts me to bed—an' 'fore she does she's  
got

My blanket-nighdy, 'at she maked, all good an' warm an'  
hot,

Hunged on the rocker by the fire—she sings me hymns, an'  
tells

Me 'bout The Good Man—yes, an' Elves, an' Old En-  
chanter spells;

An' tells me more—an' more—an' more!—tel I'm *asleep*,  
putt' nigh—

Only I thist set up ag'in an' kiss her when she cry,  
A-tellin' on 'bout *some* boy's Angel-mother—an' it's  
*mine!* . . .

My Ma's a *Angel*—but I'm got "The Curv'ture of the  
Spine"!

But Aunty's all so childish-like on my account, you see,  
I'm 'most afeard she'll be took down—an' 'at's what  
bothers *me!*—

'Cause ef my good old Aunty ever would git sick an' die,  
I don't know what she'd do in Heaven—till *I* come, by an'  
by:—

Fer she's so ust to all my ways, an' ever'thing, you know,  
An' no one there like me, to nurse an' worry over so!—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Cause all the little childerns there's so straight an' strong  
an' fine,  
They's nary angel 'bout the place with "Curv'ture of the  
Spine" 1

NOTE.—The word "thist," as used in foregoing lines, is an occasional childish pronunciation evolved from the word "just"—a word which in child vernacular has manifold supplanters,—such as "jus," "jes," "des," "jis," "dis," "jist," "dist," "ist," and even "gest," with hard *g*. In "thist," as used above, sound "th" as in the word "the."

75

### *Christmas Afterthought*

**A**FTER a thoughtful, almost painful pause,  
Bub sighed, "I'm sorry fer old *Santy Claus*:—  
They *wuz* no *Santy Claus*, ner *couldn't* 1,  
When *he wuz* ist a little boy like me!"

76

### *In the Night*

**W**HEN it's night, and no light, too,  
Wakin' by yourse'f,  
With the old clock mockin' you  
On the mantel-she'f;  
In the dark—so still and black,  
You're afeard you'll hear  
Somepin' awful pop and crack,—  
"Go to sleep, my dear!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

That's what *Mother* says.—And *then's*  
When we ain't *afeard!*  
Wunder, when we be big mens,  
Then 'ul we be skeerd?—  
Some night *Mother's* goned away,  
And ist *us* is here,  
Will The Good Man wake and say,  
"Go to sleep, my dear"?

77

*When Our Baby Died*

WHEN our baby died—  
My Ma she ist cried an' eried:  
Yes 'n' my Pa *he* cried, too—  
An' *I* eried—An' me an' you.—  
An' I 'tended like my doll  
She cried too—An' ever'—all—  
O ist *ever'body* cried  
When our baby died!

When our baby died—  
Nen I got to took a ride!  
'An' we all ist rode an' rode  
Clean to Heav'n where baby goed  
Mighty nigh!—An' nen Ma she  
Cried ag'in—an' Pa—an' me.—  
All but ist the *Angels* cried  
When our baby died!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

78 *The Squirt-Gun Uncle Maked Me*

UNCLE SIDNEY, when he was here,  
Maked me a squirt-gun out o' some  
Elder-bushes 'at grewed out near  
Where wuz the brick-yard—'way out clear  
To where the Toll Gate come!

So when we walked back home again,  
He maked it, out in our woodhouse where  
Wuz the old work-bench, an' the old jack-plane,  
An' the old 'poke-shave, an' the tools all lay'n'  
Ist like he wants 'em there.

He sawed it first with the old hand-saw;  
An' nen he peeled off the bark, an' got  
Some glass an' scraped it; an' told 'bout Pa,  
When *he* wuz a boy an' fooled his Ma,  
An' the whippin' 'at he caught.

Nen Uncle Sidney, he took an' filed  
A' old arn ramrod; an' one o' the ends  
He serewed fast into the vise; an' smiled,  
Thinkin', he said, o' when he wuz a child,  
'Fore him an' Pa wuz mens.

He punched out the peth, an' nen he putt  
A plug in the end with a hole notched through;  
Nen took the old drawey-knife an' cut  
An' maked a handle 'at shoved clean shut  
But ist where yer hand held to.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' he wropt th'uther end with some string an' white  
Picec o' the sleeve of a' old tored shirt;  
An' nen he showed me to hold it tight,  
An' suck in the water an' work it right.—  
An' it 'ud ist squirt an' squirt!

### 79            *That-Air Young-Un*

**T**HAT-AIR young-un ust to set  
By the erick here day by day,—  
Watch the swallers dip and wet  
Their slim wings and skoot away;  
Watch these little snipes along  
The low banks tilt up and down  
'Mongst the reeds, and hear the song  
Of the bullfrogs croakin' roun':  
Ust to set here in the sun  
Watchin' things, and listenun,  
'Peared-like, mostly to the roar  
Of the dam below, er to  
That-air riffle nigh the shore  
Jes' acrost from me and you.  
Ust to watch him from the door  
Of the mill.—'Ud rigg him out  
With a fishin'-pole and line—  
Dig worms fer him—nigh about  
Jes' spit on his bait!—but he  
Never keered much, 'pearantly,  
To ketch fish!—He'd ruther fine  
Out some sunny place, and set

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Watchin' things, with droopy head,  
And "a-listenun," he said—  
"Kind o' listenun above  
The old erick to what the wet  
Warter was a-talkin' of!"

Jevver hear sich talk as that?  
Bothered *Mother* more'n me  
What the child was cipher'n' at.—  
Come home one't and said 'at he  
Knewed what the snake-feeders thought  
When they grit their wings; and knowed  
Turkle-talk, when bubbles riz  
Over where the old roots growed  
Where he th'owed them pets o' his—  
Little turripuns he caught  
In the County Ditch and packed  
In his pockets days and days!—  
Said he knowed what goslin's quacked—  
Could tell what the kilidees sayes,  
And grasshoppers, when they lit  
In the erick and "minnies" bit  
Off their legs.—"But, *blame!*" sayes he,  
Sort o' lookin' clean above  
Mother's head and on through me—  
(And them eyes!—I see 'em yet!)—  
"*Blame!*" he sayes, "ef I kin see,  
Fr make *out*, jes' what the wet  
Warter is a-talkin' of!"

Made me *nervous!* Mother, though,  
Said best not to scold the child—  
The Good Bein' knowed.—And so

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

We was only rickonciled  
When he'd be asleep.—And then,  
Time, and time, and time again,  
We've watched over him, you know—  
Her a-sayin' nothin'—jes'  
Kind o' smoothin' back his hair,  
And, all to herse'f, I guess,  
Studyin' up some kind o' prayer  
She ain't tried yet.—One't she said,  
Cotin' Scriptur', " 'He,' " says she,  
In a solemn whisper, " 'He  
Givnth His beloved sleep! "  
And jes' then I heerd the rain  
Strike the shingles, as I turned  
Res'less to'rds the wall again.  
Pity strong men dast to weep!—  
Specially when up above  
*Thrash!* the storm comes down and you  
Feel the midnight plum soaked through  
Heart and soul, and wunder, too,  
What the warter's talkin' of!

Found his hat 'way down below  
Hinckman's Ford.—'Ves' Anders he  
Rid and fetched it. Mother she  
Went *wild* over that, you know—  
Hugged it! kissed it!—*Turribul!*  
My hopes then was all gone too. . . .  
Brung him in, with both hands full  
O' warter-lilies—'peared-like new-

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Bloomed fer him—renched whiter still  
In the clear rain, mixin' fine  
And finer in the noon sunshine. . . .  
Winders of the old mill looked  
On him where the hill-road crooked  
In on through the open gate. . . .  
Laid him on the old settee  
On the porch there. Heerd the great  
Roarin' dam acrost—and we  
Heerd a crane cry in amongst  
The sycamores—and then a dove  
Cutterin' on the mill-roof—then  
Heerd the crick, and thought again,  
“*Now* what's it a-talkin' of?”

80

### *Old Man's Nursery Rhyme*

**I**N the jolly winters  
Of the long-ago,  
It was not so cold as now—  
Oh! No! No!  
Then, as I remember,  
Snowballs to eat  
Were as good as apples now,  
And every bit as sweet!

In the jolly winters  
Of the dead-and-gone,  
Bub was warm as summer,  
With his red mitts on,—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Just in his little waist-  
And-pants all together,  
Who ever heard him growl  
About cold weather?

In the jolly winters  
Of the long-ago—  
Was it *half* so cold as now?  
Oh! No! No!  
Who caught his death o' cold,  
Making prints of men  
Flat-backed in snow that now's  
Twice as cold again?

In the jolly winters  
Of the dead-and-gone,  
Startin' out rabbit huntin'—  
Early as the dawn,—  
Who ever froze his fingers,  
Ears, heels, or toes,—  
Or'd 'a' cared if he had?  
Nobody knows!

Nights by the kitchen stove,  
Shellin' white and red  
Corn in the skillet, and  
Sleepin' four abed!  
Ah! the jolly winters  
Of the long-ago!  
We were not as old as now—  
Oh! No! No!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

81

*Max and Jim*

**M**AX an' Jim.  
They're each other's  
Fat an' slim  
Little brothers.

Max is thin,  
An' Jim, the fac's is,  
Fat ag'in  
As little Max is!

Their Pa 'lowed  
He don't know whuther  
He's most proud  
Of one er th'other!

Their Ma says  
They're both so sweet—'m!—  
That she guess  
She'll haf to eat 'em!

82

*The Old Haymow*

**T**HE Old Haymow's the place to play  
Fer boys, when it's a rainy day!  
I good 'eal ruther be up there  
Than down in town, er anywhere!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

When I play in our stable-loft,  
The good old hay's so dry an' soft,  
An' feels so fine, an' smells so sweet,  
I 'most fergot to go an' eat.

An' one time onc't I *did* fergot  
To go tcl dinner was all et,—  
An' they had short-cake—an'—Bud he  
Hogged up the piecc Ma saved fer me!

Nen I won't let him play no more  
In our haymow, where I keep store  
An' got hen-eggs to sell,—an' shoo  
The cackle-unfold hen out, too!

An' nen, when Aunty she was here  
A-visitun from Rensselaer,  
An' bringed my little cousin,—*he*  
Can come up there an' play with me.

But, after while—when Bud he bets  
'At I can't turn no summersetts,  
I let him come up, ef he can  
Ac' ha'f-way like a gentleman!

### *Guincy-Pigs*

**G**UINEY-PIGS is awfml cute,  
With their little trimbly snoot  
Sniffin' at the pussly that  
We bring 'em to nibble at.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Looks like they're so clean an' white,  
An' so dainty an' polite,  
They could eat like you an' me  
When they's company!

Tiltin' down the clover-tops  
Till they spill, an' overdrops  
The sweet morning dew—Don't you  
Think they might have napkins, too?  
Ef a guiney-pig was big  
As a *shore-an'-certain* pig,  
Nen he wouldn't ac' so fine  
When he come to dine.

Nen he'd chomp his jaws an' eat  
Things out in the dirty street,  
Dirt an' all! An' nen lay down  
In mud-holes an' waller roun'!  
So the *guiney-pigs* is best,  
'Cause they're nice an' tidiest;  
They eat 'most like you an' me  
When they's company!

### 84      *The Land of Thus-and-So*

“**H**OW would Willie like to go  
To the Land of Thus-and-So?  
Everything is proper there—  
All the children comb their hair  
Smoother than the fur of cats,  
Or the nap of high silk hats;

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Every face is clean and white  
As a lily washed in light;  
Never vaguest soil or speck  
Found on forehead, throat or neck;  
Every little crimped ear,  
In and out, as pure and clear  
As the cherry-blossom's blow  
In the Land of Thus-and-So.

"Little boys that never fall  
Down the stairs, or cry at all—  
Doing nothing to repent,  
Watchful and obedient;  
Never hungry, nor in haste—  
Tidy shoe-strings always laced;  
Never button rudely torn  
From its fellows all unworn;  
Knickerbockers always new—  
Ribbon, tie, and collar, too;  
Little watches, worn like men,  
Always promptly half-past ten—  
Just precisely right, you know,  
For the Land of Thus-and-So!

"And the little babies there  
Give no one the slightest care—  
Nurse has not a thing to do  
But be happy and sigh 'Boo!'  
While Mamma just nods, and knows  
Nothing but to doze and doze:  
Never litter round the grate;  
Never lunch or dinner late;

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Never any household din  
Peals without or rings within—  
Baby coos nor laughing calls  
On the stairs or through the halls—  
Just Great Hushes to and fro  
Pace the Land of Thus-and-Sol

"Oh! the Land of Thus-and-Sol  
Isn't it delightful, though?"

"Yes," lisped Willie, answering me  
Somewhat slow and doubtfully—

"Must be awful nice, but I  
Ruther wait till by and by  
'Fore I go there—maybe when  
I be dead I'll go there *then*.—

"But"—the troubled little face  
Closer pressed in my embrace—  
"Le's don't never *ever* go  
To the Land of Thus-and-Sol!"

85

### *Grandfather Squeers*

"MY grandfather Squeers," said The Raggedy Man.  
As he solemnly lighted his pipe and began—

"The most indestructible man, for his years,  
And the grandest on earth, was my grandfather Squeers!

"He said, when he rounded his threescore-and-ten,  
'I've the hang of it now and can do it again!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

"He had fro. en his heels so repeatedly, he  
Could tell by them just what the weather would be;

"And would laugh and declare, 'while *the Almanac* would  
Most falsely prognosticate, *he* never could!"

"Such a hale constitution had grandfather Squeer,  
That, though he'd used 'nazy' for sixty-odd years,

"He still chewed a dime's worth six days of the week,  
While the seventh he passed with a chew in each cheek.

"Then my grandfather Squeers had a singular knack  
Of sitting around on the small of his back,

"With his legs like a letter Y stretched o'er the grate  
Wherein 'twas his custom to ex-pec-tor-ate.

"He was fond of tobacco in *manifold* ways,  
And would sit on the door-step, of sunshiny days,

"And smoke leaf-tobacco he'd raised strictly for  
The pipe he'd used all through the Mexican War."

And The Raggedy Man said, refilling the bowl  
Of his *own* pipe and leisurely picking a coal

From the stove with his finger and thumb, "You can see  
What a tee-nacious habit he's fastened on me!

"And my grandfather Squeers took a special delight  
In pruning his corns every Saturday night

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

"With a horn-handled razor, whose edge he excused  
By saying 'twas one that his grandfather used;

"And, though deeply etched in the haft of the same  
Was the ever-euphonious Wostenholm's name,

"'Twas my grandfather's custom to boast of the blade  
As 'a Seth Thomas razor—the best ever made!

"No Old Settlers' Meeting, or Pioneers' Fair,  
Was complete without grandfather Squeers in the chair,

"To lead off the program by telling folks how  
'He used to shoot deer where the Court-house stands now!—

"How 'he felt, of a truth, to live over the past,  
When the country was wild and unbroken and vast,

"That the little log cabin was just plenty fine  
For himself, his companion, and fambly of nine!—

"When they didn't have even a pump, or a tin,  
But drink surface-water, year out and year in,

"From the old-fashioned gourd that was sweeter, by odds,  
Than the goblets of gold at the lips of the gods!"

Then The Raggedy Man paused to plaintively say  
It was clockin' along to'rds the close of the day—

And he'd *ought* to get back to his work on the lawn,—  
Then dreamily blubbered his pipe and went on:

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

"His teeth were imperfect—my grandfather owned  
That he couldn't eat oysters unless they were 'boned';

"And his eyes were so weak, and so feeble of sight,  
He couldn't sleep with them unless, every night,

"He put on his spectacles—all he possessed,—  
Three pairs—with his goggles on top of the rest.

"And my grandfather always, retiring at night,  
Blew down the lamp-chimney to put out the light;

"Then he'd curl up on edge like a shaving, in bed,  
And puff and smoke pipes in his sleep, it is said:

"And would snore oftentimes, as the legends relate,  
Till his folks were wrought up to a terrible state,—

"Then he'd snort, and rear up, and roll over; and there  
In the subsequent hush they could hear him chew air.

"And so glaringly bald was the top of his head  
That many's the time he has musingly said,

"As his eyes journeyed o'er its reflex in the glass,—  
'I must set out a few signs of *Keep Off the Grass!*'

"So remarkably deaf was my grandfather Squeers  
That he had to wear lightning-rods over his ears

"To even hear thunder—and oftentimes then  
He was forced to request it to thunder again."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

86 *Little Mandy's Christmas-Tree*

LITTLE Mandy and her Ma  
'S porest folks you ever saw!—  
Lived in porest house in town,  
Where the fence 'uz all tore down.

And no front-door steps at all—  
Ist a' old box 'g'inst the wall;  
And no door-knob on the door  
Outside,—*My!* but they 'uz pore!

Wuz no winder-shutters on,  
And some of the *winders* gone,  
And where *they* 'uz broke they'd pas'e  
Ist brown paper 'crost the place.

*Tell* you! when it's *winter there*,  
And the snow ist ever'where,  
Little Mandy's Ma she say  
'Spec' they'll freeze to death some day.

Winst my Ma and me—when we  
Be'n to church, and's goin' to be  
Chris'mus purty soon,—we went  
There—like the Committee sent.

*And-sir!* when we're in the door,  
Wuz no carpet on the floor,  
And no fire—and heels-and-head  
Little Mandy's tucked in bed!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And her Ma telled *my* Ma she  
Got no coffee but ist tea,  
And fried mush—and's all they had  
Sence her health broke down so bad.

Nen Ma hug and hold me where  
Little Mandy's layin' there;  
And she kiss her, too, and nen  
Mandy kiss my Ma again.

And my Ma she telled her *wee*  
Goin' to have a Chris'mus-Tree,  
At the Sund'y-School, 'at's fer  
ALL the childern, and fer *her*.

Little Mandy *think*—nen she  
Say, "What *is* a Chris'mus-Tree?"  
Nen my Ma she gived *her* Ma  
Somepin' 'at I never saw.

And say she *must* take it,—and  
She ist maked her keep her hand  
Wite close shut,—and nen she *kiss*  
Her hand—shut ist like it is.

Nen we comed away. . . . And nen  
When it's Chris'mus Eve again,  
And all of us childerns be  
At the Church and Chris'mus-Tree—

And all git our toys and things  
'At old Santy Claus he brings  
And puts on the Tree;—wite where  
The *big* Tree 'uz standin' there,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And the things 'uz all tooked down,  
And the childerns, all in town,  
Got their presents—nen we see  
They's a *little* Chris'mus-Tree

Wite *behind* the *big* Tree—so  
We can't see till *nen*, you know,—  
And it's all ist loaded down  
With the purtiest things in town!

And the teacher smile and say:  
"This-here Tree 'at's hid away  
It's marked '*Little Mandy's Tree*.'—  
Little Mandy! Where is she?"

Nen nobody say a word.—  
Stillest place you ever heard!—  
Till a man tiptoe up where  
Teacher's still a-waitin' there.

Nen the man he whispers, so  
Ist the *Teacher* hears, you know.  
Nen he tiptoe back and go  
Out the big door—ist so slow!

*Little Mandy*, though, *she* don't  
Answer—and Ma say "she won't  
*Never*, though each year they'll be  
'*Little Mandy's* Chris'mus-Tree'

Fer pore childern"—my Ma says—  
And *Committee* say they guess  
'*Little Mandy's* Tree" 'ull be  
Bigger than the *other* Tree!

88  
W  
Jes' be  
She'd  
An' li  
You'd

THE HOOSIER BOOK

87 *The Funniest Thing in the World*

**T**HE funniest thing in the world, I know,  
Is watchin' the monkeys 'at's in the show!—  
Jumpin' an' runnin' an' racin' roun',  
'Way up the top o' the pole; nen down!  
First they're here, an' nen they're there,  
An' ist a'most any an' ever'where!—  
Screechin' an' scratchin' wherever they go,  
They're the funniest thing in the world, I know!  
They're the funniest thing in the world, I think:—  
Funny to watch 'em eat an' drink;  
Funny to watch 'em a-watchin' us,  
An' actin' 'most like grown folks does!—  
Funny to watch 'em p'tend to be  
Skeered at their tail 'at they happen to see;—  
But the funniest thing in the world they do  
Is never to laugh, like me an' you!

88 *Little John's Chris'mus*

**W**E got it up a-purpose, jes' fer little John's, you know;  
His mother was so pore an' all, an' had to manage  
so.—  
Jes' bein' a War-widder, an' her pension m'ghty slim,  
She'd take in weavin', er work out, er anything fer him!  
An' little John's was puny-like—but iaw, *the nerve* he  
had!—  
You'd want to kind o' pity him, but couldn't, very bad,—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

His pants o' army-blanket an' his coat o' faded blue  
Kep' hintin' of his father like, an' pity wouldn't dol

So we collogued together, onc't, one winter-time, 'at we—  
Jes' me an' mother an' the girls, an' Wilse, John-Jack an'  
Free—

Would jine an' git up little Johnnts, by time 'at Chris'nus  
come,  
Some sort o' doin's, don't you know, 'at would su'prise him  
some.

An' so, all on the 'quiet, Mother she turns in an' gits  
Some blue-janes—cuts an' makes a snit; an' then sets down  
an' knits

A pair o' little galluses to go 'long with the rest—  
An' putts in a red-flannen back an' buckle on the vest.—

The little feller'd be'n so much around our house, you see,  
An' be'n sich he'p to her an' all, an' handy as could be,  
'At Mother couldn't do too much fer little Johnnts—No,  
*sir!*

She ust to jes' declare 'at "he was meat-an'-drink to her!"

An' Piney, Lide, an' Madaline they watch their chance an'  
rid

To Fountaintown with Lijey's folks; an' bought a book,  
'hey did,

O' fairy tales, with pictur's in; an' got a little pair  
O' red-top boots 'at John-Jack said he'd be'n a-pricin' there.

An' Lide got him a little sword, an' Madaline, a drum;  
An' shootin'-crackers—Lawzy-day! an' they're so danger-  
some!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' Piney, ever' time the rest 'ud buy some other toy,  
She'd take an' turn in then an' buy more candy fer the boy!

"Well," thinks-says-I, when they got back, "*your* pocket-  
books is dry!"—

But little John's was there hisse'f that afternoon, so I—

Well, *all* of us kep' mighty mum, tel we got him away

By tellin' him be shore an' come to-morry—Chris'mus

Day—

An' fetch *his mother* 'long with him! An' bow he scud  
acrost

The fields—his towhead, in the dusk, jes' like a streak o'  
frost!—

His comfert flutter'n' as he run—an' old Tige, don't you  
know,

A-jumpin' high fer rabbits an' a-plowin' up the snow!

It must 'a' be'n 'most *ten* that night afore we got to bed—

With Wilse an' John-Jack he'ppa' us; an' Freeman in the  
shed,

An' Lide out with the lantern while he trimmed the Chris'-  
mus Tree

Out of a little scrub-oak-top 'at suited to a "T"!

All night I dream' o' hearin' things a-skulkin' round the  
place—

An' "Old Kris," with his whiskers off, an' freckles on his  
face—

An' reindeers, shaped like shavin'-horses at the cooper-  
shop,

A-stickin' down the chimbley, with their heels out at the top!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

By time 'at Mother got me up 'twas plum daylight an'  
more—

The front yard full o' neighbors all a-crowdin' round the  
door,

With John's mother leadin'; yes—an' little John's hisse'f,  
Set up on Freeman's shoulder, like a jug up on the she'f!

Of course I can't describe it when they all got in to where  
We'd congered up the Chris'mus Tree an' all the fixin's  
there!—

Fer all the shouts o' laughture—clappin' hands, an' crackin'  
jokes,

Was heap o' kissin' goin' on amongst the women-folks:—

Fer, lo-behold-ye! there they had that young-un!—An' his  
chin

A-wobblin' like;—an', shore enough, at last he started in—  
An'—sich another bellerin', in all my mortal days,  
I never heerd, er 'spect to hear, in woe's app'inted ways!

An' Mother grabs him up an' says: "It's more'n he can  
bear—

It's all too *sudden* fer the child, an' too sn'prisin'!—  
*There!*"

"Oh, no it ain't"—sobbed little John's—"I ain't sn'prised—  
but I'm

A-eryin' 'cause I watched you all, an' knowed it all the  
time!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

89

*The Boys' Candidate*

LAS' time 'at Uncle Sidney come,  
He bringed a watermelon home—  
An' half the boys in town  
Come taggin' after him.—An' he  
Says, when we et it,—“*Gracious me!*  
*'S the boy-house jell down!*”

90

*The Bumblebee*

YOU better not fool with a Bumblebee!—  
Ef you don't think they can sting—you'll see!  
They're lazy to look at, an' kind o' go  
Buzzin' an' bummin' aroun' so slow,  
An' ac' so slouchy an' all fagged out,  
Danglin' their legs as they drone about  
The hollyhawks 'at they can't climb in  
'thout ist a-tumble-un out ag'in!  
Wunst I watched one climb clean 'way  
In a junson-blossom, I did, one day,—  
An' I ist grabbed it—an' nen let go—  
An' “*Ooh-ooh! Honey! I told ye so!*”  
Says The Raggedy Man; an' he ist run  
An' pullt out the stinger, an' don't laugh none,  
An' says: “*They has be'n folks, I guess,*  
*'At thought I wuz predjudust, more er less,—*  
*Yit I still muntain 'at a Bumblebee*  
*Wears out his welcome too quick fer me!*”

91 *When the World Bu'sts Through*

[CASUALLY SUGGESTED BY AN EARTHQUAKE.]

WHERE'S a boy a-goin',  
 An' what's he goin' to do,  
 An' how's he goin' to do it,  
 When the world bu'sts through?  
 Ma she says "she can't tell  
 What we're comin' to!"  
 An' Pop says "he's ist skeered  
 Clean—plun—through!"

S'pose we'd be a-playin'  
 Out in the street,  
 An' the ground 'ud split up  
 'Bout forty feet!—  
 Ma says "she ist knows  
 We 'ud tumble in";  
 An' Pop says "he bets you  
 Nen we wou'dn't grin!"

S'pose we'd ist be 'tendin'  
 Like we had a show,  
 Down in the stable  
 Where we mustn't go.—  
 Ma says, "The earthquake  
 Might make it fall";  
 An' Pop says, "More'n like  
 Swaller barn an' all!"

92

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Landy I ef we both wuz  
Runnin' 'way from school,  
Out in the shady woods  
Where it's all so cool!—  
Ma says "a big tree  
Might squish our head";  
An' Pop says, "Chop 'em out  
Both—killed—dead!"

But where's a boy goin',  
An' what's he goin' to do,  
An' how's he goin' to do it,  
Ef the world bu'sts through?  
Ma she says "she can't tell  
What we're comin' to!"  
An' Pop says "he's ist skeered  
Clean—plum—through!"

92

### *A Prospective Glimpse*

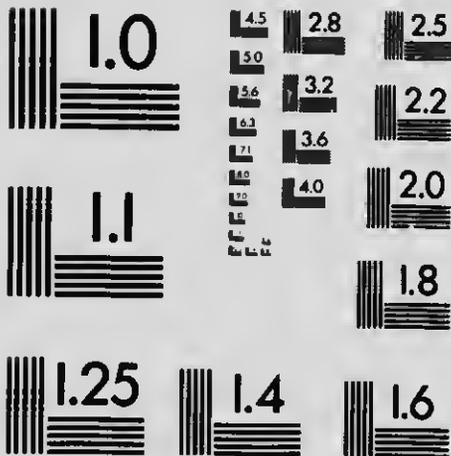
**J**ANEY Pettibone's the best  
Little girl an' purtiest  
In this town I an' lives next door,  
Up-stairs over their old store.

Little Janey Pettibone  
An' her Ma lives all alone,—  
'Cause her Pa broke up, an' nen  
Died 'cause they ain't rich again.



# MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

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## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Little Janey's Ma she sews  
Fer my Ma sometimes, an' goes  
An' gives music-lessons—where  
People's got pianers there.

But when Janey Pettibone  
Grows an' grows, like I'm a-growin',  
Nen I'm go' to keep a store,  
An' sell things—an' sell some more—

Till I'm ist as rich!—An' nen  
Her Ma can be rich again,—  
Ef I'm rich enough to own  
Little Janey Pettibone!

93

### *The Old Tramp*

**A**' OLD Tramp slep' in our stable wunst,  
An' The Raggedy Man he caught  
An' roust him up, an' chased him off  
Clean out through our back lot!

An' th' old Tramp hollered back an' said,—  
"You're a *purty* man!—*You* air!—  
With a pair o' eyes like two fried eggs,  
An' a nose like a Bartlutt pear!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

94

*The Pet Coon*

**N**OHEY Bixler ketched him, an' fetched him in to me  
When he's ist a little teenty-wcenty baby-coon  
'Bout as big as little pups, an' tied him to a tree;  
An' Pa gived Noey fifty cents, when he come home at  
noon.

Nen he buyed a chain fer him, an' little collar, too,  
An' sawed a hole in a' old tub an' turnt it npside down;  
An' little feller'd stay in there and won't come out fer you—  
'Tendin' like he's kind o' skeered o' boys 'at lives in town.

Now he ain't afeard a bit! he's ist so fat an' tame,  
We on'y chain him up at night, to save the little chicks.  
Holler "Greedy! Greedy!" to him, an' he knows his name,  
An' here he'll come a-waddle-un, up fer any tricks!  
He'll climb up my leg, he will, an' waller in my lap,  
An' poke his little black paws 'way in my pockets where  
They's beechnuts, er chinkypins, er any little scrap  
Of anything 'at's good to eat—an' *he* don't care!

An' he's as spunky as you please, an' don't like dogs at  
all.—

Billy Miller's black-an'-tan tackled him one day,  
An' "Greedy" he ist kind o' doubled all up like a ball,  
An' Billy's dog he gived a yelp er two an' runned away!  
An' nen when Billy fighted me, an' hit me with a bone,  
An' Ma she purt' nigh ketched him as he dodged an'  
scooted through  
The fence, she says, "You better let my little boy alone,  
Er 'Greedy,' next he whips yer dog, shall whip you, too!"

95

*Naughty Claude*

WHEN Little Claude was naughty wunst  
 At dinner-time, an' said  
 He won't say "Thank you" to his Ma,  
 She maked him go to bed  
 An' stay two hours an' not git up,—  
 So when the clock struck Two,  
 Nen Claude says,—“Thank you, Mr. Clock,  
 I'm much obleeged to you!”

96

*“The Preacher’s Boy”*

I RICKOLLECT the little tad, back, years and years  
 ago—  
 “The Preacher’s Boy” that every one despised and hated  
 so l

A meek-faced little feller, with white eyes and foxy hair,  
 And a look like he expected ser’ons trouble everywhere:  
 A sort o’ fixed expression of suspicion in his glance;  
 His bare feet always scratched with briars; and green  
 stains on his pants;  
 Molasses-marks along his sleeves; his cap-rim turned be-  
 hind—  
 And so it is “The Preacher’s Boy” is brought again to  
 mind l

My fancy even brings the sly marauder back so plain,  
 I see him jump our garden-fence and slip off down the  
 lane;

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And I seem to holler at him and git back the old reply:  
"Oh, no: your peaches is too green fer such a worm as I!"  
Fer he scorned his father's phrases—every holy one he  
had—

"As good a man," folks put it, "as that boy of his was  
bad!"

And again from their old buggy-shed, I hear the "rod un-  
spared"—

Of course that never "spoiled the child" for which nobody  
eared!

If any neighbor ever found his gate without a latch,  
Or rines around the edges of his watermelon-patch;  
His pasture-bars left open; or his pump-spout clogged with  
clay,

He'd swear 'twas "that infernal Preacher's Boy," right  
away!

When strings was stretched acrost the street at night, and  
some one got

An everlastin' tumble, and his nose broke, like as not,  
And laid it on "The Preacher's Boy"—no power low ner  
high,

Could ever quite substantiate that boy's alibi!

And did *nobody* like the boy?—Well, all the *pets* in town  
Would eat out of his fingers; and canaries would come  
down

And leave their swingin' perches and their fish-bone jist to  
pick

The little warty knuckles that the dogs would leap to lick.—  
No little snarlin', snappin' fiste but what would leave his  
bone

To foller, ef *he* whistled, in that tantalizin' tone

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

That made a goods-box whittler blasphemously protest  
"He couldn't tell, 'twixt dog and boy, which one was orn-  
riest!"

'Twas such a little cur as this, one't, when the crowd was  
thick

Along the streets, a drunken corner-loafer tried to kick,  
When a sudden foot behind him tripped him up, and falling  
so

He "marked his man," and jerked his gun—drawed up and  
let 'er go!

And the crowd swarmed round the victim—holding close  
against his breast

The little dog unharmed, in arms that still, as they caressed,  
Grew rigid in their last embrace, as with a smile of joy

He recognized the dog was saved. So died "The Preach-  
er's Boy"!

When it appeared, before the Squire, that fatal pistol-ball  
Was fired at "a dangerous beast," and not the boy at all,  
And the facts set forth established—it was like-befittin'  
then

To order out a possy of the "city councilmen?"

To kill *the dog!* But, strange to tell, they searched the  
country round,

And never hide-ner-hair of that "said" dog was ever found!  
And, somehow, *then* I sort o' thought—and half-way think,  
*to-day—*

The spirit of "The Preacher's Boy" had whistled him away.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

97

*An Impetuous Resolve*

**W**HEN little Dickie Swope's a man,  
He's go' to be a Sailor;  
An' little Hamey Tinscher, he's  
A-go' to be a Tailor;  
Bud Mitchell, he's a-go' to be  
A stylish Carriage-Maker;  
An' when I grow a grea'-big man,  
I'm go' to be a Baker!

An' Dick'll buy his sailor-suit  
O' Hame; an' Hame'll take it  
An' buy as fine a double-rig  
As ever Bud kin make it:  
An' nen all three'll drive roum' fer me,  
An' we'll drive off togever,  
A-singin' pie-crust 'long the road  
Ferever an' ferever!

98

*The Man in the Moon*

**S**AID The Raggedy Man, on a hot afternoon:  
My!

Sakes!

What a lot o' mistakes  
Some little folks makes on The Man in the Moon!  
But people that's be'n up to see him, like me,  
And calls on him frequent and intimuttly,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Might drop a few facts that would interest you  
Clean!

Through!—

If you wanted 'em to—  
Some *actual* facts that might interest you!

O The Man in the Moon has a crick in his back;  
Whee!

Whimm!

Ain't you sorry for him?

And a mole on his nose that is purple and black;  
And his eyes are so weak that they water and run  
If he dares to *dream* even he looks at the sun,—  
So he jes' dreams of stars, as the doctors advise—

My!

Eyes!

But isn't he wise—

To jes' dream of stars, as the doctors advise?

And The Man in the Moon has a boil on his ear—  
Whee!

Whing!

What a singular thing!

I know! but these facts are authentic, my dear,—  
There's a boil on his ear; and a corn on his chin—  
He calls it a dimple—but dimples stick in—  
Yet it might be a dimple turned over, you know!

Whang!

Ho!

Why, certainly so!—

It might be a dimple turned over, you know!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And The Man in the Moon has a rheumatic knee—  
Gee!

Whizz!

What a pity that is!

And his toes have worked round where his heels ought to  
be.—

So whenever he wants to go North he goes *South*,  
And comes back with porridge-crumbs all round his mouth,  
And he brushes them off with a Japanese fan,

Whing!

Wham!

What a marvelous man!

What a very remarkably marvelous man!

And The Man in the Moon, sighed The Raggedy Man,  
Gits!

So!

Sullonesome, you know,—

Up there by hisse'f sence creation began!—  
That when I call on him and then come away,  
He grabs me and holds me and begs me to stay,—  
Till—*W'ell!* if it wasn't fer *Jimmy-cum-jim*,

Dadd!

Limb!

I'd go pardners with him—

Jes' jump my job here and be pardners with *him!*

THE HOOSIER BOOK

99

*Billy Goodin'*

*A big piece o' pie, and a big piece o' puddin'—  
I laid it all by fer little Billy Goodin'!*

—BOY-POET.

**L**OOK so neat an' sweet in an yer frills an' fancy p'atin'!  
Better shet yer kitchen, though, afore you go to Meet-  
in'!

Better hide yer mi. ce-meat an' stewed fruit an' plums!  
Better hide yer pound-cake an' bresh away the crumbs!  
Better hide yer cullbord-key when Billy Goodin' comes,  
A-eatin'! an' a-eatin'! an' a-eatin'!

Sight o' Sudd'y-doin's 'at ain't done in Meetin'!  
Sun acrost yer garden-patch a-pourin' an' a-beatin';  
Meller apples drappin' in the weeds an' roun' the groun'  
Clingstones an' sugar-pears a-ist a-plunkin' down!—  
Better kind o' comb the grass 'fore Billy comes aroun'  
A-eatin'! an' a-eatin'! an' a-eatin'!

*Billy Goodin'* ain't a-go' to go to any Meetin'!  
He 'ull watch an' ketch an' give the little sneak a beatin'!—  
Better hint we want'o stay 'n' snoop yer grapes an' plums!  
Better eat 'em all yerse'f an' suck yer stingy thumbs!—  
Won't be nothin' anyhow when Billy Goodin' comes!  
A-eatin'! an' a-eatin'! an' a-eatin'!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

100 *Prior to Miss Belle's Appearance*

WHAT makes you come *here* fer, Mister,  
So much to *our* house?—*Say!*  
Come to see our big sister!  
An' Charley he says 'at you kissed her  
An' he ketched you, th'nter day!—  
Didn't you, Charley?—But we p'omised Belle  
An' crossed our heart to never to tell—  
'Cause *she* gived us some o' them-er  
Chawk'lut-drops 'at you bringed to her!

Charley he's my little b'ntler—  
An' we has a-mostest fun,  
Don't we, Char' ?—Our Mnther,  
Whenever we whips one-another,  
Tries to whip *us*—an' we *run*—  
Don't we, Charley?—An' nen, bime-by,  
Nen she gives us cake—an' pie—  
Don't she, Charley?—when we come in  
An' p'omise never to do it ag'in!

*He's* named Charley.—I'm *Willie*—  
An' I'm got the purtiest name!  
But Uncle Bob *he* calls me "Billy"—  
Don't he, Charley?—'N' our silly  
We named "Billy," the same  
Ist like me! An' our Ma said  
'At "Bob puts foolishness into our head!"  
Didn't she, Charley?—An' *she* don't know  
Much about *boys!* 'Cause Bob said so!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Baby's a funniest feller!

Nain't no hair on his head—

Is they, Charley?—It's meller

Wite up there! An' ef Belle er

Us ask wuz *we* that way, Ma said,—

Yes; an' yer *Pa's* head wuz soft as that,

An' it's that way yet!—An' Pa grabs his hat

An' says, "Yes, childern, she's right about Pa—

'Cause that's the reason he married yer Ma!"

An' our Ma says 'at "Belle couldn'

Ketch nothin' at all but ist '*boves*'"—

An' *Pa* says 'at "you're soft as puddin!"—

An' *Uncle Bob* says "you're a good-un—

'Cause he can tell by yer nose!"—

Didn' he, Charley?—An' when Belle'll play

In the poller on th' pianer, some day,

Bob makes up funny songs about you,

Till she gits mad—like he wants her to!

Our sister *Fanny* she's '*leven*

Years old! 'At's mucher 'an I—

Ain't it, Charley? . . . I'm seven!—

But our sister *Fanny's* in *Heaven!*

Nere's where you go ef you die!—

Don't you, Charley!—Nen you has *wings*—

*Ist like Fanny!*—an' *purtiest things!*—

Don't you, Charley?—An' nen you can *fly*—

Ist *fly*—an' *ever'thing!* . . . Wisht I'd die!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

101

*She "Displains" It*

"HAD, too!"  
"Hadn't, neither!"

So contended Bess and May—  
Neighbor children, who were boasting  
Of their grandmamas, one day.

"Had, too!"

"Hadn't, neither!"

All the difference begun  
By May's saying she'd *two* grandmas—  
While poor Bess had only one.

"Had, too!"

"Hadn't, neither!"

Tossing curls, and kinks of friz!—  
"How could you have *two* gran'mmuvvers  
When ist *one* is all they is?"

"Had, too!"

"Hadn't, neither!"

'Cause ef you had *two*," said Bess,  
"You'd *displain* it!" Then May answered,  
"My gran'mas wuz *twains*, I guess!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

102

*The Jolly Miller*

[RESTORED ROMAUNT]

**I**T was a Jolly Miller lived on the River Dee;  
He looked upon his piller, and there he found a flea;  
"O Mr. Flea! you have bit me,  
And you shall shorely die!"  
So he scrunched his bones ag'inst the stones—  
And there he let him lie!

'Twas then the Jolly Miller he laughed and told his wife,  
And she laughed fit to kill her, and dropped her carving-  
knife!—

"O Mr. Flea!" "Ho-ho!" "Tee-hee!"  
They *both* laughed fit to kill,  
Until the sound did almost drown'd  
The rumble of the mill!

*"Laugh on, my Jolly Miller! and Missus Miller, too!—  
But there's a weeping-willer will soon weave over you!"*  
The voice was all so awful small—

So very small and slim!—  
He durst' infer that it was her,  
Ner her infer 'twas him!

That night the Jolly Miller, says he, "It's, Wifey dear,  
That cat o' yourn, I'd kill her!—her actions is so queer,—  
She's rubbin' 'g'inst the grindstone-legs,  
And yowlin' at the sky—  
And I 'low the moon hain't greener  
Than the yaller of her eye!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And as the Jolly Miller went chuekle-un to bed,  
Was *Somepin'* jerked his piller from underneath his head!

"O Wife," says he, on-easi-lee,  
"Fetch here that lantern there!"

But *Somepin'* moans in thunder-tones,  
"You tetch it ef you dare!"

'Twas then the Jolly Miller he trimbled and he quailed—  
And his wife choked until her breath come back 'n' she  
wailed!

And "Oh!" cried she, "it is *the Flea*,

All white and pale and wann—

He's got you in his clutches, and

*He's bigger than a man!*"

"Ho! ho! my Jolly Miller" (*fer 'twas the Flea, fer shore!*),

"I reckon you'll not rack my bones ner scrunch 'em any  
more!"

Then *the Flea-Ghost* he grabbed him clos't,

With many a ghastly smile,

And from the door-step stooped and hopped

About four hunderd mile!

103

### *At Aunty's House*

ONE time, when we'z at Aunty's honse—

'Way in the country!—where

They's ist but woods—an' pigs, an' cows—

An' all's outdoors an' air!—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' orelnrd-swing; an' churry-trees—  
An' *churries* in 'em!—Yes, an' these—  
Here redhead birds steals all they please,  
An' tetch 'em ef you dare!—  
W'y, wunst, one time, when we wuz there,  
*It's et out on the porch!*

Wite where the cellar door wuz shut  
The table wuz; an' I  
Let Auntie set by me an' cut  
My vittuls up—an' pie,  
'Tuz awful funny! I could see  
The redheads in the churry-tree;  
An' beehives, where you got to be  
So keerful, goin' by;—  
An' "Comp'ny" there an' all!—an' we—  
*It's et out on the porch!*

An' I ist et *p'surves* an' things  
'At Ma don't 'low me to—  
An' *chickun-gizzurds*—(don't like *wings*  
Like *Parunts* does! do you?)  
An' all the time the wind blowed there,  
An' I could feel it in my hair,  
An' ist smell clover *over*'where!—  
An' a' old redhead flew  
Purt' nigh wite over my high-chair,  
*When we et on the porch!*

THE HOOSIER BOOK

104

*The Raggedy Man*

**O** THE Raggedy Man! He works fer Pa;  
An' he's the goodest man ever you saw!  
He comes to our house every day,  
An' waters the horses, an' feeds 'em hay;  
An' he opens the shed—an' we all ist laugh  
When he drives out our little old wobble-ly calf;  
An' nen—ef our hired girl says he can—  
He milks the cow fer 'Lizabuth Ann.—  
Ain't he a' awful good Raggedy Man?  
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

W'y, The Raggedy Man—he's ist so good,  
He splits the kindlin' an' chops the wood;  
An' nen he spades in our garden, too,  
An' does most things 'at boys can't do.—  
He clumbed clean up in our big tree  
An' shooked a' apple down fer me—  
An' 'nother 'n', too, fer 'Lizabuth Ann.—  
An' 'nother 'n', too, fer The Raggedy Man.—  
Ain't he a' awful kind Raggedy Man?  
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' The Raggedy Man one time say he  
Pick' roast' rambos from a' orchurd-trec,  
An' et 'em—all ist roast' an' hot!—  
An' it's so, too!—'cause a corn-crib got  
Afire one time an' all burn down  
On "The Smoot Farm," 'bout four mile from town—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

On "The Smoot Farm" I Yes—an' the hired han'  
'At worked there nen 'uz The Raggedy Man!—  
Ain't he the beatin'est Raggedy Man?  
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

The Raggedy Man's so good an' kind  
He'll be our "horsey," an' "haw" an' mind  
Ever'thing 'at you make him do—  
An' won't run off—'less you want him to!  
I drived him wunst way down our lane  
An' he got skeered, when it 'menced to rain,  
An' ist rared up an' squealed and run  
Purt' nigh away!—an' it's all in fun!  
Nen he skeered *ay'in* at a' old tin can . . .  
Whoa! y' old runaway Raggedy Man!  
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' The Raggedy Man, he knows most rhymes,  
An' tells 'em, ef I be good, sometimes:  
Knows 'bout Gimts, an' Griffuns, an' Elves,  
An' the Squidgicim-Squees 'at swallows the'r selves!  
An', wite by the pump in our pasture-lot,  
He showed me the hole 'at the Wunks is got,  
'At lives 'way deep in the ground, an' can  
Turn into me, er 'Lizabuth Ann!  
Er Ma, er Pa, er The Raggedy Man!  
Ain't he a funny old Raggedy Man?  
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' wunst, when The Raggedy Man come late,  
An' pigs ist root' thine the garden-gate,  
He 'tend like the pigs 'uz *bears* an' said,  
"Old Bear-shooter'll shoot 'em dead!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' race' an' chase' 'em, an' they'd ist run  
When he pint his hoe at 'em like it's a gun  
An' go "Bang!—Bang!" nen 'tend he stan'  
An' load up his gun ag'in! Raggedy Man!  
He's an old Bear-shooter Raggedy Man!  
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' sometimes The Raggedy Man lets on  
We're little *prince*-children, an' old King's gone  
To git more money, an' lef' us there—  
And *Robbers* is ist thick ever'where;  
An' nen—ef we all won't cry, fer *shore*—  
The Raggedy Man he'll come and "'splore  
The Castul-halls," an' steal the "gold"—  
An' steal *us*, too, an' grab an' hold  
An' pack us off to his old "Cave"!—An'  
Haymow's the "cave" o' The Raggedy Man!—  
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

The Raggedy Man—one time, when he  
Wuz makin' a little bow-'n'-orry fer me,  
Says "When you're big like your Pa is,  
Air *you* go' to keep a fine store like his—  
An' be a rich merchunt—an' wear fine clothes?—  
Er what *air* you go' to be, goodness knows?"  
An' nen he laughed at 'Lizabuth Ann,  
An' I says "'M go' to be a Raggedy Man!—  
I'm ist go' to be a nice Raggedy Man!"  
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

105

*A Boy's Mother*

**M**Y mother she's so good to me,  
Ef I was good as I could be,  
I couldn't be as good—no, sir!—  
Can't any boy be good as her I

She loves me when I'm glad er sad;  
She loves me when I'm good er bad;  
An', what's a funniest thing, she says  
She loves me when she punishes.

I don't like her to punish me.—  
That don't hurt,—but it hurts to see  
Her cryin'.—Nen I cry; an' nen  
We both cry an' be good again.

She loves me when she cuts an' sews  
My little cloak an' Sund'y clothes;  
An' when my Pa comes home to tea,  
She loves him most as much as me.

She laughs an' tells him all I said,  
An' grabs me up an' pats my head:  
An' I hug *her*, an' hug my Pa  
An' love him purt' nigh as much as Ma.

*The Fishing Party*

WUNST we went a-fishin'—Me  
An' my Pa an' Ma all three,  
When they wuz a pic-nic, 'way  
Out to Hanch's Woods, one day.

An' they wuz a crick out there,  
Where the fishes is, an' where  
Little boys 'taint big an' strong,  
Better have their folks along!

My Pa he ist fished an' fished!  
An' my Ma she said she wished  
Me an' her was home; an' Pa  
Said he wished so worse'n Ma.

Pa said ef you talk, er say  
Anything, er sneeze, er play,  
Hain't no fish, alive er dead,  
Ever go' to bite! he said.

Purt' nigh dark in town when we  
Got back home; an' Ma says she,  
Now she'll have a fish fer shore!  
An' she buyed one at the store.

Nen at supper, Pa he won't  
Eat no fish, an' says he don't  
Like 'em.—An' he pounded me  
When I choked! . . . Ma, didn't he?

THE HOOSIER BOOK

107 *The Boy Lives on Our Farm*

**T**HE Boy lives on our Farm, he's not  
Afeard o' horses none!  
An' he can make 'em lope, er trot,  
Er rack, er pace, er run.  
Sometimes he drives two horses, when  
He comes to town an' brings  
A wagon-full o' 'taters nen,  
An' roastin'-ears an' things.

Two horses is "a team," he says,—  
An' when you drive er hitch,  
The right-un's a "near-horse," I guess,  
Er "off"—I don't know which.—  
The Boy lives on our Farm, he told  
Me, too, 'at he can see,  
By lookin' at their teeth, how old  
A horse is, to a T!

I'd be the gladdest boy alive  
Ef I knowed much as that,  
An' could stand up like him an' drive,  
An' ist push back my hat,  
Like he comes skallyhootin' through  
Our alley, with one arm  
A-wavin' Fare-ye-well! to you—  
The Boy lives on our Farm!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

108

*The Runaway Boy*

WUNST I sassed my Pa, an' he  
Won't stand that, an' punished me,—  
Nen when he wuz gone that day,  
I slipped out an' runned away.

I tooked all my copper-cents,  
An' clumbed over our back fence  
In the jimpson-weeds 'at growed  
Ever'where all down the road.

Nen I got out there, an' nen  
I runned some—an' runned again  
When I met a man 'at led  
A big cow 'at shooked her head.

I went down a long, long lane  
Where was little pigs a-play'n';  
An' a grea'-big pig went "Booh!"  
An' jumped up, an' skeered me too.

Nen I scampered past, an' they  
Was somebody hollered "Hey!"  
An' I ist locked ever'where,  
An' they wuz nobody there.

I want to, but I'm 'fraid to try  
To go back. . . . An' by-an'-by,  
Somepin' hurts my th'roat inside—  
An' I want my Ma—an' cried.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Nen a grea'-big girl come through  
Where's a gate, an' telled me who  
Am I? an' ef I tell where  
My home's at she'll show me there.

But I couldn't ist but tell  
What's my *name*; an' she says "well,"  
An' she tooked me up an' says  
"She know where I live, she guess."

Nen she telled me hug wite close  
Round her neck!—an' off she goes  
Skippin' up the street! An' nen  
Purty soon I'm home again.

An' my Ma, when she kissed me,  
Kissed the big girl too, an' *she*  
Kissed me—ef I p'omise *shore*  
I won't run away no more!

**O**UR hired girl, she's 'Lizabuth Ann;  
An' she can cook best things to eat!  
She ist puts dough in our pie-pan,  
An' pours in somepin' 'at's good and sweet;  
An' nen she salts it all on top  
With cinnamon; an' nen she'll stop  
An' stoop an' slide it, ist as slow,  
In th' old cook-stove, so's 'twon't slop

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' git all spilled; nen bakes it, so  
It's custard pie, first thing you know!

An' nen she'll say:

"Clear out o' my way!

They's time fer work, an' time fer play!—

Take yer dough, an' run, child, run!

Er I cain't git no cookin' done!"

When our hired girl 'tends like she's mad,

An' says folks got to walk the chalk

When *she's* around, er wisht they had,

I play out on our porch an' talk

To Th' Raggedy Man 'at mows our lawn;

An' he says "*Whew!*" an' nen leans on

His old crook-scythe, and blinks his eyes

An' sniffs all round an' says, "I swaw:!

Ef my old nose don't tell me lies,

It 'pears like I smell custard-pies!"

An' nen *he'll* say,

"Clear out o' my way!

They's time fer work, an' time fer play!

Take yer dough, an' run, child, run!

Er *she* cain't git no cookin' done!"

Wunst our hired girl, when she

Got the supper, an' we all et,

An' it was night, an' Ma an' me

An' Pa went wher' the "Social" met,—

An' nen when we come home, an' see

A light in the kitchen-door, an' we

Heerd a maccordenn, Pa says "Lan'-

O'-Gracious! who can *her* beau be?"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' I marched in, an' 'Lizabeth Ann  
Wuz parchin' corn fer The Raggedy Man!

*Better say*

"Clear out o' the way!

They's time fer work, an' time fer play!

Take the hint, an' run, child, run!

Er we cain't git no courtin' done!"

## GREEN FIELDS AND RUNNING BROOKS

110     *On the Banks O' Deer Crick*

**O**N THE banks o' Deer Crick! There's the place fer  
me!—

Worter slidin' past ye jes' as clair as it kin be:  
See yer shadder in it, and the shadder o' the sky,  
And the shadder o' the buzzard as he goes a-lazin' by;  
Shadder o' the pizen-vines, and shadder o' the trees—  
And I purt' nigh said the shadder o' the sunshine and the  
breeze!

Well—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the sea:  
On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!

On the banks o' Deer Crick—mil'd er two from town—  
Went up where the mill-race comes a-foafin' down,—  
Laid to git up in there—'mongst the sycamores—  
And watch the worter at the dam, a-frothin' as she pours:  
Crawl out on some old log, with my hook and line,  
Where the fish is jes' so thick you kin see 'em shine  
As they flicker round yer bait, *coaxin'* you to jerk,  
Tel yer tired ketchin' of 'em, mighty nigh, as *work!*

On the banks o' Deer Crick!—Allus my delight,  
Jes' to be around there—take it day er night!—  
Watch the snipes and killdecs foolin' half the day—  
Er these-ere little worter-bugs skootin' ever' way!—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Snake-feeders glancin' round, er dartin' out o' sight;  
And dewfall, and bullfrogs, and lightnin'-bugs at night—  
Stars up through the tree-tops—er in the crick below,—  
And smell o' mussrat through the dark clean from the old  
by-o!

Er take a tromp, some Sund'y, say, 'way up to "Johnson's  
Hole,"

And find where he's had a fire, and hid his fishin'-pole:  
Have yer "dog-leg" with ye, and yer pipe and "cut-and-  
dry"—

Pocketful o' corn-bread, and slug er two o' rye,—  
Soak yer hide in sunshine and waller in the shade—  
Like the Cood Book tells us—"where there're none to make  
afraid!"

Well!—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the sea—  
On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!

### III      *How John Quit the Farm*

**N**OBODY on the old farm here but Mother, me and  
John,  
Except, of course, the extry he'p when harvest-time come  
on—

And *then*, I want to say to you, we *needed* he'p about,  
As you'd admit, ef you'd 'a' seen the way the crops turned  
out!

A better quarter-section, ner a richer soil warn't found  
Than this-here old-home place o' ourn fer fifty miles  
around!—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

The house was small—but plenty-big we found it from the  
day

That John—our only livin' son—packed up and went away.

You see, we tuk sich pride in John—his mother more'n  
me—

That's natchurul; but *both* of us was proud as proud could  
be;

For the boy, from a little chap, was most uncommon bright,  
And seemed in work as well as play to take the same  
delight.

He allus went a-whistlin' round the place, as glad at heart  
As robins up at five o'clock to git an airy start;

And many a time 'fore daylight Mother's waked me up  
to say—

"Jes' listen, David!—listen!—Johnny's beat the birds to-  
day!"

High-sperited from boyhood, with a most inquirin' turn,—

He wanted to learn ever'thing on earth they was to learn:

He'd ast more plaguy questions in a mortal-minute here

Than his grandpap in Paradise could answer in a year!

And *read!* w'y, his own mother learnt him how to read and  
spell;

And "The Childern of the Abbey"—w'y, he knowed that  
book as well

At fifteen as his parents!—and "The Pilgrim's Progress,"  
too—

Jes' knuckled down, the shaver did, and read 'em through  
and through!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

At eighteen, Mother 'lowed the boy must have a better  
chance—

That we ort to educate him, under any circumstance;  
And John he j'ined his mother, and they ding-donged and  
kep' on,  
Tel I sent him off to school in town, half glad that he was  
gone.

But—I missed him—w'y, of course I did!—The Fall and  
Winter through

I never built the kitchen-fire, er split a stick in two,  
Er fed the stock, er butchered, er swung up a gambrel-  
pin,  
But what I thought o' John, and wished that he was home  
ag'in.

He'd come, sometimes—on Sund'ys most—and stay the  
Sund'y out;

And on Thanksgivin'-Day he 'peared to like to be about:  
But a change was workin' on him—he was stiller than  
before,  
And didn't joke, ner laugh, ner sing and whistle any more.

And his talk was all so proper; and I noticed, with a sigh,  
He was tryin' to raise side-whiskers, and had on a striped  
tie,

And a standin'-collar, ironed up as stiff and slick as bone;  
And a breast-pin, and a watch and chain and plug-hat of  
his own.

But when Spring-weather opened out, and John was to  
come home

And he'p me through the season, I was glad to see him  
come;

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But my happiness, that evening, with the settin' sun went  
down,  
When he bragged of "a position" that was offered him in  
town.

"But," says I, "you'll not accept it?" "W'y, of course I  
will," says he—

"This drudgin' on a farm," he says, "is not the life fer me;  
I've set my stakes up higher," he continued, light and gay.  
"And town's the place fer *me*, and I'm a-goin' right away!"

And go he did!—his mother clingin' to him at the gate,  
A-pleadin' and a-cryin'; but it hadn't any weight.  
I was tranquil, and told her 'twarn't no use to worry so,  
And onelashed her arms from round his neck round mine—  
and let him go!

I felt a little bitter feelin' foolin' round about  
The aidges of my conscience; but I didn't let it out;—  
I simply retch out, trimbly-like, and tuk the boy's hand,  
And though I didn't say a word, I knowed he'd understand.

And—well!—sence then the old home here was mighty  
lonesome, shore!

With me a-workin' in the field, and Mother at the door,  
Her face ferever to'rds the town, and f    n' more and  
more—

Her only son nine miles away, a-clerkin' in a store!

The weeks and months dragged by us; and sometimes the  
boy would write

A letter to his mother, sayin' that his work was light,  
And not to feel oneasy about his health a bit—

Though his business was confinin', he was gittin' used to it.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And sometimes he would write and ast how *I* was gittin'  
on,

And ef I had to pay out much fer he'p sence he was gone;  
And how the hogs was doin', and the balance of the stock,  
And talk on fer a page er two jes' like he used to talk.

And he wrote, along 'fore harvest, that he guessed he  
would git home,

Fer business would, of course, be dull in town.—But he  
*didn't* come:—

We got a postal later, sayin' when they had no trade  
They filled the time "invoicin' goods," and that was why he  
stayed.

And then he quit a-writin' altogether: Not a word—  
Exceptin' what the neighbors brung who'd been to town  
and heard

What store John was clerkin' in, and went round to inquire  
If they could buy their goods there less and sell their  
produce higher.

And so the Summer faded out, and Autumn wore away,  
And a keener Winter never fetched around Thanksgivin'-  
Day!

The night before that day of thanks I'll never quite fergit.  
The wind a-howlin' round the house—it makes me creepy  
yit!

And there set me and Mother—me a-twistin' at the prongs  
Of a green scrub-ellum forestick with a vicious pair of  
tongs,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And Mother sayin', "*David! David!*" in a' undertone,  
As though she thought that I was thinkin' bad-words  
unbeknown.

"I've dressed the turkey, David, fer to-morrow," Mother  
said,

A-tryin' to wedge some pleasant subject in my stubborn  
head,—

"And the mince-meat I'm a-mixin' is perfection mighty  
nigh;

And the pound-cake is delicious-rich—"  
I-says-I. "Who'll eat 'em?"

"The cranberries is drippin'-sweet," says Mother, runnin'  
on,

P'tendin' not to hear me;—"and somehow I thought of  
John

All the time they was a-jellin'—fer you know they allus  
was

His favorite—he likes 'em so!" Says I, "Well s'pose he  
does?"

"Oh, nothin' much!" says Mother, with a quiet sort o'  
smile—

"This gentleman behind my cheer may tell you after  
while!"

And as I turned and looked around, some one riz up and  
leant

And putt his arms round Mother's neck, and laughed in low  
content.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

"It's *me*," he says—"your for boy John, come back to  
shake your hand;

Set down with you, and talk with you, and make you  
understand

How dearer yit than all the world is this old home that we  
Will spend Thanksgivin' in fer life—jes' Mother, you and  
me!"

. . . . .  
Nobody on the old farm here but Mother, me and John,  
Except, of course, the extry he'p when harvest-time comes  
on:

And then, I want to say to you, we *need* sich he'p about,  
As you'd admit, ef you could see the way the crops turns  
out!

112

### *His Mother's Way*

TOMPS 'nd allus haf to say  
Somepin' 'bout "his mother's way."—  
*He* lived hard-like—never j'ined  
Any church of any kind.—  
"It was Mother's way," says he,  
"To be good enough fer *me*  
And her too,—and cert'inly  
Lord has heerd *her* pray!"  
Propped up on his dyin' bed,—  
"Shore as Heaven's overhead,  
I'm a-goin' there," he said—  
"It was Mother's way."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

113

*Jap Miller*

**J**AP MILLER down at Martinsville's the blamēdest  
feller yit!

When *he* starts in a-talkin' other folks is apt to quit!—  
'Pears like that mouth o' his'n wuzn't made fer nothin' else  
But jes' to argify 'em down and gether in their pelts:  
He'll talk you down on tariff; er he'll talk you down on  
tax,

And prove the pore man pays 'em all—and them's about the  
fac's!—

Religen, law, er politics, prize-fightin', er baseball—  
Jes' tetch Jap up a little and he'll post you 'bout 'em all.

And the comicallest feller ever tilted back a cheer  
And tuk a chaw tobacker kind o' like he didn't keer.—  
There's where the feller's stren'th lays.—he's so common-  
like and plain,—

They hain't no dude about old Jap, you bet you—nary  
grain!

They 'lected him to Council and it never turned his head,  
And didn't make no differunce what anybody said,—  
He didn't dress no finer, ner rag out in fancy clothes;  
But his voice in Council-meetin's is a turrer to his foes.

He's fer the pore man ever' time! And in the last cam-  
paign

He stumped old Morgan County, through the sunshine and  
the rain,

And helt the banner up'ards from a-trailin' in the dust  
And cut loose on monopolies and cuss'd and cuss'd and  
cuss'd!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

He'd tell some funny story ever' now and then, you know,  
Tel, blame it! it wuz better'n a jack-o'-lantern show!  
And I'd go funder, yit, to-day, to hear old Jap norate  
Than any high-toned orator 'at ever stumped the State!

W'y, that-air blame Jap Miller, with his keen sircastic fun,  
Has got more friends than ary cauldicate 'at ever run!  
Don't matter what *his* views is, when he states the same  
to you,

They allus coincide with yourn, the same as two and two:  
You *can't* take issue with him—er, at least, they hain't no  
sense

In startin' in to down him, so you better not commence,—  
The best way's jes' to listen, like your humble servant does,  
And jes' concede Jap Miller is the best man ever wuz!

### 114 *Jack the Giant Killer*

#### BAD BOY'S VERSION

**T**ELL you a story—an' it's a fac':—  
Wunst wuz a little boy, namie wuz Jack,  
An' he had a sword an' buckle an' strap  
Maked of gold, an' a "'visibul cap";  
An' he killed Gi'nts 'at et whole cows—  
Th' horns an' all—an' pigs an' sows!  
But Jack, his golding sword wuz, oh!  
So awful sharp 'at he could go

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' cut th' ole Gi'uts clean in too  
'Fore 'ey knowed what he wuz goin' to do!  
An' *one* ole Gi'nt, he had four  
Heds, and name wuz "Bumblebore"—  
An' he wuz feared o' Jack—'cause he,  
*Jack*, he killed six—five—ten—three,  
An' all o' th' uther ole Gi'uts but him:  
An' thay wuz a place Jack haf to swim  
'Fore he could git t' ole "Bumblebore"—  
Nen thay wuz "griffins" at the door:  
But Jack, he thist plunged in an' swum  
Clean acrost; an' when he come  
To th' uther side, he thist put on  
His "'visibl cap," an' nen, dog-gone!  
You couldn't see him at all!—An' so  
He slewed the "griffins"—*boff*, you know!  
Nen wuz a horn huuged over his head,  
High on th' wall, an' words 'at read,—  
"Whoever kin this trumput blow  
Shall cause the Gi'nt's overth'ow!"  
An' Jack, he thist reached up an' blowed  
The stuffin' out of it! an' th'owed  
Th' castul-gates wide open, an'  
Nen tuk his gold sword in his han',  
An' thist marched in t' ole "Bumblebore,"  
An', 'fore he knowed, he put 'bout four  
Heds on him—an' chopped 'em off, too!—  
Wisht 'at *I'd* been Jack!—don't you?

THE HOOSIER BOOK

115 *Farmer Whipple.—Bachelor*

**I**T'S a mystery to see me—a man o' fifty-four,  
Who's lived a cross old bachelor fer thirty year' and  
more—

A-lookin' glad and smilin'! And they's none o' you can say  
That you can guess the reason why I feel so good to-day!

I must tell you all about it! But I'll have to deviate  
A little in beginnin' so's to set the matter straight  
As to how it comes to happen that I never took a wife—  
Kind o' "crawfish" from the Present to the Spring-time of  
my life!

I was brought up in the country: Of a family of five—  
Three brothers and a sister—I'm the only one alive,—  
Fer they all died little babies; and 'twas one o' Mother's  
ways,  
You know, to want a daughter; so she took a girl to raise.

The sweetest little thing she was, with rosy cheeks, and  
fat—  
We was little chunks o' shavers then about as high as that!  
But some way we sort o' *suit*ed-like! and Mother she'd  
declare  
She never laid her eyes on a more lovin' pair

Than *we* was! So we growed up side by side fer thirteen  
year',  
And every hour of it she growed to me more dear!—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Why, even Father's dyin', as he did, I do believe  
Warn't more affectin' to me than it was to see her grieve!

I was then a lad o' twenty; and I felt a flash o' pride  
In thinkin' all depended on *me* now to pervide  
Fer Mother and fer Mary; and I went about the place  
With sleeves rolled up—and workin', with a mighty smilin'  
face.—

Fer *sompin' else* was workin' I but not a word I said  
Of a certain sort o' notion that was runnin' through my  
head,—

"Some day I'd maybe marry, and a *brother's* love was one  
Thing—a *lover's* was another!" was the way the notion  
run!

I remember onc't in harvest, when the "cradle-in'" was  
done—

(When the harvest of my summers mounted up to twenty-  
one),

I was ridin' home with Mary at the closin' o' the day—  
A-chawin' straws and thinkin', in a lover's lazy way!

And Mary's cheeks was burnin' like the sunset down the  
lane:

I noticed she was thinkin', too, and ast her to explain.

Well—when she turned and *kissed* me, *with her arms*  
*around me—laa!*

P'd a bigger load o' Heaven than I had a load o' straw!

I don't p'tend to learnin', but I'll tell you what's a fac',  
They's a mighty truthful sayin' somers in a almanac—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Er *somers*—'bout "puore happiness"—perhaps some folks'll  
laugh

At the idy—"only lastin' jest two seconds and a half."—

But it's jest as true as preachin'!—fer that was a *sister's*  
kiss,

And a sister's lovin' confidence a-tellin' to me this:—

"*She* was happy, *bein' promised to the son o' farmer*  
*Brown.*"—

And my feelin's struck a pardnership with sunset and went  
down!

I don't know *how* I acted, I don't know *what* I said,—

Fer my heart seemed jest a-turnin' to an ice-cold lump o'  
lead;

And the hosses kind o' glimmered before me in the road,

And the lines fell from my fingers—And that was all I  
knowed—

Fer—well, I don't know *how* long—They's a dim remem-  
berence

Of a sound o' snortin' hosses, and a stake-and-ridered fence

A-whizzin' past, and wheat-sheaves a-dancin' in the air,

And Mary screamin' "Murder!" and a-runnin' up to where

*I* was layin' by the roadside, and the wagon upside down  
A-leanin' on the gate-post, with the wheels a-whirlin'  
round!

And I tried to raise and meet her, but I couldn't, with a  
vague

Sort o' notion comin' to me that I had a broken leg.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Well, the women nussed me through it; but many a time  
I'd sigh

As I'd keep a-gittin' better instid o' goin' to die,  
And wonder what was left *me* worth livin' fer below,  
When the girl I loved was married to another, don't you  
know!

And my thoughts was as rebellious as the folks was good  
and kind

When Brown and Mary married—Railly must 'a' Leen my  
*mind*

Was kind o' out o' kilter!—fer I hated Brown, you see,  
Worse'n *pizen*—and the feller whittled crutches out fer  
*me*—

And done a thousand little ac's o' kindness and re. pec'—  
And me a-wishin' all the time that I could break his neck!  
My relief was like a mourner's when the funeral is done  
When they moved to Illinois in the Fall o' Forty-one.

Then I went to work in airnest—I had nothin' much in  
view

But to drownd out rickollections—and it kep' me busy, too!  
But I slowly thrived and prospered, tel Mother used to  
say

She expected yit to see me a wealthy man some day.

Then I'd think how little *money* was, compared to happi-  
ness—

And who'd be left to use it when I died I couldn't guess!  
But I've still kep' spekulatin' and a-gainin' year by year,  
Tel I'm payin' half the taxes in the county, mighty near!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Well!—A year ago er better, a letter comes to hand,  
Astin' how I'd like to dicker fer some Illinois land—  
"The feller th' had owned it," it went ahead to state,  
"Had jest deceased, insolvent, leavin' chance to specu-  
late,"—

And then it closed by sayin' that I'd "better come and  
see."—

I'd never been West, anyhow—a'most too wild fer me,  
I'd allus had a notion; but a lawyer here in town  
Said I'd find myself mistakend when I come to look around.

So I bids good-by to Mother, and I jumps aboard the  
train,

—thinkin' what I'd bring her when I come back home  
again—

And ef she'd had an idy what the present was to be,  
I think it's more'n likely she'd 'a' went along with me!

Cars is awful tejus ridin', fer all they go so fast!  
But finally they called out my stoppin'-place at last:  
And that night, at the tavern, I dreamt' I was a train  
O' cars, and *skered* at somepin', rummin' down a country  
lane!

Well, in the mornin' airly—after huntin' up the man—  
The lawyer who was wantin' to swap the piece o' land—  
We started fer the country; and I ast the history  
Of the farm—its former owner—and so forth, etcetery!

And—well—it was interestin'—I sn'prised him, I suppose  
By the loud and frequent manner in which I blowed my  
nose!—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But his surprise was greater, and it made him wonder more,  
When I kissed and hugged the wailer when she met us at  
the door!—

*It was Mary: . . . They's a-reelin' a-hidin' down in  
here—*

Of course I can't explain it, ner ever make it clear.—  
It was with us in that meetin', I 's 't want you to fergit!  
And it makes me kind o' nervous when I think about it yit!

I bought that farm, and *decided* it, afore I left the town,  
With "title clear to mansions in the skies," to Mary Brown!  
And fu'thermore, I took her and the *childern*—fer you see,  
They'd never seed their Grandma—and I fetched 'em home  
with me.

So *now* you've got an idy why a man o' fifty-four,  
Who's lived a cross old bachelor fer thirty year' and more,  
Is a-lookin' glad and smilin'!—And I've jest come into  
town

To git a pair o' license fer to *marry* Mary Brown.

116      *Dawn, Noon and Dewfall*

I

**D**AWN, noon and dewfall! Bluebird and robin  
Up and at it airy, and the orchard-blossoms bobbin'  
Peekin' from the winder, half awake, and wishin'  
I could go to sleep ag'in as well as go a-fishin'!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

### II

On the apern o' the dam, legs a-danglin' over,  
Drowsy-like with sound o' worter and the smell o' clover:  
Fish all out a-visitin'—'cept some dratted minnor!  
Yes, and mill shet down at last and hauds is gone to  
dinner.

### III

'Trompin' home acrost the fields: Lightnin'-bugs a-blinkin'  
In the wheat like sparks o' things feller keeps a-thinkin':—  
Mother waitin' supper, and the childern there to cherr me!  
And fiddle on the kitchen-wall a-jes' a-eechin' fer me!

### 117 *As My Uncle Used to Say*

I 'VE thought a power on men and things—  
As my uncle ust to say,—  
And ef folks don't work as they pray, i jings!  
W'y, they ain't no use to pray!  
Ef you want somepin', and jes' dead-set  
A-pleadin' fer it with both eyes wet,  
And *tears* won't bring it, w'y, you try *sweat*  
As my uncle ust to say.

They's some don't know their A, B, C's—  
As my uncle ust to say—  
And yit don't waste no candle-grease,  
Ner whistle their lives away!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But ef they can't write no book, ner rhyme  
No ringin' song fer to last all time,  
They can blaze the way fer "the march sublime,"  
As my uncle nst to say.

Whoever's Foreman of all things here,  
As my uncle nst to say,  
He knows each job 'at we're best fit fer,  
And our ronnd-up, night and day:  
And a-savin' *His* work, east and west,  
And north and south, and worst and best,  
I ain't got nothin' to suggest,  
As my uncle ust to say.

118

### *A Full Harvest*

**S**EEMS like a feller'd ort'o jes' to-day  
Git down and roll and waller, don't you know,  
In that-air stubble, and flop up and crow,  
Seein' sich crops! I'll undertake to say  
There're no wheat's ever turned out thataway .  
Afore this seson!—Folks is keerless, though,  
And too fergifnl—'caze we'd ort'o show  
More thankfnlness!—Jes' looky hyonder, hey?—  
And watch that little reaper wadin' thue  
That last old yaller hunk o' harvest-ground—  
Jes' natchur'ly a-slicin' it in two  
Like honeycomb, and gaumin' it around  
The field—like it had nothin' else to do  
On'y jes' waste it all on me and you!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

119

*Right Here at Home*

RIGHT here at home, boys, in old Hoosierdom,  
Where strangers allus joke us when they come,  
And brag o' *their* old States and interprize—  
Yit *settle* here; and 'fore they realize,  
They're "hoosier" as the rest of us, and live  
Right here at home, boys, with their past fergive'!

Right here at home, boys, is the place, I guess,  
Fer me and you and plain old happiness:  
We hear the World's lots grander—likely so,—  
We'll take the World's word fer it and not go.—  
We know *its* ways ain't *our* ways—so we'll stay  
Right here at home, boys, where we *know* the way

Right here at home, boys, where a well-to-do  
Man's plenty rich enough—and knows it, too,  
And's got a' extry dollar, any time,  
To boost a feller up 'at *wants* to climb  
And's got the git-up in him to go in  
And *git there*, like he purt' nigh allus kin!

Right here at home, boys, is the place fer us!—  
Where folks' heart's bigger'n their money-pu's';  
And where a *common* feller's jes' as good  
As ary other in the neighborhood:  
The World at large don't worry you and me  
Right here at home, boys, where we ort to be!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Right here at home, boys—jes' right where we air!—  
Birds don't sing any sweeter anywhere:  
Grass don't grow any greener'n she grows  
Across the pastur' where the old path goes,—  
All things in ear-shot's purty, er in sight,  
Right here at home, boys, ef we *size* 'em right.

Right here at home, boys, where the old home-place  
Is sacerd to us as our mother's face,  
Jes' as we rickollect her, last she smiled  
And kissed us—dyin' so and rickonciled,  
Seein' us all at home here—none astray—  
Right here at home, boys, where she sleeps to-day.

### 120      *Sister Jones's Confession*

**I** THOUGHT the deacon liked me, yit  
I warn't adzackly shore of it—  
Fer, mind ye, time and time ag'in,  
When jiners 'nd be comin' in,  
I'd seed him shakin' hands as free  
With all the sistern as with me!  
But jurin' last Revival, where  
He called on *me* to lead in prayer,  
An' kneeled there with me, side by side,  
A-whisper'n' "he felt sanctified  
Jes' tetchin' of my gyarment's hem,"—  
That settled things as fur as them-  
Thare *other* wimmin was concerned!—  
And—well—I know I must 'a' turned

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

A dozen colors!—*Flurried?*—*la!*—  
No mortal sinner never saw  
A gladder widder than the one  
A-kneelin' there and wonderin'  
Who'd pray!—So glad, upon my word,  
I raily couldn't thank the Lord!

121

### *Iry and Billy and Jo*

A TINTYPE

**I**RY an' Billy an' Jo!—  
Iry an' Billy's *the boys*,  
An' Jo's their *dog*, you know,—  
Their pictur's took all in a row.  
Bet they kin kick up a noise—  
Iry and Billy, the boys,  
And that-air little dog Jo!

*Iry's* the one 'at stands  
Up there a-lookin' so mild  
An' meek—with his hat in his hands,  
Like such a '*bediant* ehild—  
(*Sakes-alive!*)—An' *Billy* he sets  
In the cheer an' holds on to Jo an' *sweats*  
Hisse'f, a-lookin' so good! Ho-ho!  
Iry an' Billy an' Jo!

Yit the way them boys, you know,  
Usen to jes' turn in  
An' fight over that dog Jo  
Wuz a burnin'-shame-an'-a-sin!—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Iry *he'd* argy 'at, by gee-whizz!  
That-air little Jo-dog wuz *his!*—  
An' Billy *he'd* claim it wuzn't so—  
'Cause the dog wuz *his!*—An' at it they'd go,  
Nip-an'-tugg, tooth-an'-toe-nail, you know—  
Iry an' Billy an' Jo!

But their Pa—(He wuz the marshal then)—  
He 'tended-like 'at he *jerked 'em up;*  
An' got a jury o' Brick-yard men  
An' helt *a trial* about the pup:  
An' *he* says *he* jes' like to 'a' died  
When the rest o' us town-boys *testified*—  
Regardin', you know,  
Iry an' Billy an' Jo.—

'Cause we all knowed, when *the Gipsies* they  
Camped down here by the crick last Fall,  
They brung Jo with 'em, an' give him away  
To Iry an' Billy fer nothin' at all!—  
So the jury fetched in the *verdick* so  
Jo he ain't *neether* o' theirs fer *shore*—  
He's *both* their dog, an' jes' no more!  
An' so  
They've quit quarrelin' long ago,  
Iry an' Billy an' Jo.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

122

*Them Flowers*

TAKE a feller 'at's sick and laid up on the shelf,  
All shaky, and ga'nted, and pore—  
Jes' all so knocked out he can't handle hisself  
With a stiff upper-lip any more;  
Shet him up all alone in the gloom of a room  
As dark as the tomb, and as grim,  
And then take and send him some roses in bloom,  
And you can have fun out o' him!

You've ketched him 'fore now—when his liver  
was sound  
And his appetite notched like a saw—  
A-mockin' you, maybe, fer romancin' round  
With a big posy-bunch in yer paw;  
But you ketch him, say, when his health is away,  
And he's flat on his back in distress,  
And *then* you kin trot out yer little bokay  
And not be insulted, I guess!

You see, it's like this, what his weakness is,—  
Them flowers makes him think of the days  
Of his innocent youth, and that mother o' his,  
And the roses that *she* us't to raise:—  
So here, all alone with the roses you send—  
Bein' sick and all trimbly and faint,—  
My eyes is—my eyes is—my eyes is—old friend—  
Is a-leakin'—I'm blamed ef they ain't!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

23

*By Any Other Name*

FIRST the teacher called the roll,  
Clos't to the beginnin',  
"Addeliney Bowersox!"

Set the school a-grinnin'.  
Winter-time, and stingin' cold  
When the session took up—  
Cold as we all looked at *her*,  
Though *she* couldn't look up!

Total stranger to us, too—  
Country folks ain't allus  
Nigh so shameful unpolite  
As some people call us!—  
But the honest facts is, *then*,  
Addeliney Bower-  
Sox's feelin's was so hurt  
She cried half an hour!

My dest was acrost from hern:  
Set and watched her tryin'  
To p'tend she didn't keer,  
And a kind o' dryin'  
Up her tears with smiles—tel I  
Thought, "Well, 'Addeliney  
Bowersox' is plain, but *she's*  
Purty as a piney!"

. . . . .  
It's be'n many of a year  
Sence that most uncommon  
Cur'ous name o' *Bowersox*  
Struck me so abomin-

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Nubble and outlandish-like!—  
I changed it to Adde-  
Liney *Daubenspeck*—and *that*  
Nearly killed her Daddy!

124

### *The Hoodoo*

**O**WNEED a pair o' skates one't.—Traded  
Fer 'em,—stropped 'em on and waded  
Up and down the erick, a-waitin'  
Tel she'd freeze up fit fer skatin'.  
Mildest winter I remember—  
More like Spring- than Winter-weather!—  
Didn't *frost* tel 'bout December—  
Git up airy ketch a feather  
Of it, mayby, 'erost the winder—  
Sunshine swinge it like a cinder!

Well—I *waited*—and *kep'* waitin'!  
Couldn't see my money's wo'th in  
Them-air skates, and was no skatin'  
Ner no hint o' ice ner nothin'!  
So, one day—along in airy  
Spring—I swopped 'em off—and barely  
Closed the dicker, 'fore the weather  
Natchurly jes' slipped the rateliet,  
And erick—tail-race—all together,  
Froze so tight eat couldn't scratch it!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

125 *What Chris'mas Fetched the  
Wigginses*

WINTER-TIME, er Summer-time,  
Of late years I notice I'm  
Kind o' like, more subjec' to  
What the *weather* is. Now, you  
Folks 'at lives *in town*, I s'pose,  
Thinks it's bully when it snows;  
But the chap 'at chops and hauls  
Yer wood fer ye, and then stalls,  
And snaps tuggs and swingletrees,  
And then has to walk er freeze,  
Hain't so much "stuck on" the snow  
As stuck *in* it—Bless ye, no!—  
When it's packed, and sleighin' 's good,  
And *church* in the neighborhood,  
Them 'at's *got* their girls, I guess,  
Takes 'em, likely, more er less.  
Tell the plain facts o' the ease,  
No men-folks about our place  
Ou'y me and Pap—and he  
'Lows 'at young folks' company  
Allus made him sick! So I  
Jes' don't want, and jes' don't try!  
Chinky-pin, the dad-burn town,  
'S too fur off to loaf aroun'  
Eether day er night—and no  
Law compellin' me to go!—  
'Less'n some Old-Settlers' Day,  
Er big-doin's thataway—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Then, to tell the p'inted fac',  
I've went more so's to come back  
By old Gnthric's still-house, where  
Minors *has* got licker there—  
That's pervidin' we could show 'em  
Old folks sent fer it from home!  
Visit roun' the neighbors some,  
When the *boys* wants me to come.—  
Coon-hunt with 'em; er set traps  
Fer mussrats; er jes' perhaps,  
Lay in roun' the stove, you know,  
And parch corn, and let her snow!  
Mostly, nights like these, you'll be  
(Ef you' got a writ fer *me*)  
Ap' to skeer me up, I guess,  
In about the Wigginses'.  
Nothin' roun' *our* place to keep  
Me at home—with Pap asleep  
'Fore it's dark; and Mother in  
Mango pickles to her chin;  
And the girls, all still as death,  
Piccin' quilts.—Sence I drawed breath  
Twenty year' ago, and heerd  
Some girls whisper'n' so's it 'peared  
Like they had a row o' pins  
In their mouth—right there begins  
My first rickollections, built  
On that-air blame' old piece-quilt!

Summer-time, it's jes' the same—  
'Cause I've noticed,—and I claim,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

As I said afore, I'm more  
Subjee' to the weather, *shore*,  
'Troaching my majority,  
Than I ever ust to be!  
Callin' back *last* Summer, say,—  
Don't seem hardly past away—  
With night closin' in, and all  
S' lonesome-like in the dewfall:  
Bats—ad-drat their ugly muggs!—  
Flicker'n' by; and lightnin'-bugs  
Huekster'n' roun' the airly night  
Little sickly gasps o' light;—  
Whippoorwills, like all possess'd,  
Moanin' out their mournfullest;—  
Frogs and katydids and things  
Jes' *chubs* in and sings and sings  
Their *ding-dangdest!*—Stock's all fed,  
And Pap's washed his feet fer bed;—  
Mother and the girls all down  
At the milk-shed, foolin' roun'—  
No wunder 'at I git blue,  
'at I sit out—and so would you!  
'at I can't stay aroun' no place  
Whur they hain't no livin' face;—  
'Crost the fields and thue the gaps  
Of the hills they's friends, perhaps,  
Waitin' somers, 'at kin be  
Kind o' comfertin' to me!

Neighbors all is plenty good,  
Scattered thue this neighborhood;

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yit, of all, I like to jes'  
Drap in on the Wigginscs.—  
Old man, and old lady too,  
'Fear-like, makes so much o' you—  
Least, they've allus pampered me  
Like one of the fambily.—  
The boys, too, 's all thataway—  
Want you jés' to come and stay;—  
Price, and Chape, and Mandaville,  
Poke, Chasteen, and "Catfish Bill"—  
Poke's the runt of all the rest,  
But he's jes' the beatin'est  
Little 'schemer, fer fourtteen,  
Anybody ever seen!—  
"Like his namesake," old man claims,  
"Jeems K. Poke, the first o' names!  
Full o' tricks and jokes—and you  
Never know what *Poke's* go' do!"  
*Genius*, too, that-air boy is,  
With them awk'ard hands o' his:  
Gits this blame pokeberry-juice,  
Er some stuff, fer ink—and goose-  
Quill pen-p'int: And then he'll draw  
Dogdest pictures yevver saw!—  
Jes' make deers and eagles good  
As a writin' teacher could!  
Then they's two twin boys they've riz  
Of old Coonrod Wigginses  
'At's deceast—and glad of it,  
'Cause his widder's livin' yit!  
Course *the boys* is mostly jes'  
Why I go to Wigginses'.—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Though *Melviney*, sometimes, *she*  
Gits her slate and algebray  
Jes' sets there cipher'n' thue  
Sums old Ray hisse'f cain't do!—  
Jes' sets there, and tilts her chair  
Forreds tel, 'pcar-like, her hair  
Jes' *spills* in her lap—and then  
She jes' dips it up again  
With her hands, as white, I swan,  
As the apern she's got on!

Talk o' hospitality!—  
Go to Wigginses' with me—  
Overhet, or froze plum thue,  
You'll find welcome waitin' you:—  
Th'ow out yer tobacker 'fore  
You set foot acrost that floor,—  
“Got to eat whatever's set—  
Got to drink whatever's wet!”  
Old man's sentinuns—them's his—  
And means jes' the best they is!  
Then he lights his pipe; and she,  
The old lady, presen'ly  
She lights hern; and Chape and Poke.—  
I hain't got none, ner don't smoke,—  
(In the crick afore their door—  
Sort o' so's 'at I'd be shore—  
Drownded mine one night and says  
“I won't smoke at *Wigginses'!*”)  
Price he's mostly talkin' 'bout  
Politics, and “thieves turned out”—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

What he's go' to be, ef he  
Ever "gits there"—and "we'll see!"—  
Poke he 'lows they's blame' few men  
Go' to hold their breath tel then!  
Then Melviney smiles, as she  
Goes on with her algebray,  
And the clouds clear, and the room's  
Sweeter'n crabapple-blooms!  
(That Melviney, she's got some  
Most surprisin' ways, i gum!—  
Don't 'pear-like she ever *says*  
Nothin', yit you'll *listen* jes'  
Like she *was* a-talkin', and  
Half-way seem to understand,  
But not quite,—*Poke* does, I know,  
'Cause he good as told me so.—  
Poke's her favo-rite; and he—  
That is, confidentially—  
He's *my* favo-rite—and I  
Got my whurfore and my why!)

I hain't never be'n no hand  
Much at talkin', understand,  
But they's *thoughts* o' mine 'at' jes'  
Jealous o' them Wigginses!—  
Gift o' talkin' 's what they' got,  
Whuther they want to er not.—  
F'r instunce, start the old man on  
Huntin'-scrapes, 'fore game was gone,  
'Way back in the Forties, when  
Bears stold pigs right out the pen,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Er went waltzin' 'crost the farm  
With a bechive on their arm!—  
And—sir, *ping!* the old man's gun  
Has plumped over many a one,  
Firin' at him from afore  
That-air very cabin-door!  
Yes—and *painters*, prowlin' 'bout,  
Allus darkest nights.—Lay out  
Clost yer cattle.—Great, big red  
Eyes a-blazin' in their head,  
Glitter'n' 'long the timber-line—  
Shine out some, and then *un-shine*,  
And shine back.—Then, stiddy! *whizz!*  
'N' there yer Mr. Painter is  
With a hole bored spang between  
Them-air eyes! . . . Er start Chasteen,  
Say, on blooded racin'-stock,  
Ef you want to hear him talk;  
Er tobacker—how to raise,  
Store, and k-yorc it, so's she pays. . . .  
The old lady—and she'll cote  
Scriptur' tel she'll git yer votel  
Prove to you 'at wrong is right,  
Jes' as plain as black is white:  
Prove when you're asleep in bed  
You're a-standin' on yer head,  
And yer train 'at's going West,  
'S goin' East its level best;  
And when bees dies, it's their wings  
Wears out—And a thousand things!  
And the boys is "chips," you know,  
"Off the old block"—So I go

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

To the Wigginses', 'cause—jes'  
'Cause I *like* the Wigginses—  
Even ef Melviney *she*  
Hardly 'pears to notice me!

Rid to Chinky-pin this week—  
Yisterd'y.—No snow to speak  
Of, and didn't have no sleigh  
Anyhow; so, as I say,  
I rid in—and froze one ear  
And both heels—and I don't keer!—  
“Mother and the girls kin jes'  
Bother 'bout their Chris'mases  
*Next* time fer *theirse'v's*, i jack!”  
Thinks-says-I, a-startin' back,—  
Whole durn meal-bag full of things  
Wropped in paper-sacks, and strings  
Liable to snap their holt  
Jes' at any little jolt!  
That in front o' me, and *wind*  
With *nicks* in it, 'at jes' skinned  
Me alive!—I'm here to say  
Nine mile' hossback thataway  
Would 'a' walked my log! But, as  
Somepin' allus comes to pass,  
As I topped old Guthrie's hill,  
Saw a buggy, front the Still,  
P'inted home'ards, and a thin  
Little chap jes' climbin' in.  
Six more minutes I were there  
On the groun's!—And course it were—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

It were little Poke—and he  
Nearly fainted to see me!—  
“You be’n in to Chinky, too?”  
“Yes; and go’ ride back with you,”  
I-says-I. He he’pped me fnd  
Room fer my things in behind—  
Stript my hoss’s reins down, and  
Putt his mitt’ on the right hand  
So’s to lead—“Pile in!” says he,  
“But you’ve struck pore company!”  
Noticed he was pale—looked siek,  
Kind o’ f’ke, and had a quiek  
Way o’ flickin’ them-air eyes  
O’ his roun’ ’at didn’t size  
Up right with his usual style—  
S’ I, “You well?” He tried to smile,  
But his elin shuek and tears come.—  
*“I’ve run ’Vincy ’way from home!”*

Don’t know jes’ what all occurred  
Next ten seconds—Nary word,  
But my heart jes’ drapt, stobbed thue,  
And whirlt over and come to.—  
Wrenched a big quart-bottle from  
That fool-boy!—and eut my thumb  
On his little fiste-teeth—helt  
Him snug in one arm, and felt  
That-air little heart o’ his  
Churn the blood o’ Wigginses  
Into that old head ’at spun  
Roun’ her, spilt at Lexington!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

His k'nptions, like enough,  
He'pped us both,—though it was rough—  
Rough on him, and rougher on  
Me when last his nerve was gone,  
And he laid there still, his face  
Fishin' fer some hidin'-place  
Jes' a leetie lower down  
In my breast than he'd yit foun'!  
Last I kind o' soothed him, so's  
He could talk.—And what you s'pose  
Them-air revelations of  
Poke's was? . . . He'd be'n writin' love-  
Letters to Melviney, and  
Givin' her to understand  
They was from "a young man who  
Loved her," and—"the violet's blue  
'N' sugar's sweet"—and Lord knows what!  
Tel, 'peared-like, Melviney got  
S' interested in "the young  
Man," Poke *he* says, 'at she brung  
A' answer onc't fer him to take,  
Statin' "she'd die fer his sake,"  
And writ fifty *x's* "fer  
Love-kisses fer him from her!" . . .  
I was standin' in the road  
By the buggy, all I knowed  
When Poke got that fur.—"That's why,"  
Poke says, "I 'fessed up the lie—  
*Had* to—'cåuse I sec," says he,  
"Viney was in *airnest*—she  
*Cried*, too, when I told her.—Then  
She swore me, and smiled again,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And got Pap and Mother to  
Let me hitch and drive her thue  
Into Chinkypin, to be  
At Aunt 'Rludy's Chris'mas-tree—  
That's to-night." Says I, "Poke—durn  
Your lyin' soull—'s that beau o' hern—  
That—*she*—loves—Does *he* live in  
That hellhole o' Chinkypin?"  
"No," says Poke, "er 'Viney would  
Went some *other* neighborhood."  
"Who *is* the blame' whelp?" says I.  
"Promised 'Viney, hope I'd die  
If I ever told!" says Poke,  
Pittiful and jes' heart-broke'—  
"Sides that's why she left the place,—  
'She eain't look him in the face  
Now no more on earth!' she says."—  
And the child broke down and jes'  
Solibed! . . . Says I, "Poke, I p'tend  
T' be *your* friend, and your Pap's friend,  
And your *Mother's* friend, and all  
The *boys'* friend, little, large and small—  
The *whole fambily's* friend—and you  
Know that means *Melviney*, too.—  
Now—you hursh yer troublin' l—I'm  
Go' to he'p friends ever' time—  
Ou'y in *this* case, *you* got  
To he'p *me*—and, like as not,  
I kin he'p *Melviney* then,  
And we'll have her home again.  
And now, Poke, with your consent,  
I'm go' go to that-ajr gent

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

She's in love with, and confer  
With *him* on his views o' *her*.—  
Blast him! give the man *some* show.—  
Who *is* he?—*I'm go' to know!*"  
Somepin' struck the little chap  
Funny, 'peared-like.—Give a slap  
On his leg—laughed thue the dew  
In his eyes, and says: "*It's you!*"

Yes, and—'cordin' to the last  
Love-letters of ours 'at passed  
Thue his hands—we was to be  
Married Chris'mas.—"*Gee-mun-nee!*  
*Poke,*" says I, "*it's suddent—yit*  
*We kin* make it! You're to git  
Up to-morry, say, 'bout *three*—  
Tell your folks you're go' with me:—  
We'll hitch up, and jes' drive in  
'N' *take* the town o' Chinkypin!"

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### *Old Winters on the Farm*

I HAVE jest about decided  
It 'ud keep a *town-boy* hoppin'  
Fer to work all winter, choppin'  
Fer a' old fireplace, like *I* did!  
Lawz! them old times wuz *contrairy!*—  
Blame' backbone o' winter, 'peared-like  
*Wouldn't* break!—and I wuz *skeerd-like*  
Clean on into *Feb'uary!*

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Notthin' ever made me madder  
Than fer Pap to stomp in, layin'  
On a' extra fore-stick, sayin'  
"Groun'-hog's out and seed his shadder!"

127

### *The Twins*

ONE'S the pictur' of his Pa,  
And the *other* of her Ma—  
Jes' the bossiest pair o' babies 'at a mortal  
ever saw!

And we love 'em as the bees  
Loves the blossoms on the trees,  
A-ridin' and a-rompin' in the breeze!

One's got her Mammy's eyes—  
Soft and blue as Apurl-skies—  
With the same sort of a *smile*, like—Yes, and  
mouth about her size,—  
Dimples, too, in cheek and chin,  
'At my lips jes' *wallers* in,  
A-goin' to work, er gittin' home ag'in.

And the *other*—Well, they say  
That he's got his Daddy's way  
O' bein' ruther soberfied, er ruther extry gay,—  
That he either cries his best,  
Er he laughs his howlin'est—  
Like all he lacked was buttons and a vest!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Look at *her!*—and look at *him!*—  
Talk about yer “Cheru-*bin!*”  
Roll ‘em up in dreams together, rosy arm and  
chubby limb!  
O we love ‘em as the bees  
Loves the blossoms on the trees,  
A-ridin’ and a-rompin’ in the breeze!

128

*John Alden and Percilly*

WE got up a Christmas-doin’s  
Las’ Christmas Eve—

Kind o’ dimonstration  
‘At I raily believe  
Give more satisfaction—  
Take it up and down—  
Than ary intertainment  
Ever come to town!

Raily was a *theater*—  
That’s what it was,—  
But, bein’ in the church, you know,  
We had a “*Santy Claus*”—  
So’s to git the *old folks*  
To patternize, you see,  
And *back* the institootion up  
Kind o’ *morally*.

School-teacher writ the thing—  
(Was a friend o’ mine)  
Got it out o’ Longfeller’s  
Pome “*Evangeline*”—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Er somers—'bout the *Purituns*.—  
Anyway, the part  
"John Alden" fell to me—  
And learnt it all by heart!

Clairey was "*Percilly*"—  
(School-teacher 'lowed  
Me and her could act them two  
Best of all the crowd)—  
Then—blame' ef he didn't  
Git her Pap, i jing!—  
To take the part o' "*Santy Claus*,"  
To wind up the thing.

Law! the fun o' practisin!—  
Was a week er two  
Me and Clairey didn't have  
Nothin' else to do!—  
Kep' us jes' a-meetin' round,  
Kind o' here and there,  
Ever' night rehearsin'-like,  
And gaddin' ever'where!

Game was wo'th the candle, though!—  
Christmas Eve at last  
Rolled around.—And 'tendance jes'  
Couldn't been su'passed!—  
Neighbors from the country  
Come from Clay and Rush—  
Yes, and 'cros't the county-line  
Clean from Puckerbrush!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Meetin'-house jes' trimbled  
As "Old Santy" went  
Round amongst the childern,  
With their peppermint  
And sassafras and wintergreen  
Candy, and "a ball  
O' popcorn," the preacher 'nounced,  
"Free fer each and all!"

School-teacher suddenly  
Whispered in my ear,—  
"Guess I got you:—*Christmas-gift!*—  
*Christmas is here!*"  
I give *him* a gold pen,  
And case to hold the thing.—  
And *Claircy* whispered "*Christmas-gift!*"  
And I give her a *ring*.

"And now," says I, "jes' watch *me*—  
"Christmas-gift," says I,  
"I'm a-goin' to git one—  
'Santy's' comin' by!"—  
Then I reek an I grabbed him:  
And, as you'll infer,  
'Course I got the old man's,  
And *he* gumme *her!*



THE HOOSIER BOOK

130 *The Rivals; or the Showman's  
Ruse*

*A Tragi-Comedy, in One Act*

PERSONS REPRESENTED

BILLY MILLER	}	The Rivals
JOHNNY WILLIAMS		Conspirator
TOMMY WELLS		

TIME—NOON. SCENE—Country Town—Rear view of the Miller Mansion, showing Barn, with practical loft-window opening on alley-way, with colored-crayon poster beneath, announcing:—"BILLY MILLER'S Big Show and Monstur Circus and Equareum! A shour-bath fer Each and All fer 20 pins. This Afternoon! Don't fer git the Date!" Enter TOMMY WELLS and JOHNNY WILLIAMS, who gaze a while at poster, TOMMY secretly smiling and winking at BILLY MILLER, concealed at loft-window above.

TOMMY [to JOHNNY]—

Guess 'at Billy hain't got back,—  
Can't see nothin' through the crack—  
Can't hear nothin' neether—No!  
. . . Thinks he's got the dandy show,  
Don't he?

JOHNNY [scornfully]—

'Course! but what *I* care?—  
He hain't got no show in there!—  
What's *he* got in there but that  
Old hen, cooped up with a cat

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' a turkle, an' that thing  
'At he calls his "circus-ring"?  
"What a circus-ring!" I'd quit!  
Bet mine's twic't as big as it!

TOMMY—

Yes, but *you* got no machine  
W'at you bathe with, painted green,  
With a string to work it, guess!

JOHNNY [*contemptuously*]-

Folks don't *bathe* in *circuses*!—  
*Ladies* comes to *mine*, you bet!  
I' got seats where girls can set;  
An' a dressin'-room, an' all,  
Fixed up in my pony's stall—  
Yes, an' I' got *carpet*, too,  
Fer the tumblers, and a blue  
Center-pole!

TOMMY—

Well, Billy, he's  
Got a tight-rope an' trapeze,  
An' a hoop 'at he jumps through  
Head-first!

JOHNNY—

Well, what's *that* to do—  
Lightin' on a pile o' hay?  
Hain't no *actin'* thataway!

TOMMY—

Don't care what you say, he draws  
Bigger crowds than you do, 'cause

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Sence he started up, I know  
All the fellers says his show  
Is the best-un!

JOHNNY—

Yes, an' he  
Better not tell things on me!  
His old circus hain't no good!—  
'Cause he's got the neighborhood  
Down on me he thinks 'at I'm  
Goin' to stand it all the time;  
Thinks ist 'cause my Pa don't 'low  
Me to fight, he's got me now,  
An' ean say I lie, an' call  
Me ist anything at all!  
Billy Miller thinks I am  
'Feard to say 'at he says "dam"—  
Yes, and *worser* ones! and I'm  
Goin' to tell his folks sometime!—  
An' ef he don't shet his head  
I'll tell worse 'an *that* he said  
When he fighted Willie King—  
An' got licked like ever'thing!—  
Billy Miller better shin  
Down his Daddy's lane ag'in,  
Like a cowardy-calf, an' elimb  
In fer home another time!  
Better—

[Here BILLY leaps down from the loft upon his unsuspecting victim; and two minutes later, JOHNNY, with the half of a straw hat, a bleeding nose, and a straight run across one trousers-knee, makes his inglorious—exit.]

## ARMAZINDY

131

### *Armazindy*

ARMAZINDY;—family name  
*Ballenger*,—you'll find the same,  
As her daddy answered it,  
In the old War-rickords yit,—  
And, like him, she's airnt the good  
Will o' all the neighborhood.—  
Name ain't down in *History*,—  
But, i jucks! it *ort* to be!

Folks is got respee' fer *her*—  
Armazindy Ballenger!—  
'Specially the ones 'at knows  
Fae's o' how her story goes  
From the start:—Her father blowed  
Up—eternally furloughed—  
When the old "Sultana" bu'st,  
And sich men wuz needed wusst.—  
Armazindy, 'bout fourteen-  
Year-old then—and thin and lean  
As a killdee,—but *my la!*—  
Blamedest nerve you ever saw!  
The girl's mother'd *allus* be'n  
Sickly—wuz consumed when  
Word came 'bout her husband.—So  
Folks perdicted *she'd* soon go—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

(Kind o' grief I understand,  
Losin' *my* companion,—and  
Still a widower—and still  
Hinted at, like neighbors will!)  
So, app'inted, as folks said  
Ballenger a-bein' dead,  
Widder, 'peared-like, gradjully,  
Jes' grieved after him tel *she*  
Died, nex' Aprile wuz a year,—  
And, in Armazindy's keer  
Leavin' the two twins, as well  
As her pore old miz'able  
Old-maid aunty 'at had be'n  
Struck with palsy, and wuz then  
Jes' a he'pless charge on *her*—  
*Armazindy Ballenger.*

Jevver watch a primrose 'bout  
Minute 'fore it blossoms out—  
Kind o' loosen-like, and blow  
Up its museles, don't you know,  
And, all suddent, hu'st and bloom  
Out life-size?—Well, I persume  
'At's the only measure I  
Kin size Armazindy by!—  
Jes' a *child*, *one* minute,—nex',  
*Woman-grown*, in all respee's  
And intents and purposuz—  
'At's what Armazindy wuz!

Jes' a *child*, I tell ye! Yit  
She made things git up and git

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Round that little farm o' hern I—  
Shouldered all the whole concern;—  
Feed the stock, and milk the cows—  
Run the *farm* and run the *house!*—  
Only thing she didn't do  
Wuz to plow and harvest too—  
But the house and childern took  
Lots o' keer—and had to look  
After her old fittified  
Grand-aunt.—Lord! ye could 'a' cried,  
Seein' Armazindy smile,  
'Peared-like, sweeter all the while!  
And I've heerd her laugh and say:—  
"Jes' afore Pap marched away,  
He says 'I depend on *you*,  
Armazindy, come what may—  
You must be a Soldier, too!"

Neighbors, from the fust, 'ud come—  
And she'd *let* 'em help her *some*,—  
"Thanky, ma'am!" and "Thanky, sir!"  
But no charity fer *her!*—  
"*She* could raise the means to pay  
Fer her farm-hands ever' day  
Sich wuz needed!"—And she *could*—  
In cash-money jes' as good  
As farm produc's ever brung  
Their perducer, *old* er young!  
So folks humored her and smiled,  
And at last wuz rickonciled  
Fer to let her have her own  
Way about it.—But a-goin'

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Past to town, they'd stop and see  
"Armazindy's fambily,"  
As they'd allus laugh and say,  
And look sorry right away,  
Thinkin' of her Pap, and how  
He'd indorse his "Soldier" now!

'Course *she* couldn't never be  
Much in young-folks' company—  
Plenty of *in-vites* to go,  
But das't leave the house, you know—  
'Less'n *Sund'ys* sometimes, when  
Some old *Granny'd* come and 'ten'  
Things, while Armazindy *has*  
Got away fer Church er "Class."  
Most the youngsters *liked* her—and  
'Twuzn't hard to understand,—  
Fer, by time she wuz sixteen,  
Purtier girl you never seen—  
'Ceptin' she lacked schoolin', ner  
Couldn't rag out stylisher—  
Like some *neighbor-girls*, ner thumb  
On their blame' melodium,  
Whilse their pore old mothers slosed  
Round the old back-porch and washed  
Their clothes fer 'em—rubbed and scrubbed  
Fer girls'd ort to jes' be'n clubbed!

—And jes' sich a girl wuz Jule  
Reddinhouse.—*She'd* be'n to school  
At *New Thessaly*, i gum!—  
Fool before, but that he'pped *some*—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Stablished-like more confidence  
'At she *never* had no sense,  
But she wuz a cunning', sly,  
Meek and lowly sort o' lie,  
'At men-folks like me and you  
B'lieves jes' 'cause we ortn't to,—  
Jes' as purty as a snake,  
And as *pisen*—mercy sake!  
Well, about them times it wuz,  
Young Sol Stephens th'ashed fer us;  
And we sent him over to  
Armazindy's place to do  
*Her* work fer her.—And-sir! Well—  
Mighty little else to tell,—  
Sol he fell in love with her—  
Armazindy Ballenger!

Bless ye!—'Ll of all the love  
'At I've ever yit knowed of,  
That-air case o' thein beat all!  
Wy, she *worshipped* him!—And Sol,  
'Peared-like could 'a' kissed the sod  
(Sayin' is) where that girl trod!  
Went to town, she did, and bought  
Lot o' things 'at neighbors thought  
Mighty strange fer *her* to buy,—  
Raal chintz dress-goods—and 'way high!—  
Cut long in the skyrt,—also  
Gaiter-pair o' shoes, you know;  
And lace collar;—yes, and fine  
Stylish hat, with ivy-vine  
And red ribbons, and these-'ere  
Artificial flowers and queer

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Little beads and spangles, and  
Oysturch-feathers round the band!  
Worc 'em, Sund'ys, fer a while—  
Kind o' went to Church in style,  
Sol and Armazindy!—Tel  
It was noised round purty well  
They wuz *promised*.—And they wuz—  
Sich news travels—well it does!—  
Pity 'at *that* did!—Fer jes'  
That-air fac' and nothin' less  
Must 'a' putt it in the mind  
O' Jule Reddinhouse to find  
Out some dratted way to hatch  
Out *some* plan to break the match—  
'Cause she *done* it!—*How?* they's none  
Knows adzac'ly *what* she done;  
*Some* claims she writ letters to  
Sol's folks, up nigh Pleasant View  
Somers—and described, you see,  
"Armazindy's fambily"—  
Hintin' "ef Sol married *her*,  
He'd jes' be pervidin' fer  
Them-air twins o' hern, and old  
Palsied aunt 'at couldn't hold  
Spoon to mouth, and layin' near  
Bedrid on to eighteen year,  
And still likely, 'pearanly,  
To live out the century!"  
Well—whatever plan Jule laid  
Out to reach the p'int she made,  
It wuz *desper't*—And she won,  
Finully, by marryun

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Sol herse'f—*e-lop*in', too,  
With him, like she *had* to do,—  
'Cause her folks 'ud allus swore  
"Jule should never marry pore!"

This-here part the story I  
Allus haf to hurry by,—  
Way 'at *Amazindy jes*'  
Dropped back in her linsey dress,  
And grabbed holt her loom, and shet  
Her jaws square.—And ef she fret  
Any 'lout it—never 'peared  
Sign 'at *neighbors* seed er heerd;—  
Most folks liked her all the more—  
I know *I* did—certain-shore!—  
(Course *I'd* knowed her *Pap*, and what  
*Stock* she come of.—Yes, and thought,  
And think *yit*, no man on earth  
'S worth as much as that girl's worth!)

As fer Jule and Sol, they had  
Their sheer!—less o' good than bad!—  
Her folks let her go.—They said,  
"Spite o' them she'd made her bed  
And must sleep in it!"—But she,  
'Peared-like, didn't sleep so free  
As she ust to—ner so *late*,  
Ner so *fine*, I'm here to state!—  
Sol wuz pore, of course, and she  
Wuzn't ust to poverty—  
Ner she didn't 'pear to *jes*'  
'Filiate with lonesomeness,—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Cause Sol *he* wuz off and out  
With his th'asher nigh about  
Half the time; er, season done,  
He'd be off mi-anderun  
Round the country, here and there,  
Swoppin' hosses. Well, that-air  
Kind o' livin' didn't suit  
Jule a bit!—and then, to boot,  
*She* had now the keer o' two  
Her own childern—and to do  
Her own work and cookin'—yes,  
And sometimes fer *hands*, I guess,  
Well as fambily of her own.—  
Cut her pride clean to the bone!  
So how *could* the whole thing end?—  
She set down, one night, and penned  
A short note, like—'at she sewed  
On the childern's blanket—blowed  
Out the candle—pulled the door  
To close after her—and, shore-  
Footed as a cat is, clumb  
In a rigg there and left home,  
With a man a-drivin' who  
"Loved her ever fond and true,"  
As her note went on to say,  
When Sol read the thing next day.

Raaly didn't 'pear to be  
Extry waste o' sympathy  
Over Sol—pore feller!—Yit,  
Sake o' them-air little bit

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

O' two *orphants*—as you might  
Call 'em *then*, by law and right,—  
Sol's old friends wuz sorry, and  
Tried to hold him out their hand  
Same as allus: But he'd f'etch—  
Tel, jes' 'peared-like, inch by inch,  
He let *all* holts go; and so  
Took to drinkin', don't you know,—  
Tel, to make a long tale short,  
He wuz fuller than he ort  
To 'a' be'n, at work one day  
'Bout his th'asher, and give way,  
Kind o' like and fell and ketched  
In the beltin'.

. . . Rid and fetched  
Armazindy to him.—He  
Begged me to.—But time 'at she  
Reached his side, he smiled and *tried*  
To speak—Couldn't. So he died. . .  
Hands all turned and left her there  
And went somers else—*somewhere*.  
Last, she called us back—in clear  
Voice as man'll ever hear—  
Clear and stiddy, 'peared to me,  
As her old Pap's ust to be.—  
Give us orders what to do  
'Bout the body—he'pped us, too.  
So it wuz. Sol Stephens passed  
In Armazindy's hands at last.  
More'n that, she claimed 'at she  
Had consent from him to be

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Mother to his children—now  
'Thout no parents anyhow.

*Yes-sir!* and she's *got 'em*, too,—  
Folks saw nothin' else 'ud do—  
So they let her have *her way*—  
Like she's doin' yit to-day!  
Years now, I've be'n coaxin' her—  
Armazindy Ballenger—  
To in-large her fambily  
Jes' *one* more by takin' *me*—  
Which I'm feared she never will,  
Though I'm 'lectioneerin' still.

### 132 *Writin' Back to the Home-Folks*

**M**Y dear old friends—It jes' beats all,  
The way you write a letter  
So's ever' *last* line beats the *first*,  
And ever' *next-un's* better!—  
W'y, ever' fool-thing you putt down  
You make so 'interestin',  
A feller, readin' of 'em all,  
Can't tell which is the *best-un*.

It's all so comfortin' and good,  
'Pears-like I almost *hear* ye  
And git more sociabler, you know,  
And hitch my cheer up near ye

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And jes' smile on ye like the sun  
Acrost the whole per-rairies  
In Aprile when the thaw's begun  
And country couples marries.

It's all so good-old-fashioned like  
To talk jes' like we're *thinkin'*,  
Without no hidin' back o' faus  
And giggle-un and winkin',  
Ner sizin' how each other's dressed—  
Like some is allus doin'—  
“/s Marthy Ellen's basque be'n turned  
Er shore-enough a new-un!”—

Er “ef Steve's city-friend hain't jes'  
‘A leetle kind o' sort o'’”—  
Er “wears them-air blame' eye-glasses  
Jes' 'cause he hadn't ort to?”—  
And so straight on, *dad-libitum*,  
Tel all of us feels, *someway*,  
Jes' like our “comp'ny” wuz the best  
When we git up to come 'way!

That's why I like *old* friends like you,—  
Jes' 'cause you're so *abidin'*.—  
Ef I was built to live “*fer keeps*,”  
My principul residin'  
Would be amongst the folks 'at kep'  
Me allus *thinkin'* of 'em  
And sort o' ecchin' all the time  
To tell 'em how I love 'em.—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Sich folks, you know, I jes' love so  
I wouldn't live without 'em,  
Er couldn't even drap asleep  
But what I *dreamp'* about 'em,—  
And ef we minded God, I guess  
We'd *all* love one another  
Jes' like one famb'ly,—me and Pap  
And Madaline and Mother.

133

### *The Muskingum Valley*

**T**HE Muskingum Valley—How longin' the gaze  
A feller throws back on its long summer days,  
When the sniles of its blossoms and *m.* sniles wuz one  
And-the-same, from the rise to the set o' the sun:  
Wher' the hills sloped as soft as the dawn down to noon,  
And the river run by like an old fiddle-tune,  
And the hours glided past as the bubbles 'ud glide,  
All so loaferin'-like, 'long the path o' the tide.

In the Muskingum Valley—it 'peared like the skies  
Looked lovin' on me as my own mother's eyes,  
While the laughin'-sad song of the stream seemed to be  
Like a lullaby angels was wastin' on me—  
Tel, swimmn' the air, like the gossamer's thread,  
'Twixt the blue underneath and the blue overhead,  
My thoughts went astray in that so-to-speak realm  
Wher' Sleep bared her breast as a pillar fer them.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

In the Muskingum Valley, though far, far a-way,  
I know that the winter is bleak there to-day—  
No bloom ner perfume on the brambles er trees—  
Wher' the buds used to bloom, now the icicles freeze.—  
That the grass is all hid 'long the side of the road  
Wher' the deep snow has drifted and shifted and blowed—  
And I feel in my life the same changes is there,—  
The frost in my heart, and the snow in my hair.

But, Muskingum Valley! my memory sees  
Not the white on the ground, but the green in the trees—  
Not the froze'-over gorge, but the current, as clear  
And warm as the drop that has jes' trickled here;  
Not the choked-up ravine, and the hills topped with snow,  
But the grass and the blossoms I knowed long ago  
When my little bare feet wundered down wher' the stream  
In the Muskingum Valley flowed on like a dream,

### 134 "How Did You Rest, Last Night?"

"**H**OW did you rest, last night?"—  
I've heard my gran'pap say  
Them words a thousand times--that's right—  
Jes' them words thataway!  
As punctchul-like as morning dast  
To ever heave in sight  
Gran'pap 'ud allus haf to ast—  
"How did you rest, last night?"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Us young-uns used to grin,  
At breakfast, on the sly,  
And mock the wobble of his chin  
And eyebrows helt so high  
And kind: "*How did you rest, last night?*"  
We'd mumble and let on  
Our voices trimbled, and our sight  
Was dim, and hearin' gone.

. . . . .

Bad as I used to be,  
All I'm a-wantin' is  
As puore and ca'm a sleep fer me  
And sweet a sleep as his!  
And so I pray, on Jedgment Day  
To wake, and with its light  
See *his* face dawn, and hear him say—  
"*How did you rest, last night?*"

135 *Up and Down Old Brandywine*

UP and down old Brandywine,  
In the days 'at's past and gone—  
With a dad-burn hook-and-line  
And a saplin'-pole—i swawn!  
I've had more fun, to the square  
Inch, than ever *anywhere!*  
Heaven to come can't discomnt *mine,*  
Up and down old Brandywine!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Hain't no sense in *wishin'*—yit  
Wisht to goodness I *could jes'*  
"Gee" the blame' world round and git  
Back to that old happiness!—  
Kind o' drive back in the shade  
"The old Covered Bridge" there laid  
'Crosst the crick, and sort o' soak  
My soul over, hub and spoke!

Honest, now!—it hain't no *dream*  
'At I'm wantin',—but *the fac's*  
As they wuz; the same old stream,  
And the same old times, i jacks!—  
Gimme back my bare feet—and  
Stonebruise too!—And scratched and tanned!—  
And let hottest dog-days shine  
Up and down old Brandywine!

In and on betwixt the trees  
'Long the banks, pour down yer noon,  
Kind o' curdled with the breeze  
And the yallerhammer's tune;  
And the snokin', chokin' dust  
O' the turnpike at its wusst—  
*Saturd'ys*, say, when it seems  
Road's jes' jammed with cuntry teams! .

Whilse the old town, fur away  
'Crosst the hazy pastur'-land,  
Dozed-like in the heat o' day  
Peaceful' as a hired hand.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Jolt the gravel th'rough the floor  
O' the old bridge!—grind and roar  
With yer blame' percession-line—  
Up and down old Brandywine!

Souse me and my new straw-hat  
Off the foot-log!—what *I* care?—  
Fist shoved in the crown o' that—  
Like the old Clown ust to wear.—  
Wouldn't swop it fer a' old  
Gin-u-wine raal crown o' gold!—  
Keep yer *King* ef you'll gimme  
Jes' the boy I ust to be!

Spill my fishin'-worms! er steal  
My best "goggle-eye!"—but you  
Can't lay hands on joys I feel  
Nibblin' like they ust to do!  
So, in memory, to-day  
Same old ripple lips away  
At my cork and saggin' line,  
Up and down old Brandywine!

There the logs is, round the hill,  
Where "Old Irvin" ust to lift  
Out sunfish from daylight till  
Dewfall—'fore le'd leave "The Drift"  
And g'ive *us* a chance—and then  
Kind o' fish back home again,  
Ketchin' 'em jes' left and right  
Where we hadn't got "a bite"!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Fr, 'way windin' out and in,—  
Old path th'ough the turnweeds  
And dog-fennel to yer chin—  
Then come suddent, th'ough the reeds  
And cattails, smack into where  
Them-air woods-hogs ust to scare  
Us clean 'crosst the County-line,  
Up and down old Brandywine!

But the dim roar o' the dam  
It 'ud coax us funder still  
To'rds the old race, slow and ca'm,  
Slidin' on to Huston's mill—  
Where, I 'spect, "the Freeport crowd"  
Never *warmed* to us er 'lowed  
We wuz quite so overly  
Welcome as we aimed to be.

Still it 'peared-like ever'thing—  
Fur away from home as *there*—  
Had more *relish*-like, i jing!—  
Fish in stream, er bird in air!  
O them rich old bottom-lands,  
Past where Cowden's Schoolhouse stands!  
Wortermelons—*master-mine*!  
Up and down old Brandywine!

And sich pop-paws!—Lumps o' raw  
Gold and green,—jes' oozy th'ough  
With ripe yaller—*like* you've saw  
Custard-pie with no crust to:

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And jes' *gorges* o' wild plums,  
Till a feller'd suck his thumbs  
Clean up to his elbows! *My!*—  
*Me some more er lem me die!*

Up and down old Brandywine!  
Stripe me with pokeberry-juice!—  
Flick me with a pizen-vine  
And yell "*Yip!*" and lem me loose!  
—Old now as I then wuz young,  
'F I could sing as I *have* sung,  
Song' 'ud surely ring *dee-vine*  
Up and down old Brandywine!

136

### *My Henry*

**H**ES jes' a great, big, awk'ard, hulkin'  
Feller,—humped, and sort o' sulkin'-  
Like, and ruther still-appearin'—  
Kind-as-ef he wuzn't keerin'  
Whether school helt out er not—  
That's my Henry, to a dot!

Allus kind o' liked him—whether  
Childern, er growed-up together!  
Fifteen year' ago and better,  
'Fore he ever knowed a letter,  
Run acrosst the little fool  
In my Primer-class at school.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

When the Teacher wuzn't lookin'  
He'd be th'owin' wads; er crookin'  
Pins; er sprinklin' pepper, more'n  
Likely, on the stove; er borin'  
Gimlet-holes up thue his desk—  
Nothin' *that* boy wouldn't resk!

But, somehow, as I was goin'  
On to say, he seemed so knowin',  
*Other* ways, and cute and cunning'—  
Allus wuz a notion runnin'  
Thue my giddy, fool-head he  
Jes' had be'n cut out fer me!

Don't go much on *prophesyin'*  
But last night whilse I wuz fryin'  
Supper, with that man a-pitchin'  
Little Marthy 'round the kitchen,  
Think-says-I, "Them baby's eyes  
Is my Heary's, jes' p'aise!"

### 137 *When Lide Married Him*

**W**HEN Lide married *him*—w'y, she had to jes' dee-fy  
The whole population!—But she never bat' an eye!  
Her parents begged, and *threatened*—she must give him up  
—that *he*  
Wuz jes' "a common drunkard!"—And he *wuz*, appear-  
antly.—  
Swore they'd chase him off the place  
Ef he ever showed his face—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Long after she'd *cloped* with him and married him fer shore!—

When Lide married *him*, it wuz "*Katy, bar the door!*"

When Lide married *him*—Well! she had to go and be  
A *hired girl* in town somewheres—while he tromped round  
to see

What *he* could git 'at *he* could do,—you might say, jes'  
sawed wood

From door to door!—that's what he done—'cause that wuz  
best he could!

And the strangest thing, i jing!

Wuz, he didn't *drink* a thing.—

But jes' got down to bizness, like he someway *wanted* to,  
When Lide married *him*, like they warn'd her *not* to do!

When Lide married *him*—er, ruther *had* be'n married  
A little up'ards of a year—some feller come and carried  
That *hired girl* away with him—a ruther *stylish* feller  
In a bran-new green spring-wagon, with the wheels striped  
red and yeller:

And he whispered, as they driv

To'rds the country, "*Now we'll live!*"—

And *somepin' else* she *laughed* to hear, though both her  
eyes wuz dim,

'Bout "*trustin' Love and Hav'n above*, sence Lide married  
*him!*"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

138

"Ringworm Frank"

**J**EST Frank Reed's his *real* name—though  
Boys all calls him "Ringworm Frank,"

'Cause he allus *runs round* so.—

No man can't tell where to bank

*Frank'll* be,

Next you see

Er *hear* of him!—Drat his melts!—

That man's allus *somers else!*

We're old pards.—But Frank he jest

*Can't* stay still!—Wuz *prosper'n'* here,

But lit out on funder West

Somers on a ranch, last year:

Never heard

Nary a word

*Hore* he liked it, tel to-day.

Got this card, reads thisaway:—

"Dad-burn climate out here makes

Me homesick all Winter long.

And when Spring-time *comes*, it takes

Two pce-wees to sing one song.—

One sing '*pee,*'

And the other one '*zee!*'

Stay right where you air, old pard.—

Wisht *I* wuz this postal card!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

139

*The Youthful Patriot*

**O** WHAT did the little boy do  
'At nobody wanted him to?  
Didn't do nothin' but romp an' run,  
An' whoop an' holler an' bang his gun  
An' bu'st fire-crackers, an' ist have fun—  
An' 'at's all the little boy done!

140

*Folks at Lonesomeville*

**P**ORE-Folks lives at Lonesomeville—  
Lawzy! but they're pore!  
Houses with no winders in,  
And hardly any door:  
Chimbley all tore down, and no  
Smoke in that at all—  
Ist a stovepipe through a hole  
In the kitchen wall!

Pump 'at's got no handle on;  
And no woodshed—And, *wooh!*—  
Mighty cold there, choppin' wood,  
Like pore-folks has to do!—  
Winter-time, and snow and sleet  
Ist fairly fit to kill!—  
Hope to goodness *Santy Claus*  
Goes to Lonesomeville!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

141      *The Three Jolly Hunters*

**O** **THERE** were three jolly hunters;  
And a-hunting they did go,  
With a spaniel-dog, and a pointer-dog,  
And a setter-dog also.

Looky there!

And they hunted and they hal-looed;  
And the first thing they did find  
Was a dingling-dangling hornet's-nest  
A-swinging in the wind.

Looky there!

And the first one said—"What is it?"  
Said the next, "We'll punch and see";  
And the next one said, a mile from there,  
"I wish we'd let it be!"

Looky there!

And they hunted and they hal-looed;  
And the next thing they did raise  
Was a bobbin' bunny cottontail  
That vanished from their gaze.

Looky there!

One said it was a hot baseball,  
Zippt through the brambly thatch,  
But the others said 'twas a note by post,  
Or a telegraph-despatch.

Looky there!



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## THE HOOSIER BOOK

So they hunted and they hal-looed;  
And the next thing they did sight  
Was a great big bulldog ehasing them,  
And a farmer, hollerin' "Skite!"  
Looky there!

And the first one said, "Hi-jinktum!"  
And the next, "Hi-jinktum-jee!"  
And the last one said, "Them very words  
Had just occurred to me!"  
Looky there!

### 142 *A Few of the Bird-Family*

**T**HE Old Bob-white, and Chipbird;  
The Flicker, and Chewink,  
And little hopty-skip bird  
Along the river-brink.

The Blaekbird, and Snowbird,  
The Chieken-hawk, and Crane;  
The glossy old bla & Crow-bird,  
And Buzzard down the lane.

The Yellowbird, and Redbird,  
The Tomtit, and the Cat;  
The Thrush, and that Redhead-bird  
The rest's all pickin' at!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The Jay-bird, and the Bluebird,  
The Sapsuck, and the Wren—  
The Cockadoodle-doo-bird,  
And our old Settin'-hen!

143      *The Toy Penny-Dog*

**M**A put my Penny-Dog  
Safe on the shelf,  
And left no one home but him,  
Me and myself;  
So I clumbed a big chair  
I pushed to the wall—  
But the Toy Penny-Dog  
Ain't there at all!  
I went back to Dolly—  
And *she* 'uz gone too,  
And little Switch 'uz layin' there;—  
And Ma says "*Boo!*"  
And there she wuz a-peepin'  
Through the front-room door:  
And I ain't goin' to be a bad  
Little girl no more!

## HOME-FOLKS

144

### *Home-Folks*

HOME-FOLKS!—Well, that-air name, to me  
Sounds jis the same as *poetry*—  
That is, ef poetry is jis  
As sweet as I've hearn tell it is!

Home-Folks—they're jis the same as *kin*—  
All brung up, same as *we* have bin,  
Without no overpowerin' sense  
Of their oncommon consequence!

They've bin to school, but not to git  
The habit fastened on 'em yit  
So as to ever interfere  
With *other* work 'at's waitin' here:

Home-Folks has crops to plant and plow,  
Er lives in town and keeps a cow;  
But whether country-jakes er town-,  
They know when eggs is up er down!

La! can't you *spot* 'em—when you meet  
'Em *anywheres*—in field er street?  
And can't you see their faces, bright  
As circus-day, heave into sight?

H  
Kind  
Good

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And can't you hear their "Howdy!" clear  
As a brook's chuckle to the ear,  
And allus find their laughin' eyes  
As fresh and clear as morning skies?

And can't you—when they've gone away  
Jis feel 'em shakin' hands, all day?  
And feel, too, you've bin higher raised  
By sich a meetin'?—God be praised!

Oh, Home-Folks! you're the best of all  
'At ranges this terreschul ball,—  
But, north er south, er east er west,  
It's home is where you're at your best.—

It's home—it's home your faces shine,  
In-nunder your own fig and vine—  
Your fambly and your neighbors 'bout  
Ye, and the latch-string hangin' out

Home-Folks—*at home*,—I know o' one  
Old feller now 'at hain't got none.—  
Invite him—he may hold back some—  
But *you* invite him, and he'll come.

145

### *Mister Hop-Toad*

**H**OWDY, Mister Hop-Toad! Glad to see you out!  
Bin a month o' Sund'ys sence I seen you hereabout.  
Kind o' bin a-layin' in, from the frost and snow?  
Good to see you out ag'in, it's bin so long ago!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Plows like slicin' cheese, and sod's loppin' over even;  
Loam's like gingerbread, and clod's softer'n deceivin'—  
Mister Hop-Toad, honest-true — Spring-time — don't you  
love it?  
You old rusty rascal you, at the bottom of it!

Oh! oh! oh!  
I grabs up my old hoe;  
But I sees *you*,  
And s' I, "Ooh-oo!"  
Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

Make yurse'f more comfo'bler—square round at your  
ease—  
Don't set saggin' slaunchwise, with your nose below your  
knees.  
Swell that fat old throat o' yourn and lemme see you  
swaller;  
Straighten up and h'ist your head!—*You* don't owe a  
dollar!—  
Hain't no mor'gage on your land—ner no taxes, nuther;  
*You* don't haf to work no roads, even ef you'd ruther.  
'F I was you, and *fixed* like you, I raily wouldn't keer  
To swop fer life and hop right in the presidential cheer!

Oh! oh! oh!  
I hauls back my old hoe;  
But I sees *you*,  
And s' I, "Ooh-oo!"  
Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Long about next Aprile, hoppin' down the furry,  
Won't you mind I ast you what 'peared to be the hurry?—  
Won't you mind I hooked my hoe and hauled you back and  
smiled?—

W'y, bless you, Mister Hop-Toad, I love you like a child!  
S'pose I'd want to 'flict you any more'n what you air?—  
S'pose I think you got no rights 'cept the warts you wear?  
Hulk, sulk, and blink away, you old bloat-eyed rowdy!—  
Hain't you got a word to say?—Won't you tell me  
"Howdy"?

Oh! oh! oh!

I swish round my old hoe;

But I sees *you*,

And s' I, "Ooh-oooh!

Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

116

### *Uncle Sidney's Logic*

**P**A wunst he scold' an' says to me,—  
"Don't *play* so much, but try  
To *study* more, and nen you'll be  
A great man, by an' by."  
Nen Uncle Sidney says, "You let  
Him *be* a boy an' play.—  
The greatest man on earth, I bet,  
'Ud trade with him to-day!"

147      *The Schoolboy's Favorite*

*Over the river and through the wood  
Now Grandmother's cap I spy;  
Hurrah for the fun! Is the pudding done?  
Hurrah for the pumpkin-pie!*

—SCHOOL READER.

**F**ER any boy 'at's little as me,  
Er any little girl,  
That-un's the goodest poetry-piece  
In any book in the worl'!  
An' ef grown-peoples wuz little ag'in  
I bet they'd say so, too,  
Ef they'd go see *their* ole Gran'ma,  
Like our Pa lets us do!

*Over the river an' through the wood  
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:  
Hurrah for the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—  
Hurrah for the punkin-pie!*

An' I'll tell you *why* 'at's the goodest piece:—  
'Cause it's ist like we go  
To *our* Gran'ma's, a-visitun there,  
When our Pa he says so;  
An' Ma she fixes my little cape-coat  
An' little fuzz-cap; an' Pa  
He tucks me away—an' yells "*Hoo-ray!*"—  
An' whacks Ole Cay, an' drives the sleigh  
Fastest you ever saw!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

*Over the river an' through the wood  
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:  
Hurrah fer the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—  
Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!*

An' Pa ist snuggles me 'tween his knees—  
An' I he'p hold the lines,  
An' peek out over the buffalo-robe;—  
An' the wind ist *blows!*—an' the snow ist snows!—  
An' the sun ist shines! an' shines!—  
An' th' old horse tosses his head an' coughs  
Th' frost back in our face.—  
An' I' ruther go to my Gran'ma's  
Than any other place!

*Over the river an' through the wood  
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:  
Hurrah fer the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—  
Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!*

An' all the peoples they is in town  
Watches us whizzin' past  
To go a-visitun *our* Gran'ma's,  
Like we all went there last;—  
But *they* can't go, like ist *our* folks  
An' Johnny an' Lotty, an' three  
Er four neighbor-childerns, an' Rober-ut Volney  
An' Charley an' Maggy an' me!

*Over the river an' through the wood  
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:  
Hurrah fer the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—  
Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!*

*The Little Mock-Man*

THE Little Mock-man on the Stairs—  
 He mocks the lady's horse 'at rares  
 At bi-sickles an' things,—  
 He mocks the mens 'at rides 'em, too;  
 An' mocks the Movers, drivin' through,  
 An' hollers "Here's the way you do  
 With them-air hitchin'-strings!"  
 "Ho! ho!" he'll say,  
 Ole Settlers' Day,  
 When they're all jogglin' by,—  
 "You look like *this*,"  
 He'll say, an' twis'  
 His mouth an' squint his eye  
 An' 'tend like *he* wuz beat the bass  
 Drum at both ends—an' toots and blares  
 Ole dinner-horn an' puffs his face—  
 The Little Mock-man on the Stairs!

The Little Mock-man on the Stairs  
 Mocks all the peoples all he cares  
 'At passes up an' down!  
 He mocks the chickens round the door,  
 An' mocks the girl 'at scrubs the floor,  
 An' mocks the rich, an' mocks the pore,  
 An' ever'thing in town!  
 "Ho! ho!" says he,  
 To you er me;

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' ef we turns an' looks,  
He's all cross-eyed  
An' mouth all wide  
Like Giu ts is, in books,—  
"Ho! ho!" he yells, "look here at me,"  
An' rolls his fat eyes roun' an' glares,—  
"You look like *this!*" he sa, s, says he—  
The Little Mock-man on t'ie Stairs!

*The Little Mock—*

*The Little Mock—*

*The Little Mock-man on the Stairs,*  
*He mocks the music-box an' clock,*  
*An' roller-sofy an' the chairs;*  
*He macks his Pa an' spec's he wears;*  
*He mocks the man 'at picks the pears*  
*An' plums an' peaches on the shares;*  
*He mocks the monkeys an' the bears*  
*On picture-bills, an' rips an' tears*  
*'Em dozen,—an' mocks ist all he cares,*  
*An' EVERYBODY EVER'wheres!*

### 149 *Summer-Time and Winter-Time*

**I**N the golden noon-shine,  
Or in the pink of dawn;  
In the silver moonsine,  
Or when the moon is gone;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Open eyes, or drowsy lids,  
'Wake or 'most asleep,  
I can hear the katydids,—  
"Cheep! Cheep! Cheep!"

Only in the winter-time  
Do they ever stop,  
In the chip-and-splinter-time,  
When the backlogs pop,—  
Then it is, the kettle-lids,  
While the sparkles leap,  
Lisp like the katydids,—  
"Cheep! Cheep! Cheep!"

150 *My Dancin'-Days Is Over*

**W**HAT is it in old fiddle-chunes 'at makes me ketch  
my breath  
And ripples up my backbone tel I'm tickled most  
to death?—  
Kind o' like that sweet-sick feelin', in the long sweep of  
a swing,  
The first you ever swung in, with yer first sweetheart  
i jing!—  
Yer first picnic—yer first ice-cream—yer first o' ever-  
*thing*  
'At happened 'fore yer dancin'-days wuz over!

I never understood it—and I s'pose I never can,—  
But right in town here, yisterd'y, I heerd a pore blind  
man

THE HOOSIER BOOK

A-fiddlin' old "Gray Eagle"—*And-sir!* I jes' stopped  
my load

O' lay and listened at him—yes, and watched the way he  
"bow'd,"—

And back I went, plum forty year', with boys and girls  
I knowed

And loved, lo g 'fore my dancin'-days wuz over!—

At high noon in yer city,—with yer blame' 'lectric-Cars  
A-hummin' and a-screechin' past—and bein' and G.  
A. R.'s

A-marchin'—and fire-inges,—*All* the noise, the whole  
street through,

Wuz lost on me!—I only heard a whippewill er two,  
It 'peared-like kind o' callin' 'erost the darkness and the  
dew,

Them ni g's afore my dancin'-days wuz over.

T 'uz Chused'y-night at Wetherell's, er We'n'sd'y-night at  
Strawn's,

Er Fourth-o'-July-night at n . . . Tomps's house er John's!—  
With old Lew Church fro Sugar Crick, with that old  
fiddle he

Had sawed clean through the Army, from Atlanty to  
the sea—

And yit he'd fetched her home ag'in, so's he could play  
fer me

One't more afore my dancin'-days wuz over!

The woods 'at's all be'n cut away wuz growin' same as  
then;

The youngsters all wuz boys ag'in 'at's now all oldish  
men;

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And all the girls 'at *then* wuz girls—I saw 'em, one  
and all,  
As *plain* as then—the middle-sized, the short-and-fat, and  
tall—  
And 'peared-like, I danced "Tucker" fer 'em up and  
down the wall  
Jes' like afore my dancin'-days wuz over!

. . . . .  
The facts is, I wuz *dazed* so 'at I clean fergot jes' where  
I raily wuz,—a-blockin' streets, and still a-standin' there:  
I heard the *po-leece* yellin', but my ears wuz kind o'  
*blurred*—  
My eyes, too, fer the odds o' that,—bekase I thought I  
heard  
My wife 'at's dead a-laughin'-like, and jokin', word-fer-  
word  
Jes' like afore her dancin'-days wuz over.

151

### "Home Ag'in"

I 'M a-feelin' ruther sad,  
Fer a father proud and glad  
As I am—my only child  
Home, and all so rickonciled!  
Feel so strange-like, and don't know  
What the mischief ails me so!  
'Stid o' bad, I ort to be  
Feelin' good pertickerly—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yes, and extry thankful, too,  
'Cause my nearest kith and kin,  
My Elviry's schoolin' 's through,  
And I' got her home ag'in—  
Home ag'in with me!

Same as ef her mother'd been  
Livin', I have done my best  
By the girl, and watchfulest;  
Nussed her—keerful' as I could—  
From a baby, day and night,—  
Drawin' on the neighborhood  
And the women-folks as light  
As needssesity 'ud 'low—  
'Cept in "teethin'," onc't, and fight  
Through black-measles. Don't know now  
How we ever saved the child!  
Doc *he'd* give her up, and said,  
As I stood there by the bed  
Sort o' foolin' with her hair  
On the hot, wet pillar there,  
"Wuz no use!"—And at them-air  
Very words she waked and smiled—  
Yes, and *knowed* me. And that's where  
I broke down, and simply jes'  
Bellered like a boy—I guess!—  
*Women* claim I did, but I  
Allus helt I didn't cry  
But wuz laughin',—and I *wuz*,—  
Men don't cry like *women* does!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Well, right then and there I felt  
'T 'uz her mother's doin's, an',  
Jes' like to mys'f, I knelt  
Whisperin', "I understand." . . .  
So I've raised her, you might say,  
Stric'ly in the narrer way  
'At her mother walked therein—  
Not so quite religiously,  
Yit still strivin'-like to do  
Ever'thing a father *could*  
Do he knowed the *mother* would  
Ef she'd lived—And now all's through  
And I' got her home ag'in—  
Home ag'in with me!

And I' been so lonesome, too,  
Here o' late, especially,—  
"Old Aunt Abigail," you know,  
Ain't no company;—and so  
Jes' the hired hand, you see—  
Jonas—like a relative  
More—sence he come here to live  
With us, nigh ten year' ago.  
Still he don't count much, you know,  
In the way o' company—  
Lonesome, 'peared-like, 'most as me!  
So, as I say, I' been so  
Special lonesome-like and blue,  
With Elviry, like she's been,  
'Way so much, last two or three  
Year'—But now she's home ag'in—  
Home ag'in with me!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Driv in fer her yisterday,  
Me and Jonas—gay and spry,—  
We jes' cut up, all the way!—  
Yes, and sung!—tel, blame it! I  
Keyed my voice up 'bout as high  
As when—days 'at I wuz young—  
“Buckwheat-notes” wuz all they sing.  
Jonas bantered me, and 'greed  
To sing one 'at town-folks sing  
Down at Split Stump 'er High-Low—  
Some new “ballet,” said he, 'at he'd  
Learnt—about “The Grape-vine Swing.”  
And when *he* quit, *I* begun  
To chime up my voice and run  
Through the what's-called “scales” and “do  
Sol-me-fa's” I *ust* to know—  
Then let loose old *favorite* one,  
“*Hunters o' Kentucky!*” *My!*  
Tel I thought the boy would *die!*  
And we *both* langhed—Yes, and still  
Heerd more laughin', top the hill;  
Fer we'd missed Elviry's train,  
And she'd lit out 'cross the fields,—  
Dewdrops dancin' at her heels,  
And cut up old Smoots's lane  
So's to meet us. And there in  
Shaddler o' the chinkypin,  
With a danglin' dogwood-bough  
Bloomin' 'bove her—See her now!—  
Sunshine sort o' flickerin' down  
And a kind o' laughin' all  
Round her new red parasol,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Tryin' to git at *her!*—well—like  
I jumped out and showed 'em how—  
Yes, and jes' the place to strike  
That-air mouth o' hern—as sweet  
As the blossoms breshed her brow  
Er sweet-williams round her feet—  
White and blushy, too, as she  
“Howdied” up to Jonas, and  
Jienked her head, and waved her hand.  
“Hey!” says I, as she bounced in  
The spring-wagon, reachin' back  
To give *me* a lift, “whoop-ee!”  
I-says-ec, “yon're home ag'in—  
Home ag'in with me!”

Lord! how *wild* she wuz, and glad,  
Gittin' home!—and things she had  
To inquire about, and talk—  
Plowin', plantin', and the stock—  
News o' neighborhood; and how  
Wuz the Deem-girls doin' now,  
Sence that-air young chicken-hawk  
They was “tamin'” soared away  
With their settin'-hen, one day?—  
(Said she'd got Mame's postal-card  
'Bout it, very day 'at she  
Started home from Bethany.)  
How wuz produce—eggs, and lard?—  
Er wuz stores still claimin' “hard  
Times,” as usual? And, says she,  
Troubled-like, “How's Deedie—say?  
Sence pore child e-loped away

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And got back, and goin' to 'ply  
Fer school-license by and by—  
And where's 'Lijy workin' at?  
And how's 'Aunt' and 'Uncle Jake'?  
How wuz 'Old Maje'—and the eat?  
And wuz Marthy's baby fat  
As his 'Humpty-Dumpty' ma?  
Sweetest thing she ever saw!—  
Must run 'crost and see her, too,  
Soon as she turned in and got  
Supper fer us—smokin'-hot—  
And the 'dishes' all wuz through,—"  
*Sich* a supper! W'y, I set  
There and et, and et, and et!—  
Jes' et on, tel Jonas he  
Pushed his chair back, laughed, and says,  
"I could walk *his* log!" and we  
All laughed then, tel 'Viry she  
Lit the lamp—and I give in!—  
Riz and kissed her: "Heaven bless  
You!" says I—"you're home ag'in—  
Same old dimpie in your chin,  
Same white apern," I-says-ee,  
"Same sweet girl, and good to see  
As your *mother* ust to be,—  
And I' got you home ag'in—  
Home ag'in with me!"

I turns then to go on by her  
Through the door—and see her eyes  
Both wuz swimmin', and she tries

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

To say somepin'—can't—and so  
Grabs and hugs and lets me go.  
Noticed Aunty'd made a fire  
In the settin'-room and gone  
Back where her p'serves wuz on  
Bilin' in the kitchen. I  
Went out on the porch and set,  
Thinkin'-like. And by and by  
Heerd Elviry, soft and low,  
At the organ, kind o' go  
A mi-anderin' up and down  
With her fingers 'mongst the keys—  
"Vacant Chair" and "Old Camp-Groun'." . . .  
Dusk was moist-like, with a breeze  
Lazin' round the locus'-trees—  
Heerd the hosses champin', and  
Jonas feedin', and the hogs—  
Yes, and katydids and frogs—  
And a tree-toad, somers. Heerd  
Also whipperwills.—*My land!*—  
All so mournful ever'where—  
Them out here, and her in there,—  
'Most like 'tendin' *services!*  
*Anyway*, I must 'a' jes  
Kind o' drapped asleep, I guess;  
'Cause when Jonas must 'a' passed  
Me, a-comin' in, I knowed  
Nothin' of it—yit it seemed  
Sort o' like I kind o' dreamed  
'Bout him, too, a-slippin' in,  
And a-watchin' back to see  
If I wuz asleep, and then

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Passin' in where 'Viry wuz ;  
And where I declare it does  
'Pear to me I heerd him say,  
Wild and glad and whisperin'—  
'Peared-like heerd him say, says-ee,  
"Ah! I got you home ag'in—  
Home ag'in with me!"

152      *To "Uncle Remus"*

**W**E love your dear old face and voice—  
We're *all* Miss Sally's Little Boys,  
Climbin' your knee,  
In ecstasy,  
Rejoicin' in your Creeturs' joys  
And trickery.

The Lord who made the day and night,  
He made the Black man and the White;  
So, in like view,  
We hold it true  
That He hain't got no favorite—  
Unless it's you.

153      *A Feel in the Chris'mas-Air*

**T**HEY'S a kind o' *feel* in the air, to me,  
When the Chris'mas-times sets in,  
That's about as much of a mystery  
As ever I've run ag'in'!—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

For instunee, now, whilse I gain in weight  
And ginerall health, I swear  
They's a *goneness* somers I can't quite state—  
A kind o' *feel* in the air.

They's a *feel* in the Chris'mas-air goes right  
To the spot where a man *lives* at!—  
It gives a feller a' appetite—  
They ain't no doubt about *that!*—  
And yit they's *somcpin'*—I don't know what—  
That follers me, here and there,  
And ha'nts and worries and spares me not—  
A kind o' *feel* in the air!

They's a *feel*, as I say, in the air that's jest  
As blame-don sad as sweet!—  
In the same ra-sho as I feel the best  
And am spryest on my feet,  
They's allus a kind o' sort of a' *ache*  
That I can't lo-eate no-where;—  
But it comes with *Chris'mas*, and no mistake!—  
A kind o' *feel* in the air.

Is it the racket the childern raise?—  
W'y, *no!*—God bless 'em!—*no!*—  
Is it the eyes and the checks ablaze—  
Like my *own* wuz, long ago?—  
Is it the bleat o' the whistle and beat  
O' the little toy-drum and blare  
O' the horn?—*No! no!*—it is jest the sweet—  
The sad-sweet *feel* in the air.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

154

*Cassander*

"CASSANDER! O Cassander!"—her *mother's voice*  
seems cle'r

As ever, from the old back-porch, a-hollerin' fer her—  
specially in airy Spring—like May, two year' ago—  
Last time she hollered fer her,—and Cassander didn't hear!

Cassander wuz so chirpy-like and sociable and free,  
And good to ever'body, and wuz even good to me  
Though *I* wuz jes' a common—well, a farm-hand, don't  
you know,  
A-workin' on her father's place, as pore as pore could be!

Her bein' jes' a' only child, Cassander had her way  
A good-'eal more'n other girls; and neighbors ust to say  
She looked most like her Mother, but wuz turned most  
like her Pap,—  
Except *he* had no use fer *town*-folks then—ner *yit to-day!*

I can't claim she encouraged *me*: She'd let me drive her in  
To town sometimes, on Saturd'ys, and fetch her home  
ag'in,  
Tel one't she 'scused "Old Moll" and me,—and some  
blame' city-chap,  
*He* driv her home, two-forty style, in face o' kith and kin.

She even tried to make him stay fer supper, but I 'low  
He must 'a' kind o' 'spicioned some objections.—Anyhow,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Her mother callin' at her, whilse her father stood and  
shook  
His fist,—the town-chap turnt his team and made his  
partiu' bow.

"Cassander! You, Cassander!"—hear her mother jes' as  
plain,  
And see Cassander blushin' like the peach-tree down the  
lane,  
Whilse I sneaked on apast her, with a sort o' hang-dog  
look,  
A-feelin' cheap as sorghum and as green as sugar-cane!

(You see, I'd *skooted* when she met her *town-beau*—when,  
in fact,  
Ef I'd had sense I'd *stayed* fer her.—But sense wuz what  
I lacked!  
So I'd cut home ahead o' her, so's I could tell 'em what  
Wuz keepin' her. And—you know how a jealous fool'll  
act!)

I past her, I wuz sayin',—but she never turnt her head;  
I swallered-like and cle'ed my th'out—but that wuz all  
I said;  
And whilse I hoped fer some word back, it wuzn't what  
I got.—  
That girl'll not stay stiller on the day she's layin' dead!

Well, that-air silence *lasted!*—Ust to listen ever' day  
I'd be at work and hear her mother callin' thataway;  
I'd *sight* Cassander, mayby, cuttin' home acrost the blue  
And drizzly fields; but nary answer—nary word to say!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Putt in about two weeks o' that—two weeks o' rain and mud,

Er mostly so: I couldn't plow. The old crick like a flood:  
And, lonesome as a borried dog, I'd wade them old woods through—

The dogwood blossoms white as snow, and redbuds red as blood.

*Last* time her mother called her—sich a morning like as now:

The robins and the bluebirds, and the blossoms on the bough—

And this wuz yit 'fore breckfust, with the sun out at his best,

And hosses kickin' in the barn—and dry enough to plow.

"Cassander! O Cassander!" . . . And her only answer—  
What?—

A letter, twisted round the cookstove damper, smokin'-hot,

A-statin': "I wuz married on that day of all the rest,  
The day my husband fetched me home—ef you ain't all fergot!"

"Cassander! O Cassander!" seems, allus, 'long in May,  
I hear her mother callin' her—a-callin', night and day—

"Cassander! O Cassander!" allus callin', as I say,

"Cassander! O Cassander!" jes' a-callin' thataway.

*Our Queer Old World*

*For them 'at's here in airliest infant stages,  
It's a hard world:*

*For them 'at gits the knocks of boyhood's ages,  
It's a mean world:*

*For them 'at nothin's good enough they're gittin',  
It's a bad world:*

*For them 'at learns at last what's right and fittin',  
It's a good world.*

—THE HIRED MAN.

**I**T'S a purty hard world you find, my child—  
It's a purty hard world you find!

You fight, little rascall and kick and squall,  
And snort out medic' spoon and all!

When you're here . . . er you'll change yer mind  
And simmer down sort half-rickonciled.

But *now*—Jee!-

*My!*-mun-nee!

It's a purty hard world, my child!

It's a purty mean world you're in, my lad—

It's a purty mean world you're in!

We know, of course, in your schoolboy-days

It's a world of too many troublesome ways

Of tryin' things over and startin' ag'in,—

Yit *your* chance beats what your *parents* had.

But *now*—Oh!

Fire-and-tow!

It's a purty mean world, my lad!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

It's a purty bad world you've struck, young chap—

It's a purty bad world you've struck—

But *study* the cards that you hold, you know,  
And your hopes will sprout and your mustache grow,

And your store-clothes likely will change your luck,

And you'll rake a rich ladybird into yer lap!

But *now*—Doubt

All things out,—

It's a purty bad world, young chap!

It's a purty good world this is, old man—

It's a purty good world this is!

For all its follies and shows and lies—

It's rainy weather, and cheeks likewise,

And age, hard-hearin' and rheumatiz,—

*We're* not a-faultin' the Lord's own plan—

All things jest

At their best —

It's a purty good world, old man!

### 156      *The Rhymes of Ironquill*

TO EUGENE F. WARE

I'VE allus held—till jest of late—

That *Poetry* and me

Got on best, not to 'sociate—

That is, *most* poetry;

But t'other day my *son-in-law*,

Milt—be'n in town to mill—

Fetcht home a present-like, fer Ma,—

The Rhymes of Ironquill.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Milt ust to teach; and, 'course, *his* views  
Ranks over *common* sense;—  
That's *biased* me, till I refuse  
'Most all he rickommends.—  
But Ma *she* read and read along  
And cried, like women will,  
About that "Washerwoman's Song"  
In Rhymes of Ironquill.

And then she made *me* read the thing,  
And found my specs and all;  
And I jest leant back there—i jing—  
My cheer ag'inst the wall—  
And read and *read*, and read and *read*,  
All to myse'f—until  
I lit the lamp and went to bed  
With Rhymes of Ironquill!

I propped myse'f up there, and—*durn!*—  
I never shet an eye  
Till daylight!—hogged the whole concern  
Tee-total, mighty nigh!—  
I'd sigh sometimes, and cry sometimes,  
Er laugh jest fit to kill—  
Clean *captured*-like with them-air rhymes  
O' that-air Ironquill!

Read that-un 'bout old "Marmaton"  
'At hain't be'n ever "sized"  
In Song before—and yit's rolled on  
Jest same as 'postrophized!—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Putt me in mind o' *our* old erick  
At *Freeport*—and the *mill*—  
And Hinehman's Ford—till jest *homesick*—  
Them Rhymes of Ironquill!

Read that-un, too, 'bout "Game o' Whist,"  
And likenin' Life to fun  
Like *that*—and playin' out yer fist,  
However cards is run:  
And them "Tobacker-Stemmers' Song"  
They sung with sich a will  
Down 'mongst the misery and wrong—  
In Rhymes of Ironquill.

And old John Brown, who broke the sod  
Of Freedom's faller field  
And sowed his *heart* there, thankin' God  
Pore slaves would git the yield—  
Rained his last tears fer them and *us*  
To irrigate and till  
A crop of Song as glorions  
As Rhymes of Ironquill.

And—sergeant, died there in the War,  
'At talked, out of his head . . .  
He went "back to the Violet Star,"  
I'll bet—jest like he said!—  
Yer Wars kin riddle bone and flesh,  
And blow out brains, and spill  
Life-blood,—but *Somepin'* lives on, fresh  
As Rhymes of Ironquill.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

157

*The Smitten Purist*

AND THE CHARMING MISS SMITH'S EFFECT UPON HIM

**T**HWEET Poethy! let me *lithp* forthwith,  
That I may thling of the name of Smith—  
Which name, alath!  
In Harmony hath  
No adequate rhyme, leht you grant me thith,—  
That the thimple thibillant thound of *eth*—  
(Which to thave my thoul, I can not expreth!)  
Thuth I may thhingingly,  
Wooingly and winningly  
Thu—thu—thound in the name of Smith.

O give me a name that will rhyme with Smith,—  
For wild and weird ath the sthrange name ith,  
I would sthrangle a sthrain  
And a thad refrain  
Faint and sthweet ath a whithpered kissth;  
I would thhing thome thong for the mythic mitth  
Who beareth the thingular name of Smith—  
The dathzlingly brilli-ant,  
Rarely rethilliant  
Ap—pup—pellation of Smith!

O had I a name that would rhyme with Smith—  
Thome rhythmical tincture of rethonant blith—  
Thome melody rare  
Ath the cherubth blare

THE HOOSIER BOOK

On them little trumpeths they're foolin' with—  
I would thit me down, and I'd thhing like thith  
Of the girl of the thingular name of Smith—  
    The sthrangely curiouth,  
    Rich and luxuriouth  
Pup—patronymic of Smith!

158

*An Idiot*

I 'M on'y thist a' idiot—  
    That's what folks calls a feller what  
    Ain't got no mind  
    Of any kind,  
Ner don't know nothin' he's forgot.—  
    I'm one o' *them*—But I know why  
    The bees buzz *tais* way when they fly,—  
    'Cause honey it gits on their wings.  
    Ain't thumbs and fingers funny things?

What's money? Hooh! it's thist a hole  
Punched in a round thing 'at won't roll  
    'Cause they's a string  
    Poked through the thing  
And fastened round your neck—that's all!  
    Ef I could git my money off,  
    I'd buy whole lots o' whoopin'-cough  
    And give it to the boy next door  
    Who did 'cause he ain't got no more.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

What is it when you die? *I* know,—  
You can't wake up ag'in, ner go  
To sleep no more—  
Ner kick, ner snore,  
Ner lay and look and watch it snow;  
And when folks slaps and pinches you—  
You don't keer nothin' *what* they do.  
No honey on the *angels'* wings!  
Ain't thumbs and fingers funny things?

159 *The Hired Man's Faith in Children*

I BELIEVE *all* children's good,  
Ef they're only *understood*,—  
Even *bad* ones, 'pears to me,  
'S jes' as good as they kin be!

160 "Them Old Cheery Words"

PAP he allus ust to say,  
"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"  
Liked to hear him thataway,  
In his old split-bottomed cheer  
By the fireplace here at night—  
Wood all in,—and room all bright,  
Warm and snug, and folks all here:  
"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Me and 'Lize, and Warr'n and Jess  
And Eldory home fer two  
Weeks' vacation; and, I guess,  
Old folks tickled through and through,  
Same as *we* was,—“Home onc't more  
Fer another Chris'mus—shore!”  
Pap 'ud say, and tilt his cheer,—  
“Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!”

Mostly Pap was ap' to be  
Ser'ous in his “daily walk,”  
As he called it; giner'ly  
Was no hand to joke er talk.  
Fac's is, Pap had never be'n  
Rugged-like at all—and then  
Three years in the army had  
He'pped to break him purty bad.

Never *flinched!* but frost and snow  
Hurt his wovnd in winter. But  
You bet *Mother* knowed it, though!—  
Watched his feet and made him putt  
On his flannen; and his knee,  
Where it never healed up, he  
Claimed was “well now—migl.ty near—  
Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!”

“Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!”  
Pap 'ud say, and snap his eyes. . . .  
Row o' apples sputter'n' here  
Round the hearth, and me and 'Lize

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Craekin' hicker'-nuts; and Warr'n  
And Eldory parehin' corn;  
And whole raft o' young folks here.  
"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

Mother tuk most comfort in  
Jes' a-he'ppin' Pap: She'd fill  
His pipe fer him, er his tin  
O' hard eider; er set still  
And read fer him out the pile  
O' newspapers putt on file  
Whilse he was with Sherman—(She  
Knowed the whole war-history!)

Sometimes he'd git het up some.—  
"Boys," he'd say, "and you girls, too,  
Chris'mus is about to come;  
So, as you've a right to do,  
*Celebrate* it! Lots has died,  
Same as Him they crucified,  
That you might be happy here.  
Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

Missed his voice last Chris'mus—missed  
Them old cheery words, you know.  
Mother helt up tel she kissed  
All of us—then had to go  
And break down! And I laughs: "Here!  
'Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"  
"Them's his very words," sobbed she,  
"When he asked to marry me."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"—

"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

Over, over, still I hear,

"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

Yit, like him, I'm goin' to smile

And keep cheerful all the while:

*Allus* Chris'mus *There*—And here

"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

## HIS PA'S ROMANCE

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### *His Pa's Romance*

ALL 'at I ever want to be  
Is ist to be a man like Pa  
When he wuz young an' married Ma!  
Uncle he telled us yisterdy  
Ist all about it then—'cause they,  
My Pa an' Ma, wuz bofe away  
To 'tend P'tracted Meetin', where  
My Pa an' Ma is allus there  
When all the big "Revivals" is,  
An' "Love-Feasts," too, an' "Class," an' "Prayer,"  
An' when's "Comoonian Servicis."  
An', yes, an' Uncle said to not  
To never tell *them* nor let on  
Like we knowed now ist how they got  
F'rst married. So—while they wuz gone—  
Uncle he telled us ever'thing—  
'Bout how my Pa wuz ist a pore  
Farm-boy.—He says, I tell you *what*,  
Your Pa *wuz* pore! But neighbors they  
All liked him—all but one old man  
An' his old wife that folks all say  
Nobody liked, ner never can!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yes, sir! an' Uncle purt' nigh swore  
About the mean old man an' way  
He treat' my Pa!—'cause he's a pore  
Farm-hand—but prouder 'an a king—  
An' ist work' on, he did, an' wore  
His old patched clo'es, ist anyway,  
So he saved up his wages—then  
He ist worked on an' saved some more,  
An' ist worked on, ist night an' day—  
Till, sir, he save' up nine er ten  
Er humnerd dollars! But he keep  
All still about it, Uncle say—  
But he ist thinks—an' thinks a heap!  
Though what he wuz a-thinkin', Pa  
He never tell' a soul but Ma—  
(Then, course, you know, he wuzn't Pa,  
An', course, you know, she wuzn't Ma—  
They wuz ist sweethearts, course you know);  
'Cause Ma wuz ist a girl, about  
Sixteen; an' when my Pa he go  
A-courtin' her, her Pa an' Ma—  
The very first they find it out—  
Wuz maddest folks you ever saw!  
'Cause it wuz her old Ma an' Pa  
'At hate my Pa, an' toss their head,  
An' ist raise Ned! An' her Pa said  
He'd ruther see his daughter dead!  
An' said she's ist a child!—an' so  
Wuz Pa!—An' ef he wuz man-grown  
An' only man on earth below,  
His daughter shouldn't marry him  
Ef he's a king an' on his throne!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Pa's chances then looked mighty slim  
Fer certain, Unele said. But he—  
He never told a soul but her  
What he wuz keepin' quiet fer.  
Her folks ist lived a mile from where  
He lived at—an' they drove past there  
To git to town. An' ever' one  
An' all the neighbors they liked her  
An' showed it! But her folks—no, sir!—  
Nobody liked her parunts none!  
An' so when they shet down, you know,  
On Pa—an' old man tell' him so—  
Pa ist went back to work, an' she  
Ist waited. An', sir! purty soon  
Her folks they thought he's turned his eye  
Some other way—'cause by-an'-by  
They heard he'd *rented* the old place  
He worked on. An' one afternoon  
A neighbor, that had bu'st' a trace,  
He tell' the old man they wuz signs  
Around the old place that the young  
Man wuz a-fixin' up the old  
Log cabin some, an' he had brung  
New furnichur from town; an' told  
How th' old house 'uz whitewashed clean  
An' sweet—wiv mornin'-glory vines  
An' hollyhawks all 'round the door  
An' winders—an' a bran'-new floor  
In th' old porch—an' wite-new green-  
An'-red pump in the old sweep-well!  
An', Uncle said, when he hear tell

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

O' all them things, the old man he  
Ist grin' an' says, he "reckon' now  
Some gal, er widdler anyhow,  
That silly boy he's coaxed at last  
To marry him!" he says, says-ee,  
"An' ef he has, 'so mote it be'!"  
Then went back to the house to tell  
His *wife* the news, as he went past  
The smokehouse, an' then went on in  
The kitchen, where his daughter she  
Wuz washin', to tell *her*, an' grin  
An' try to worry her a spell!  
The mean old thing! But Uncle said  
She ain't ery mach—ist pull her old  
Sunbonnet forrards on her head—  
So's old man he can't see her face  
At all! An' when he s'pose he scold'  
An' jaw enough, he ist clear' out  
An' think he's boss of all the place!

Then Uncle say, the first you know  
They's go' to be a Circus-show  
In town! an' old man think he'll take  
His wife an' go. An' when she say  
To take their daughter, too, *she* shake  
Her head like she don't *want* to go;  
An' when he sees she wants to stay,  
The old man takes her, anyway!  
An' so she went! But Uncle he  
Said she looked mighty sweet that day,  
Though she wuz pale as she could be,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

A-speslully a-drivin' by  
Wite where her bean lived at, you know;  
But out the corner of his eye  
The old man watch' her; but she throw  
Her pairsol 'round so she can't see  
The house at all! An' then she hear  
Her Pa an' Ma a-talkin' low  
And kind o' laughin'-like; but she  
Ist set there in the seat behind,  
P'tendin' like she didn't mind.  
An', Uncle say, when they got past  
The young man's place, an' 'pearantly  
He wuzn't home, but off an' gone  
To town, the old man turned at last  
An' talked back to his daughter there,  
All pleasant-like, from then clean on  
Till they got into town, an' where  
The Circus wuz, an' on inside  
O' that, an' through the crowd, on to  
The very top seat in the tent  
Wite next the band—a-bangin' through  
A tune 'at bu'st his yeers in two!  
An' there the old man serouged an' tried  
To make his wife set down, an' she  
A-yellin'! But ist what she meant  
He couldn't hear, ner couldn't see  
Till she turned 'round an' pinte. Then  
He turned an' looked—an' looked again! . . .  
He ist saw neighbors ever'where—  
But, sir, *his daughter* wuzn't there!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An', Uncle says, he even saw  
Her beau, you know, he hated so;  
An' he wuz with some other girl.  
An' then he heard the Clown "Haw-haw!"  
An' saw the horses wheel an' whid  
Around the ring, an' heard the zipp  
O' the Ringmaster's long slim whip—  
But that whole Circus, Uncle said,  
Wuz all inside the old man's head!

An' Uncle said, he didn't find  
His daughter all that afternoon—  
An' her Ma says she'll lose her mind  
Ef they don't find her purty soon!  
But, though they looked all day, an' stayed  
There fer the night p'formance—not  
No use at all!—they never laid  
Their eyes on her. An' then they got  
Their team out, an' the old man shook  
His fist at all the town, an' then  
Shook it up at the moon ag'in,  
An' said his time 'nd come, some day!  
An' jerked the lines an' driv away.

Uncle, he said, he 'spect, that night,  
The old man's madder yet when they  
Drive past the young man's place, an' hear  
A fiddle there, an' see a light  
Inside, an' shadders light an' gay  
A-dancin' 'crost the winder-blind.  
An' some young chaps outside yelled, "Say!  
What 'pears to be the hurry—hey?"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But the old man ist whipped the lines  
An' streaked past like a runaway!  
An' now you'll be su'prised, I bet!--  
I hardly ain't quit laughin' yet  
When Uncle say, that jamboree  
An' dance an' all—w'y, that's a sign  
That any old man ort to see,  
As plain as 8 and 1 makes 9,  
That they's a *weddin'* wite inside  
That very house—he's whippin' so  
To git apast—an', sir! the bride  
There's his own daughter! Yes, an' oh!  
She's my Ma now—an' young man she  
Got married, he's my Pa! *Whoop-ee!*  
But Uncle say to not laugh all  
The laughin' yet, but please save some  
To kind o' spice up what's to come!

Then Uncle say, about next day  
The neighbors they begin to call  
An' wish 'em well, an' say how glad  
An' proud an' tickled ever' way  
Their friends all is—an' how they had  
The lovin' prayers of ever' one  
That had homes of their own! But none  
Said nothin' 'bout the home that she  
Had run away from! So she sighed  
Sometimes—an' wunst she purt' nigh cried.

Well, Uncle say, her old Pa, he  
Ist like to died, he wuz so mad!  
An' her Ma, too! But by-an'-by  
They cool down some.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' 'bout a week,  
She want to see her Ma so bad,  
She think she'll haf to go! An' so  
She coax him; an' he kiss her cheek  
An' say, Lord bless her, *course* they'll go!  
An', Uncle say, when they're bofe come  
A-knockin' there at her old home—  
W'y, first he know, the door it flew  
Open, all quick, an' she's jerked in,  
An', quicker still, the door's banged to  
An' locked: an' crosst the winder-sill  
The old man pokes a shotgun through  
An' says to git! "You stold my child,"  
He says; "an', now she's back, w'y, you  
Clear out, this minute, er I'll kill  
You! Yes, an' I 'ull kill her, too,  
Ef you don't go!" An' then, all wild,  
His young wife begs him please to go!  
An' so he turn' an' walk'—all slow  
An' pale as death, but awful still  
An' ca'm--back to the gate, an' on  
Into the road, where he had gone  
So many times alone, you know!  
An', Uncle say, a whipperwill  
Holler so lonesome, as he go  
On back to'rds home, he say he 'spec'  
He ist 'ud like to wring its neck!  
An' I ain't think he's goin' back  
All by hisse'f—but Uncle say  
That's what he does, an' it's a fac'!  
An' 'pears-like he's gone back to *stay*—  
'Cause there he stick', ist thataway,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' don't go nowheres any more,  
Ner don't nobody ever see  
Him set his foot outside the door—  
Till 'bout five days, a boy loped down  
The road, a-comin' past from town,  
An' he called to him from the gate  
An' sent the old man word: He's thought  
Things over now; an', while he hate  
To lose his wife, he think she ought  
To mind her Pa an' Ma an' do  
Whatever *they* advise her to.  
An' sends word, too, to come an' git  
Her new things an' the furnichur  
That he had special' bought fer her—  
'Cause, now that they wuz goin' to quit,  
She's free to ist have all of it;—  
So, fer his love fer her, he say  
To come an' git it, wite away.  
An' spangl that very afternoon,  
Here come her Ma—ist 'bout as soon  
As old man could hitch up an' tell  
Her "hurry back!" An' 'bout as quick  
As she's drove there to where my Pa—  
I mean to where her son-in-law—  
Lives at, he meets her at the door  
All smilin', though he's awful pale  
An' trimbly—like he's ist been sick;  
He take her in the house—An', 'fore  
She knows it, they's a cellar-door  
Shet on her, an' she hears the clik  
Of a' old rusty padlock! Then,  
Uncle, he say, she kind o' stands

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' thinks--an' thinks--an' thinks ag'in--  
An' mayby thinks of her own child  
Locked up--like her! An' Uncle smiled,  
An' I ist laughed an' clapped my hands!  
An' there she stayed! An' she can cry  
Ist all she want I an' yell an' kick  
To ist her heart's content! an' try  
To pry out wiv a quiltin'-stick!  
But Uncle say he guess at last  
She 'bout give up, an' holler' through  
The door-crack fer to please to be  
So kind an' good as send an' tell  
The old man, like she want him to,  
To come, 'fore night, an' set her free,  
Er--they wuz rats down there! An' yell  
She did, till, Uncle say, it soured  
The morning's milk in the back yard'  
But all the answer reached her, where  
She's skeered so in the dark down there,  
Wuz ist a mutterin' that she heard--  
*"I've sent him word!--I've sent him word!"*  
An' shore enough, as Uncle say,  
He *has* "sent word!"

Well, it's plum night  
An' all the house is shet up tight--  
Only one winder 'bout half-way  
Raised up, you know; an' ain't no light  
Inside the whole house, Uncle say.  
Then, first you know, there where the team

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Stands hitehd yet, there the old man stands—  
A' old tin lantern in his hands  
An' monkey-wrench; an' he don't seem  
To make things out, a-standin' there.  
He comes on to the gate an' feels  
An' fumbles fer the latch—then hears  
A voice that chills him to the heels—  
“You halt! an' stand right where you air!”  
Then, sir! my—my—his son-in-law,  
There at the winder wiv his gun,  
He tell the old man what he's done:  
“You hold *my* wife a prisoner—  
An' *your* wife, drat ye! I've got *her*!  
An' now, sir,” Uncle say he say,  
“You ist turn round an' climb wite in  
That wagon, an' drive home ag'in  
An' bring my wife back wite away,  
An' we'll trade then—an' uot before  
Will I unlock my cellar-door—  
Not fer your wife's sake ner your own,  
But *my* wife's sake—an' hers alone!”  
An', Uncle say, it don't sound like  
It's so, but yet it is!—He say,  
From wite then, somepin' seem' to strike  
The old man's funny-bone some way;  
An', minute more, that team o' his  
Went tearin' down the road *k'whis!*  
An' in the same two-forty style  
Come whizzin' back! An' oh, that-air  
Sweet girl a-cryin' all the while,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Thinkin' about her Ma there, shet  
In her own daughter's cellar, where  
Ist week or so *she's* kep' house there,  
She hadn't time to clean it yet!  
So when her Pa an' her they git  
There—an' the young man grab' an' kiss  
An' hug her, till she make him quit  
An' ask him where her mother is.  
An' then he smile' an' try to not;  
Then slow-like find th' old padlock key,  
An' blow a' oat-hull out of it,  
An' then stoop down there where he's got  
Her Ma locked up so keerfully—  
An' where, wite there, he say he thought  
It *ort* to been *the old man*—though  
Uncle, he say, he reckon not—  
When out she bonced, all tickled so  
To taste fresh air ag'in an' find  
Her folks wunst more, an' grab' her child  
An' cry an' laugh, an' even go  
An' hug the old man; an' he wind  
Her in his arms, an' laugh, an' pat  
Her back, an' say he's riconciled,  
In such a happy scene as that,  
To swap his daughter for her Ma,  
An' have so smart a son-in-law  
As *they* had! "Yes, an' he's my Pa!"  
I laugh' an' yell', "Hooray-hooraw!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

162 *Almost Beyond Endurance*

**I** AIN'T a-goin' to cry no more, no more!  
 I'm got ear-ache, an' Ma can't make  
 It quit a-tall;  
 An' Carlo bite my rubber-ball  
 An' puncture it; an' Sis she take  
 An' poke' my knife down through the stable-floor  
 An' loozed it—blame it all!  
 But I ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!  
 An' Aunt Mame *wrote* she's comin', an' she *can't*—  
 Folks is come *there!*—An' I don't care  
 She is my Aunt!  
 An' my eyes stings; an' I'm  
 Ist coughin' all the time,  
 An' hurts me so, an' where my side's so sore  
 Grampa felt where, an' he  
 Says "Mayby it's *pleurasy!*"  
 But I ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!  
 An' I elumbed up an' nen falled off the fence,  
 An' Herbert he ist laugh at me!  
 An' my fi'-cents  
 It sticked in my tin bank, an' I ist tore  
 Punt' nigh by thumbnail off, a-tryin' to git  
 It out—nen *smash* it!—An' it's in there yit!  
 Bu: I ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!  
 Oo! I'm so wickud!—An' my breath's so *hot*—  
 Ist like I run an' don't res' none  
 But ist run on when I ought to not;  
 Yes, an' my chin

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' lips's all warpy, an' teeth's so fast,  
An' 's a place in my throat I can't swaller past—  
An' they all hurt so!—  
An' oh, my-oh!  
I'm a-stirtin' ag'in—  
I'm a-starvin' ag'in, but I *won't*, fer shore!—  
*I ist ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!*

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*The Lisper*

**E**LSIE MINGUS *lipsis*, she does!  
She lives wite acrosst from us  
In Miz. Ayers'uz house 'at she  
Rents part to the Mingsuz.—  
Yes, an' Elsie plays wiv me.

Elsie lipsis so, she can't say  
Her own name, *ist anyway!*—  
She says "*Elthy*"—like they wuz  
Feathers on her words, an' they  
Ist stick on her tongue like fuzz.

*My!* she's *purty*, though!—An' when  
She *lipsis*, w'y, she's *purty nen!*  
When she telled me, wunst, her doll  
Wuz so "thweet," an' I p'ten'  
*I lisp too,—she laugh'—'at's all!—*

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

She don't never git mad none—  
'Car she know I'm ist in fun.—  
Elsie she ain't one bit sp'iled.—  
Of all childerns—ever' one—  
She's the *ladylikest* child!—

My Ma say she is! One time  
Elsie start to say the rhyme,  
"Thing a thong o' thixpenth"—*H'hee!*  
I ist yell! An' Ma say I'm  
Unpolite as I can bel

Wunst I went wiv Ma to call  
On Elsie's Ma, an' eat an' all;  
An' nen Elsie, when we've et,  
An' we're playin' in the hall,  
Elsie say: It's etikett

Fer young gentlemens, like me,  
Eatin' when they's *company*,  
Not to never ever crowd  
Down their food, ner "thip their tea  
Ner thup thoop so awful loud!"

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### *Our Betsy*

U S CHILDERN'S all so lonesome,  
We hardly want to *play*  
Or skip or swing or anything,—  
'Cause Betsy she's away!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

She's gone to see her people  
At her old home.—But then—  
Oh! every child'll jist be wild  
When she's back here again!

### CHORUS

*Then it's whoopty-doopty dooden!—  
W'hoopy-dooden then!  
Oh! it's whoopty-doopty dooden,  
When Betsy's back again!*

She's like a mother to us,  
And like a sister, too—  
Oh, she's as sweet as things to eat  
When all the dinner's through!

And hey! to hear her laughin'!  
And ho! to hear her sing!—  
To have her back is all we lack  
Of havin' *everything!*

### CHORUS

*Then it's whoopty-doopty dooden!—  
W'hoopy-dooden then!  
Oh! it's whoopty-doopty dooden,  
When Betsy's back again!*

Oh! some may sail the northern lakes,  
And some to foreign lands,  
And some may seek old Nameless Creek,  
Or India's golden sands;

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Or some may go to Kokomo,  
And some to Mackinac,—  
But I'll go down to Morgantown  
To fetch our Betsy back.

### CHORUS

*Then it's whooply-doopty dooden!—  
Whooply-dooden then!  
Oh! it's whooply-doopty dooden,  
When Betsy's back again!*

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### *The Toy-Balloon*

**T**HEY wuz a Big Day wunst in town,  
An' little Jason's Pa  
Buyed him a little toy-balloon,  
The first he ever saw.—  
An' oh! but Jase wuz *more'n* proud,  
A-holdin' to the string  
And scrougin' through the grea'-big crowd,  
To hear the Glee Club sing.

The Glee Club it wuz goin' to sing  
In old Masonic Hall;  
An' Speakin', it wuz in there, too,  
An' soldiers, folks an' all;  
An' Jason's Pa he git a seat  
An' set down purty soon,  
A-holdin' little Jase, an' him  
A-holdin' his balloon.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' while the Speakin' 's startin' up  
An' ever'body still—  
The first you know wuz little Jase  
A-yellin' fit to kill!—  
Nen Jason's Pa jump on his seat  
An' grab up in the air,—  
But little Jason's toy-balloon  
Wuz clean away from there!

An' Jase he yelled; an' Jase's Pa,  
Still lookin' up, climb down—  
While that-air little toy-balloon  
Went bumpin' rom' an' rom'  
Ag'inst the ceilin', 'way up there  
Where ever'body saw,  
An' *they* all yelled, an' *Jason* yelled,  
An' little Jason's Pa!

But when his Pa he packed him out  
A-screamin'—nen the crowd  
Looked down an' hushed—till they looked up  
An' howled again out loud;  
An' nen the speaker, mad an' pale,  
Jist turned an' left the stand,  
An' all j'ined in the Glee Club—"Hail,  
Columby, Happy Land!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

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*Old Granny Dusk*

**O**LD Granny Dusk, when the sun goes down,  
Here *she* comes into thish-*yer* town!  
Out o' the wet black woods an' swamps  
In she traipses an' trails an' tromps—  
With her old sunbonnet all floppy an' brown,  
An' her cluckety shoes, an' her old black gown,  
Here *she* comes into thish-*yer* town!

Old Granny Dusk, when the bats begin  
To flap around, comes a-trompin' in!  
An' the katydids they rasp an' whir,  
An' the lightnin'-bugs all blink at *her*;  
An' the old Flop-toad turns in his thumbs,  
An' the bunglin' June-bug booms an' hums,  
An' the Bullfrog croaks, "O here *she* comes!"

Old Granny Dusk, though I'm 'feard o' you,  
Shore-fer-certain I'm sorry, too  
'Cause you look as lonesome an' s'ar— an' sad  
As a mother 'at's lost ever' child she had.—  
Yet never a child in thish-*yer* town  
Clings at yer hand er yer old black gown,  
Er kisses the face you're a-bendin' down.

*Billy Miller's Circus-Show*

**A**T BILLY MILLER'S Circus-Show—  
 In their old stable where it's at—  
 The boys pays twenty pins to go,  
 An' gits their money's worth at that!—  
 'Cause Billy he can climb and chalk  
 His stockin'-feet an' purt' nigh alk  
 A tight-rope—yes, an' ef he fall  
 He'll ketch, an' "skin a cat" 'at's all!

He ain't afeard to swing and hang  
 Ist by his legs!—an' mayby stop  
 An' yell "Look out!" an' nen -k-spang!—  
 He'll let loose, upside-down, an' drop  
 Wite on his hands! An' nen he'll do  
 "Contortion-acts" ist limber through  
 As "Injarubber Mens" 'at goes  
 With shore-fer-certain circus shows!

At Billy Miller's Circus-Show

He's got a circus-ring—an' they's  
 A dressin'-room,—so's he can go  
 An' dress an' paint up when he plays  
 He's somepin' else:—'cause sometimes he's  
 "Ringmaster"—hossin' like he please—  
 An' sometimes "Ephakant"—er "Bare-  
 Back Rider," prancin' out o' there!

An' sometimes—an' the best of all!—  
 He's "The Old Clown," an' got on clo'es  
 All stripud,—an' white hat, all tall  
 An' peakud—like in shore-'nuff shows,—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' got three-cornered red-mark  
On his white cheeks—ist like they do!—  
An' you'd ist die, the way he sings  
An' dances an' says funny things!

168

*Good-By er Howdy-Do*

**S**AY good-by er howdy-do—  
What's the odds betwixt the two?  
Comin'—goin', ev'ry day—  
Best friends first to go away—  
Grasp of hands you'd ruther hold  
Than their weight in solid gold  
Slips their grip while greetin' you.—  
Say good-by er howdy-do!

Howdy-do, and then, good-by—  
Mixes jes' like laugh and cry;  
Deaths and births, and worst and best,  
Tangled their contrariest;  
Ev'ry jinglin' weddin'-bell  
Skerrin' up some funer'l knell.—  
Here's my song, and there's your sigh.—  
Howdy-do, and then, good-by!

Say good-by er howdy-do—  
Jes' the same to me and you;  
'Tain't worth while to make no fuss,  
'Cause the job's put up on us!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Some One's runnin' this concern  
That's got nothin' else to learn:  
Ef *He's* willin', we'll pull through—  
Say good-by er howdy-do!

169

### *Never Talk Back*

**N**EVER talk back! sich things is repperhensible;  
A feller only hurts hisse'f that jaws a man that's  
hot;  
In a quarrel, ef you'll only keep your mouth shet and act  
sensible,  
The man that does the talkin' 'll git worsted every shot!

Never talk back to a feller that's abusin' you—  
Jes' let him carry on, and rip, and snort, and swear;  
And when he finds his blamin' and defamin' 's jes' amusin'  
you,  
You've got him clean kaffummixed,—and you want to  
hold him there!

Never talk back, and wake up the whole community  
And call a man a liar, over Law, er Politics.—  
You can lift and land him funder and with gracefuller  
impunity  
With one good jolt of silence than half a dozen kicks!

*Me and Mary*

ALL my feelin's in the Spring  
 Gits so blame contrary,  
 I can't think of anything  
 Only me and Mary!  
 "Me and Mary!" all the time,  
 "Me and Mary!" like a rhyme,  
 Keeps a-dingin' on till I'm  
 Sick o' "Me and Mary!"

"Me and Mary! Ef us two  
 Only was together—  
 Playin' like we used to do  
 In the Aprile weather!"  
 All the night and all the day  
 I keep wishin' thataway  
 Till I'm gittin' old and gray  
 Jes' on "Me and Mary!"

Muddy yit along the pike  
 Sence the Winter's freezin',  
 And the orchard's back'ard-like  
 Bloomin' out this season;  
 Only heerd one bluebird yit—  
 Nary robin ner tomtit;  
 What's the how and why of it?  
 'Spect it's "Me and Mary!"

Me and Mary liked the birds—  
 That is, *Mary* sort o'  
 Liked 'em first, and afterwards,  
 W'y, I thought *I'd* ort 'o.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And them birds—ef Mary stood  
Right here with me, like she should—  
They'd be singin', them birds would,  
All fer me and Mary.

Birds er not, I'm hopin' some  
I can git to plowin' l  
Ef the sun'll only come,  
And the Lord allowin',  
Guess to-morry I'll turn in  
And git down to work ag'in;  
This here loaferin' won't win,  
Not fer me and Mary l

Fer a man that loves, like me,  
And's afeard to name it,  
Till some other feller, he  
Gits the girl—dad-shame-it l  
Wet er dry, er clouds er sun—  
Winter gone er jes' begun—  
Outdoor work fer me er none,  
No more "Me and Mary l"

171

### *Fire at Night*

**F**IRE! Fire! Ring! and ring!  
Hear the old bell bang and ding!  
Fire! Fire! 'way at night,—  
Can't you hear?—I think you might!—  
Can't you hear them-air clangin' bells?—  
Wy, I can't hear nothin' else!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Fire! Ain't you 'wake at last!—  
Hear them horses poundin' past—  
Hear that ladder-wagon grind  
Round the corner!—and, behind,  
Hear the hose-cart, turnin' short,  
And the horses slip and snort,  
As the engine's clank-and-jar  
Jolts the whole street, near and far.  
Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire!  
Can't you h'ist that winder higher?  
La! they've all got past like "scat!" . . .  
Night's as black as my old hat—  
And it's rainin', too, at that! . . .  
Wonder where their old fire's at!

### 172 *A Fall-Crick View of the Earth-quake*

**I** KIN hump my back and take the rain,  
And I don't keer how she pours;  
I kin keep kind o' ca'in in a thunder-storm,  
No matter how loud she roars;  
I hain't much skeered o' the lightnin'  
Ner I hain't sich awful shakes  
Afeard o' *cyclones*—but I don't want none  
O' yer dad-burned old earthquakes!

As long as my legs keeps stiddy,  
And long as my head keeps plum',  
And the buildin' stays in the front lot,  
I still kin whistle, *some!*

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But about the time the old clock  
Flops off'n the mantel-shelf,  
And the bureau skoots fer the kitchen,  
I'm a-goin' to skoot, myself!

Plague-take! ef you keep me stabled  
While any earthquakes is around!—  
I'm jes' like the stock,—I'll beller  
And break fer the open ground!  
And I 'low you'd be as nervous,  
And in jes' about my fix,  
When your whole farm slides from inunder you,  
And on'y the mor'gage sticks!

Now cars hain't a-goin' to kill you  
Ef you don't drive 'erost the track;  
Crediters never'll jerk you up  
Ef you go and pay 'em baek;  
You kin stand all moral and mundane storms  
Ef you'll on'y jes' behave—  
But a' EARTHQUAKE!—well, ef it wanted you  
It 'ud husk you out o' yer grave!

173

### *Spirits at Home*

#### THE FAMILY

**T**HERE was Father, and Mother, and Emmy, and  
Jane,  
And Lou, and Ellen, and John and me—  
And Father was killed in the war, and Lou  
She died of consumption, and John did too,  
And Emmy she went with the pleurisy.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

### THE SPIRITS

Father believed in 'em all his life—  
But Mother, at first, she'd shake her head—  
Till after the battle of Champion Hill,  
When many a flag in the winder-sill  
Had crape mixed in with the white and red!

I used to doubt 'em myself till then—  
But me and Mother was satisfied  
When Ellen she set, and Father came  
And rapped "God Bless You!" and Mother's name,  
And "The Flag's up here!" . . . And we all just  
cried.

Used to come to us often, after that,  
And talk to us—just as he used to do,  
Pleasantest kind! And once, for John,  
He said he was "lonesome, but wouldn't let on—  
Fear Mother would worry, and Emmy and Lou."

But Lou was the bravest girl on earth—  
For all she never was hale and strong,  
She'd have her fun!—With her voice clean lost  
She'd laugh and joke us that "when *she* crossed  
To Father, *we'd* all come taggin' along!"

Died—just that way! And the raps was thick  
*That* night, as they often since occur,  
Extry loud! And when *Lou* got back  
She said it was Father and her—and "*whack!*"  
She tuk the table—and we knowed *her!*

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

John and Emmy, in five years more,  
Both had went.—And it seemed like fate,  
For the old home *it* burnt down.—But Jane  
And me and Ellen we built again  
The new house, here, on the old estate.

And a happier family I don't know  
Of *anywheres*—unless it's *them*,—  
Father, with all his love for Lou,  
And her there with him, and healthy, too,  
And laughin', with John and little Em.

And, first we moved in the *new* house here,  
They all dropped in for a long powwow:—  
“We like your buildin', of course,” Lon said,—  
“But wouldn't swap with you to save your head—  
For we live in the ghost of the old house now!”

### 174 *Some Christmas Youngsters*

#### I

#### THE STRENGTH OF THE WEAK

**L**AST Chris'mus, little Benny  
Wuzn't sick so bad,—  
Now he's had the worst spell  
Ever yet he had.  
Ever' Chris'mus-morning, though,  
He'll p'tend as if  
He's asleep—an' first you know  
He's got your “Chris'mus-gif'!”

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Pa he's good to *all* of us  
All the time; but when,  
Ever' time it's *Chris'mus*,  
He's as good-again!—  
'Sides our toys an' candy,  
Ever' *Chris'mus*, he  
Gives us all a quarter,  
Certain as can be!

Pa, this morning, tiptoe' in  
To make the fire, you know,  
Long 'fore it's daylight,  
An' all's ice an' snow!—  
An' Benny holler, "*Chris'mus-gif'!*"  
An' Pa jump an' say,  
"You'll only git a *dollar* if  
You skeer me thataway!"

### II

#### THE LITTLE QUESTIONER

Babe she's so always  
Wantin' more to hear  
All about *Santy Claus*,  
An' says: "*Mommy dear*,  
Where's *Santy's home* at  
When he ain't *away*?—  
An' is they *Mizzus Santy Claus*  
An' *little folks*—say?—  
*Chris'mus*, *Santy's* always *here*—  
Don't *they* want him, too?  
When it ain't *Chris'mus*  
What does he do?"

# THE HOOSIER BOOK

III

## PARENTAL CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

Parunts don't git toys an' things,  
Like you'd think they *ruther*.—  
Mighty funny Chris'mus-gif's  
Parunts gives each other l—  
Pa give Ma a barrel o' flour,  
An' Ma she give to Pa  
The nicest diuin'-table  
She know he ever saw l

## MORNING

175

### *A Hoosier Calendar*

#### JANUARY

**B**LEAK January! Cold as fate,  
And ever colder—ever keener—  
Our very hair cut while we wait  
By winds that clip it ever cleaner:  
Cold as a miser's buried gold,  
Or nethe'-deeps of old tradition—  
*Jeems January!* you're a cold  
Proposition!

#### FEBRUARY

You, February,—seem to be  
Old January's understudy,  
But play the part too vaudeville-y,—  
With wind too moist and snow too muddy—  
You overfreeze and overthaw—  
Your "Hoos'ler Jo"-like recitation  
But hints that you're, at best, a raw  
Imitation.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

### MARCH

And, March, you've got no friends to spare—  
Warm friends, I mean—unless coal-dealers,  
Or gas-well owners, pipin' where  
The piper's paid—above all spieler;  
You are a month, too, of complex  
Perversities beyond solution—  
A sort o' "loveliest of your sex"  
Institution!

### APRIL

But, April, when you kind o' come  
A-sa'nterin' down along our roadway,  
The bars is down, and we're at home,  
And you're as welcome as a show-day!  
First thing we know, the sunshine falls  
Spring-like, and drenches all Creation  
With that-'ere ba'm the poet calls  
"Inspiration."

### MAY

And May!—It's warmin' jest to see  
The crick thawed clear ag'in and dancin'—  
'Pear-like it's tickled 'most as *me*  
A-prancin' 'crosst it with my pants on!  
And then to hear the bluebird whet  
His old song up and lance it through you,  
Clean through the boy's heart beatin' yet—  
Hallylooya!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

### JUNE

June—'Li, I jest git *doped* on June!—  
The trees and grass all at their greenest—  
The round earth swung 'twixt sun and moon,  
Jest at its—so to say—serenest:—  
In country,—stars and whipperwills;  
In town,—all night the boys invadin'  
Leadin' citizens' winder-sills,  
Sair-a-nadin'.

### JULY

Fish still a-bitin'—*some*; but 'most  
Too hot fer anything but layin'  
Jest do-less like, and watchin' clo'st  
The treetops and the squirrels playin'—  
Their tail-tips switched 'bove knot and limb,  
But keepin' most in sequestration—  
Leavin' a big part to the im-  
Magination.

### AUGUST

Now when it's August—I can tell  
It by a hundred signs and over;—  
They is a mixed ripe-apple-smell  
And mashed-down grass and musty clover;  
Bees is as lazy 'most as me—  
Bee-bird eats 'em—gap's his wings out  
So lazy 'at I don't think he  
Spits their stings out!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

### SEPTEMBER

September, you appeal to all,  
Both young and old, lordly and lowly;  
You stuff the haymow, trough and stall,  
Till horse and cow's as roly-poly  
As pigs is, slopped on buttermilk  
And brand, shipstuff and 'tater-peelin's—  
And folks, too, feelin' fine as silk  
With all their feelin's!

### OCTOBER

If I'd be'n asked for my advice,  
And thought the thing out, ca'm and sober—  
Sizin' the months all once or twice,—  
I'd la'neh'd the year out with *October*. . . .  
All Nature then jest veiled and dressed  
In weddin' gyarments, ornamented  
With ripe-fruit-gems—and kissin' jest  
New-invented!

### NOVEMBER

I'm 'feared November's hopes is few  
And far between!—Cold as a Monday-  
Washday, er a lodge-man who  
You' got to pallbear for on Sunday;  
Colder and colder every day—  
The fixed official time for sighin',—  
A sinkin' state you jest can't stay  
In, or *die* in!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

DECEMBER

December—why, of course we grin  
And bear it—shiverin' every minute,  
Yet warm from time the month rolls in  
Till it skites out with Christmas in it;  
And so, for all its coldest truths  
And chill, goose-pimpled imperfections,  
It wads our lank old socks with Youth's  
Recollections.

176 *The Hired Man's Dog-Story*

*Twa dogs that were na thrang at hame  
Forgather'd ance upon a time.*

—BURNS.

**D**OGS, I contend, is jes' about  
Nigh human—git 'em studied out.  
I hold, like us, they've got their own  
Reasonin' powers 'at's theirs alone—  
Same as their tricks and habits too,  
Provin', by lots o' things they do,  
That instinct's not the only thing  
That dogs is governed by, i jing!—  
And I'll say further, on that line,  
And prove it, that they's dogs a-plenty  
Will show intelligence as fine  
As ary ten men out o' twenty!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Jevver investigate the way  
Sheep-killin' dogs goes at it—hey?  
Well, you dig up the facts and you  
Will find, first thing, they's always *two*  
Dogs goes together on that spree  
O' blood and puore dog-deviltry!  
And, then, they always go at night—  
Mind ye, it's never in daylight,  
When folks is up and wide awake,—  
No self-respectin' dogs'll make  
Mistakes o' judgment on that score,—  
And I've knowed fifty head or more  
O' slaughtered sheep found in the lot,  
Next morning the old farmer got  
His folks up and went out to feed,—  
And every livin' soul agreed  
That all night long they never heerd  
The bark o' dog ner bleat o' skeered  
And raein', tromplin' floek o' sheep  
A-skallyhootin' roun' the pastur',  
To rouse 'em from their peaceful sleep  
To that heart-renderin' disaster!

Well, now, they's aetchul evidence  
In all these facts set forth; and hence  
When, by like facts, it has been foun'  
That these two dogs—colloguin' roun'  
*At night* as thick as thieves—*by day*  
Don't go together anyway,  
And, 'pearantly, hain't never met  
Each other; and the facts is set

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

On record funder, that these smart  
Old pards in erime lives miles apart—  
Which is a trick o' theirs, to throw  
Off all suspicion, don't you know!—  
One's a *town*-dog—belongin' to  
Some good man, maybe—er to you!—  
And one's a *country*-dog, er "jay,"  
As you nickname us thataway.  
Well, now!—these is the facts I got  
(And, mind ye, these *is* facts—not *guesses*)  
To argy on, concernin' what  
Fine reasonin' powers dogs p'sesses.

My idy is,—the dog lives in  
The *town*, we'll say, runs up ag'in  
The *country*-dog, some Saturday,  
Under a' old farm-wagon, say,  
Down at the Court-house hitchin'-rack.—  
Both lifts the bristles on their back  
And show their teeth and growl as though  
They meant it pleasant-like and low,  
In case the fight hangs fire. And they  
Both wag then in a friendly way,  
The town-dog sayin':—"Seems to me,  
Last Dimoeratic jubilee,  
I seen you here in town somewhere?"  
The country-dog says:—"Right you air!—  
And right here's where you seen me, too,  
Under this wagon, watchin' you!"  
"Yes," says the town-dog,—"and I thought  
We'd *both* bear watchin', like as not."

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And as he yawns and looks away,  
The country-dog says, "What's your lay?"  
The town-dog whets his feet a spell  
And yawns ag'in, and then says,—“Well,  
Before I answer that—Ain't you  
A Mill Crick dog, a mile er two  
From old Chape Clayton's stock-farm—say?”  
“Who *told* you?” says the jay-dog—“hey?”  
And looks up, real su'prised. “*I guessed,*”  
The town-dog says—“*You* tell the rest,—  
How's old Chape's mutton, anyhow?—  
How many of 'em's ready now—  
How many's ripe enough fer use,  
And how's the hot, red, rosy juice?”  
“Mm!” says the country-dog, “I think  
I sort o' see a little blink  
O' what you mean.” And then he stops  
And turns and looks up street and lops  
His old wet tongue out, and says he,  
Liekin' his lips, all slobbery,  
“Ad-drat my melts! you're jes' my man!—  
I'll trust you, 'cause I know I can!”  
And then he says, “I'll tell you jes'  
How things is, and Chape's carelessness  
About his sheep,—fer instance, say,  
To-morry Chapes'll all be 'way  
To Sund'y-meetin'—and ag'in  
At night.” “At night? That lets us in!—  
'Better the day'”—the town-dog says—  
“'Better the deed.' We'll pray; Lord, yes!—  
May the outpourin' graec be shed  
Abroad, and all hearts comforted

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Accordin' to tneir lights!" says he,  
"And that, of course, means you and me."  
And then they both snarled, low and quiet—  
Swore where they'd meet. And both stood by it!

Jes' half-past eight on Sund'y night,  
Them two dogs meets,—the *town*-dog, light  
O' foot, though five mile' he had spanned  
O' field, beech-wood and bottom-land.  
But, as books says,—we draw a veil  
Over this chapter of the tale! . . .  
Yit when them two infernal, mean,  
Low, orn'ry whelps has left the scene  
O' carnage—chased and putt to death  
The last pore sheep,—they've yit got breath  
Enough to laugh and joke about  
The fun they've had, while they sneak out  
The woods-way for the old crick where  
They both plunge in and wash their hair  
And rench their bloody mouths, and grin,  
As each one skulks off home ag'in—  
Jes' innardly too proud and glad  
    To keep theirselves from kind o' struttin',  
Thinkin' about the fun they'd had—  
    When their blame wizzens needed cuttin'!

Dogs is deliber't.—They can bide  
Their time till s'picious all has died.  
The country-dog don't 'pear to care  
Fer town no more,—he's off somewhere  
When the folks whistles, as they head  
The team t'rds town. As I jes' said,—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Dogs is deliber't, don't forgit!  
So this-here dog he's got the grit  
To jes' deprive hisse'f o' town  
For 'bout three weeks. But time rolls romi' . . .  
Same as they *first* met:—Saturday—  
Same Court-house—hitch-rack—and same way  
The team wuz hitched—same wagon where  
The same *jay-dog* growls under there  
When same *town-dog* comes loafin' by,  
With the most innocentest eye  
And giner'l meek and lowly style,  
As though he'd never cracked a smile  
In all his mortal days!—And both  
Them dogs is strangers, you'd take oath!—  
Both keeps a-lookin' sharp, to see  
If folks is watchin'—jes' the way  
They acted that first Saturday  
They talked so confidentchully.  
“Well”—says the town-dog, in a low  
And careless tone—“Well, whatch you know?”  
“*Know?*” says the country-dog—“Lots m . . .  
Than some smart people knows—that's shor'!”  
And then, in his dog-language, he  
Explains how slick he had to be  
When some suspicious folks come romi'  
A-tryin' to track and run him down—  
Like *he'd* had anything to do  
With killin' over fifty head  
O' sheep! “Jes' think!—and *me*”—he said,  
“And me as innocent as *you*,  
That very hour, five mile' away  
In this town, like you air to-day!”

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Ah!" says the town-dog, "there's the beauty  
O' bein' *prepared* for what may be,  
And *washin'* when you've done your duty!—  
No stain o' blood on you er me  
Ner wool in *our* teeth!—*Then,*" says he,  
"When wicked men has wronged us so,  
We ort to learn to be forgivin'—  
Half the world, of course, don't know  
How the other gits its livin'!"

177

### *Her Poet-Brother*

O H! what ef little childerns all  
Wuz big as parunts is!  
Nen I'd join pa's Masonic Hall  
An' wear gold things like his!  
An' you'd "reecive," like ma, an' be  
My "hostuss"—An', gee-whizz!  
We'd *alluz* have ice-cream, ef we  
Wuz big as parunts is!

Wiv all the money mens is got—  
We'd buy a *Store* wiv that,—  
Ist candy, pies an' cakes, an' not  
No *drygoods*—'cept a hat—  
An'-plume fer *you*—an' "plug" fer me,  
An' clothes like *ma's* an' *his*,  
'At on'y ist fit *us*—ef we  
Wuz big as parunts is!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An'—ef we had a little boy  
An' girl like me an' you,—  
Our Store'd keep ever' kind o' toy  
They'd ever want us to!—  
We'd hire "Old Kriss" to 'tend to be  
The boss of all the biz  
An' ist "charge" ever'thing—ef we  
Wuz big as parunts is!

178 *I Got to Face Mother To-day!*

I' GOT to faec Mother to-day, fer a fact!—  
I' got to faec Mother to-day!  
And jes' how I'll *dare* to, an' how she will act,  
Is more than a mortal can say!  
But I' *got* to faec her—I' *got* to! And so  
Here's a' old father clean at the end of his row!

And Pink and Wade's gone to the farm fer her now—  
And I'm keepin' house fer 'em here—  
Their purty, new house—and all paid fer!—But how  
Am I goin' to meet her, and clear  
Up my actehully he'ppin' 'em both to elope?—  
('Cause Mother wuz set—and wuz no other hope!)

I don't think it's *Wade* she's so biased ag'in',  
But his *business*,—a railroadin' man  
'At runs a switch-engine, day out and day in,  
And's got to make hay while he can,—  
It's a *dangerous* job, I'll admit,—but see what  
A fine-furnished home 'at he's already got!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And *Pink*—W'y, the girl wuz just pinin' away,—  
So what could her old father do,  
When he found her, hid-like, in a loose load of hay,  
But jes' to drive on clean into  
The aidge of the city, where—singular thing!—  
Wade switched us away to the Squire, i jing!

Now—a-leavin' me here—they're driv off, with a cheer,  
On their weddin'-trip—which is to drive  
Straight home and tell Mother, and toll her back here  
And surrender me, dead er alive!  
So I'm waitin' here—not so blame' overly gay  
As I *wuz*,—'cause I' got to face *Mother* to-day!

### 179     *A Little Lame Boy's Vices*

**O**N 'Scursion-days—an' Shows—an' Fairs—  
They ain't no bad folks anywheres!—  
On street-cars—same as *you*—  
Seems like *somebody* allus sees  
I'm lame, an' takes me on their knees,  
An' holds my crutches, too—  
An' asts me what's my name, an' pays  
My fare theirse'f—On all Big Days!

The mob all *scr*—'s you an' makes  
Enough o' bluf, for goodness-sakes!  
But none of 'em *ain't* mad—  
They're only *lettin' on*.—I know;—  
An' I can tell you *why* it's so:  
They're all of 'em too *glad*—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

They're *ever' one*, jes' glad as *me*  
To be there, er they *wouldn't* bel

The man that sells the tickets snoops  
My "one-er" in, but sort o' stoops  
    An' grins out at me—then  
Looks mean an' business-like an' sucks  
His big mustache at me an' chucks  
    Too much change out again.—  
He's a *smooth citizen*, an' yit  
He don't fool *me* one little bit!

An' then, *inside*—fer all the jam—  
Folks, seems-like, all knows who I am,  
    An' tips me nods an' winks;  
An' even country-folks has made  
Me he'p eat pie an' marmalade,  
    With bottled milk fer "drinks"!—  
Folks *all's* so good to me that I—  
Sometimes—I nearly purt' near' cry.

An' all the *kids*, high-toned er pore,  
Seems better than they wuz before,  
    An' wants to kind o' "stand  
In" with a feller—see him through  
The *free* lay-out an' *sideshoves*, too,  
    An' do the bloomin' "grand"!  
On 'Scurasion-days—an' Shows an' Fairs—  
They ain't no bad folks anywheres!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

180

### *Rabbit*

I S'POSE it takes a feller 'at's be'n  
Raised in a country-town, like me,  
To 'preciate rabbits! . . . Eight er ten  
Bellerin' boys and two er three  
Yelpin' dawgs all on the trail  
O' one little pop-eyed cottontail!

'Bout the first good fall o' snow—  
So's you kin track 'em, don't you know,  
Where they've run,—and one by one  
Hop 'em up and chase 'em down  
And prod 'em out of a' old bresh-pile  
Er a holler log they're a-hidin' roum',  
Er way en-nunder the ricked cord-wood  
Er crosstie-stack by the railroad track  
'Bout a mile  
Out o' sight o' the whole ding town! . . .  
Well! them's times 'at I call good!

Rabbits!—w'y, as my thoughts goes back  
To them old boyhood days o' mine,  
I kin sic him now and see "Old Jack"  
A-plowin' snow in a rabbit-track  
And a-pitelin' over him, head and heels,  
Like a blame' hat-rack,  
As the rabbit turns fer the timber-line  
Down the County Ditch through the old  
corn-fields. . . .

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yes, and I'll say right here to you,  
Rabbits that boys has *earn't*, like that—  
Skinned and hung for a night er two  
On the old back-porch where the pump's  
done froze—

Then fried 'bout right, where your brekfust's at,  
With hot brown gravy and shortenin' bread,—  
Rabbits, like *them*—er I ort to 'a' said,  
I s'pose,  
Rabbits like *those*  
Ain't so p'ticalar pore, I guess,  
Fer *catin'* purposes!

181

### *Grampa's Choice*

**F**IRST and best of earthly joys,  
I like little girls and boys:  
Which of all do I like best?  
Why, the one that's happiest.

182

### *Thinkin' Back*

**I**'VE be'n thinkin' back, of late,  
S'prisin'!—And I'm here to tate  
I'm suspicious it's a sign  
Of age, maybe, er decline  
Of my faculties,—and yit  
I'm not feelin' old a bit—  
Any more than sixty-four  
Ain't no young man any more!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Thinkin' back's a thing 'at grows  
On a feller, I suppose—  
Older 'at he gits, i jack,  
More he keeps a-thinkin' back!  
Old as old men git to be,  
Er as middle-aged as me,  
Folks'll find us, eye and mind  
Fixed on what we've left behind—  
Rehabilitatin'-like  
Them old times we used to hike  
Out barefooted fer the crick,  
'Long 'bout Aprile first—to pick  
Out some "warmest" place to go  
In a-swimmin'—*Ooh! my-oh!*  
Wonder now we hadn't died!  
Grate horseradish on my hide  
Jes' a-thinkin' how cold then  
That-'ere worter must 'a' be'n!

Thinkin' back—W'y, goodness me!  
I kin call their names and see  
Every little tad I played  
With, er fought, er was afraid  
Of, and so made *him* the best  
Friend I had of all the rest!  
Thinkin' back, I even hear  
Them a-callin', high and clear,  
Up the crick-banks, where they seem  
Still hid in there—like a dream—  
And me still a-pantin' on  
The green pathway they have gone!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Still they hide, by bend er ford—  
Still they hide—but, thank the Lord  
(Thinkin' back, as I have said),  
I hear laughin' on ahead!

183 *The Raggedy Men on Children*

**C**HILDREN—take 'em as they run—  
You kin bet on ev'ry one!—  
Treat 'em right and reco'nize  
Human souls is all one size.

Jevver think?—the world's best men  
Wears the same souls they had when  
They run barefoot—'way back when  
All these little children air.

Heerd a boy, not long ago,  
Say his parents *sassed* him so,  
He'd *correct* 'em, ef he could,—  
Then be good ef *they'd* be good.

184 *'Lizabuth-Ann on Bakin'-Day*

**O**UR Hired Girl, when it's bakin'-day  
She's out o' patience allus,  
An' tells us "Hike *outdoors* an' play,  
An' when the cookies's done," she'll say,  
"Land sake! she'll come an' call us!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' when the little doughbowl's all  
1st heapin'-full, she'll come an' call—  
*Non say*, "She ruther take a switchin'  
Than have a pack o' pesky childern  
Trackin' round the kitchen!"

185

### "Mother"

I 'M gittin' old—I know,—  
It seems so long ago—  
So long sence John was here!  
He went so young!—our Jim  
'S as old now 'most as him,—  
Close on 'to thirty year'!

I know I'm gittin' old—  
I know it by the *cold*,  
From time 'at first frost flies.—  
Seems like—sence John was here—  
Winters is more severe;  
And winter I de-spise!

And yet it seems, some days,  
John's here, with his odd ways . . .  
Comes soon-like from the corn-  
Field, callin' "Mother" at  
Me—like he called me that  
Even 'fore Jim was *born*!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

When Jim come—La! how good  
Was all the neighborhood!—  
And Doctor!—when I heard  
Him joke John, kind o' low,  
And say: Yes, folks could go—  
Pa needn't be afeard!

When Jim come,—John says-'e—  
A-bendin' over me  
And baby in the hed—  
And jes' us three,—says-'e  
"Our little family!"  
And that was all he said . . .

And cried jes' like a child!—  
Kissed me again, and smiled,—  
'Cause I was cryin' too.  
And here I am *again*  
A-cryin', same as then—  
Yet happy through and through!

The old home's most in mind  
And joys long left behind . . .  
Jim's little h'istin' crawl  
Across the floor to where  
John set a-rockin' there . . .  
(I'm *gittin' old*—That's all!)

I'm gittin' old—no doubt—  
(*Healthy* as all git-out!)

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But,—strangest thing I do,—  
I cry so *easy* now—  
I cry jes' anyhow  
The fool-tears wants me to!

But Jim *he* won't be told  
'At "Mother" 's gittin' old! . . .  
Hugged me, he did, and smiled  
This morning, and bragged "*shore*"  
He loved me even more  
Than when he was a child!

That's *his* way; but ef *John*  
Was here now, lookin' on,  
He'd shorely know and see:  
"But, 'Mother,'" s'pect he'd say,  
"S'pose you *air* gittin' gray,  
You're younger yet than *me!*"

I'm gittin' old,—because  
Our young days, like they was,  
Keeps comin' back—so clear,  
'At little Jim, once more,  
Comes h'istin' 'crost the floor!  
Fer John's old rockin'-cheer!

O *beautiful!*—to be  
A-gittin' old, like me! . . .  
*Hey, Jim! Come in now, Jim!*  
*Your supper's ready, dear!*  
(How more, every year,  
He looks and acts like *him!*)

THE HOOSIER BOOK

186 *What Little Saul Got, Christmas*

US parents mostly thinks our own's  
The smartest childern out!  
But Widder Shelton's little Saul  
Beats all I know about!  
He's weakly-like—in p'int o' health,  
But strong in word and deed  
And heart and head, and snap and spunk,  
And allus in the lead!

Comes honest by it, fer his Pa—  
Afore he passed away—  
He was a leader—(Lord, I'd like  
To hear him preach to-day!)  
He led his flock; he led in prayer  
Fer spread o' Peace—and when  
Nothin' but War could spread it, he  
Was first to lead us then!

So little Saul has grit to take  
Things jes' as they occur;  
And Sister Shelton's prond o' him  
As he is proud o' her!  
And when she "got up"—jes' fer him  
And little playmates all—  
A Chris'mus-tree—they ever'one  
Was there but little Saul.

Pore little chap was sick in bed  
Next room; and Doc was there,  
And said the childern might file past,  
But go right back to where

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

The *tree* was, in the settin'-room.  
And Saul jes' laid and smiled—  
Ner couldn't nod, ner wave his hand,  
It hurt so—Bless the child!

And so they left him there with Doc  
And warm tear of his Ma's . . .  
Then—suddent-like—high over all  
Their laughture and applause—  
They heerd: "I don't care what you git  
On your old Chris'mus-tree,  
'Cause I'm got somepin' you all hain't—  
I'm got the pleurisy!"

187

### *Goldie Goodwin*

**M**Y old Unele Sidney *he* says it's a sign  
All over the Worl', an' ten times out of nine,  
He can tell by the *name* of a child ef the same  
Is a good er bad youngin—ist knows by their name!—  
So he says, "It's the vurry best sign in the Worl'  
That *Goldie Goodwin* is a good little girl."—  
An' says, "First she's *gold*—then she's *good*—an' behold,  
*Good's* 'bout 'leventy-hunnerd times better than *gold!*"

*Symptoms*

I 'M not a-workin' now!—  
 I'm jes' a-layin' round  
 A-lettin' *other* people plow,—  
 I'm cumberin' the ground! . . .  
 I jes' don't *keer!*—I've done my sheer  
 O' sweatin'!—Anyhow,  
 In this dad-blasted weather here,  
 I'm not a-workin' *now!*

The corn and wheat and all  
 Is doin' well enough!—  
 They' got clean on from now tel Fall  
 To show what kind o' stuff  
 'At's in their *own* dad-burn backbone;  
 So, while the Scriptur's 'low  
 Man ort to reap as he have sown—  
 I'm not a-workin' now!

The grass en-nunder these-  
 Here ellums 'long "Old Blue,"  
 And shadders o' the sugar-trees,  
 Beats farmin' quite a few!  
 As feller says,—I ruther guess  
 I'll make my comp'ny bow  
 And *snooze* a few hours—more er less.—  
 I'm not a-vorkin' now!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

189 "Blue-Monday" at the Shoe Shop

IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES

O H, if we had a rich boss  
Who liked to have us rest,  
With a dime's lift for a benehmate  
Financially distressed,—  
A boss that's been a "jour." himself  
And ain't forgot the pain  
Of restin' one day in the week,  
Then back to work again!

*Chorus*

*Ho, it's hard times together,  
We've had 'em, you and I,  
In all kinds of weather,  
Let it be wet or dry;  
But I'm bound to earn my livelihood  
Or lay me down and die!*

Poverty compels me  
To face the snow and sleet,—  
For poor wife and children  
Must have a crust to eat.—  
The sad wail of hunger  
It would drive me insane.  
If it wasn't for Blue-Monday  
When I git to work again!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

### *Chorus*

*Ho, it's hard times together,  
We've had 'em, you and I,  
In all kinds of weather,  
Let it be wet or dry;  
But I'm bound to earn my livelihood  
Or lay me down and die!*

Then it's stoke up the stove, Boss,  
And drive off the damps:  
Cut out me tops, Boss,  
And lend me your clamps;—  
Pass us your tobacky  
Till I give me pipe a start. . . .  
Lor', Boss! how we love ye  
For your warm kynd heart!

### *Chorus*

*Ho, it's hard times together,  
We've had 'em, you and I,  
In all kinds of weather,  
Let it be wet or dry;  
But I'm bound to earn my livelihood  
Or lay me down and die!*

THE HOOSIER BOOK

190

*It's Got to Be*

“WHEN it's *got* to be,”—like I always say,  
As I notice the years whiz past,  
And know each day is a yesterday,  
When we size it up, at last,—  
Same as I said when my boyhood went  
And I knowed *we* had to quit,—  
“It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!”—  
So I said “Good-by” to it.

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!  
So at least I always try  
To kind o' say in a hearty way,—  
“Well, it's *got* to be. Good-by!”

The time just melts like a late, last snow,—  
When it's *got* to be, it melts!  
But I aim to keep a cheerful mind,  
Ef I can't keep nothin' else!  
I knowed, when I come to twenty-one,  
That I'd soon be twenty-two,—  
So I waved one hand at the soft young man,  
And I said, “Good-by to *you!*”

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!  
So at least I always try  
To kind o' say, in a cheerful way,—  
“Well, it's *got* to be.—Good-by!”

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

They kep' a-goin', the years and years,  
Yet still I smiled and smiled,—  
For I'd said "Good-by" to my single life,  
And now had a wife and child:  
Mother and son and the father—one,—  
Till, last, on her bed of pain,  
She jes' smiled up, like she always done,—  
And I said "Good-by" again.

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!  
So at least I always try  
To kind o' say, in a humble way,—  
"Well, it's *got* to be. Good-by!"

And then my boy—as he growed to be  
Almost a man in size,—  
Was more than a pride and joy to me,  
With his mother's smilin' eyes.—  
He gimme the slip, when the War broke out,  
And followed me. And I  
Never knowed till the first fight's end . . .  
I found him, and then, . . . "Good-by."

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!  
So at least I always try  
To kind o' say, in a patient way,  
"Well, it's *got* to be. Good-by!"

I have said, "Good-by!—Good-by!—Good-by!"  
With my very best good will,  
All through life from the first,—and I  
Am a cheerful old man still:

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But it's *got* to end, and it's *goin'* to end!  
And this is the thing I'll do,—  
With my last breath I will laugh, O Death,  
And say "Good-by" to you! . . .

It's *got* to be! And again I say,—  
When his old scythe circles high,  
I'll laugh—of course, in the kindest way,—  
As I say "Good-by!—Good-by!"

### 191 *Hoosier Spring-Poetry*

**W**HEN ever'thing's a-goin' like she's got-a-goin' now,—  
The maple-sap a-drippin', and the buds on ever'  
bough

A-sort o' reachin' up'ards all a-trimblin', ever' one,  
Like 'bout a million brownie-fists a-shakin' at the sun!  
The childern wants their shoes off 'fore their breakfast,  
and the Spring

Is here so good-and-plenty that the old hen has to sing!—  
When things is goin' *thisaway*, w'y, that's the sign, you  
know,

That ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!  
Old Winter's up and dusted, with his dratted frost and  
snow—

The ice is out the crick ag'in, the freeze is out the ground,  
And you'll see faces thawin' too ef you'll jes' look around!—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

The bluebird's landin' home ag'in, and glad to git the  
chance,  
'Cause here's where he belongs at, that's a settled circum-  
stance!

And him and mister robin now's a-chumin' fer the show,  
Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

The sun ain't jes' p'tendin' now!—The ba'm is in the  
breeze—

The trees'll soon be green as grass, and grass as green as  
trees;

The buds is all jes' *eechin'*, and the dogwood down the run  
Is bound to bu'st out laughin' 'fore another week is done;

The bees is wakin', gap'y-like, and fumblin' fer their buzz,  
A-thinkin', ever-wakefuler, of other days that wuz,—

When all the land wuz orchard-blooms and clover, don't  
you know. . . .

Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

192

### *Rub Says*

**T**HE moon in the sky is a custard-pie,  
An' the clouds is the cream pour'd o'er it,  
An' all o' the glittering stars in the sky  
Is the powdered-sugar for it.

. . . . .  
Jolnts—he's proudest boy in town—  
'Cause his Mommy she cut down  
His Pa's pants fer Jolnts—an' there  
Is 'nuff left fer 'nother pair!



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## THE HOOSIER BOOK

One time, when her Ma was gone,  
Little Elsie she put on  
All her Ma's fine clothes—an' hlaek  
Grow-grain-silk, an' sealskin-sack;  
Nen while she wuz flouncin' out  
In the hall an' round about,  
Some one knocked, an' Elsie she  
Clean forgot an' run to see  
Who's there at the door—an' saw  
Mighty quick it wuz her Ma.  
But ef she ain't saw at all,  
She'd a-knowed her parasol!

. . . . .  
Gran'pas an' Gran'mas is funniest folks!—  
Don't be jolly, ner tell no jokes,  
Tell o' the weather an' frost an' snow  
O' that cold New Year's o' long-ago;  
An' then they sigh at each other an' cough  
An' talk about suddently droppin' off.

**Y**OU have more'n likely noticed,  
When you *didn't* when you *could*,  
That jes' the thing you *didn't* do  
Was jes' the thing you *should*.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

194 *Name Us no Names no More*

SING, oh, rarest of roundelays!—  
Sing the hilarity and delight  
Of our childhood's gurgling, giggling days!—  
When our eyes were as twinkling-keen and bright  
And our laughs as thick as the stars at night,  
And our breasts volcanoes of pent hoo-rays!—  
When we grouped together in secret mirth  
And sniggered at everything on earth—  
But specially when strange visitors came  
And we learned, for instance, that their name  
was Fishback—or Mothershead—or Philpott—  
or Dalrymple—or Fullenwider—or Applewhite—  
or Hunnicutt—or Tubbs—or Oldshoe!  
*"Oldshoe!"—jeminy-jee!" thinks we—*  
*"Hain't that a funny name!—tee-hee-hee!"*

Barefoot racers from everywhere,  
We'd pelt in over the back porch floor  
For "the settin'-room," and cluster there  
Like a clot of bees round an apple-core,  
And sleeve our noses, and pinafore  
Our smearease-mouths, and slick our hair,  
And stare and listen, and try to look  
Like "Agnes" does in the old school-book,—  
Till at last we'd catch the visitor's name,—  
Redinhouse, Lippsecomb, or Burlingame,—  
or Winkler—or Smock—or Tutewiler—or  
Daubenspeck—or Throckmorton—or Rubottom  
—or Bixler—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

"'Bixler!' jeminy-jee!" thinks we—  
"Hain't that a funny name!—tee-hee-hee!"

Peace!—Let be!—Fall away!—Fetch loose!—  
We can't have fun as we had fun *then!*—  
Shut up, Memory!—what's the use?—  
When the girls and boys of 8 and 10  
Are now—well, *matronly*, or *old men*,  
And Time has (so to say) "cooked our goose!"  
But ah! if we only *could* have back  
'The long-lost laughs that we now so lack  
And so vainly long for,—how—we—*could*  
Naturely wake up the neigh-ber-hood,  
over the still heterogenious names ever un-  
rolling from the endless roster of ortho-  
graphic actualities,—such names—for fur-  
ther instance of good faith—simply such  
names as Vanderlip—or Funkhouser—or  
Smoot—or Galbreath—or Frybarger—or  
Dinwiddie—or Bouslog—or Puterbaugh—  
or Longnecker—or Hartpence—or Wig-  
gins—or Pangborn—or Bowersox—  
"Bowersox"! Gee!—But alas! now we  
Taste salt tears in our "tee-hee-hee"!

## POEMS HERE AT HOME

195      *The Poems Here at Home*

THE Poems here at Home!—Who'll write 'em down,  
Jes' as they air—in Country and in Town?  
Sowed thick as clods is 'crost the fields and lanes,  
Er these-'ere little hop-toads when it rains!—  
Who'll "voice" 'em? as I heerd a feller say  
'At spéechified on Freedom, t'other day,  
And soared the Eagle tel, it 'peared to me,  
She wasn't bigger'n a bumble-bee!

Who'll sort 'em out and set 'em down, says I,  
'At's got a stiddy hand enough to try  
To do 'em jestic 'thout a-foolin' some,  
And headin' facts off when they want to come?—  
Who's got the lovin' eye, and heart, and brain  
To reco'nize 'at nothin's made in vain—  
'At the Good Bein' made the bees and birds  
And brutes first choice, and us-folks afterwards?

What We want, as I sense it, in the line  
O' poetry is somepin' Yours and Mine—  
Somepin' with live stock in it, and out-doors,  
And old crick-bottoms, snags, and sycamores:  
Putt weeds in—pizen-vines, and underbresh,  
As well as johnny-jump-ups, all so fresh  
And sassy-like!—and groun'-squir'ls,—yes, and "We,"  
As sayin' is,—“We, Us and Company!”

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Putt in old Nature's sermons,—them's the best,—  
And 'casion'ly hang up a hornets' nest  
'At boys 'at's ran away from school can git  
At handy-like—and let 'em tackle it!  
Let us be wrought on, of a truth, to feel  
Our proneness fer to hurt more than we heal,  
In ministratin' to our vain delights—  
Fergittin' even insec's has their rights!

No "Ladies' Amaranth," ner "Treasury" book—  
Ner "Night Thoughts," nuther—ner no "Lally Rook"  
We want some poetry 'at's to Our taste,  
Made out o' truck 'at's jes' a-goin' to waste  
'Cause smart folks thinks it's altogether too  
Outrageous common—'cept fer me and you!—  
Which goes to argy, all sich poetry  
Is 'bliged to rest its hopes on You and Me.

196

### *Nothin' to Say*

**N**OTHIN' to say, my daughter! Nothin' at all to say!  
Gyrls that's in love, I've noticed, giner'ly has their  
way!

Yer mother did, afore you, when her folks objected to me—  
Yit here I am and here you air! and yer mother—where is  
she?

You look lots like yer mother: purty much same in size;  
And about the same complected; and favor about the eyes:  
Like her, too, about livin' here, because *she* couldn't stay;  
It'll 'most seem like you was dead like her!—but I hain't  
got nothin' to say!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

She left you her little B<sup>b</sup>le—writ yer name acrost the  
page—

And left her ear-bobs fer you, ef ever you come of age;  
I've alluz kep' 'em and gynarded 'em, but ef yer goin'  
away—

Nothin' to say, my daughter! Nothin' at all to say!

You don't rickollect her, I reckon? No; you wasn't a year  
old then!

And now yer—how old *air* you? W'y, child, not "*twenty*"!  
When?

And yer nex' birthday's in Aprile? and you want to git  
married that day?

I wisht yer mother was livin'!—but I hain't got nothin' to  
say!

Twenty year! and as good a gyrl as parent ever found!  
There's a straw ketched on to yer dress there—I'll bresh it  
off—turn round.

(Her mother was jes' twenty when us two run away.)

Nothin' to say, my daughter! Nothin' at all to say!

### 197 *The Absence of Little Wesley*

**S**ENCE little Wesley went, the place seems all so  
strange and still—

W'y, I miss his yell o' "Gran'pap!" as I'd miss the whip-  
perwill!

And to think I ust to *scold* him fer his everlastin' noise,  
When I on'y rickollect him as the best o' little boys!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

I wisht a hunderd times a day 'at he'd come trompin' in,  
And all the noise he ever made was twic't as loud ag'in!—  
It 'u'd seem like some soft music played on some fine in-  
strument,  
'Longside o' this loud lonesomeness, sence little Wesley  
went!

Of course the clock don't tick no louder than it ust to do—  
Yit now they's times it 'pears like it 'u'd bu'st itse'f in two!  
And let a rooster, suddent-like, crow som'ers clos't around,  
And seems's ef, mighty nigh it, it 'u'd lift me off the  
ground!

And same with all the cattle when they bawl around the  
bars,

In the red o' airly morning, er the dusk and dew and stars.  
When the neighbors' boys 'at passes never stop, but jes'  
go on,

A-whistlin' kind o' to theirse'v's—sence little Wesley's  
gone!

And then, o' nights, when Mother's settin' up uncommon  
late,

A-bilin' pears er somepin', and I set and smoke and wait.  
Tel the moon out through the winder don't look bigger'n a  
dime,

And things keeps gittin' stiller—stiller—stiller all the  
time,—

I've ketchied myse'f a-wishin' like—as I clumb on t'he cheer  
To wind the clock, as I hev done fer more'n fifty year—  
A-wishin' 'at the time hed come fer us to go to bed,  
With our last prayers, and our last tears, sence little Wes-  
ley's dead!

At "The Literary"

FOLKS in town, I reckon, thinks  
 They git all the fun they air  
 Rinnin' loose 'round!—but, 'y jinks!  
 We' got fun, and fun to spare,  
 Right out here amongst the ash-  
 And oak-timber ever'where!  
 Some folks else kin cut a dash  
 'Sides town-people, don't fergit!—  
 'Specially in *winter-time*,  
 When they's snow, and roads is fit.  
 In them circumstances I'm  
 Resig-nated to my lot—  
 Which putts me in mind o' what  
 'S called "The Literary."

Us folks in the country sees  
*Lots o' fun!*—Take spellin'-school;  
 Er ole hoe-down jamborees;  
 Er revivals; er ef you'll  
 Tackle taffy-pullin's you  
 Kin git fun, and quite a few!—  
 Same with huskin's. But all these  
 Kind o' frolics they hain't new  
 By a hunderd year' er two,  
 Ciper on it as you please!  
 But I'll tell you what I jest  
 Think walks over all the rest—  
 Anyway it suits *me* best,—  
 That's "The Literary."

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

First they started it—" 'y gee!"  
Thinks-says-I, "this settle-ment  
'S gittin' too high-toned fer me!"  
But when all begin to jine,  
And I heerd *Izory* went.  
I jest kind o' drapped in line,  
Like you've seen some sandy, thin,  
Serawny shoat putt fer the erick  
Down some pig trail through the thick  
Spice-bresh, where the whole drove's been  
'Bout six weeks 'fore he gits in!—  
"Can't tell nothin'," I-says-ee,  
"'Bout it tei you go and see  
Their blame 'Literary'!"

Very first night I was there  
I was 'p'inted to be what  
They call "Critic"—so's a fair  
And square jedgment could be got  
On the pieces 'at was read,  
And on the debate,—"Which air  
Most destructive element,  
Fire er worter?" Then they hed  
Compositions on "Content,"  
"Death," and "Botany"; and Tomps  
He read one on "Dreenin' Swamps"  
I p'nonced the boss, and said,  
"So fur, 'at's the best thing read  
In yer 'Literary'!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Then they *sum* some—tel I called  
Order, and got back ag'in  
In the critic's cheer, and hauled  
All o' the p'formers in:—  
Mandy Brizendine read one  
I fergit; and Doe's was "Thought";  
And Sarepty's, hern was "None  
Air Denied 'at Knocks"; and Dant—  
Fayette Strawnse's little niece—  
She got up and spoke a piece:  
Then Izory she read hern—  
"Best thing in the whole concern,"  
I-says-ee; "now let's adjourn  
This-here 'Literary'!"

They was some contendin'—yit  
We broke up in harmony.  
Road outside as white as grit,  
And as slick as slick could be!—  
I'd fetched 'Zory in my sleigh,—  
And I had a heap to say,  
Drivin' back—in fact, I driv  
'Way around the old north way,  
Where the Daubenspeckses live.  
'Zory allus—'fore that night—  
Never 'peared to feel jest right  
In my company.—You see,  
On'y thing on earth saved me  
Was that "Literary"!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

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*Dozen to the Capital*

I' BEN down to the Capital at Washington, D. C.,  
Where Congress meets and passes on the pensions ort  
to be

Allowed to old one-legged chaps, like me, 'at sence the war  
Don't wear their pants in pairs at all—and yit how proud  
we are!

Old Flukens, from our deestrick, jes' turned in and tuck  
and made

Me stay with him whilse I was there; and longer 'at I  
stayed

The more I kep' a-wantin' jes' to kind o' git away,  
And yit a-feelin' sociabler with Flukens ever' day.

You see I'd got the idy—and I guess most folks agrees—  
'At men as rich as him, you know, kin do jes' what they  
please;

A man worth stacks o' money, and a Congresssman and all,  
And livin' in a buildin' bigger'n Masonic Hall!

Now mind, I'm not a-faultin' Fluke—he made his money  
square:

We both was Forty-niners, and both bu'sted gittin' there;  
I weakened and onwindlassed, and he stuck and stayed and  
made

His millions; don't know what I'm worth untel my pen-  
sion's paid.

But I was goin' to tell you—er a-ruther goin' to try  
To tell you how he's livin' now: gas barnin' mighty nigh

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

In ever' room about the house; and ever' night about,  
Some blame reception goin' on, and money goin' out.

They's people there from all the world—jes' ever' kind 'at  
lives,

Injuns and all and Senators, and Ripresentatives;  
And girls, you know, jes' dressed in gauze and roses I  
declare,

And even old men shamblin' round and a saltzin' with 'em  
there!

And bands a-tootin' circus-tunes 'way in some other room  
jes' ehokin' full o' hothouse plants and pinies and 'er-  
fume;

And fountains, squirtin' stiddy all the time; and statutes,  
made

Out o' puore marble, 'peared-like, sneakin' round there in  
the shade.

And Fluke he coaxed and begged and pled with *me* to take  
a hand

And sashay in amongst 'em—crutch and all, you under-  
stand;

But when I said how tired I was, and made fer open air,  
He follered, and tel five o'clock we set a-talkin' there.

"My God!" says he—Fluke says to me, "I'm tireder'n you;  
Don't putt up yer tobacker tel you give a man a chew.

Set back a leetle furdher in the shadder—that'll do;

I'm tireder'n you, old man; I'm tireder'n you.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

"You see that-air old dome," says he, "lumped up ag'inst the sky?

It's grand, first time you see it; but it changes, by and by. And then it stays jes' thataway—jes' anchored high and dry Betwixt the sky up yender and the achin' of yer eye.

"Night's purty; not so purty, though, as what it ust to be When my first wife was livin'. You remember her?" says he.

I nodded-like, and Fluke went on, "I wonder now ef she Knows where I am—and what I am—and what I ust to be?"

"That band in there!—I ust to think 'at music couldn't wear

A feller out the way it does; but that ain't music there— That's jes' a' *imitation*, and like ever'thing, I swear, I hear, or see, or tetch, or taste, or tackle anywhere!

"It's all jes' *artificial*, this-'ere high-priced life of ours; The theory, *it's* sweet enough, tel it saps down and sours. They's no *home* left, ner *ties* o' home about it. By the powers, The whole thing's artificialer'n artificial flowers!

"And all I want, and could lay down and *sob* fer, is to know

The homely things of homely life; fer instance, jes' to go And set down by the kitchen stove—Lord! that 'u'd rest me so,—

Jes' set there, like I ust to do, and laugh and joke, you know.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Jes' set there, like I ust to do," says Fluke, a-startin' in,  
'Peared-like, to say the whole thing over to hisse'f ag'in;  
Then stopped and turned, and kind o' coughed, and stooped  
and fumbled fer  
Somepin' o' 'nuther in the grass—I guess his handkercher.

Well, sence I'm back from Washington, where I left Fluke  
a-still

A-leggin' fer me, heart and soul, on that-air pension bill,  
I've half-way struck the notion, when I think o' wealth and  
sich,

They's nothin' much patheticker'n jes' a-bein' rich!

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*The Old Man and Jim*

**O**LD man never had much to say—  
'Ceptin' to Jim.—

And Jim was the wildest boy he had—

And the old man jes' wrapped up in him!

Never heerd him speak but once

Er twice in my life,—and first time was

When the army broke out, and Jim he went,

The old man backin' him, fer three months;

And all 'at I heerd the old man say

Was, jes' as we turned to start away,—

"Well, good-by, Jim:

Take keer of yourse'f!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Peared-like, he was more satisfied  
Jes' *lookin'* at Jim  
And likin' him all to hisse'f-like, see?—  
'Cause he was jes' wrapped up in him l  
And over and over I mind the day  
The old man come and stood round in the way  
While we was drillin', a-watchin' Jim—  
And down at the deepo a-heerin' him say,  
"Well, good-by, Jim:  
Take keer of yourse'f!"

Never was nothin' about the *farm*  
Disting'ished Jim;  
Neighbors all ust to wonder why  
The old man 'peared wrapped up in him:  
But when Cap. Biggler he writ back  
'At Jim was the bravest boy we had  
In the whole dern rigiment, white er black,  
And his fightin' good as his farmin' bad—  
'At he had led, with a bullet clean  
Bored through his thigh, and carried the flag  
Through the bloodiest battle you ever seen,—  
The old man wound up a letter to him  
'At Cap. read to us, 'at said: "Tell Jim  
Good-by,  
And take keer of hisse'f."

Jim come home jes' long enough  
To take the whim  
'At he'd like to go back in the calvery—  
And the old man jes' wrapped up in him l

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Jim 'lowed 'at he'd had sich luck afore,  
Guessed he'd tackle her three years more,  
And the oid man give him a colt he'd raised,  
And follered him over to Camp Ben Wade,  
And laid around fer a week er so,  
Watchin' Jim on dress-parade—  
Tel finally he rid away,  
And last he heerd was the old man say,—  
"Well, good-by, Jim:  
Take keer of yourse'f!"

Tuk the papers, the old man did,  
A-watchin' fer Jim—  
Fully believin' he'd make his mark  
*Some* way—jes' wrapped up in him l—  
And many a time the word 'u'd come  
'At stirred him up like the tap of a drum—  
At Petersburg, fer iustnce, where  
Jim rid right into their canuons there,  
And *tuk* 'em, and p'inted 'em t'other way,  
And socked it home to the boys in gray  
As they scooted fer timber, and on and on—  
Jim a lieutenant, and one arm gone,  
And the old man's words in his mind all day,—  
"Well, good-by, Jim:  
Take keer of yourse'f!"

Think of a private, now, perhaps,  
We'll say like Jim,  
'At's clumb clean up to the shoulder-straps—  
And the old man jes' wrapped up in him l

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Think of him—with the war plum' through,  
And the glorious old Red-White-and-Blue  
A-laughin' the news down over Jim,  
And the old man, bendin' over him—  
The surgeon turnin' away with tears  
'At hadn't leaked fer years and years,  
As the hand of the dyin' boy clung to  
His father's, the old voice in his ears,—  
"Well, good-by, Jim:  
Take keer of yourse'f!"

### 201 *Thoughts on the Late War*

I WAS for Union—you, ag'in' it.  
'Pears like, to me, each side was winner,  
Lookin' at now and all 'at's in it.  
Le' 's go to dinner.

Le' 's kind o' jes' set down together  
And do some pardnership forgittin'—  
Talk, say, for instunce, 'bout the weather,  
Or somepin' fittin'.

The war, you know, 's all done and ended,  
And ain't changed no p'int's o' the compass;  
Both North and South the health' jes' splendid  
As 'fore the rumpus.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

The old farms and the old plantations  
Still ockipies the'r old positions.  
Le' 's git back to old situations  
    And old ambitions.

Le' 's let up on this blame', infernal  
Tongue-lashin' and lap-jaeket vauntin',  
And git back home to the eternal  
    Ca'm we're a-wantin'.

Peace kind o' sort o' snits my diet—  
When women does my cookin' for me;  
Ther' wasn't overly mueh pie et  
    Durin' the army.

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### *The Old Band*

**I**T'S mighty good to git back to the old town, shore,  
Considerin' I've be'n away twenty year and more.  
Sence I moved then to Kansas, of course I see a change,  
A-comin' back, and notice things that's new to me and  
    strange;  
Especially at evening when yer new band-fellers meet,  
In faney uniforms and all, and play out on the street—  
. . . What's come of old Bill Lindsey and the Saxhorn  
fellers—say?  
I want to hear the *old* band play.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

What's come of Eastman, and Nat Snow? And where's  
War Barnett at?  
And Nate and Bony Meek; Bill Hart; Tom Richa'son and  
that  
Air brother of him played the drum as twic't as big as  
Jim;  
And old Ili Kerns, the carpenter—say, what's become o'  
him?  
I make no doubt yer *new band* now's a *competenter*  
band,  
And plays their musie more by note than what they play  
by hand,  
And stylisher and grander tunes; but somehow—any-  
way,  
I want to hear the *old band* play.

Sien tunes as "John Brown's Body" and "Sweet Alice,"  
don't you know;  
And "The Camels Is A-Comin'," and "John Anderson,  
My Jo";  
And a dozent others of 'em—"Number Nine" and  
"Number 'Leven"  
Was *favo-rites* that fairly made a feller dream o'  
Heaven.  
And when the boys 'u'd saranade, I've laid so still in  
bed  
I've even heerd the loens'-blossoms droppin' on the shed  
When "Lily Dale," er "Hazel Dell," had sobbed and died  
away—  
. . . I want to hear the *old band* play.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yer *new* band ma'by beats it, but the *old band's* what I  
said—

It allus 'peared to kind o' chord with somepin' in my  
head;

And, whilse i'm no musicianer, when my blame' eyes  
is jes'

Nigh drowned out, and Mem'ry squares her jaws and  
sort o' says

She *won't* ner *never will* fergit, I want to jes' turn in  
And take and light right out o' here and git back West  
ag'in

And *stay* there, when I git there, where I never haf' to  
say

I want to hear the *old* band play.

203 "Last Christmas Was a Year  
Ago"

THE OLD LADY SPEAKS

LAST Christmas was a year ago,  
Says I to David, I-says-I,  
"We're goin' to morning service, so  
You hitch up right away: I'll try  
To tell the girls jes' what to do  
Fer dinner.—We'll be back by two."  
I didn't wait to hear what he  
Would more'n like say back to me,  
But banged the stable door and flew  
Back to the house, jes' plumb chilled through.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Cold! *H'oooh!* how cold it was! My-oh!  
Frost flyin', and the air, you know,  
"Jes' sharp enough," heerd David swear,  
"To shave a man and cut his hair!"  
And blow and blow! and snow and snow!—  
Where it had drifted 'long the fence  
And 'crost the road,—some places, though,  
Jes' swep' clean to the gravel, so  
The goin' was as bad fer sleighs  
As 't was fer wagons,—and both ways,  
'Twixt snow-drifts and the bare ground, I've  
Jes' wondered we got through alive;  
I hain't saw nothin', 'fore er sence,  
'At beat it anywheres, I know—  
Last Christmas was a year ago.

And David said, as we set out,  
'At Christmas services was 'bout  
As cold and wuthless kind o' love  
To offer up as he knowed of;  
And as fer him, he raily thought  
'At the Good Bein' up above  
Would think more of us—as He ought—  
A-stayin' home on sich a day,  
And thankin' of Him thataway!  
And jawed on, in an undertone,  
'Bout leavin' Lide and Jane alone  
There on the place, and me not there  
To oversee 'em, and p'pare  
The stuffin' fer the turkey, and  
The sass and all, you understand.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

I've allus managed David by  
Jes' sayin' *nothin'*. That was why  
He'd chased Lide's beau away—'cause Lide  
*She'd* allus take up Perry's side  
When David tackled him; and so,  
Last Christmas was a year ago,—  
Er ruther, 'bout *a week afore*,—  
David and Perry'd quarr'ld about  
Some tom-fool argyment, you know,  
And Pap told him to "Jes' git out  
O' there, and not to come no more,  
And, when he went, to shet the door!"  
And as he passed the winder, we  
Saw Perry, white as white could be,  
March past, onhitch his hoss, and light  
A see-gyar, and lope out o' sight.  
Then Lide she come to me and cried  
And I said *nothin'*—was no need.  
And yit, you know, that man jes' got  
Right out o' there's ef he'd be'n shot,  
P'tendin' he must go and feed  
The stock er somepin'. Then I tried  
To git the pore girl pacified.

But, gittin' back to—where was we?—  
Oh, yes!—where David lectered me  
All way to meetin', high and low,  
Last Christmas was a year ago:  
Fer all the awful cold, they was  
A fair attendunce; mostly, though,  
The crowd was 'round the stoves, you see,  
Thawin' their heels and scrougin' us.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Ef 't 'adn't be'n fer the old Squire  
Givin' his seat to us, as in  
We stomped, a-fairly perishin',  
And David could 'a' got no fire,  
He'd jes' 'a' drapped there in his tracks:  
And Squire, as I was tryin' to yit  
Make room fer him, says, "No; the fae's  
Is, I got to git up and git  
'Ithout no preachin'. Jes' got word—  
Trial fer life—can't be deferred!"  
And out he putt!

. . . . . And all way through  
The sermont—and a long one, too—  
I couldn't he'p but think o' Squire  
And us changed round so, and admire  
His gintle ways,—to give his warm  
Bench up, and have to face the storm.  
And when I noticed David he  
Was needin' jabbin'—I thought best  
To kind o' sort o' let him rest:  
'Peared-like he slep' so peacefully!  
And then I thought o' home, and how  
And what the gyrls was doin' now,  
And kind o' prayed, 'way in my breast,  
And breshed away a tear er two  
As David waked, and church was through.

By time we'd "howdyed" round and shuck  
Hands with neighbors, must 'a' tuck

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

A half hour longer: ever' one  
A-sayin' "Christmas gift!" afore  
David er me—so we got none!  
But David warmed up, more and more,  
And got so jokey-like, and had  
His sperits up, and 'peared so glad,  
I whispered to him, "S'pose you ast  
A passel of 'em come and eat  
The'r dinners with us. Gyrls's got  
A full-and-plenty fer the lot  
And all their kin!" So David passed  
The invite round: and ever' seat  
In ever' wagon-bed and sleigh  
Was jes' packed, as we rode away,—  
The young folks, mild er so along,  
A-strikin' up a sleighin'-song,  
Tel David laughed and yelled, you know,  
And jes' whirped up and sent the snow  
And gravel flyin' thick and fast—  
Last Christmas was a year ago.  
W'y, that-air seven-mil'd ja'nt we come—  
Jes' seven mil'd scant from church to home—  
It didn't 'pear, *that* day, to be  
Much funder railly 'n 'bout *three!*

But I was purty squeamish by  
The time home hove in sight and I  
See two vehickles standin' there  
Already. So says I, "*Prepare!*"  
All to myse'f. And presently  
David he sobered; and says he,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Hain't that-air Squire Hanch's old Buggy," he says, "and claybank mare?"  
Says I, "Le' 's git in out the cold—  
Your company's nigh 'bout froze!" He says,  
"Whose sleigh's that-air, a-standin' there?"  
Says I, "It's no odds *whose*—you jes'  
Drive to the house and let us out,  
'Cause we're jes' *freezin'*, nigh about!"  
Well, David swung up to the door,  
And out we piled. And first I heerd  
*Jane's* voice, then *Lide's*,—I thought afore  
I reached that gyrl I'd jes' die, shore;  
And *when* I reached her, wouldn't keered  
Much ef I had, I was so glad,  
A-kissin' her through my green veil,  
And jes' excitin' her so bad,  
'At *she* broke down *herse'f*—and *Jane*,  
*She* cried—and we all hugged again.  
And *David*?—David jes' turned pale!—  
Looked at the gyrls, and then at me,  
Then at the open door—and then—  
"Is old Squire Hanch in there?" says he.  
The old Squire suddently stood in  
The doorway, with a sneakin' grin.  
"Is Perry Anders in there, too?"  
Says David, limberin' all through,  
As *Lide* and me both grabbed him, and  
Perry stepped out and waved his hand  
And says, "Yes, Pap." And David jes'  
Stooped and kissed *Lide*, and says, "I guess  
Yer *mother's* much to blame as you.  
Ef *she* kin resk him, I kin too!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

The dinner we had then hain't no  
Bit better'n the one to-day  
'At we'll have fer 'em. Hear some sleigh  
A-jinglin' now. David, fer me,  
I wish you'd jes' go out and see  
If they're in sight yit. It jes' does  
Me good to think, in times like these,  
Lide's done so well. And David, he's  
More tractabler'n what he was—  
Last Christmas was a year ago.

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### *Goin' to the Fair*

OLD STYLE

**W**'EN Me an' my Ma an' Pa went to the Fair  
...a borried Mizz Rollins-uz rigg to go there,  
'Cause *our* buggy's new, an' Ma says, "Mercy-sake!  
It wouldn't hold *half* the folks *sac's* go' to take!"  
An' she took Marindy, an' Jane's twins, an' Jo,  
An' Amty Van Meters-uz girls—an' old Slo'  
Magee, 'at's so fat, come a-scringin' in there,  
When me an' my Ma an' Pa went to the Fair!

The road's full o' loads-full 'ist ready to bu'st,  
An' all hot, an' smokin' an' chokin' with dust;  
The Wolffs an' their wagon, an' Brizentines, too—  
An' horses 'ist r'ared when the toot-cars come through!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' 'way from fur off we could hear the band play,  
An' peoples all there 'n'd 'ist whoop an' hooray!  
An' I stood on the dash-board, an' Pa boost' me there  
'Most high as the fence, when we went to the Fair!

An' when we 'uz there an' inside, we could see  
Wher' the flag's on a pole wher' a show's go' to be;  
An' boys up in trees, an' the grea'-big balloon  
'At didn't goned up a-tall, all afternoon!  
An' a man in the crowd there gived money away—  
An' Pa says, "he'd ruther earn *his* by the day!"—  
An' *he* gim-me some, an' says "ain't nothin' there  
Too good fer his boy," when we went to the Fair!

Wisht The Raggedy Man wuz there, too!—but he says,  
"Don't talk fairs to *me*, child! I went to one;—yes,—  
An' they wuz a swing there ye rode—an' I rode,  
An' a thing-um-a-jing 'at ye blowed—an' I blowed;  
An' they wuz a game 'at ye played—an' I played,  
An' a hitch in the same wher' ye paid—an' I paid;  
An' they wuz *two* bad to one good peoples there—  
Like *you* an' your *Pa* an' *Ma* went to the Fair!"

"**T**ALKIN' 'bout yer bees," says Ike,  
Speakin' slow and ser'ous-like,  
"D' ever tell you 'bout old 'Bee'—  
Old 'Bee' Fessler?" Ike-says-he!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Might call him a *bee-expert*,  
When it come to handlin' bees,—  
Roll the sleeves up of his shirt  
And wade in amongst the trees  
Where a swarm 'u'd settle, and—  
Blam'est man on top of dirt I  
Rake 'em with his naked hand  
Right back in the hive ag'in,  
Jes' as easy as you please I  
Nary bee 'at split the breeze  
Ever jabbed a stinger in  
Old 'Bee' Fessler—jes' in fun,  
Er in *airnest*—nary one!—  
Couldn't agg one *on* to, nuther,  
Ary one way er the other I

"Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says-he,  
"Made a speshyality  
Jes' o' bees; and built a shed—  
Len'th about a half a mild I  
Had about a *thousan'* head  
O' hives, I reckon—tame and wild I  
Durndest buzzin' ever wuz—  
Wuss'n telegraph-poles does  
When they're sockin' home the news  
Tight as they kin let 'er loose I  
Visitors rag out and come  
Clean from town to hear 'em hum,  
And stop at the kivered bridge;  
But wuz some 'u'd cross the ridge  
Allus, and go clos'ter—so's  
They could *see* 'em hum, I s'pose I

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Peared-like strangers down that track  
Allus met folks comin' back  
Lookin' extry fat and hearty  
Fer a city picnic party!

"'Fore he went to Floridy,  
Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says-he—  
"Old 'Bee' Fessler couldn't bide  
Childern on his place," says Ike.  
"Yit, fer all, they'd climb inside  
And tromp round there, keerless-like,  
In their bare feet. 'Bee' could tell  
Ev'ry town-boy by his yell—  
So's 'at when they bounced the fence,  
Didn't make no difference!  
He'd jes' git down on one knee  
In the grass and pat the bee!—  
And, ef 't 'adn't stayed stuck in,  
Fess' 'u'd set the sting ag'in,  
'N' potter off, and wait around  
Fer the old famillyer sound.  
Allus boys there, more or less,  
Scootin' round the premises!  
When the buckwheat wuz in bloom,  
Lawzyl how them bees 'u'd boom  
Round the boys 'at crossed that way  
Fer the crick on Saturday!  
Never seemed to me su'prisin'  
'At the sting o' bees 'uz p'izin!

"'Fore he went to Floridy,"  
Ike says, "nothin' 'bout a bee

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

'At old Fessler didn't know,—  
W'y, it jes' 'peared-like 'at he  
Knowed their language, high and low:  
Claimed he told jes' by their buzz  
What their wants and wishes wuz!  
Peck in them-air little holes  
Round the porches o' the hive—  
Drat their pesky little souls!—  
Could 'a' skinned the man alive!  
Bore right in there with his thumb,  
And squat down and scrape the gum  
Outen ev'ry hole, and blow  
'N' bresh the crumbs off, don't you know!  
Take the roof off, and slide back  
Them-air glass concerns they pack  
Full o' honey, and jes' lean  
'N' grabble 'mongst 'em fer the queen!  
Fetch her out and *show* you to her—  
Jes', you might say, *interview* her!

"Year er two," says Ike, says-he,  
"Fore he went to Floridy,  
Fessler struck the theory,  
*Honey* was the same as *love*—  
You could make it day and night:  
Said them bees o' his could he  
Got jes' twic't the work out of  
Ef a feller managed right.  
He contended ef hees found  
*Blossoms* all the year around,  
He could git 'em down at once  
To work all the *winter* months

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Same as *summer*. So, one fall,  
When their summer's work wuz done,  
'Bee' turns in and robs 'em all;  
Loads the hives then, one by one,  
On the cyars, and 'lowed he'd see  
Ef bees loafed in *Floridy*!  
Said he bet he'd know the reason  
Ef *his* didn't work that season!

"And," says Ike, "it's jes'," says-he,  
"Like old Fessler says to me:  
'Any man kin fool a *bee*,  
Git him down in *Floridy*!  
'Peared at fust, as old 'Bee' said,  
Fer to kind o' turn their head  
Fer a spell; but, bless you! they  
Didn't lose a half a day  
Altogether!—Jes' lit in  
Them-air tropics, and them-air  
Cacktusses a-ripen-nin',  
'N' magnolyers, and sweet-peas,  
'N' 'sinumon and pineapple trees,  
'N' ripe bananers, here and there,  
'N' dates a-danglin' in the breeze,  
'N' figs and reezins ev'rywhere,  
All waitin' jes' fer Fessler's bees!  
'N' Fessler's bees, with gaumy wings,  
A-gittin' down and *whoopin'* things!—  
Fessler kind o' overseein'  
'Em, and sort o' '*hec-o-he.in*'!"

"'Fore he went to *Floridy*,  
Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says-he,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Wuzn't counted, jes' to say,  
Mean er or'n'ry anyway;  
On'y ev'ry 'tarnel dime  
'At 'u'd pass him on the road  
He'd ketch up with, ev'ry time;  
And no mortal ever knowed  
Him to spend a copper cent—  
'Less on some fool-'speriment  
With them *bees*—like that-un he  
Played on 'em in Floridy.  
Fess', of course, *he* tuck his ease,  
But 'twuz *bilious* on the bees!  
Sweat, you know, 'u'd jes' stand out  
On their *forreds*—pant and groan,  
And grunt round and limp about!—  
And old 'Bee,' o' course, a-knowin'  
'Twuzn't no fair shake to play  
On them pore dumb insecks, ner  
To abuse 'em thataway.  
*Bees* has rights, I'm here to say,  
And that's all they ast him fer!  
Man as mean as *that*, jes' 'pears,  
Could 'a' worked bees on the sheers!  
Cleared big money—well, I guess,  
'Bee' shipped honey, more er less,  
Into ev'ry state, perhaps,  
Ever putt down in the maps!

"But by time he fetched 'em back  
In the spring ag'in," says Ike,  
"They wuz actin' s'pieious-like:  
Though they 'peared to lost the track

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

O' ev'rything they saw er heard,  
They'd lay round the porch, and gap'  
At their shadders in the sun,  
Do-less like, ontel some bird  
Suddently 'u'd maybe drap  
In a bloomin' churry tree,  
Twitterin' a tune 'at run  
In their minds familiously l  
They'd revive up, kind o', then,  
Like they argied: 'Well, it's be'n  
The most longest summer we  
Ever saw er want to see l  
Must be *right*, though, er *old "Bee"*  
'U'd notify us!' they says-ee;  
And they'd sort o' square their chin  
And git down to work ag'in—  
Moanin' round their honey-makin',  
Kind o' like their head was achin'.  
*Tetchin'* fer to see how they  
Trusted Fessler thataway—  
Ilim a-lazin' round, and smirkin'  
To hisse'f to see 'em workin'!

"But old 'Bee,'" says Ike, says-he,—  
"Now where is he? *Where's* he gone?  
Where's the head he helt so free?  
Where's his pride and vanity?  
What's his hopes a-restin' on?—  
Never knowed a man," says Ike,  
"Take advantage of a bee,  
'At affliction didn't strike  
Round in that vicinity l

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Sinners allus suffers some,  
And *old Fessler's* reek'nin' come!  
That-air man to-day is jes'  
Like the grass 'at Scriptur' says  
Cometh up, and then turns in  
And jes' gits cut down ag'in!  
Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says-he,  
"Says, last fall, says he to me—  
'Ike,' says he, 'them bees has jes'  
Ciphered out my or'n'riness!  
Nary bee in ary swarm  
On the whole endurin' farm  
Wou't have nothin' more to do  
With a man as mean as I've  
Be'n to them, last year er two!  
Nary bee in ary hive  
But'll turn his face away,  
Like they ort, whenever they  
Hear my footprints drawin' nigh!  
And old 'Bee,' he'd sort o' shy  
Round oneasy in his cheer,  
Wipe his eyes, and yit the sap,  
Spite o' all, 'u'd haf' to drap,  
As he wound up: 'Wouldn't keer  
Quite so much ef they'd jes' light  
In and settle things up right,  
Like they ort; but—blame the thing!—  
'Pears-like they won't even *sting!*  
*Pepper* me, the way I felt,  
And I'd thank 'em, ev'ry welt!  
And as miz'able and mean  
As 'Bee' looked, ef you'd 'a' seen

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Them-air hungry eyes," says Ike,  
"You'd fergive him, more'n like.

"Wisht you had 'a' knowed old 'Bee'  
'Fore he went to Floridy!"

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### "Tradin' Joe"

I'M one o' these cur'ous kind o' chaps  
You think you know when you don't, perhaps I  
I hain't no fool—ner I don't p'tend  
To be so smart I could rickomend  
Myself fer a *congerssman*, my friend!—  
But I'm kind o' be-wixt-and-between, you know,—  
One o' these fellers 'at folks calls "slow."  
And I'll say jest here I'm kind o' queer  
Regardin' things 'at I *see* and *hear*,—  
Fer I'm *thick* o' hearin' *sometimes*, and  
It's hard to git me to understand;  
But other times it hain't, you bet I  
Fer I don't sleep with both eyes shet!

I've swapped a power in stock, and so  
The neighbors calls me "Tradin' Joe"—  
And I'm goin' to tell you 'bout a trade,—  
And one o' the best I ever made:

Folks has gone so fur's to say  
'At I'm well fixed, in a *worldly* way,  
And *bein'* so, and a *widower*,  
It's not su'prisin', as you'll infer,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

I'm purty handy among the sect—  
Widders especially, rickollect I  
And I won't deny that along o' late  
I've hankered a heap fer the married state—  
But some way o' 'nother the longer we wait  
The harder it is to discover a mate.

Marshall Thomas,—a friend o' mine,  
Doin' some in the tradin' line,  
But a'most too *young* to know it all—  
Ou'y at *picnics* er some *ball!*—  
Says to me, in a banterin' way,  
As we was a-loadin' stock one day,—  
"You're a-huntin' a wife, and I want you to see  
My girl's mother, at Kankakee!—  
She hain't over forty—good-lookin' and spry,  
And jest the woman to fill your eye I  
And I'm a-goin' there Sund'y,—and now," says he,  
"I want to take you along with *me*;  
And you marry *her*, and," he says, "by 'shaw I  
You'll hev me fer yer son-in-law!"  
I studied a while, and says I, "Well, I'll  
First have to see ef she suits my style;  
And ef she does, you kin bet your life  
Your mother-in-law will be my wife!"

Well, Sund'y come; and I fixed up some—  
Putt on a collar—I did, by gum I—  
Got down my "plug," and my satin vest—  
(You wouldn't know me to see me dressed!—  
But any one knows ef you got the clothes  
You kin go in the crowd wher' the best of 'em goes!)

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And I greeced my boots, and combed my hair  
Keerfully over the bald place there;  
And Marshall Thomas and me that day  
Eat our dinners with Widder Gray  
And her girl Han'l . . .

Well, jest a glance  
O' the widder's smilin' countenance,  
A-cuttin' up chicken and big pot-pies,  
Would make a man hungry in Paradise!  
And passin' p'serves and jelly and cake  
'At would make an *angel's* appetite *ach!*—  
Pourin' out coffee as yaller as gold—  
Twic't as much as the cup could hold—  
La! it was rich!—And then she'd say,  
"Take some o' *this!*" in her coaxin' way,  
Tel ef I'd been a hoss I'd 'a' *founded*, shore,  
And jest dropped dead on her white-oak floor!

Well, the way I talked would 'a' done you good,  
Ef you'd 'a' been there to 'a' understood;  
Tel I noticed Hanner and Marshall, they  
Was a-noticin' me in a cur'ous way;  
So I says to myse'f, says I, "Now, Joe,  
The best thing fer you is to jest go slow!"  
And I simmered down, and let them do  
The bulk o' the talkin' the evening through.

And Marshall was still in a talkative gait  
When we left, that evening—tolahle late.  
"How do you like her?" he says to me;  
Says I, "She snits, to a 't-y-Tee'!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And then I ast how matters stood  
With him in the *opposite* neighborhood?  
"Bully!" he says; "I ruther guess  
I'll finally git her to say the 'yes.'  
I named it to her to-night, and she  
Kind o' smiled, and said '*she'd see*'—  
And that's a purty good sign!" says he:  
"Yes," says I, "you're ahead o' *me*!"  
And then he laughed, and said, "*Go in!*"  
And patted me on the shoulder ag'in.

Well, ever sense then I've been ridin' a good  
Deal through the Kankakee neighborhood;  
And I make it convenient sometimes to stop  
And hitch a few minutes, and kind o' drop  
In at the widder's, and talk o' the crop  
And one thing o' 'nother. And week afore last  
The notion struck me, as I drove past,  
I'd stop at the place and state my case—  
Might as well do it at first as last!

I felt first-rate; so I hitched at the gate,  
And went up to the house; and, strange to relate,  
*Marshall Thomas* had dropped in, *too*.—  
"Glad to see you, sir, how 'o you do?"  
He says, says he! Well—it *sounded queer*;  
And when Han' told me to take a cheer,  
*Marshall* got up and putt out o' the room—  
And motioned his hand fer the *widder* to come.  
I didn't say nothin' fer quite a spell,  
But thinks I to myse'f, "*There's a dog in the well!*"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And Han' *she* smiled so cur'ous at me—  
Says I, "What's up?" And she says, says she,  
"Marshall's been at me to marry ag'in,  
And I told him 'no,' jest as you come in."  
Well, somepin' o' 'nother in that girl's voice  
Says to me, "Joseph, here's your choice!"  
And another minute her guileless breast  
Was lovin'ly throbbin' ag'in' my vest!—  
And then I kissed her, and heerd a smack  
Come like a' echo, a-flutterin' back,  
And we looked around, and in full view  
Marshall was kissin' the widder, too!  
Well, we all of us laughed, in our glad su'prise,  
Tel the tears come *a-streamin'* out of our eyes!  
And when Marsh said "'Twas the squarest trade  
That ever me and him had made,"  
We both shuek hands, 'y jucks! and swore  
We'd stick together fercvermore.  
And old 'Squire Chipman tuck us the trip:  
And Marshall and me's in pardnership!

### 207      *Uncle William's Picture*

UNCLE WILLIAM, last July,  
Had his picture took.  
"Have it done, of course," says I,  
"Jes' the way you look!"  
(All dressed up, he was, fer the  
Barbecue and jubilee  
The old settlers helt.) So he—  
Last he had it took.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Lide she'd coaxed and begged and pled,  
Sence her mother went;  
But he'd cough and shake his head  
At all argyment;  
Mebby clear his th'out and say,  
"What's my likeness 'mout to, hey,  
Now with *Mother* gone away  
From us, like she went?"

But we projicked round, tel we  
Got it figgered down  
How we'd git him, Lide and me,  
Drivin' into town;  
Bragged how well he looked and fleshed  
Up around the face, and freshed  
With the morning air; and breshed  
His coat-collar down.

All so providential! W'y,  
Now he's dead and gone,  
Picture 'pears so lifelike I  
Want to start him on  
Them old tales he ust to tell,  
And old talks so sociable,  
And old songs he sung so well—  
'Fore his voice was gone!

Face is sad to *Lide*, and they's  
Sorrow in the eyes—  
Kisses it sometimes, and lays  
It away and cries.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I smooth de a l er hair, and 'low  
He is happy, anyhow,  
Bein' there with Mother now,—  
Smile, and wipe my eyes.

208      *Squire Hawkins's Story*

I HAIN'T no hand at tellin' tales,  
I Er spinnin' yarns, as the sailors say;  
Someway o' 'nother, language fails  
To slide fer me in the oily way  
That *lawyers* has; and I wisht it would,  
Fer I've got somepin' that I eall good;  
But bein' only a country squire,  
I've learned to listen and admire,  
Ruther preferrin' to be addressed  
Than talk myse'f—but I'll do my best:—

Old Jeff Thompson—well, I'll say,  
Was the elos'test man I ever saw!—  
*Rich* as erean, but the poorest pay,  
And the meanest man to work fer—La!  
I've knowed that man to work one "hand"—  
Fer little er nothin', you understand—  
Tel eight and nine o'clock in the morning light  
Tel eight and nine o'clock at night,  
And then find fault with his appetite!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

He'd drive all over the neighborhood  
To miss the place where a toll-gate stood,  
And slip in town, by some old road  
That no two men in the county knowed,  
With a jag o' wood, and a sack o' wheat  
That wouldn't burn and you couldn't eat!  
And the trades he'd make, 'll I jest de-clare,  
Was enough to make a preacher swear!  
And then he'd hitch, and hang about  
Tel the lights in the toll-gate was blowed out,  
And then the turnpike he'd turn in  
And sneak his way back home ag'in '!

Some folks hint, and I make no doubt,  
That that's what wore his old wife out—  
Toilin' away from day to day  
And year to year, through heat and cold,  
Uncomplainin'—the same old way  
The martyrs died in the days of old;  
And a-elingin', too, as the martyrs done,  
To one fixed faith, and her *only* one,—  
Little Patience, the sweetest child  
That ever wept unrickonciled,  
Er felt the pain and the ache and sting  
That only a mother's death can bring.

Patience Thompson!—I think that name  
Must 'a' come from a power above,  
Fer it seemed to fit her jest the same  
As a *gaiter* would, er a fine kid glove!  
And to see that girl, with all the care  
Of the household on her—I de-clare

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

It was *oudacious*, the work she'd do,  
And the thousand plans that she'd putt through;  
And sing like a medder-lark all day long,  
And drownd her cares in the joys o' song;  
And *laugh* sometimes tel the farmer's "hand,"  
Away fur off in the fields, would stand  
A-listenin', with the plow half drawn,  
Tel the coaxin' echoes called him on;  
And the furries seemed, in his dreamy eyes,  
Like foot-paths a-leadin' to Paradise,  
As off through the hazy atmosphere  
The call fêr dinner reached his ear.

Now *love's* as cunnin' a little thing  
As a hummin'-bird upon the wing,  
And as liable to poke his nose  
Jest where folks would least suppose,—  
And more'n likely build his nest  
Right in the heart you'd leave unguessed,  
And live and thrive at your expense—  
At least, that's *my* experience.  
And old Jeff Thompson often thought,  
In his se'fish way, that the quiet John  
Was a stiddy chap, as a farm-hand *ought*  
To always be,—fer the airliest dawn  
Found John busy—and "*easy*," too,  
Whenever his *wages* would fall due!  
To sum him up with a final touch,  
He *eat* so little and *worked* so much,  
That old Jeff laughed to hisse'f and said,  
"He makes *me* money and airns his bread!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But John, fer all of his quietude,  
Would sometimes drap a word er so  
That none but *Patience* understood,  
And none but her was *meant* to know i—  
Maybe at meal-times John would say,  
As the sugar-bowl come down his way,  
“Thanky, no; *my* coffee’s sweet  
Enough fer *me!*” with sich conceit,  
*She’d* know at once, without no doubt,  
*He* meant because *she* poured it out;  
And smile and blush, and all sich stuff,  
And ast ef it was “*strong* enough?”  
And git the answer, neat and trim,  
“*It couldn’t* be too ‘strong’ fer *him!*”

And so things went fer ’bout a year,  
Tel John, at last, found pluck to go  
And pour his tale in the old man’s ear—  
And ef it had been *hot lead*, I know  
It couldn’t ‘a’ raised a louder fuss,  
Ner ‘a’ riled the old man’s temper wussl  
He jest *lit* in, and cussed and swore,  
And lunged and rared, and ripped and tore.  
And told John jest to leave his door,  
And not to darken it no more!  
But *Patience* cried, with eyes all wet,  
“Remember, John, and don’t ferget,  
*Whatever* comes, I love you yet!”  
But the old man thought, in his se’fish way,  
“I’ll see her married rich some day;  
And *that*,” thinks he, “is money fer *me*—  
And my will’s *law*, as it ought to be!”

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

So when, in the course of a month er so,  
A *widoweer*, with a farm er two,  
Comes to Jeff's, w'y, the folks, you know,  
Had to *talk*—as the folks'll do:  
It was the talk of the neighborhood—  
*Patience* and *John*, and *their* affairs;—  
And this old chap with a few gray hairs  
Had "cut John out," it was understood.  
And some folks reckoned "*Patience*, too,  
Knowed what *she* was a-goin' to do—  
It was *like* her—la! indeed!—  
All *she* loved was *dollars* and *cents*—  
*Like* old *Jeff*—and they saw no need  
Fer *John* to pine at *her* negligence!"  
But others said, in a kinder way,  
They missed the songs she used to sing—  
They missed the smiles that used to play  
Over her face, and the laughin' ring  
Of her glad voice—that *everything*  
Of her *old* se'f seemed dead and gone,  
And this was the ghost that they gazed on!

Tel finally it was noised about  
There was a *weddin'* soon to be  
Down at Jeff's; and the "cat was out"  
Shore enough!—'Ll the *Jec-mun-nec!*  
It *riled* me when John told me so,—  
Fer *I* was a *friend* o' *John's*, you know;  
And his trimblin voice jest broke in two—  
As a feller's voice'll sometimes do.—  
And I says, says I, "Ef I know my biz—  
And I think I know what *jestice* is,—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

I've read *some* law—and I'd advise  
A man like you to wipe his eyes,  
And square his jaws and start *ay'in*,  
*Fer jestic is a-goin' to win!*"  
And it wasn't long tel his eyes had cleared  
As blue as the skies, and the *sun* appeared  
In the shape of a good old-fashioned smile  
That I hadn't seen fer a long, long while.

So we talked on fer a' hour er more,  
And sunned ourselves in the open door,—  
Tel a hoss-and-buggy down the road  
Come a-drivin' up, that I guess John *knowed*,—  
Fer he winked and says, "I'll dessappear—  
*They'd* smell a mice ef they saw *me* here!"  
And he thumbed his nose at the old gray mare,  
And hid hisse'f in the house somewhere.

Well.—The rig drove up: and I raised my head  
As old Jeff bellered to me and said  
That "him and his old friend there had come  
To see ef the squire was at home."  
. . . I told 'em "I was; and I *aimed* to be  
At every chance of a weddin'-fee!"  
And then I laughed—and they laughed, too,—  
Fer that was the object they had in view.  
"Would I be on hands at eight that night?"  
They ast; and 's-I, "You're mighty right,  
*I'll* be on hands!" And then I bu'st  
Out a-laughin' my very wu'st,—  
And so did they, as they wheeled away  
And drove to'rds town in a cloud o' dust.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Then I sliet the door, and me and John  
Laughed and *laughed*, and jest *laughed* on,  
Tel Mother drapped her spees, and by  
*Jeechillikers!* I thought she'd *die!*—  
And she couldn't 'a' told, I'll bet my hat,  
What on earth she was laughin' at!

But all o' the fun o' the tale hain't done!—  
Fer a drizzlin' rain had jest begun,  
And a-havin' 'bout four mile' to ride,  
I jest coneluded I'd better light  
Out fer Jeff's and save my hide,—  
Fer *it was a-goin' to storm, that night!*  
So we went down to the barn, and John  
Saddled my beast, and I got on;  
And he told me somepin' to not ferget,  
And when I left, he was *laughin'* yet.

And, 'proachin' on to my journey's end,  
The great big draps o' the rain come down,  
And the thunder growled in a way to lend  
An awful look to the lowerin' frown  
The dull sky wore; and the lightnin' glanced  
Tel my old mare jest *more'n* pranced,  
And tossed her head, and bugged her eyes  
To about four times their natehurl size,  
As the big blaek lips of the clouds 'ud drap  
Out some oath of a thunder-elap,  
And threaten on in an undertone  
That chilled a feller clean to the bone!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But I struck shelter soon enough  
To save myse'f. And the house was jammed  
With the women-folks, and the weddin'-stuff:  
A great, long table, fairly *crammed*  
With big pound-cakes—and chops and steaks—  
And roasts and stews—and stunnick-aches  
Of every fashion, form, and size,  
From twisters up to punkin-pies!  
And candies, oranges, and figs,  
And reezins,—all the “whilligigs”  
And “jim-cracks” that the law allows  
On sich occasions!—Bobs and bows  
Of gigglin' girls, with corkscrew curls,  
And faney ribbons, reds and blues,  
And “beau-ketchers” and “curliques”  
To beat the world! And seven o'clock  
Brought old Jeff;—and brought—*the groom*,—  
With a sideboard-collar on, and stock  
That choked him so, he hadn't room  
To *swaller* in, er even sneeze,  
Er clear his th'oat with any ease  
Er comfort—and a good square cough  
Would saw his Adam's apple off!

But as fer *Patience*—*My! Oomh-oomh!*—  
I never saw her look so sweet!—  
Her face was cream and roses, too;  
And then them eyes o' heavenly blue  
Jest made an angel all complete!  
And when she split 'em up in smiles  
And splintered 'em around the room,  
And danced acrost and met the groom,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And laughed out loud--It kind o' spiles  
My language when I come to that--  
Fer, as she laid away his hat,  
Thinks I, "*The papers hid inside*  
*Of that said hat must make a bride*  
*A happy one fer all her life,*  
Er else a *wrecked and wretched wife!*"  
And, someway, then, I thought of *John*,--  
Then looked towards *Patience*. . . . She was *gone!*--  
The door stood open, and the rain  
Was dashin' in; and sharp and plain  
Above the storm we heard a cry--  
A ringin', laughin', loud "Good-by!"  
That died away, as fleet and fast  
A hoss's hoofs went splashin' past  
And that was all. 'Twas done that quick! . . .  
You've heard o' fellers "lookin' sick"?  
I wisht you'd seen *the groom* jest then--  
I wisht you'd seen them two old men,  
With starin' eyes that fairly *glared*  
At one another, and the scared  
And empty faces of the crowd,--  
I wisht you could 'a' been allowed  
To jest look on and see it all,--  
And heard the girls and women bawl  
And wring their hands; and heard old Jeff  
A-cussin' as he swung hisse'f  
Upon his hoss, who champed his bit  
As though old Nick had holt of it:  
And cheek by jowl the two old wrecks  
Rode off as though they'd break their necks.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And as we all stood starin' out  
Into the night, I felt the brush  
Of some one's hand, and turned about,  
And heerd a voice that whispered, "*Hush!*—  
*They're waitin' in the kitchen, and*  
*You're wanted. Don't you understand!*"  
Well, ef my *memory* serves me now,  
I think I winked.—Well, anyhow,  
I left the crowd a-gawkin' there,  
And jest slipped off around to where  
The back door opened, and went in,  
And turned and sliet the door ag'in,  
And maybe *locked* it—couldn't swear,—  
A woman's arms around me makes  
Me liable to make mistakes.—  
I read a marriage lieense nex',  
But as I didn't have my specs  
I jest *inferred* it was all right,  
And tied the knot so mortal-tight  
That Patience and my old friend John  
Was safe enough from that time on!

Well now I might go on and tell  
How all the joke at last leaked out,  
And how the youngsters raised the yell  
And rode the happy groom about  
Upon their shoulders; how the bride  
Was kissed a hunderd times beside  
The one I give her,—tel she eried  
And laughed untel she like to died!  
I might go on and tell you all  
About the supper—and the *ball*.—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

You'd ought to see me twist my heel  
Through jest one old Furginny reel  
Afore you die! er tromp the strings  
Of some old fiddle tel she sings  
Some old cowtillion, don't you know,  
That putts the devil in yer toe!

We kep' the dancin' up tel *four*  
O'clock, I reckon—maybe more.—  
We hardly heerd the thunders roar,  
Er *thought* about the *storm* that blowed—  
*And them two fellers on the road!*  
Tel all at onc't we heerd the door  
Bu'st open, and a voice that *swore*,—  
And old Jeff Thompson tuck the floor.  
He shuck hisse'f and looked around  
Like some old dog about half-drowned—  
*His hat, I reckon, weighed ten pound*  
To say the least, and I'll say, *shore*,  
*His overcoat weighed fifty more—*  
*The wettest man you ever saw,*  
*To have so dry a son-in-law!*

He sized it all; and Patience laid  
Her hand in John's, and looked afraid,  
And waited. And a stiller set  
O' folks, I *know*, you never met  
In any court room, where with dread  
They wait to hear a verdick read.

The old man turned his eyes on me:  
"And have you married 'em?" says he.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

I nodded "Yes." "Well, that'll do,"  
He says, "and now we're th'ough with you,—  
You jest clear out, and I decide  
And promise to be satisfied!"  
He hadn't nothin' more to say.  
I saw, of course, how matters lay,  
And left. But as I rode away  
I heerd the roosters crow fer day.

### 209      *The Truly Marvellous*

**G**IUNTS is the biggest mens they air  
In all this world er anywhere!—  
An' Tom Thumb he's the most little-est man,  
'Cause wunst he lived in a oysliture-can!

### 210      *The Spoiled Child*

'**C**AUSE Herbert Graham's a' only child—  
"Wuz I there, Ma?"  
His parunts uz got him purt' nigh spiled—  
"Wuz I there, Ma?"  
Alike ever'where his Ma tells  
Where *she's* bin at, little Herbert yells,  
"Wuz I there, Ma?"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' when she telled us wunst when she  
Wuz ist 'bout big as him an' me,  
W'y, little Herbert he says, says-ee,

"Wuz I there, Ma?"

Foolishest young-un you ever saw.—

"Wuz I there, Ma? Wuz I there, Ma?"

### 211      *The Doodle-Bugs's Charm*

**W**HEN Uncle Sidney he comes here—  
An' Fred an' me an' Min,—

My Ma she says she bet you yet

The roof'll tumble in!

Fer Uncle he ist *romps* with us:

An' wunst, out in our shed,

He telled us 'bout the Doodle-Bugs,

An' what they'll do, he said,

Ef you'll ist holler "Doodle-Bugs!"—

Out by our garden-bed—

"Doodle-Bugs! Doodle-Bugs!

Come up an' git some bread!"

Ain't Uncle Sidney funny man?—

"He's childish 'most as me"—

My Ma sometimes she tells him that—

"He ae's so foolishly!"

W'y, wunst, ont in our garden-path,

Wite by the pie-plant bed,

He all sprawled out there in the dirt

An' ist scrooched down his head,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' "Doodle! Doodle! Doodle-Bugs!"  
My Uncle Sidney said,—  
"Doodle-Bugs! Doodle-Bugs!  
Come up an' git some bread!"

An' nen he showed us little holes  
All bored there in the ground,  
An' little weenty heaps o' dust  
'At's piled there all around:  
An' Uncle said, when he's like us,  
Er purt' nigh big as Fred,  
That wuz the Doodle-Bugs's Charm—  
To call 'em up, he said:—  
"Doodle! Doodle! Doodle-Bugs!"  
An' they'd poke out their head—  
"Doodle-Bugs! Doodle-Bugs!  
Come up an' git some bread!"

212

### *Little Cousin Jasper*

**L**ITTLE Cousin Jasper, he  
Don't live in this town, like me,—  
He lives 'way to Rensselaer,  
An' ist comes to visit here.

He says 'at our court-house square  
Ain't nigh big as theirn is there!—  
He says their town's big as four  
Er five towns like this, an' more!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

He says ef his folks moved here  
He'd cry to leave Rensselaer—  
'Cause they's prairies there, an' lakes,  
An' wile-ducks an' rattlesnakes!

Yes, 'n' little Jasper's Pa  
Shoots most things you ever saw!—  
Wunst he shot a deer, one day,  
'At swummed off an' got away.

Little Cousin Jasper went  
An' camped out wunst in a tent  
Wiv his Pa, an' helt his gun  
While he kilt a turrapun.

An' when his Ma heerd o' that,  
An' more things his Pa's bin at,  
She says, "Yes, 'n' he'll git shot  
'Fore he's man-grown, like as not!"

An' they's mussrats there, an' minks,  
An' di-dippers, an' chee-winks,—  
Yes, 'n' cal'mus-root you chew  
All up an' 't 'on't pizen you!

An', in town, 's a flag-pole there—  
Highest one 'at's anywhere  
In this world!—wite in the street  
Where the big mass-meetin's meet.

Yes, 'n' Jasper he says they  
Got a brass band there, an' play  
On it, an' march up an' down  
An' all over round the town!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Wisht 'at town ain't like it is!—  
Wisht it s'ist as big as his!  
Wisht 'at *his* folks they'd move *here*,  
An' *we'd* move to Rensselaer!

213

*The Bee-Bag*

WHEN I was ist a Brownie—a weenty-teenty  
Brownie—

Long afore I got to be like Childerns is to-day,—  
My good old Brownie granny gimme sweeter thing 'an  
can'y—

An' 'at's my little bee-bag the Fairies stold away!

O my little bee-bag—

My little funny bee-bag—

My little honey bee-bag

The Fairies stold away!

One time when I bin swung in wiv annuver Brownie  
young-un

An' lef' sleepin' in a pea-pod while our parunts went to  
play,

waked up ist a-cryin' an' a-sobbin' an' a-sighin'

Fer my little funny bee-bag the Fairies stold away!

O my little bee-bag—

My little funny bee-bag—

My little honey bee-bag

The Fairies stold away!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

It's awful much bewilder'n', but 'at's why I'm a *Childern*,  
Ner goin' to git to be no more a Brownie sence that day I  
My parunts, so imprudent, lef' me sleepin' when they  
shouldn't!

An' I want my little bee-bag the Fairies stold away!

O my little bee-bag—

My little funny bee-bag—

My little honey bee-bag

The Fairies stold away!

214 'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset

'MONGST the Hills o' Somerset  
Wisht I was a-roamin' yet!  
My feet won't get usen to  
These low lands I'm trompin' through.  
Wisht I could go back there, and  
Stroke the long grass with my hand,  
Kind o' like my sweetheart's hair  
Smoothed out underneath it there!  
Wisht I could set eyes once more  
On our shadders, on before,  
Climbin', in the airy dawn,  
Up the slopes 'at love growed on  
Natchurl as the violet  
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

How 't 'u'd rest a man like me  
Jes' fer 'bout an hour to be

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Up there where the morning air  
Could reach out and ketch me there!—  
Snatch my breath away, and then  
Rensh and give it baek again  
Fresh as dew, and smellin' of  
The old pinks I ust to love,  
And a-flavor'n' ever' breeze  
With mixt hints o' mulberries  
And May-apples, from the thiek  
Bottom-lands along the crick  
Where the fish bit, dry er wet,  
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

Like a livin' pictur' things  
All comes baek: the bluebird swings  
In the maple, tongue and bill  
Trillin' glory fit to kill!  
In the orchard, jay and bee  
Ripens the first pears fer me,  
And the "Princee's Harvest" they  
Tumble to me where I lay  
In the clover, provin' still  
"A boy's will is the wind's will."  
Clean fergot is time, and care,  
And thiek hearin', and gray hair—  
But they's nothin' I fergot  
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

Middle-aged—to be edzaet,  
*Very* middle-aged, in fact,—  
Yet a-thinkin' baek to then,  
I'm the same wild boy again!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

There's the dear old home once more,  
And there's Mother at the door—  
Dead, I know, fer thirty year',  
Yet she's singin', and I hear;  
And there's Jo, and Mary Jane,  
And Pap, comin' up the lane!  
Dusk's a-fallin'; and the dew,  
'Tears like, it's a-falli' too—  
Dreamin' we're all livin' yet  
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

215

*Old John Henry*

OLD John's jes' made o' the commonest stuff—  
Old John Henry—  
He's tough, I reckon,—but none too tough—  
Too tough though's better than not enough!  
Says old John Henry.  
He does his best, and when his best's bad,  
He don't fret none, ner he don't git sad—  
He simply 'lows it's the best he had:  
Old John Henry!

His doctern's jes' o' the plainest brand—  
Old John Henry—  
A smilin' face and a hearty hand  
'S religen 'at 'll folks understand,  
Says old John Henry.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

He's stove up some with the rhumatiz,  
And they hain't no shine on them shoes o' his,  
And his hair hain't cut—but his eye-teeth is:  
Old John Henry!

He feeds hisse'f when the stock's all fed—  
Old John Henry—  
And sleeps like a babe when he goes to hed—  
And dreams o' Heaven and home-made bread,  
Says old John Henry.  
He hain't refined as he'd ort to be  
To fit the statutes o' poetry,  
Ner his clothes don't fit him—but *he fits me*:  
Old John Henry!

stuff—  
—  
!  
216

### Scotty

**S**COTTY'S dead.—Of course he is!  
Jes' that same old luck of his!—  
Ever sence we went cahoots  
He's be'n first, you bet yer boots!  
When our schoolin' first begun,  
Got two whippin's to my one:  
Stold and smoked the first cigar:  
Stood up first before the bar,  
Takin' whisky-straight—and me  
Wastin' time on "blackberry"!  
Beat me in the Army, too,  
And clean on the whole way through!—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

In more scrapes around the camp,  
And more troubles, on the tramp:  
Fought and fell there by my side  
With more bullets in his hide,  
And more glory in the cause,—  
That's the kind o' man *he* was!  
Luck liked Scotty more'n me.—  
*I* got married: Scotty, he  
Never even would *apply*  
Fer the pension-money I  
Had to beg of "Uncle Sam"—  
That's the kind o' cuss *I* am!—  
Scotty allus first and best—  
Me the last and ornriest!  
Yit fer all that's said and done—  
All the battles fought and won—  
We hain't prospered, him ner me—  
Both as pore as pore could be,—  
Though we've allus, up tel now,  
Stuck together anyhow—  
Scotty allus, as I've said,  
Luckiest—And now he's *dead!*

217

### *Back from Town*

**O**LD friends allus is the best,  
Halest-like and heartiest:  
Knowed us first, and don't allow  
We're so blanic much better now!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

They was standin' at the bars  
When we grabbed "the kivvered kyars"  
And lit out fer town, to make  
Money—and that old mistake!

We thought then the world we went  
Into beat "The Settlement,"  
And the friends 'at we'd make there  
Would beat any anywhere!—  
And they *do*—fer that's their biz:  
They beat all the friends they is—  
'Cept the raal old friends like you  
'At staid home, like *I'd* ort to!

W'y, of all the good things yit  
I ain't shet of, is to quit  
Business, and git back to sheer  
These old comforts waitin' here—  
These old friends; and these old hands  
'At a feller understands;  
These old winter nights, and old  
Young-folks chased in out the cold!

Sing "Hard Times'll come ag'in  
No More!" and neighbors all jine in!  
Here's a feller come from town  
Wants that-air old fiddle down  
From the chimbly!—Git the floor  
Cleared fer one cowtillion more!—  
It's poke the kitchen fire, says he,  
And shake a ffriendly leg with me!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

218 *A Man by the Name of Bolus*

A MAN by the name of Bolus—(ail 'at we'll ever know  
Of the stranger's name, I reckon—and I'm kin' o'  
glad it's so!)—

Got off here, Christmas morning, looked 'round the town,  
and then  
Kind o' sized up the folks, I guess, and—went away again!

The fac's is, this' man Bolus got "run in," Christmas-day;  
The town turned out to see it, and cheered, and blocked the  
way;

And they dragged him 'fore the Mayor—fer he couldn't er  
*wouldn't* walk—  
And socked him down fer trial—though he couldn't er  
*wouldn't* talk!

Drunk? They was no doubt of it!—W'y, the marshal of  
the town

Laughed and testified 'at he fell *up-stairs* 'stid o' *down!*  
This man by the name of Bolus?—W'y, he even drapped  
his jaw

And snored on through his "hearin'"—drunk as you ever  
saw!

One feller spit in his boot-leg, and another 'n' drapped a  
small

Little chunk o' ice down his collar,—but he didn't wake at  
all!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And they all nearly split when his Honor said, in one of his  
witty ways,  
To "chalk it down fer him, 'Called away—be back in thirty  
days!'"

That's where this man named Bolus slid, kind o' like in a  
fit,  
Flat on the floor; and—drat my ears! I hear 'em a-laughin'  
yit!  
Somebody fetched Doc Sifers from jes' acrost the hall—  
And all Doc said was, "Morphine! We're too late!" and  
that's all!

That's how they found his name out—piece of a letter 'at  
read:  
"Your wife has lost her reason, and little Nathan's dead—  
Come ef you kin,—fergive *her*—but, Bolus, as fer *me*,  
This hour I send a bullet through where my heart *ort* to  
be!"

*Man by the name of Bolus!*—As his revilers broke  
Fer the open air, 'peared like, to me, I heerd a voice 'at  
spoke—  
*Man by the name of Bolus! git up from where you lay—  
Git up and smile white at 'em, with your hands crossed  
thataway!*

*Cuored o' Skeerin'*

'LISH, you rickollect that-air  
 Dad-burn skittish old bay mare  
 Was no livin' with!—'at skeerd  
 'T ever'thing she seed er heerd!—  
 Th'owed 'Ves' Anders, and th'owed Pap,  
 First he straddled her—*k-slap!*—  
 And Izory—well!—th'owed *her*  
 Hain't no tellin' jest how fur!—  
 Broke her collar-bone—and might  
 Jest 'a' kilt the gyrl outright!

Course I'd heerd 'em make their boast  
 She th'ow any feller, 'most,  
 Ever topped her! S' I, "I know  
 One man 'at she'll never th'ow!"  
 So I rid her in to mill,  
 And, jest comin' round the hill,  
 Met a *traction-engine!*—Ort  
 Jest 'a' heerd that old mare snort,  
 And lay back her yeers, and see  
 Her a-tryin' to th'ow *me!*  
 Course I never said a word,  
 But think 'er, "My ladybird,  
 You'll git cuored, right here and now,  
 Of yer dy-does anyhow!"

So I stuck her—tel she'd jest  
 Done her very level best;  
 Then I slides off—strips the lines  
 Over her fool-head, and finds

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Me a little saplin'-gad,  
'Side the road:—And there we had  
Our own fun!—jest wore her out!  
Mounted her, and faced about,  
And jest made her *nose* that-air  
Little traction-engine there!

220

### *Home Again*

I 'M bin a-visitun 'bout a week  
To my little Cousin's at Nameless Creek;  
An' I'm got the hives an' a new straw hat,  
An' I'm come back home where my beau lives at.

# THE BOOK OF JOYOUS CHILDREN

## 221 *An Impromptu Fairy-Tale*

*When I wuz ist 'a little bit o' weenty-teenty kid  
I makes up a Fairy-tale, all by myse'f, I did:—*

I

**W**UNST upon a time wunst  
They wuz a Fairy King,  
An' ever'thing he have wuz gold—  
His clo'es, an' ever'thing!  
An' all the other Fairies  
In his goldun Palace-hall  
Had to hump an' hustle—  
'Cause he wuz boss: of all!

II

He have a goldun trumput,  
An' when he blow' on that,  
It's a sign he want' his boots,  
Er his coat er hat:  
They's a sign fer ever'thing,—  
An' all the Fairies knowed  
Ever' sign, an' come a-hopp' y'  
When the King blowed!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

III

Wunst he blowed an' telled 'em all:  
"Saddle up yer hees—  
Fireflies is gittin' fat  
An' sassy as you please!—  
Guess we'll go a-huntin'!"  
So they hunt' a little bit,  
Till the King blowed "Supper-time,"  
Nen they all quit.

IV

Nen they have a Banquet  
In the Palaece-hall,  
An' ist et l an' et l an' et l  
Nen they have a Ball;  
An' when the Queen o' Fairyland  
Come p'omenadin' through,  
The King says an' halts her,—  
"Guess I'll marry you!"

222

*Dream-March*

WASN'T it a funny dream!—perfectly hewild'rin'!—  
Last night, and night before, and night before that,  
Seemed like I saw the march o' regiments o' children,  
Marching to the robin's fife and ericket's rat-ta-tat!  
Lily-banners overhead, with the dew upon 'em,  
On flashed the little army, as with sword and flame;  
Like the buzz o' bumble-wings, with the honey on 'em,  
Came an eery, cheery chant, ehiming as it came:—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

*Where go the children? Traveling! Traveling!*  
*Where go the children, traveling ahead?*  
*Some go to kindergarten; some go to day-school;*  
*Some go to night-school; and some go to bed!*

Smooth roads or rough roads, warm or winter weather,  
On go the children, towhead and brown,  
Brave boys and brave girls, rank and file together,  
Marching out of Morning-Land, over dale and down:  
Some go a-gipsying out in country places—  
Out through the orchards; with blossoms on the boughs,  
Wild, sweet, and pink and white as their own glad faces;  
And some go, at evening, calling home the cows.

*Where go the children? Traveling! Traveling!*  
*Where go the children, traveling ahead?*  
*Some go to foreign wars, and camps by the firelight—*  
*Some go to glory so; and some go to bed!*

Some go through grassy lanes leading to the city—  
Thinner grow the green trees and thicker grows the dust;  
Ever, though, to little people any path is pretty  
So it leads to newer lands, as they know it must.  
Some go to singing less; some go to list'ning;  
Some go to thinking over ever-nobler themes;  
Some go anhungered, but ever bravely whistling,  
Turning never home again only in their dreams.

*Where go the children? Traveling! Traveling!*  
*Where go the children, traveling ahead?*  
*Some go to conquer things; some go to try them;*  
*Some go to dream them; and some go to bed!*

THE HOOSIER BOOK

223

*Elmer Brown*

**A**WF'LEST boy in this-here town  
Er anywheres is Elmer Brown!  
He'll mock you—yes, an' strangers, too,  
An' make a face an' yell at you,—  
    *"Here's the way you look!"*

Yes, an' wunst in School one day,  
An' Teacher's lookin' wite that way,  
He helt his slate, an' hide his head,  
An' maked a face at *her*, an' said,—  
    *"Here's the way you look!"*

An'-sir I when Rosie Wheeler smile  
One morning at him 'crosst the aisle,  
He twist his face all up, an' black  
His nose wiv ink, an' whisper back,—  
    *"Here's the way you look!"*

Wunst when his Aunt's all dressed to call,  
An' kiss him good-by in the hall,  
An' latch the gate an' start away,  
He holler out to her an' say,—  
    *"Here's the way you look!"*

An' when his Pa he read out loud  
The speech he maked, an' feel so proud  
It's in the paper—Elmer's Ma  
She ketched him—wite behind his Pa,—  
    *"Here's the way you look!"*

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Nen when his Ma she slip an' take  
Him in the other room an' shake  
Him good! w'y, he don't care—no-sir!—  
He ist look up an' laugh at her,—  
    *"Here's the way you look!"*

### 224 *When We First Played "Show"*

**W**ASN'T it a good time,  
    Long Time Ago—  
When we all were little tads  
    And first played "Show" l—  
When every newer day  
    Wore as bright a glow  
As the ones we laughed away—  
    Long Time Ago l

Calf was in the back-lot;  
    Clover in the red;  
Bluebird in the pear-tree;  
    Pigeons on the shed;  
Tom a-chargin' twenty pins  
    At the barn; and Dan  
Spraddled out just like "The  
    'Injarubber'-Man!"

Me and Bub and Rusty,  
    Eck and Dunk and Sid,  
'Tumblin' on the sawdust  
    Like the A-rabs did;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Jamesy on the slack-rope  
In a wild retreat,  
Grappling back, to start again—  
When he chalked his feet!

Wasn't Eck a wonder,  
In his stocking-tights?  
Wasn't Dunk—his leaping lion—  
Chief of all delights?  
Yes, and wasn't "Little Mack"  
Boss of all the Show,—  
Both Old Clown and Candy-Butcher—  
Long Time Ago!

Sid the Bareback-Rider;  
And—oh-me-oh-my!—  
Bub, the spruce Ring-Master,  
Stepping round so spry!—  
In his little waist-and-trousers  
All made in one,  
Was there a prouder youngster  
Under the sun!

And now—who will tell me,—  
Where are they all?  
Dunk's a sanatorium doctor,  
Up at Waterfall;  
Sid's a city street-contractor;  
Tom has fifty clerks;  
And Jamesy he's the "Iron Magnate"  
Of "The Hecla Works."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And Bub's old and bald now,  
Yet still he hangs on,—  
Dan and Eck and "Little Mack,"  
Long, long gone!  
But wasn't it a good time,  
Long Time Ago—  
When we all were little tads  
And first played "Show"!

225

*The Rambo-Tree*

WHEN Autumn shakes the rambo-tree—  
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—  
The bird sings low as the bumble bee—  
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—  
The poor shote-pig he says, says he:  
"When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree  
There's enough for you and enough for me."—  
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.

*For just two truant lads like we,  
When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree  
There's enough for you and enough for me—  
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.*

When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree—  
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—  
The mole digs out to peep and see—  
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

The dusk sags down, and the moon swings free,  
There's a far, lorn call, "Pig-gee! Pig-gee!"  
And two boys—glad enough for three.—  
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.

*For just two truant lads like we,  
When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree  
There's enough for you and enough for me—  
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.*

226

### *Extremes*

I

A LITTLE boy once played so loud  
That the Thunder, up in a thunder-cloud,  
Said, "Since *I* can't be heard, why, then  
I'll never, never thunder again!"

II

And a little girl once kept so still  
That she heard a fly on the window-sill  
Whisper and say to a lady-bird,  
"She's the stilliest child I ever heard!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

227

*Intellectual Limitations*

**P**ARUNTS knows lots more than us,  
But they don't know *all* things,—  
'Cause we ketch 'em, lots o' times,  
Even on little small things.

One time Winnie ask' her Ma,  
At the winder, sewin',  
What's the wind a-doin' when  
It's a-not a-blowin'?

Yes, an' 'Del', that very day,  
When we're nearly froze out,  
He ask' Uncle *where* it goes  
When the fire goes out?

Nen I run to ask my Pa,  
That way, somepin' funny;  
But I can't say ist but "Say,"  
When he turn to me an' say,  
"Well, what is it, Honey?"

228

*Thomas the Pretender*

**T**OMMY'S alluz playin' jokes,  
An' actin' up, an' foolin' folks;  
An' wunst one time he creep  
In Pa's big chair, he did, one night,  
An' squint an' shut his eyes bofe tight,  
An' say, "Now I'm asleep."

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' nen we knowed, an' Ma know' too,  
He *ain't* asleep no more'n you!

An' wunst he clumbed on our back-fence  
An' flop his arms an' nen commence  
To crow, like he's a hen;  
But when he falled off, like he done,  
He didn't fool us childern none,  
Ner didn't *crow* again.  
An' our Hired Man, as he come by,  
Says, "Tom can't *crow*, but he kin *cry*."

An' one time wunst Tom 'tend'-like he's  
His Pa an' goin' to rob the bees;  
An', first he know—oh, dear!  
They ist come swarmin' out o' there  
An' sting him, an' stick in his hair—  
An' one got in his yeer!—  
An' Uncle sigh an' say to Ma,  
An' grease the welts, "Pore Pa! pore Pa!"

229

### *Little Dick and the Clock*

**W**HEN Dicky was sick  
In the night, and the clock,  
As he listened, said "Tick-  
Atty—tick-atty—tock!"  
He said that *it* said,  
Every time it said "Tick,"  
It said "Sick," instead,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And he *heard* it say "Sick!"  
And when it said "Tick-  
Atty—tick-atty—tock,"  
He said it said "Sick-  
Atty—sick-atty—sock!"  
And he tried to *see* then,  
But the light was too dim,  
Yet he *heard* it again—  
And 'twas *talking* to him!

And then it said "Sick-  
Atty—sick-atty—sick!  
You poor little Dick-  
Atty—Dick-atty—Dick!—  
Have you got the hick-  
Atties? Hi! send for Doc  
To hurry up quick-  
Atty—quick-atty—quock,  
And heat a hot brick-  
Atty—brick-atty—brock,  
And rickle-ty wrap it  
And clickle-ty clap it  
Against his cold feet-  
Al-ty—weep-aty—cepaty-  
There he goes, slapit-  
Ty—slippaty—slecpaty!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

230

*Fool-Youngens*

**M**E an' Bert an' Minnie-Belle  
Knows a joke, an' we won't tell!  
No, we don't—'cause we don't know  
*Why* we got to laughin' so;  
But we got to laughin' so,  
We ist kep' a-laughin'.

Wind wuz blowin' in the tree—  
An' wuz only ist us three  
Playin' there; an' ever' one  
Ketched each other, like we done,  
Squintin' up there at the sun  
Like we wuz a-laughin'.

Nothin' funny anyway;  
But I laughed, an' so did they—  
An' we all three laughed, an' neu  
Squint' our eyes an' laugh' again:  
Ner we didn't ist *p'ten'*—  
We wuz *shore-'nough* laughin'.

We ist laugh' an' laugh', tel Bert  
Say he *can't* quit an' it hurt.  
Nen I *howl*, an' Minnie-Belle  
She tear up the grass a spell  
An' ist stop her yeers an' yell  
Like she'd *die* a-laughin'.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Never sich fool-youngens yit!  
Nothin' funny,—not a bit!—  
But we laugh' so, tel we whoop'  
Purt' nigh like we have the croup—  
All so hoarse we'd wheeze an' whoop  
An' ist *choke* a-laughin'.

231

### *Billy and His Drum*

**H**O! it's come, kids, come!  
With a bim! bam! bum!  
Here's little Billy bangin' on his  
big bass drum!  
He's a-marchin' round the room,  
With his feather-duster plume  
A-noddin' an' a-bobbin' with his  
bim! bom! boom!

Looky, little Jane an' Jim!  
Will you only look at him,  
A-humpin' an' a-thumpin' with his  
bam! bom! bim!  
Has the Day o' Judgment come  
Er the New Mi-len-nee-um?  
Er is it only Billy with his  
bim! bam! bum!

I'm a-comin'; yes, I am—  
Jim an' Sis, an' Jane an' Sam!  
We'll all march off with Billy an' his  
bom! bim! bam!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Come hurra'in' as you come,  
Er they'll think you're deaf-an'-dumb  
Ef you don't hear little Billy an' his  
big bass drum!

232

### *The Noble Old Elm*

**O** BIG OLD TREE, so tall an' fine,  
Where all us childern swings an' plays,  
Though neighbors says you're on the line  
Between Pa's house an' Mr. Gray's,—  
Us childern used to almost fuss,  
Old Tree, about you when we'd play.  
We'd argy you belonged to *us*,  
An' them Gray-kids the other way!

Till *Elsie*, one time *she* wuz here  
An' playin' wiv us—Don't you mind,  
Old Mister Tree?—an' purty near  
She scolded us the hardest kind  
Fer quar'llin' 'bout you thataway,  
An' say *she'll* find—ef we'll keep still—  
Whose tree you air *fer shore*, she say,  
An' settle it *fer good*, she will!

So all keep still; An' nen she gone  
An' pat the Old Tree, an' says she,—  
"Whose air you, Tree?" an' nen let on  
Like she's a-list'nin' to the Tree,—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' nen she say, "It's settled,—'cause  
The Old Tree says he's *all* our tree—  
His *trunk* belongs to bofe your Pas,  
But *shade* belongs to you an' me."

233

*The Penalty of Genius*

WHEN little 'Pollus Morton he's  
A-go' to speak a piece, w'y, nen  
The Teacher smiles an' says 'at she's  
Most proud, of all her little men  
An' women in her school—'cause 'Poll  
He allus speaks the best of all.

An' nen she'll pat him on the cheek,  
An' hold her finger up at you  
*Before* he speak'; an' *when* he speak'  
It's ist some piece *she* learn' him to!  
'Cause he's her favor-ite. . . . An' she  
Ain't pop'lar as she *ist* to be!

When 'Pollus Morton speaks, w'y, nen  
Ist all the other childern knows  
They're smart as him an' smart-again!—  
Ef they *can't* speak an' got fine clo'es,  
Their Parunts loves 'em more'n 'Poll-  
Us Morton, Teacher, speech, an' all!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

231 *The Good, Old-Fashioned People*

WHEN we hear Uncle Sidney tell  
About the long-ago  
An' old, old friends he loved so well  
When *he* was young—My-oh!—  
Us childern all wish *we'd* 'a' bin  
A-livin' then with Uncle,—so  
We could a-kind o' happened in  
On them old friends he used to know!—  
The good, old-fashioned people—  
The hale, hard-working people—  
The kindly country people  
'At Uncle used to know!

They was God's people, Uncle says,  
An' gloried in His name,  
An' worked, without no selfishness,  
An' loved their neighbors same  
As they was kin: An' when they biled  
Their tree-molasses, in the Spring,  
Er butchered in the Fall, they smiled  
An' sheered with all jist ever'thing!—  
The good, old-fashioned people—  
The hale, hard-working people—  
The kindly country people  
'At Uncle used to know!

He tells about 'em, lots o' times,  
Till we'd all ruther hear  
About 'em than the Nurs'ry Rhymes  
Er Fairies—mighty near!—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Only sometimes he stops so long  
An' then talks on so low an' slow,  
It's purt' nigh sad as any song  
To listen to him talkin' so  
Of the good, old-fashioned people—  
The hale, hard-working people—  
The kindly country people  
'At Uncle used to know!

235

### *A Christmas Memory*

**P**A he bringed me here to stay  
'Til my Ma she's well.—An' nen  
He's go' hitch up, Chris'mus-day,  
An' come take me back again  
Wher' my Ma's at! Wor't I be  
Tickled when he comes fer me!

My Ma an' my A'nty they  
'Uz each-uvver's sisters. Pa—  
A'nty telled me, th' other day,—  
He comed here an' married Ma. . . .  
A'nty said nen, "Go run play,  
I must work now!" . . . An' I saw,  
When she turn' her face away,  
She 'uz cryin'.—An' nen I  
'Tend-like I "run play"—an' cry.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

This-here house o' A'nty's wher'  
They 'uz borned—my Ma an' her !—  
An' her Ma 'uz my Ma's Ma,  
An' her Pa 'uz my Ma's Pa—  
Ain't that funny?—An' they're dead:  
An' this-here's "th' ole Homestead."—  
An' my A'nty said, an' cried,  
It's mine, too, ef my Ma died—  
Don't know what she mean—'cause my  
Ma she's nuvver go' to die!

When Pa bringed me here 't 'uz night—  
'Way dark night! An' A'nty spread  
Me a piece—an' light the light  
An' say I must go to bed.—  
I cry not to—but Pa said,  
"Be good boy now, like you telled  
Mommy 'at you're go' to be!"  
An', when he 'uz kissin' me  
My good night, his cheek's all wet  
An' taste salty.—An' he held  
Wite close to me an' rocked some  
An' laughed-like—'til A'nty come  
Git me while he's rockin' yet.

A'nty he'p me, 'til I be  
Purt' nigh strip-pnd—nen hug me  
In bofe arms an' lif' me 'way  
Up in her high bed—an' pray  
Wiv me.—'bout my Ma—an' Pa—  
An' ole Santy Claus—an' Sleigh—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' Reindeers an' little Drum—  
Yes, an' Picture-books, "Tom Thumb,"  
An' "Three Bears," an' ole "Fec-Faw"—  
Yes, an' "Tweedle-Dee" an' "Dum,"  
An' "White Knight" an' "Squidjicum,"  
An' most things you ever saw!—  
An' when A'nty kissed me, she  
'Uz all cryin' over me!

Don't want Santy Claus—ner things  
Any kind he ever brings!—  
Don't want A'nty!—Don't want Pa!—  
I'ist only want my Ma!

236

### "Old Bob White"

OLD Bob White's a funny bird!—  
Funniest you ever heard!—  
Hear him whistle,—*"Old—Bob—White!"*  
You can hear him, clean from where  
He's 'way 'crosst the wheat-field there,  
Whistlin' like he didn't care—  
*"Old—Bob—White!"*

Whistles alluz ist the same—  
So's we won't fergit his name!—  
Hear him say it?—*"Old—Bob—White!"*  
*There!* he's whizzed off down the lane—  
Gone back where his folks is stayin'—  
Hear him?—*There he goes again.—*  
*"Old—Bob—White!"*

THE HOOSIER BOOK

When boys ever tries to git  
Clos't to him—how quick he'll quit  
Whistlin' his "Old—Bob—White!"  
"Whoo-rhoo-rhoo!" he's up an' flew,  
Ist a-purt' nigh skeerin' you  
Into fits!—'At's what he'll do.—  
"Old—Bob—White!"

Wunst our Hired Man an' me,  
When we drove to Harmony,  
Saw one, whistlin' "Old—Bob—White!"  
An' we drove *wite clos't*, an' I  
Saw him an' he *didn't* fly,—  
Birds likes horses, an' that's why.  
"Old—Bob—White!"

One time, Uncle Sidney says,  
Wunst he rob' a Bob White's nes'  
Of the eggs of "Old Bob White";  
Nen he hatched 'em wiv a hen  
An' her little chicks, an' nen  
They ist all flew off again!  
"Old—Bob—White!"

237 *A Session with Uncle Sidney*

I

ONE OF HIS ANIMAL STORIES

NOW, Tudeus, you sit on *this* knee—and 'scuse  
It having no side-saddle on;—and, Jeems,  
You sit on *this*—and don't you wobble so  
And chug my old shins with your coppertoos;—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And, all the rest of you, range round someway,—  
Ride on the rockers and hang to the arms  
Of our old-time splint-bottom carryall!—  
Do anything but *squabble* for a place,  
Or push or shove or scrouge, or breathe *aut loud*,  
Or chew wet, or knead taffy in my beard!—  
Do *anything* almost—act *anyway*,—  
Only *keep* still, so I can hear myself  
Trying to tell you "just one story more!"

One winter afternoon my father, with  
A whistle to our dog, a shout to us—  
His two boys—six and eight years old we were,—  
Started off to the woods, a half a mile  
From home, where he was chopping wood. We raced,  
We slipped and slid; reaching, at last, the north  
Side of Tharp's corn-field.—There we struck what seemed  
To be a coon-track—so we all agreed:  
And father, who was not a hunter, to  
Our glad surprise, proposed we follow it.  
The snow was quite five inches deep; and we,  
Keen on the trail, were soon far in the woods.  
Our old dog, "Ring," ran nosing the fresh track  
With whimpering delight, far on ahead.  
After following the trail more than a mile  
To northward, through the thickest winter woods  
We boys had ever seen,—all suddenly  
He seemed to strike *another* trail; and then  
Our joyful attention was drawn to  
Old "Ring"—leaping to this side, then to that,  
Of a big, hollow, old oak-tree, which had  
Been blown down by a storm some years before.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

There—all at once—out leapt a lean old fox  
From the black hollow of a big bent limb,—  
Hey! how he scudded!—but with our old “Ring”  
Sharp after him—and father after “Ring”—  
We after father, near as we could hold.  
And father noticed that the fox kept just  
About four feet ahead of “Ring”—just *that*—  
No farther, and no nearer! Then he said:—  
“There are young foxes in that tree back there,  
And the mother-fox is drawing ‘Ring’ and us  
Away from their nest there!” “Oh, le’ ’s go back!—  
*Do le’ ’s go back!*” we little vandals cried,—  
“Le’ ’s go back, quick, and find the little things —  
*Please, father!*—Yes, and take ’em home for pets—  
‘Cause ‘Ring’ he’ll kill the old fox anyway!”

So father turned at last, and back we went,  
And then he chopped a hole in the old tree  
About ten feet along the limb from which  
The old fox ran, and—Bless their little lives!—  
There, in the hollow of the old tree-trunk—  
There, on a bed of warm dry leaves and moss—  
There, snug as any bug in any rug—  
We found—one—two—three—four, and, yes-sir, *five*  
Wee, weenty-teenty baby foxes, with  
Their eyes just barely opened—*Cute?*—my-oh!—  
*The cutest—the most cunning little things*  
Two boys ever saw, in all their lives!—  
“Raw weather for the little fellows *now!*”  
Said father, as though talking to himself,—  
“Raw weather, and no home *now!*”—And off came  
His warm old “waumus”; and in that he wrapped  
The helpless little fellows, and held

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Them soft and warm against him as he could,—  
And home we happy children followed him.—

*Old "Ring"* did not reach home till nearly dusk :  
The mother-fox had led him a long chase—  
"Yes, and a fool's chase, too!" he seemed to say,  
And looked ashamed to hear us *praising* him,  
But, *mother*—well, we *could not* understand  
*Her* acting as she did—and we so *pleased!*  
I can see yet the look of pained surprise  
And deep compassion of her troubled face  
When father very gently laid his coat,  
With the young foxes in it, on the hearth  
Beside her, as she brightened up the fire.  
She urged—for the old fox's sake and theirs—  
That they be taken back to the old tree ;  
But father—for *our* wistful sakes, no doubt—  
Said we would keep them, and would try our best  
To raise them. And at once he set about  
Building a snug home for the little things  
Out of an old big bushel-basket, with  
Its fractured handle and its stoven ribs :  
So, lining and padding this all cozily,  
He smuggled in its little tenants, and  
Called in John Wesley Thomas, our hired man,  
And gave him in full charge, with much advice  
Regarding the just care and sustenance of  
*Young* foxes.—"John," he said, "you feed 'em *milk*—  
*Warm* milk, John Wesley! Yes, and *keep 'em* by  
*The stove*—and keep your stove *a-roarin'*, too,  
Both night and day!—And keep 'em *covered* up—  
Not *smothered*, John, but snug and comfortable.—  
And now, John Wesley Thomas, first and last,—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

You feed 'em *milk—fresh milk*—and always *warm*—  
Say five or six or seven times a day—  
Of course we'll grade that by the way they *thrive*."  
But, for all sanguine hope, and care, as well,  
The little fellows *did not* thrive at all.—  
Indeed, with *all* our care and vigilance,  
By the third day of their captivity  
The last survivor of the fated five  
Squeaked, like some battered little rubber toy  
Just clean wore out.—And that's just what it wuz!  
And—nights,—the cry of the mother-fox for her young  
Was heard, with awe, for long weeks afterward.  
And we boys, every night, would go to the door  
And, peering out in the darkness, listening,  
Could hear the poor fox in the black bleak woods  
Still calling for her little ones in vain.  
As, all mutely, we returned to the warm fireside,  
Mother would say: "How would you like for *me*  
To be out there, this dark night, in the cold woods,  
Calling for *my* children?"

II

### UNCLE BRIGHTENS UP

Uncle he says 'at 'way down in the sea  
Ever'thing's ist like it *used* to be:—  
He says they's mermaids, an' mermiens, too,  
An' little merchildern, like me an' you—  
Little merboys, with tops an' balls,  
An' little mergirls, with little merdolls.

# THE HOOSIER BOOK

## III

### A PET OF UNCLE SIDNEY'S

Uncle Sidney's vurry proud  
Of little Leslie-Janey,  
'Cause she's so smart, an' goes to school  
Clean 'way in Pennsylvany!

She print' an' sent a postul-card  
To Uncle Sidney, telling  
How glad he'll be to hear that she  
"Toock the onners in Speling."

## IV

### IN THE KINDERGARTEN OF 'NOBLE SONG

Uncle he learns us to rhyme an' write  
An' all be poets an' all recite:  
His little-est poet's his little-est niece,  
An' this is her little-est poetry-piece.

## V

### SINGS A "WINKY-TOODEN" SONG—

O here's a little rhyme for the Spring-  
or Summer-time—

An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!—  
Just a little bit o' tune you can twitter, May  
or June,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!  
It's a song that soars and sings,  
As the birds that twang their wings  
Or the katydids and things  
Thus and so, don't you know,  
An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!  
It's a song just broken loose, with no reason  
or excuse—  
An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!  
You can sing along with it—or it matters not  
a bit—  
An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!  
It's a lovely little thing  
That 'most any one could sing  
With a ringle-dingle-ding,  
Soft and low, don't you know,  
An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!

### 238 *In Ferrent Praise of Picnics*

**P**ICNICS is fun 'at's purty hard to beat  
I purt' nigh ruther go to them than *eat*  
I purt' nigh ruther go to them than go  
With our *Charlotty* to the Trick-Dog Show!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

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### *Climatic Sorcery*

WHEN frost's all on our winder, an' the snows  
All out-o'-doors, our "Old-Kriss"-milkman goes  
A-drivin' round, ist purt' nigh froze to death,  
With his old white mustache froze full o' breath.

But when it's summer an' all warm ag'in,  
He comes a-whistlin' an' a-drivin' in  
Our alley, 'thout no coat on, ner ain't cold,  
Ner his mustache ain't white, ner he ain't old.

240

### *A Dubious "Old Kriss"*

US-FOLKS is purty pore—but Ma  
She's waitin'—two years more—tel Pa  
He serve his term out. Our Pa he—  
*He's in the Penitenchurric!*

Now don't you tell!—'cause Sis,  
The *baby*, *she* don't know he is.—  
'Cause she wuz only four, you know,  
He kissed her last an' hat to go!

Pa alluz liked Sis best of all  
Us childern.—'Speet it's 'cause she fall  
When she 'uz ist a *child*, one day—  
An' make her back look thataway.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Pa—'fore he be a burglar—he's  
A locksmith, an' maked locks, an' keys,  
An' knobs you pull fer bells to ring,  
An' he could ist make *anything!*—

'Cause our Ma say he can!—*An'* this  
Here little pair o' crutches Sis  
Skips round on—Pa maked *them*—yes-sir!—  
An' silivur-plate-name here fer her!

Pa's out o' work when Chris'mus come  
One time, an' stay away from home,  
An' 's drunk an' 'buse our Ma, an' swear  
They ain't no "Old Kriss" anywhere!

An' Sis she alluz say they *wuz*  
A' Old Kriss—an' she alluz does.  
But ef they *is* a' Old Kriss, why,  
When's Chris'mus, Ma she alluz *cry?*

This Chris'mus *now*, we live here in  
Where Ma's rent's alluz due ag'in—  
An' she "ist slaves"—I heerd her say  
She did—ist them words thataway!

An' th'other night, when all's so cold  
An' stove's 'most out—our Ma she rolled  
Us in th' old feather-bed an' said,  
"To-morry's Chris'mus—go to bed,



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## THE IHOOSIER BOOK

"An' thank yer blessed stars for this—  
We don't 'spect nothin' from Old Kriss!"  
An' cried, an' locked the door, an' prayed,  
An' turned the lamp down. . . . An' I laid

There, thinkin' in the dark ag'in,  
"Ef *wuz* Old Kriss, he can't git in,  
'Cause ain't no chimble here at all—  
Ist old stovepipe stuck frue the wall!"

I slept nen.—An' wuz dreamin' some  
When I waked up an' morning's come,—  
Fer our Ma she wuz settin' square  
Straight up in bed, a-readin' there

Some letter 'at she'd read, an' quit,  
An' nen hold like she's huggin' it.—  
An' diamon' ear-rings she don't *know*  
Wuz in her ears tel I say so—

An' wake the rest up. An' the sun  
In frue the winder dazzle-un  
Them eyes o' Sis's, wiv a sure-  
Enough gold chain Old Kriss bringed to 'er!

An' *all* of us git gold things l—Sis,  
Though, she say she know it "*ain't* Old Kriss—  
He kissed her, so she waked an' saw  
Him skite out—an' it wuz her Pa."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

241

*The Jaybird*

THE Jaybird he's my favorite  
Of all the birds they is I  
I think he's quite a stylish sight  
In that blue suit of his :  
An' when he 'lights an' shuts his wings,  
His coat's a "cutaway"—  
I guess it's only when he sings  
You'd know he wuz a jay.

I like to watch him when he's lit  
In top of any tree,  
'Cause all birds git wite out of it  
When *he* 'lights, an' they see  
How proud he act', an' swell an' spread  
His chest out more an' more,  
An' raise the feathers on his head  
Like it's cut pompadore!

242

*A Bear Family*

WUNZT, 'way West in Illinois,  
Wuz two Bears an' their two boys :  
An' the two boys' names, you know,  
Wuz—like *ours* is,—Jim an' Jo ;  
An' their *parunts'* names wuz same's  
All big grown-up people's names,—  
Ist *Miz* Bear, the neighbors call  
'Em, an' *Mister* Bear—'at's all.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yes—an' Miz Bear scold him, too,  
Ist like grown folks *shouldn't* do!  
Wuz a grea'-big river there,  
An', 'crosst that, 's a mountain where  
Old Bear said some day he'd go,  
Ef she don't quit scoldin' so!  
So, one day when he been down  
The river, fishin', 'most to town,  
An' come back 'thout no fish a-tall,  
An' Jim an' Jo they run an' hawl  
An' tell their ma their pa hain't fetch!  
No fish,—she scold again an' ketch  
Her old broom up an' biff him, too.—  
An' he ist cry, an' say, "*Boo-hoo!*  
*I told you what I'd do some day!*"  
An' he ist turned an' runned away  
To where's the grea'-big river there,  
An' ist *splunged* in an' swum to where  
The mountain's at, 'way th' other side,  
An' clumbed up there. An' Miz Bear *cried*—  
An' little Jo an' little Jim—  
Ist like their ma—bofe cried fer him!—  
But he clumbed on, *clean out o' sight*,  
He wuz so mad!—An' served 'em right!  
Nen—when the Bear got 'way on top  
The mountain, he heerd somepin' flop  
Its wings—an' somepin' else he heerd  
A-rattlin'-like.—An' he wuz *skeered*,  
An' looked 'way up, an'—*Mercy sake!*  
It wuz a' Eagul an' a SNAKE!  
An'-sir! the Snake, he bite an' kill!  
The Eagul, an' they bofe fall till

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

They strike the ground—*k'spang-k'spat!*  
Wite where the Bear wuz standin' at!  
An' when here come the Snake at *him*,  
The Bear he think o' little Jim  
An' Jo, he did—an' their ma, too,—  
All safe at home; an' he ist flew  
Back down the mountain—an' could hear  
The old Snake rattlin', sharp an' clear,  
Wite clos't behin' it!—An' Bear he's so  
All tired out, by time, you know,  
He git down to the river there,  
He know' he can't *swim* back to where  
His folks is at. But ist wite nen  
He see a boat an' six big men  
'At's been a-shootin' ducks: An' so  
He skeered them out the boat, you know,  
An' ist jumped in—an' Snake *he* tried  
To jump in, too, but falled outside  
Where all the water wuz; an' so  
The Bear grabs one the things you row  
The boat wiv an' ist whacks the head  
Of the old Snake an' kills him dead!—  
An' when he's killed him dead, w'y, nen  
*The old Snake's drowned dead again!*  
Nen Bear set in the boat an' bowed  
His back an' rowed—an' rowed—an' rowed—  
Till he's safe home—so tired he can't  
Do nothin' but lay there an' pant  
An' tell his childern, "Bresh my coat!"  
An' tell his wife, "Go chain my boat!"  
An' they're so glad he's back, they say  
"They *knowed* he's comin' thataway

THE HOOSIER BOOK

To ist su'prise the dear ones there!"  
An' Jim an' Jo they dried his hair  
An' pulled the hurrs out; an' their ma  
She ist set there an' helt his paw  
Till he wuz sound asleep, an' nen  
She tell' him she won't scold again—  
Never—never—never—  
Ferever an' ferever!

243 *Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-  
Wheeze*

**O**LD Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze  
Lives 'way up in the leaves o' trees.  
An' wunst I slipped up-stairs to play  
In Aunty's room, while she 'uz away;  
An' I clumbed up in her cushion-chair  
An' ist peeked out o' the winder there;  
An' there I saw—wite out in the trees—  
Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze!

An' Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze  
Would bow an' bow, with the leaves in the breeze,  
An' waggle his whiskers an' raggedly hair,  
An' bow to me in the winder there!  
An' I'd peek out, an' he'd peek in  
An' waggle his whiskers an' bow ag'in,  
Ist like the leaves 'u'd wave in the breeze—  
Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze,  
Seem-like, says to me: "See my bees  
A-bringin' my dinner? An' see my cup  
O' locus'-blossoms they've plum filled up?"  
An' "*Um-yum, honey!*" wuz last he said,  
An' waggled his whiskers an' bowed his head;  
An' I yells, "Gimme some, won't you, please,  
Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze?"

211 *Little-Girl-Tree-Little-Girls*

I'M twins, I guess, 'cause my Ma say  
I'm two little girls. An' one o' me  
Is *Good* little girl; an' th' other 'n' she  
Is *Bad* little girl as she can be!  
An' Ma say so, 'most ever' day.

An' she's the *funniest* Ma! 'Cause when  
My Doll won't mind, an' I ist cry,  
W'y, nen my Ma she sob an' sigh,  
An' say, "Dear Good little girl, good-by!--  
*Bad* little girl's comed here again!"

Last time 'at Ma act' thataway,  
I cried all to myse'f a while  
Out on the steps, an' nen I smile,  
An' git my Doll all fix' in style,  
An' go in where Ma's at, an' say:

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Morning to you, Mommy dear!  
Where's that Bad little girl wuz here?  
Bad little girl's goned clean away,  
An' Good little girl's comed back to stay."

245      *A Gustatory Achievement*

LAST Thanksgivin'-dinner we  
Et at Granny's house, an' she  
Had—ist like she alluz does—  
Most an' best pies ever wuz.

Canned *blackburry*-pie an' *goose-*  
*Burrry*, squshin'-full o' juice;  
An' *rosburry*--yes, an' plum—  
Yes, an' *churrry*-pie—*um-yum!*

Peach an' punkin, too, you bet.  
Lawzy! I kin taste 'em yet!  
Yes, an' *custard*-pie, an' *mincet*

.....  
An'—I—*ain't*—et—no—pie—since!

246      *A Parent Reprimanded*

SOMETIMES I think 'at Parunts does  
Things ist about as bad as *us*—  
Wite 'fore our vurry eyes, at that!  
Fer one time Pa he scold' my Ma  
'Cause he can't find his hat;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' she ist *cried*, she did! An' I  
Says, "Ef you scold my Ma  
Ever again an' make her cry,  
W'y, you shan't *be* my Pa!"  
An' nen he laugh' an' find his hat  
Ist wite where Ma she said it's at!

247

"*Company Manners*"

WHEN Bess gave her dollies a Tea, said she,  
"It's unpolite, when they's Company,  
To say you've dranked *two* cups, you see,—  
But say you've dranked a *couple* of tea."

## THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

248 *The Boys of the Old Glee Club*

YOU-FOLKS rickollect, I know—  
'Tain't so *very* long ago—  
Th' Old Glee Club—was got up here  
'Bont first term Grant tuk the Cheer  
Fer President four year—and then  
Riz- and tuk the thing again!  
Politics was runnin' high,  
And the *Soldiers* mighty nigh  
Swep' the Country—'bout on par  
With their ricord through the War.  
Glee Club, mainly, *Soldiers*, too—  
Most the Boys had wore the blue,—  
So their singin' had the swing—  
Kind o' sort o' Shiloh-ring,  
Don't you know, 'at kind o' got  
Clean *inside* a man and shot  
Telegrams o' joy dee-vine  
Up and down his mortal spine!  
They was jest *boys* then, all young—  
And 'bout lively as they sung!  
*Now* they hain't young any more—  
(*'Less* the ones 'at's gore before

THE HOOSIER BOOK

'S got their youth back, glad and free  
'N' keerness as they used to be!  
*Burgess Brown's* old friends all 'low  
He is 'most as lively now,  
And as full o' music, too,  
As when Old Glee Club was 'ewl  
And *John Blake*, you mind, 'at had  
The near-sightedness so bad,  
When he sing by note, the rest  
Read 'em fer him, er he *guessed*  
How they run—and *sung* 'em, too,  
Clair and sweet as honey-dew!  
*Harry Adams's* here—and he's  
Jollyin' ever' man he sees  
'At complains o' gittin' gray  
Er a-agin' anyway.  
Harry he jest *thrices* on fun—  
"Troubles?" he says,—"Nary one!—  
Got gran'-children I can play  
And keep young with, night and day!"  
Then there's *Ozzy Weaver*—  
Kickin', lively as you please.—  
'N' *Dearie Macy*.—Called 'em  
"The Cherubs." Sing "We a  
O' th' Olden Time." Well! th  
Was jest sweet as violets!  
And *Dan Ransdell*—he's still here  
Not jest in the town, but near  
Enough, you bet, to allus come  
Prompt' on time to vote at home!  
Dan he's be'n in Washing'on

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Since he went with Harrison. . . .  
And *John Slauson*—(Boys called John  
"Sloppy Weather.")—he went on  
Once to Washington; and Dan  
Intertained him:—Ever' man,  
From the President, to all  
Other big-guns Dan could haul  
In posish 'nd have to shake  
Hands with John fer old times' sake.  
And to hear *John*, when he got  
Home again, w'y, you'd 'a' caught  
His own sperit and dry fun  
And *dis-chicre-y-ousness* 'at run  
Through his talk of all he see:—  
"Ruther pokey there, fer me  
John says,—"though, of course, I met  
Mostly jest the *Cabinet*  
Members; and the President  
*He'd* drop round: and then we went  
*Incogg* fer a quiet walk—  
Er sometimes jest set and talk  
'Bout old times back here—and how  
All you-boys was doin' now,  
And Old Glee Club songs; and then  
He'd say, 'f he *could*, once again,  
Jest hear *us*—'once more,' says he,—  
'Td shed Washington, D. C.,  
And jest fall in ranks with you  
And march home, a-singin', too!"  
And *Bob Geiger*—*Now* lives down  
At *Atlanty*,—but this town

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

'S got Bob's *heart*—a permanent  
 And time-honored resident.  
 Then there's *Mahlon Butler*—still  
 Lookin' like he allus will  
 "How you feelin'?" s'I, last time  
 I see Mahlon: 'N' he says "I'm  
*feelin'!*" says, "so peert and gay  
 If I's hitched up I'd run away!"  
 He says, "Course I'm *bald* a bit,  
 Put not 'nough to *brag* on 't  
 Like *Dave Wallace* does," he says,  
 "With his *two* shamefacedness!"  
 (Dave jest laughs and lifts his "dice"  
 At the joke, and blushes—twice.)  
 And *Ed. Thompson*, he's gone on—  
 They's a whole quartette 'at's gone—  
 Yes, a whole quartette, and *more*,  
 Has crossed on the *Other Shore*. . . .  
*Sabold* and *Doc Wood'ard's* gone—  
 'N' *Ward*; and—last,—*Will Tarkington*.—  
 Ward 'at made an Irish bull  
 Acthully jest beautiful!—  
 "'Big-nose *Beu.*'" says Ward, "I s'pose,  
 Makes an eyesore of his nose!"  
 And *Will Tarkington*—Ef he  
 Ever had an *inemy*,  
 The Good Bein's plans has be'n  
 Tampered with!—because all men,  
 Women and childern—ever' one—  
 Loved to love *Will Tarkington*!  
 The last time I heard 'em all  
 Was at *Tomilsonian Hall*,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

As I rickollect—and *know*,—  
Must be'n fifteen year' ago!—  
Big Mass Meetin'—*thousands* here. . . .  
Old Dick Thompson in the Chicer  
On the stage—and three er four  
*Other* "Silver-Tongues" er more! . . .  
Mind Ben Harrison?—Clean, rich,  
Ringin' voice—" 'bout concert-pitch,"  
Tarkington *he* called it, and  
Said its music 'clipsed the band  
And Glee Club both rolled in one!—  
( 'Course you all knowed *Harrison!*)  
Yes, and Old Flag, streamin' clean  
From the high arch 'bove the scene  
And each side the Speaker's stand.—  
And a *Brass*, and *Sheepskin* Band,  
( 'Twixt the speeches 'at was made)  
'At cut loose and banged and played—  
S'pose, to have the *noise* all through  
So's the crowd could listen to  
Some *real* music!—Then Th' Old Glee  
Club marched out to victory!—  
And sich singin'!—Boys was jest  
At their very level-best! . . .  
*My!* to *hear* 'em!—From old "Red-  
White-and-Blue," to "Uncle Ned"!—  
From "The Sword of Bunker Hill,"  
To "Billy Magee-Magaw"!—And—still  
The more they sung, the more, yon know,  
The crowd jest *wouldn't* let 'em go!—  
Till they reached the final notch  
O' glory with old "Larboard Watch"!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Well! *that* song's a song my soul  
Jest swings off in, past controll—  
Allus did and allus will  
Lift me clair of earthly ill  
And interrogance and doubt  
O' what the good Lord's workin' out  
*Anyway er anyhow!* . . .  
Shet my eyes and hear it *now!*—  
Till, at night, that ship and sea  
And wet waves jest wallers me  
Into that saine sad yet glad  
Certainty *the Sailor* had  
When waked to his watch and ward  
By th' lone whisper of the Lord—  
Heerd high 'bove the hoarsest roar  
O' any storm on sea er shore!

Time's be'n clockin' on, you know!  
Sabold, who was first to go,  
Died back East, in ninety-three,  
At his old home, Albany:  
Ward was next to leave us—Died  
New York. . . . How we laughed and  
cried  
Both together at them two  
Friends and comards tried and true!—  
Ner they wasn't, when they died,  
Parted long—'most side-by-side  
They went singin', you might say,  
Till their voices died away  
Kind o' into a duet  
O' silence they're rehearsin' yet.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Old Glee Club's be'n meetin' less  
And less frequenter, I guess,  
Sence so many's had to go—  
And the rest all miss 'em so I  
Still they's calls they' got to make,  
Fer old reputation's sake,  
So to speak; but, 'course, they all  
Can't jest answer *ever*' call—  
'Ceptin' Christmas-times, er when  
Charity calls on 'em then;  
And—not *chargin'* anything—  
W'y, the Boys's jest *got* to sing! . . .  
Campaign work, and jubilees  
To wake up the primaries;  
Loyal Legions—G. A. R.'s—  
Big Reunions—Stripes-and-Stars  
Fer Schoolhouses ever'where—  
And Church-doin's, here and there—  
And Me-morial Meetin's, when  
Our War-Gov'ner lives again I  
Yes, and Decoration Days—  
Martial music—prayers and praise  
Fer the Boys 'at marched away  
So's *we'd* have a place to stay! . . .  
Little childern, 'mongst the flowers,  
Learnin' 'bout this Land of Ours,  
And the price these Soldiers paid,  
Gethered in their last parade. . . .  
O that sweetest, saddest sound!—  
"Tenting on the old Campground." . . .  
The Old Glee Club—singin' so  
Quaverin'-like and soft and low,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Ever' listener in the crowd  
Sings in *whispers*—but, *out 'loud*,  
Sings as ef he didn't keer—  
Not fer *nothin'*! . . . Ketch me here  
Whilse I'm honest, and I'll say  
*God's* way is the only way! . . .  
So I' allus felt, i jing!  
Ever' time the Boys 'ud sing  
'Bout "A Thousand Years, my Own  
Columbia!"—er "The Joys we've Known"—  
"Hear dem Bells"—er "Hi-lo, Hail!"—  
I have felt God must prevail—  
Jest like ever' boy 'at's gone  
Of 'em all, whilse he was on  
Deck here with us, seemed to be  
Livin', laughin' proof, to *me*,  
Of Eternal Life—No more  
*Will* than *them all*, gone before! . . .  
Can't I—many-a-time—jest see  
Them *all*, like they *used* to be!—  
Tarkington, fer instance, clean  
Outside o' the man you *seen*,  
Singin'—till not only you  
*Heerd* his voice but *felt* it, too,  
In back of the bench you set  
In—And 'most can feel it yet!  
Yes, and Will's the last o' five  
Now that's dead—yet still *alive*,  
True as Holy Writ's own word  
Has be'n spoke and man has heard!  
Them was left when Will went on  
Has met once sence he was gone—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Met jest once—but not to sing  
Ner to practise anything.—  
Facts is, they jest didn't know  
Why they *was* a-meetin' so;—  
But *John Brush* he had it done  
And invited ever' one  
Of 'em he could find, to call  
At his office, "Musie Hall,"  
Four o'clock—one Saturd'y  
Afternoon.—And this was three  
Er four weeks, mind, sence the day  
We had laid poor Will away.  
Mahlon Butler he come past  
My shop, and I dropped my last  
And went with him, wonder'n', too,  
What new *joke* Brush had in view;—  
But, when all got there, and one-  
By-one was give' a scat, and none  
O' Brush's *twinkles* scemed in sight,  
'N' he looked *biz* all right, all right,—  
We saw—when he'd locked the door—  
What *some* of us, years before,  
Had seen, and long sence fergot—  
(*Seen* but not *heard*, like as not.)—  
How Brush, once when Admiral Brown  
'S baek here in his old home-town  
And flags ever' wheres—and Old  
Glee Club telim' George to "Hold  
The Fort!" and "We" would "make 'em flee  
By land and sea," et ectery,—  
How Brush had got the Boys to sing  
A song in that-there very thing

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Was on the table there to-day—  
Some kind o' 'phone, you know.—But say!  
When John touched it off, and we  
Heerd it singin'—No-sir-ee!—  
*Not* the machine a-singin'—No,—  
Th' *Old Glee Club* o' long ago! . . .  
There was *Sabold's* voice again—  
'N' *Ward's*;—and, sweet as summer-rain,  
With glad boy-laughture's trills and runs,  
*Ed. Thompson's* voice and *Tarkington's!* . . .  
And *ah*, to hear them, through the storm  
Of joy that swayed each listener's form—  
Seeming to call, with hail and cheer,  
From Heaven's high seas down to us here:—

*"But who can speak the joy he feels  
While o'er the foam his vessel reels,  
And his tired eyelids slumbering fall,  
He rouses at the welcome call  
Of 'Larboard Watch, Ahoy!"*

. . . . . And O  
To hear them—same as long ago—  
The listeners whispered, still as death,  
With trembling lips and broken breath,  
A . . . with one voice—and eyes all wet,—  
". . . !—God!—Thank God, they're singing  
yet!"

## A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

### 249 *A Defective Santa Claus*

*Little Bay! Halloo!—halloo!  
Can't you hear me calling you?—  
Little Boy that used to be,  
Come in here and play with me.*

**A**LLUS when our Pa he's away  
Nen Unele Sidney comes to stay  
At our house here—so Ma an' me  
An' Etty an' Lee-Bob won't be  
Afeard ef anything at night  
Might happen—like Ma says it might.  
(Ef *Trip* wuz *big*, I bet you he  
'Uz best watch-dog you ever see!)  
An' so last winter—ist before  
It's go' be Chris'mus-Day,—w'y, shore  
Enough, Pa had to haf to go  
To 'tend a lawsuit—"An' the snow  
Ist right fer Santy Claus!" Pa said,  
As he clumb in old Ayersuz sled,  
An' say he's sorry *he* can't be  
With us that night—"Cause," he-says-ee,  
"Old Santy *might* be comin' here—  
This very night of all the year  
*I* got to be away!—so all  
You kids must tell him—ef he call—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

He's mighty welcome, an' yer Pa  
He left his love with yon an' Ma  
An' Uncle Sid!" An' clucked, an' leant  
Back, laughin'—an' away they went!  
An' Uncle wave' his hands an' yells  
"Yer old horse ort to have on bells!"  
But Pa yell back an' laugh an' say  
"I 'spect when *Santy* come this way  
It's time enough fer sleighbells nen!"  
An' holler back "Good-by!" again,  
An' reach out with the driver's whip  
An' cut behind an' drive back Trip.

An' so all day it snowed an' snowed!  
An' Lee-Bob he ist watched the road,  
In his high-chair; an' Etty she  
'Ud play with Uncie Sid an' me—  
Like she wuz he'ppin' fetch in wood  
An' keepin' old fire goin' good,  
Where Ma she wuz a-cookin' there  
In k'ichen, too, an' ever'where!  
An' ncle say, "'At's ist the way  
Yer Ma's b'en workin', night an' day,  
Sence she hain't big as Etty is  
Er Lee-Bob in that chair o' his!"  
Nen Ma she'd laugh 't what Uncle said,  
An' smack an' smooove his old bald head  
An' say "Clear out the way till I  
Can keep that pot from b'ilin' dry!"  
Nen Uncle, when she's gone back to  
The kitchen, says, "We *ust* to do

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Some cookin' 'n the *ashes*.—Say,  
S'posin' we try some, thataway!"  
An' nen he send us to tell Ma:  
Send two big 'taters in he saw  
Pa's b'en keepin' 'cause they got  
The premium at the Fair! An' what  
You think?—He rake a grea'-big hole  
In the hot ashes, an' he roll  
Them old big 'taters in the place  
An' rake the coals back—an' his face  
Ist swettin' so's he purt' nigh swear  
'Cause it's so hot! An' when they're there  
'Bout time 'at we fergit 'em, he  
Ist rake 'em out again—an' gee!—  
He bu'st 'em with his fist wite on  
A' old stove-led, while E'tty's gone  
To git the salt, an' butter, too—  
Ist like he said she haf to do,  
No matter what *Ma* say! An' so  
He salt an' butter 'em, an' blow  
'Em cool enough fer us to eat—  
An' *me-o-my!* they're hard to beat!  
An' Trip 'ud ist lay there an' pant  
Like he'd laugh *out loud*, but he can't.  
Nen Uncle fill his pipe—an' we  
'Ud he'p him light it—Sis an' me,—  
But mostly little Lee-Bob, 'cause  
"He's the best *Lighter* ever wuz!"  
Like Uncle telled him wunst when Lee-  
Bob cried an' jerked the light from me,  
He wuz so mad! So Uncle pat  
An' pet him (Lee-Bob's ust to that—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Cause he's the *little*-est, you know,  
An' allus has b'en humored so!)  
Nen Unele gits the flat-arn out,  
An', while he's tellin' us all 'bout  
Old Chris'mus-times when *he's* a kid,  
He ist cracked hickernuts, he did,  
Till they's a crockful, mighty nighl  
An' when they're all done by an' by,  
He raked the red coals out again  
An' telled me, "Fetch that popcorn in,  
An' old three-leggud skillut—an'  
The *l d* an' all now, little man,—  
An' yer old Unele here 'ull show  
You how corn's popped, long years ago  
When me an' Santy Claus wuz boys  
On Pap's old place in Illinois!—  
An' your Pa, too, wuz ehums, all through,  
With Santy!—Wisht Pa'd be here, too!"  
Nen Uncle sigh at Ma, an' she  
Pat him again, an' say to me  
An' Etty,—“You take warning fair!—  
Don't talk too much, like Uncle there,  
Ner don't fergit, like *him*, my dears,  
That 'little pitchers has big ears!"  
But Uncle say to her, “Clear out!—  
Yer brother knows what he's about.—  
*You* git your Chris'mus-cookin' done  
Er these pore childern won't have none!"  
Nen Trip wake' up an' raise', an' nen  
Turn roun' an' nen lay down again.  
An' one time Uncle Sidney say,—  
“When dogs is sleepin' thataway,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Like Trip, an' *whimpers*, it's a sign  
He'll keteh *eight* rabbits—mayby *nine*—  
Afore his fleas'll wake him—nen  
He'll bite hisse'f to sleep again  
An' *try* to dream he's go' keteh *ten*,"  
An' when Ma's gone again back in  
The kitchen, Uncle scratch his chin  
An' say, "When Santy Claus an' Pa  
An' me wuz little boys—an' Ma,  
When she's 'bout big as Etty there;—  
W'y,—'When we're *growed*—no matter *where*,  
Santy he cross' his heart an' say,—  
'I'll come to see you, all, some day  
When you' got chielderns—all but me  
An' pore old Sid!" Nen Unele he  
1st kind o' shade his eyes an' pour'  
'Bout forty-'leven bushels more  
O' popeorn out the skillut there  
In Ma's new basket on the chair.  
An' nen he telled us—an' talk low,  
"So Ma can't hear," he say:—"You know  
Yer Pa know', when he drived away,  
To-morry's go' be Chris'mus-Day;—  
Well, nen *to-night*," he whisper, "see?—  
It's go' be Chris'mus-*Eve*," says-ee,  
"An', like yer Pa hint, when he went,  
Old Santy Claus (now hush!) he's sent  
Yer Pa a postul-card, an' write  
He's shorely go' be here to-night. . . .  
That's why yer Pa's so bored to be  
*Away* to-night, when Santy he

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Is go' be here, sleighbells an' all,  
To make you kids a Chris'mus-call!"  
An' we're so glad to know *fer shore*  
He's comin', I roll on the floor—  
An' here come Trip a-waller'n' roun'  
An' purt' nigh knock the clo'es-horse down!—  
An' Etty grab Lee-Bob an' prance  
All roun' the room like it's a dance—  
Till Ma she come an' march us nen  
To dinner, where we're *still* again,  
But *tickled so* we ist can't eat  
But pie, an' ist the hot mincemeat  
With raisins in.—But *Uncle et,*  
An' *Ma.* An' there they set an' set  
Till purt' nigh supper-time; nen we  
Tell him he's got to fix the Tree  
'Fore *Santy* gits here, like he said.  
We go nen to the old woodshed—  
All bundled up, through the deep snow—  
"An' snowin' yet, *jee-rooshy-G!*"  
Uncle he said, an' he'p us wade  
Back where's the Chris'mus-Tree he's made  
Out of a little jackoak-top  
He git down at the sawmill-shop—  
An' Trip 'ud run ahead, you know,  
An' 'tend-like he 'uz *catin'* snow—  
When we all waddle back with it;  
An' Uncle set it up—an' git  
It wite in front the fireplace—'cause  
He says "'Tain't so 'at *Santy Claus*  
Comes down *all* chimblies,—least, to-night  
He's comin' in *this* house all right—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

By the front-door, as ort to be!—  
We'll all be hid where we can *see!*"  
Nen he look up, an' he see Ma  
An' say, "It's ist too bad their Pa  
Can't be here, so's to see the fun  
The childern *will* have, ever' one!"

Well, *we!*—We hardly couldn't wait  
Till it wuz dusk, an' dark an' late  
Enough to light the lamp!—An' Lee-  
Bob light a candle on the Tree—  
"Ist *one!*—'cause I'm 'The Lighter'!"—Nen  
He clumb on Uncle's knee again  
An' hug us *tofe!*—an' Etty go.  
Her little chist an' set on it  
Wite clos't, while Unele telled some more  
'Bout Santy Claus, an' cio'es he wore  
*"All maked o' furs, an' trimmed as white  
As cotton is, or snow at night!"*  
An' nen, ail sudden-like, he say,—  
*"Hush! Listen there! Hain't that a sleigh  
An' sleighbells jinglin'?"* Trip go "*whooh!*"  
Like he hear bells and *smell* 'em, too.  
Nen we all listen. . . . An'-sir, shore  
Enough, we hear bells—more an' more  
A-jinglin' clos'ter—clos'ter still  
Down the old crook-road reum' the hill.  
An' Uncle he jumps up, an' all  
The chairs he jerks baek by the wall  
An' th'ows a' overcoat an' pair  
O' winder-curtains over there

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' says, "Hide quick, er you're too late!—  
Them bells is stoppin' at the gate!—  
Git back o' them-air chairs an' hide,  
'Cause I hear Santy's voice outside!"  
An' Bang! bang! bang! we heard the door—  
Nen it flew open, an' the floor  
Blowed full o' snow—that's first we saw,  
Till little Lee-Bob shriek' at Ma  
"There's Santy Claus!—I know him by  
His big white mustash!"—an' ist cry  
An' laugh an' squeal an' dance an' yell—  
Till, when he quiet down a spell,  
Old Santy bow an' th'ow a kiss  
To him—an' one to me an' Sis—  
An' nen go clos't to Ma an' stoop  
An' kiss her—An' nen give a whoop  
That fainted her!—'Cause when he bent  
An' kiss her, he ist backed an' went  
Wite 'g'inst the Chris'mus-Tree ist where  
The candle's at Lee-Bob lit there!—  
An' set his white-fur belt afire—  
An' blaze streaked round his waist an' higher  
Wite up his old white beard an' th'out!—  
Nen Uncle grabs th' old overcoat  
An' flops it over Santy's head,  
An' swing the door wide back an' said,  
"Come out, old man!—an' quick about  
It!—I've ist got to put you out!"  
An' out he sprawled him in the snow—  
"Now roll!" he says—"Hi-roll-ee-O!"—  
An' Santy, sputter'n' "Ouch! Gee-whiz!"  
Ist roll an' roll fer all they is!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' Trip he's out there, too,—I know,  
 'Cause I could hear him yappin' so—  
 An' I heerd Santy, wunst er twic't,  
 Say, as he's rollin', "*Drat the fice't!*"  
 Nen Uncle come back in, an' shake  
 Ma up, an' say, "Fer mercy-sake!—  
 He hain't hurt none!" An' nen he said,—  
 "You youngsters h'ist up-stairs to bed!—  
 Here! kiss yer Ma 'Good night,' an' me,—  
 We'll he'p old Santy fix the Tree—  
 An' all yer whistles, horns an' drums  
 I'll he'p you toot when morning comes!"

. . . . .

It's a long while 'fore we go to sleep,—  
 'Cause down-stairs, all-time somepin' keep  
 A-kind o' scufflin' roum' the floors—  
 An' openin' doors, an' *shettin'* doors—  
 An' could hear Trip a-whinin', too,  
 Like he don't know ist *what* to do—  
 An' tongs a-elankin' down *k'thump!*—  
 Nen some one squonkin' the old pump—  
 An' *Woooh!* how cold it soun' out there!—  
 I could ist *see* the pump-spout where  
 It's got ice chin-whiskers all wet  
 An' drippy—An' I see it yet!  
 An' nen, seem-like, I hear some mens  
 A-talkin' out there by the fence,  
 An' one says, "Oh, 'bout twelve o'clock!"  
 "Nen," 'nother'n' says, "Here's to you, Doe!—  
*God bless us ever' one!*" An' nen  
 I heerd the old pump squonk again.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' nen I say my prayer all through  
Like Uncle Sidney learn' me to,—  
"O Father mine, e'en as Thine own,  
This child looks up to Thee alone:  
Asleep or waking, give him still  
His Elder Brother's wish and will."  
An' that's the last I know . . . Till Ma  
She's callin' us—an' so is Pa,—  
He holler "*Chris'mus-gif!*" an' say.—  
"I'm got back home fer Chris'mus-Day!—  
An' Unele Sid's here, too—an' he  
Is nibblin' 'roun' yer Chris'mus-Tree!"  
Nen *Uncle* holler, "I suppose  
Yer Pa's so proud he's froze his nose  
He wants to turn it up at us,  
'Cause *Santy* kick' up such a fuss—  
Tetelin' hisse'f off same as ef  
He wuz his own fireworks hisse'f!"

An' when we're down-stairs,—shore enough,  
Pa's nose *is* froze, an' salve an' stuff  
All on it—an' one hand's froze, too,  
An' got a old yarn red-and-blue  
Mitt on it—"An' he's froze some more  
Acrost his chist, an' kind o' sore  
All ron' his *dy*-fram," Uncle say.—  
"But Pa he'd ort a-seen the way  
*Santy* Lear up last night when that-  
Air fire break out, an' quicker'n *scat*  
He's all a-blazin', an' them-'air  
Gun-cotton whiskers that he wear

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Ist *flashin'*!—till I burn a hole  
In the snow with him, an' he roll  
The front-yard dry as Chris'mus jokes  
Old parents plays on little folks!  
Bnt, long's a smell o' tow er wool,  
I kep' him rollin' *beautiful!*—  
Till I wuz *shore* I *shorely* see  
He's *squenced!* W'y, hadn't b'en fer me,  
That old man might a-burnt clear down  
lean—plum'—level with the grom'!"  
Nen Ma say, "*There, Sid; that'll do!*—  
Breakfast is ready—*Chris'mus, too.*—  
Your voice 'ud somn' best, sayin' *Grace*—  
Say it." An' Uncle bow' his face  
An' say so long a *Blessing* nen,  
Trip bark' *two* times 'fore it's "A-men!"

## RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

250      *Rubáiyát of Doc Sifers*

**I**F you don't know Doc SIFERS I'll jes' argy, here and now,  
You've bin a mighty little while about here, anyhow,  
'Cause Doc he's rid these roads and woods—er *swum* 'em,  
now and then—

And practised in this neighborhood sence hain't no tellin'  
when I

In radius o' fifteen mil'd, all p'int's o' compass round,  
No man er woman, chick er child, er team, on top o'  
ground,

But knows *him*—yes, and got respects and likin' fer him,  
too,

Fer all his so-to-speak dee-fects o' genius showin' through I

Some claims he's absent-minded; some has said they wuz  
afeard

To take his powders when he come and dosed 'em out, and  
'peared

To have his mind on somepin' else—like Connty Ditch, er  
some

New way o' tannin' mussrat-pelts, er makin' butter come.

He's cur'ous—they hain't no mistake about it!—but he's got  
Enough o' extry brains to make a *jury*—like as not.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

They's no *describin'* Sifers,—fer, when all is said and done,  
He's jes' *hisse'f* Doc Sifers—ner they hain't no other one!

Doc's allus sociable, polite, and 'greeable, you'll find—  
Pervidin' ef you strike him right and nothin' on his mind,—  
Like in some *hurry*, when they've sent fer Sifers *quick*, you  
see,  
To 'tend some sawmill-accident, er picnic jamboree;

Er when the lightin' 's struck some harebrained harvest-  
hand; er in  
Some 'tempt o' suicidin'—where they'd ort to try ag'in I  
I've *knowed* Doc haul up from a trot and talk a' hour er  
two  
When raily he'd a-ort o' not a-stopped fer "*Hosedy-do!*"

And then, I've met him 'long the road, *a-lopin'*,—starin'  
straight  
Ahead,—and yit he never knowed me when I hollered  
*"Yate,*  
*Old Saddlebags!"* all hearty-like, er "*Who you goin' to*  
*kill?"*  
And he'd say nothin'—only hike on faster, starin' still!

I'd bin insulted, many a time, ef I jes' wuzn't shore  
Doc didn't mean a thing. And I'm not tetchy any more  
Sence that-air day, ef he'd a-jes' a-stopped to jaw with me,  
They'd bin a little dorter less in my own tumbily!

Times *now*, at home, when Sifers' name comes up, I jes'  
*let on,*  
You know, 'at I think Doc's to *blame*, the way he's bin and  
gone

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And disapp'inted folks—'Ll-*jee-man-nee!* you'd ort to then  
Jes' hear my wife light into me—"ongratefulest o' men!"

'Mongst *all* the women—mild er rough, splendiferous er  
plain,

Er them *with* sense, er not enough to come in out the  
rain,—

Jes' ever' shape and build and style o' women, fat er slim—  
They all like Doc, and got a smile and pleasant word fer  
*him!*

Ner hain't no horse I've ever saw bnt what'll neigh and try  
To sidle up to him, and paw, and sense him, ear-and-eye:  
Then jes' a tetch o' Doc's old pa'm, to pat 'em, er to shove  
Along their nose—and they're as ca'm as any cooin' dove!

And same with *dogs*,—take any breed, er strain, er pedi-  
gree,

Er racial caste 'at can't concede no use fer you er me,—  
They'll putt all predju-dice aside in *Doc's* case and go in  
Kahoots with him, as satisfied as he wuz kith-and-kin!

And Doc's a wonder, trainin' pets!—He's got a chicken-  
hawk,

In kind o' half-cage, where he sets out in the gyarden-walk,  
Ard got that wild bird trained so tame, he'll loose him, and  
he'll fly

Clean to the woods!—Doc calls his name—and he'll come,  
by and by!

Some says no money down 'nd buy that bird o' Doc.—  
Ner no

Inducement to the *bird*, says I, 'at he'd let *Sifers* go!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And Doc *he* say 'at *he's* content—long as a bird o' prey  
Kin 'bide *him*, it's a *compliment*, and takes it thataway.

But, gittin' back to *docterin'*—all the sick and in distress,  
And old and pore, and weak and small, and lone and moth-  
erless,—

I jes' tell you I 'preciate the man 'at's got the love  
To "go ye forth and ministrate!" as Scriptur' tells us of.

*Dull* times, Doc jes' *mianders* round, in that old rig o' his:  
And hain't no tellin' where he's bound ner guessin' where  
he is;

He'll drive, they tell, jes' thataway fer maybe six er eight  
Days at a stretch; and neighbors say he's bin clean round  
the State.

He picked a' old tramp up, one trip, 'bout eighty mil'd from  
here,

And fetched him home and k-yored his hip, and kep' him  
'bout a year;

And feller said—in all his ja'nts round this terreschul ball  
'At no man waz a *circumstance* to *Doc!*—he topped 'em  
all!—

Said, bark o' trees 's a' open book to Doc, and vines and  
moss

He read like writin'—with a look knowed ever' dot and  
cross:

Said, stars at night wuz jes' as good's a compass: said, he  
s'pose

You couldn't lose Doc in the woods the darkest night that  
blows!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Said, Doc'll tell you, purty clos't, by nderbresh and plants,  
How fur off *rearter* is,—and 'most perdict the sort o'  
chance

You'll have o' findin' *fish*; and how they're liable to *bite*,  
And whether they're a-bitin' now, er only after night.

And, whilse we're talkin' *fish*,—I mind they formed a  
fishin'-crowd

(When folks *could* fish 'thout gittin' *fined*, and seinin' wuz  
allowed!)

O' leadin' citizens, you know, to go and sein "Old Blue"—  
But hadn't no big seine, and so—w'y, wl wuz they to  
do? . . .

And Doc he say he thought 'at *he* could *knit* a stitch er  
two—

"Bring the *materials* to me—'at's all I'm astin' you!"

And down he sets—six weeks, i jing! and knits that seine  
plum done—

Made corks, too, brails and ever'thing—good as a boughten  
one!

Doc's *public* sperit—when the sick's not takin' *all* his time

And he's got *some* fer politics—is simple yit sublime:—

He'll *talk* his *principles*—and they air *honest*;—but the sly

Friend strikes him first, election-day, he'd 'commodate, er  
die!

And yit, though Doc, as all men knows, is square straight  
up and down,

That vote o' his is—well, I s'pose—the cheapest one in  
town;—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

A fact 'at's sad to verify, as could be done on oath—  
I've voted Doe myse'f—*And I was criminal fer both!*

You kin corrupt the *ballot-box*—corrupt *yourse'f*, as well—  
Corrupt *some* neighbors,—but old Doe's as onecorruptible  
As Holy Writ. So putt a pin right there!—Let *Sifers* be,  
I jueks I he wouldn't vote ag'in' his own worst inimy!

When Cynthy Eubanks laid so low with fever, and Doc  
Glenn  
Told Euby Cynth 'nd Iaf to go—they sends fer *Sifers*  
then! . . .  
Doc sized the case: "She's starved," says he, "fer *rearter*—  
yes, and *meat!*"  
The treatment 'at she'll git from *me's* all she kin drink and  
eat!"

He orders Euby then to split some wood, and take and  
build  
A fire in kitchen-stove, and git a young spring-chicken  
killed;  
And jes' whirled in and th'owed his hat and coat there on  
the bed,  
And warshed his hands and sailed in that-air kitchen,  
Euby said,

And biled that chicken-broth, and got that dinner—all com-  
plete  
And clean and crisp and good and hot as mortal ever eat!  
And Cynth and Euby both'll say 'at Doc'll git as good  
Meals-vittles up, jes' any day, as any *woman* could!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Time Sister Abbiek tuk so bad with striffen o' the lung,  
P'tracted Meetin', where she had jes' shouted, prayed, and  
sung

All winter long, through snow and thaw,—when Sifers  
come, says he;

"No, M'lissy; don't poke out your raw and cloven tongue  
at me!—

"I know, without no symptoms but them *injarubber-shoes*  
You promised me to never putt a fool-foot in ner use  
At purril o' your life!" he said. "And I won't save you  
*now,*

Unless—here on your dyin' bed—-you consecrate your  
vow!"

Without a-claimin' *any creed*, Doc's rail religious views  
Nobody knows—ner got no *need* o' knowin' whilse he  
choose

To be heerd not of man, ner raise no loud, vain-glorious  
prayers

In crowded marts, er public ways, er—i jucks, *any wheres!*—

'Less'n it is away deep down in his own heart, at night,  
Facin' the storm, when all the town's a-sleepin' snug and  
tight—

Him splashin' hence from scenes o' pride and sloth and  
gilded show,

To some pore sufferer's bedside o' anguish, don't you  
know!

Er maybe dead o' *winter*—makes no odds to *Doc*,—he's got  
To face the weather ef it takes the hide off! 'cause he'll not

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Lie out o' goin' and p'tend he's sick hisse'f—like *some*  
'At I could name 'at folks might send fer and they'd *never*  
come!

Like pore Phin Hoover—when he goes to that last dance o'  
his  
That Chris'mus when his feet wuz froze—and Doc saved  
all they is  
Left of 'em—"Nough," as Phin say now, "to *track* me by,  
and be  
A advertisement, anyhow, o' what Doc's done fer me! —

"When *he* come—knife-and-saw"—Phin say, "I knowed, ef  
I'd the spunk,  
'At Doc 'ud fix me up *some* way, ef nothin' but my *trunk*  
Wuz left, he'd fasten *casters* in and have me, spick-and-  
span,  
A-skootin' round the streets ag'in as sry as any man!"

Doc sees a patient's *got* to quit—he'll ease him down serene  
As dozin' off to sleep, and yit not dope him with mor-  
*phcen.*—

He won't tell *what*—jes' 'lows 'at he has "airnt the right to  
sing

'O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy  
sting?"

And, mind' 'e now!—it's not in scoff and scorn, by long  
degree,

'At Doc gits things like that-un off: it's jes' his *shority*  
And total faith in Life to Come,—w'y, "from that *Land o'*  
*Bliss,*"

He says, "we'll haf to chuckle some, a-lookin' back at this!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And, still in p'int, I mind, one *night o' 'nitiation* at  
Some seecrt lodge, 'at Doe set right down on 'em, square  
and flat,

When they mixed up some Scriptur' and wuz *fnnnin'-like*—  
w'y, he

Lit in 'em with a rep'imand 'at ripped 'em, A to Z!

And onc't—when g'neral loafin'-place wuz old Shoe-Shop—  
and all

The gang 'ud git in there and brace their backs ag'inst the  
wall

And *settle* questions that had went onsettled long enough,—  
Like "wuz no Heav'n—ner no torment"—*jes' talkin' awf'!*  
*rough!*

There wuz Sloke Haines and old Ike Knight and Coonrod  
Simmes—all three

Ag'inst the Bible and the Light, and scoutin' Deity.

"*Science*," says Ike, "it *demonstrates*—it takes nobody's  
word—

*Scriptur'* er not,—it '*vestigates* ef sich things could oc-  
curred!"

Well, Doe he heerd this,—he'd drapped in a minute, fer to  
git

A tore-off heel pegged on ag'in,—and, as he stood on it  
And stomped and grinned, he says to Ike, "I s'pose now,  
purty soon

Some lightin'-bug, indignant-like, 'll '*vestigate* the  
moon! . . .

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

"No, Ike," says Doc, "this world hain't saw no brains like  
yourn and mine  
With sense enough to grasp a law 'at takes a brain divine.—  
I've bared the thoughts of brains in doubt, and felt their  
finest pulse,—  
And mortal brains jes' won't turn out omnipotent results!"

And Doc he's got respects to spare the *rich* as well as  
*pore*—  
Says he, "I'd turn no *millionnaire* onsheltered from my  
door."—  
Says he, "What's wealth to him in quest o' *honest* friends  
to back  
And love him fer *hiss'e'f*.—not jes' because he's made his  
jack!"

And childern.—*Childern?* Lawzy-day! Doc *worships* 'em!  
—You call  
Round at his house and *ast* 'em!—they're a-*swarmin'* there  
—that's all!—  
They're in his *Lib'ry*—in best room—in kitchen—fur and  
near,—  
In office too, and, I p'sume, his operatin'-cheer!

You know they's men 'at *bees* won't sting?—They's plaguy  
*few*,—but Doc  
He's one o' *them*.—And same, i jing! with *childern*;—they  
jes' flock  
Round Sifers *natchurl!*—in his lap, and in his pockets, too  
And in his old fur mitts and cap, and *heart* as warm and  
true!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

It's cur'ous, too,—'cause Doc hain't got no childern of his own—

'Ceptin' the ones he's tuk and brought up, 'at's bin left alone

And orphans when their father died, er mother,—and Doc he

Has he'pped their dyin' satisfied.—“The child shall live with me

“And Winniferd, my wife,” he'd say, and stop right there, and cle'r

His ti'roat, and go on thinkin' way *some* mother-hearts down here

Can't never feel *their* ozen babe's face a-pressin' 'em, ner make

Their naked breasts a restin'-place fer any baby's sake.

Doc's Lib'ry—as he calls it,—well, they's ha'f-a-dozen she'ves

Jam-full o' books—I couldn't tell *how* many—count your-se'ves!

*One whole she'f's* Works on Medicine! and most the rest's about

First Settlement, and Indians in here,—'fore we driv 'em out.—

And Plutarch's Lives—and life also o' Dan'l Boone, and this-

Here Mungo Park, and Adam Poe—jes' all the *lives* they is!

And 'er's got all the *novels* out,—by Scott and Dickison

And Cooper.—And, I make no doubt, he's read 'em ever' one!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

One't, in his office, settin' there, with crowd o' eight er nine  
Old neighbors with the time to spare, and Doc a-feelin' fine,  
A man rid up from Rollins, jes' fer Doc to write him out  
Some blame' p'scription—done, I guess, in minute, nigh  
about.—

And *I* says, "Doe, you 'pear so spry, jes' write me that  
recei't  
You have fer bein' *happy* by,—fer that 'ud shorely beat  
Your *medicine!*" says I.—And quick as *s'cat!* Doe turned  
and writ  
And handed me: "Go he'p the sick, and putt your heart  
in it."

And then, "A-talkin' furder 'bout that line o' thought,"  
says he,  
"Ef we'll jes' do the work ent out and give' to you and me,  
We'll laek no joy, ner appetite, ner all we'd ort to eat,  
And sleep like childern ever' night—as puore and ea'm and  
sweet."

Doc *has* bin 'eused o' *offishness* and laek o' talkin' free  
And extry friendly; but he says, "I'm '*feard* o' talk," says  
he,—  
"I've got," he says, "a natehurl turn fer talkin' fit to kill.—  
The best and hardest thing to learn is triek o' keepin' still."

Doe *kin* smoke, and I s'pose he *might* drink lieker—jes' fer  
fun.  
He says, "*You* smoke, *you* drink all right; but *I* don't—  
neether onc"—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Says, "I *like* whisky—'good old rye'—but like it in its place,  
Like that-air warter in your eye, er nose there on your  
face."

Doc's bound to have his joke! The day he got that off  
on me

I jes' had sold a load o' hay at "Scofield's Livery,"  
And tolled Doc in the shed they kep' the hears't in, where  
I'd hid

The stuff 'at got me "out o' step," as Sifers said it did.

Doc hain't, to say, no "*rollin' stone*," and yit he hain't no  
hand

Fer '*cumulatin'*.—*Home's* his own, and scrap o' farmin'-  
land—

Enough to keep him out the way when folks is tuk down  
sick

The suddentest—'most any day they want him 'special  
quick.

And yit Doc loves his practise; ner don't, wilful, want to  
slight

No call—no matter who—how fur away—er day er night.—  
He loves his work—he loves his friends—J.oe, Winter,  
Fall, and Spring:

His *lovin'*—facts is—never ends; he loves jes' *ever'*-  
thing. . . .

'Cept—*keepin'* books. He never sets down no accounts.—  
He hates,

The worst of all, collectin' debts—the worst, the more he  
waits.—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

I've knowed him, when at last he *had* to dun a man, to end  
By makin' him a loan—and mad he hadu't more to lend.

When Pence's Drug Store ust to be in full blast, they wuz  
some  
Doc's patients got things frekantly there, charged to *him*,  
i gun!—  
Doc run a bill there, don't you know, and allus when he  
squared,  
He never questioned nothin',—so he had his feelin's spared.

Now sich as that, I hold and claim, hain't '*sensable*—it's not  
*Professional!*—It's jes' a shame 'at Doc hisse'f hain't got  
No better *business-sense!* That's why lots'd respect him  
more,  
And not give him the clean go-by fer *other* docters. Shore!

This-here Doc *Glenn*, fer instance; er this little jack-leg  
*Hall*;—  
They're *business*—folks respects 'em fer their *business*  
more'n all  
They ever knowed, or ever *will*, 'bout *medicine*.—Yit they  
Collect their money, k-yore er kill.—They're *business*, any-  
way!

You ast Jake Dunn:—he's worked it out in *figgers*.—He  
kin show  
*Statistics* how Doc's airnt about *three* fortunes in a row,—  
Ever' ten-year' hand-runnin' straight—*three* of 'em—*thirty*  
year'  
'At Jake kin count and 'lucidate o' Sifers' practise here.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yit—"Praise the Lord," says Doc, "we've got our little home!" says he—

"(It's raily *Winniferd's*, but what she owns, she sheers with me.)

We' got our little gyarden-spot, and peach and apple trees,  
And stable, too, and chicken-lot, and eighteen hive' o' bees."

*You* call it anything you please, but it's *witchcraft*—the power

'At Sifers has o' handlin' bees!—He'll watch 'em by the hour—

Mix right amongst 'em, mad and hot and swarmin'!—yit they won't

Sting *him*, er *want* to—'pear to not,—at least I know they *don't*.

With *me* and bees they's no *p'tense* o' sociability—

A dad-burn bee 'ud climb a fence to git a whack at *me*!

I s'pose no thing 'at's *got* a sting is raily satisfied

It's *sharp* enough, ontel, i jing! he's honed it on my hide!

And Doc he's allus had a knack *inventin'* things.—Dec-vised  
A windlass wound its own se'f back as it run down: and s'prised

Their new hired girl with *clothes-line*, too, and *clothes-pins*,  
all in *one*:

Purt' nigh all left fer *her* to do wuz git her *primpin'* done!

And onc't, I mind, in airy Spring, and tappin' sugar trees,  
Doc made a dad-burn little thing to sharpen *spiles* with—  
these-

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Here wood'-sponts 'at the peth's punched out, and driv' in  
where they lore  
The auger-holes. He sharpened 'bout a *million* spiles er  
more!

And Doc's the first man ever swung a *bucket* on a tree  
Instid o' *troughs*; and first man brung *grained* sugar—so's  
'at he  
Could use it fer his coffee, and fer eookin', don't you  
know.—  
Folks come clean up from Pleasantland 'fore they'd *believe*  
it, though!

And all Doc's stable-doors *onlocks* and locks *theirse'ves*—  
and gates  
The same way;—all rigged up like elocks, with pulleys,  
wheels, and weights.—  
So, 's Doe says, "Drivin' *out*, er *in*, they'll *open*; and they'll  
*then*,  
All quiet-like, shet up ag'in like little gentlemen!"

And Doe 'ud made a mighty good *detective*.—Neighbors all  
Will testify to *that*—er *could*, ef they wuz legal call:  
His theories on any crime is worth your listenin' to.—  
And he has hit 'em, many a time, long 'fore established true.

At this young druggist Wenfield Pence's trial fer his life,  
On *primy faishy* evidence o' pizonin' his wife  
Doc's testimony saved and ele'ed and 'quitted him and  
freed  
Him so's he never even 'peared cog-nizant of the deed!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

The facts wuz—Sifers testified,—at inquest he had found  
The stummick showed the woman *died* o' pizon, but had  
downed

The Jos't *herse'f*,—because *amount* and *cost* o' drug im-  
ployed

No *druggist* would, on *no* accoutnt, 'a' lavished and dis-  
troyed!

Doe tracked a blame-don burglar down, and *nailed* the  
scamp, to boot,

But told him ef he'd leave the town he wouldn't prosecute.  
He traced him by a tied-up thumb-print in fresh pntty,  
where

Doc glazed it. Jes' *that's* how he come to track him to his  
lair!

Doc's jes' a *lectle* too inclined, *some* thinks, to overlook  
The criminal and vicious kind we'd ort to bring to book  
And punish, 'thout no extry show o' *sympathizin'*, where  
*They* hain't showed none fer *us*, you know. But he takes  
issue there:

Doc argies 'at "The Red-eyed Law," as *he* says, "ort to  
learn

To lay a mighty leenient paw on deeds o' sich concern  
As only the Good Bein' knows the wherefore of, and  
spreads

His hands above accused and sows His mercies on their  
heads."

Doe even holds 'at *murder* hain't no crime we got a right  
To hang a man fer—claims it's *taint* o' *lunacy*, er *quite*.—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Hold *sich* a man responsibal fer murder," Doc says,—  
"then,  
When *he's* hung, where's the rope to pull them *sound-mind*  
jurymen?"

"It's in a nutshell— *ill kin see*," says Doc,— "t's cle'r the  
*Late's*  
As ap' to err as you er me, and kill without a cause:  
The man most innocent o' sin *I've* saw, er '*spect* to see,  
Wuz servin' a life-sentence in the penitetchury."

And Doc's a whole hand at a *fire!*—directiu' how and  
where  
To set your ladders, low er higher, and what first duties  
air,—  
Like formin' warter-bucket-line; and best man in the town  
To chop holes in old roofs, and mine defective climbles  
down:

Er durin' any public crowd, mass-meetin', er big day,  
Where ladies ortn't be allowed, as I've heerd Sifers say,—  
When they's a suddent rush somewhere, it's Doc's voice.  
ca'm and cle'r,  
Says, "Fall back, men, and give her air!—that's all she's  
faintin' fer."

The sorriest I ever feel fer Doc is when some show  
Er circus comes to town and he'll not git a chance to go.  
'Cause he jes' natchurly *delights* in circuses—clean down  
From tumblers, in their spangled tights, to trick-mule and  
Old Clown.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And ever'body *knows* it, too, how Doc is, thataway! . . .  
I mind a circus one't come through—wuz there myse'f that  
day.—

Ring-master cracked his whip, you know, to start the ridin'  
—when

In runs Old Clown and hollers "*W'hoa!*—Ladies and gen-  
tlemen

"Of this vast audience, I fain would make inquiry ele'r,  
And learn, find out, and ascertain—*Is Doctor Sifers here?*"  
And when some fool-voice bellers down: "He is! He's  
settin' in

Full view o' yel!" "*Then,*" says the Clown, "*the circus may  
begin!*"

Doc's got a *temper*; but, he says, he's learnt it which is  
boss,

Y it has to *watch* it, more er less. . . . I never seen him  
cross

But one't, enough to make him swear;—mileh-cow stepped  
on his toe,

And Doc ripped out "*I dooggies!*"—There's the only case I  
know.

Doc says that's what your temper's fer—to hold back out  
o' view,

And learn it never to occur on out ahead o' *you*.—

"*You lead the way,*" says Sifers—"git your *temper* back in  
line—

And *furdest* back the *best*, ef it's as mean a one as mine!"

He hates contentions—can't abide a wrangle er dispute  
O' any kind; and he 'ull slide out of a crowd and skoot

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Up some back-alley 'fore he'll stand and listen to a furse  
When ary one's got upper-hand and t'other one's got worse.

Doc says: "I 'spise, when pore and weak and awk'ard  
talkers fails,  
To see it's them wit' har'lest cheek and loudest mouth  
pervails.—

A' all-one-sided quarr'I 'll make me *biassed*, mighty near,—  
'Cause ginerly the side I take's the one I never hear."

What 'peals to Doc the most and best is "seein' folke  
*agreed*,

And takin' e'kal interest and univ'ersal heed

O' ever'body *else's* words and idies—same as we

Wuz glad and chirpy as the birds—jes' as we'd *ort* to be!"

And *paterotic!* Like to git Doc started, full and fair,  
About the war, and why 'tuz fit, and what wuz 'complished  
there;

"And who wuz *wrong*," says Doc, "er *right*, 'tuz waste o'  
blood and tears,

All prophesied in *Black and White* fer years and years and  
years!"

And then he'll likely kind e' tetch on old John Brown, and  
dwell

On what *his* warnin's wuz; and ketch his breath and cough,  
and tell

On down to Lincoln's death. And *then*—well, he jes'  
chokes and quits

With "I mu' go now, gentlemen!" and grabs his hat, and  
*gits!*

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Doc's own war-rickord wuzn't won so much in line o' fight  
As line o' work and nussin' done the wounded, day and  
night.—

His wuz the hand, through dark and dawn, 'at bound their  
wounds, and laid

As soft as their own mother's on their forreds when they  
prayed. . . .

His wuz the face they saw the first—all dim, but smilin'  
bright,

As they come to and knowed the worst, yit saw the old  
*Red-White-*

*And-Blue* where Doc had fixed it where they'd see it  
awain' still,

Out through the open tent-flap there, er 'cross the winder-  
sill.

And some's a-limpin' round here yit—a-waitin' Last Re-  
view,—

'Ud give the pensions 'at they git, and pawn their crutches,  
too,

To he'p Doc out, ef he wuz pressed financial'—same as e  
Has *allus* he'pped them when distressed—ner never tuk a  
fee.

Doc never wuz much hand to pay attention to *f'tense*

And fus. and-feathers and display in men o' prominence:

"A raily *great* man," Sifers 'lows, "is not the out'ard  
dressed—

All uniform, salutes and bows, and swellin' out his chest.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

"I met a great man onc't," Doc says, "and shuk his hand,"  
says he,  
"And *he* come 'bout in *one*, I guess, o' disapp'intin' *me*—  
He talked so common-like, and brought his miud so cle'r  
in view  
And simple-like, I purt' nigh thought, 'I'm best man o' the  
two!'"

Yes-sir! Doc's got convictions and old-fashioned kind o'  
ways  
And idies 'bout this glorious Land o' Freedom; and he'll  
raise  
His hat clean 'off, no matter where, jes' ever' time he sees  
The Stars and Stripes a-floatin' there and flappin' in the  
breeze.

And tuncs like old "Red-White-and-Blue" 'll fairly drive  
him wild,  
Played on the brass band, marchin' through the streets!  
Jes' like a child  
I've saw that man, his smile jes' set, all kind o' pale and  
white,  
Bareheaded, and his eyes all wet, yit dancin' with delight!

And yit, that very man we see all trimbly, pale and wann,  
Give him a case o' *surgery*, we'll see another man!—  
*We'll* do the trimblin' then, and *we'll* git white around the  
gills—  
He'll show us *nerve* o' nerves, and he 'ull show us *skill* o'  
skills!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

*Then you could toot your horns and beat your drums and  
bang your guns,*

*And wave your flags and march the street, and charge, all  
Freedom's sons!—*

*And Sifers then, I bet my hat, 'ud never flinch a hair,  
But, stiddy-handed, 'tend to that pore patient layin' there.*

*And Sifers' eye's as stiddy as that hand o' his!—He'll shoot  
A' old-style rifle, like he has, and smallest bore, to boot,  
With any fancy rifles made to-day, er expert shot  
'At works at shootin' like a trade—and all some of 'em's  
got!*

*Let 'em go right out in the woods with Doc, and leave their  
"traps"*

*And blame' glass-balls and queensware-goods, and see how  
Sifers draps*

*A squirrel out the tallest tree.—And 'fore he fires he'll say  
Jes' who he'll hit him—yes, sir-ee! And he's hit that-  
away!*

*Let 'em go out with him, i jncks! with fishin'-pole and  
gun,—*

*And ekal chances, fish and ducks, and take the rain, er sun,  
Jes' as it pours, er as it blinds the eyesight; then I guess  
'At they'd acknowledge, in their minds, their disadvantages.*

*And yit he'd be the last man out to flap his wings and crow  
Insultin'-like, and strut about above his fallen foe!—*

*No-sir! the hand 'at tuk the wind out o' their sails 'ud be  
The very first they grabbed, and grinned to feel sich sym-  
pathy.*

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Doc gits off now and then and takes a huntin'-trip some-  
where

'Bout Kankakee, up 'mongst the lakes—sometimes'll drift  
round there

In his canoe a week er two; then paddle clean on back  
By way o' old Wabash and Blue, with fish—all he kin  
pack,—

And wild ducks—some with feathers on 'em yit, and stuffed  
with grass.

And neighbors—all knows he's bin *gone*—comes round and  
gits a bass—

A great big double-breasted "rock," er "black," er maybe  
*pair*

Half fills a' ordinary crock. . . . Doc's *fish*'ll give out  
there

Long 'fore his *ducks*!—But folks'll smile and blandish him,  
and make

Him tell and *tell* things!—all the while enjoy 'em jes' fer  
sake

Or jesin' 'im; and then turn in and la'nch him from the  
*stove*

A-tellin' all the things ag'in they raily know by heart.

He's jes' a *child*, 's what Sifers is! And-sir, I'd ruther see  
That happy, childish face o' his, and puore simplicity,  
Than any shape er style er plan o' mortals otherwise —  
With perfect faith in God and man a-shinin' in his eyes.

TAMAM

## A CHILD-WORLD

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### *The Child-World*

A CHILD-WORLD, yet a wondrous world no less,  
To those who knew its boundless happiness,  
A simple old frame house—eight rooms in all—  
Set just one side the center of a small  
But very hopeful Indiana town,—  
The upper story looking squarely down  
Upon the main street, and the main highway  
From East to West,—historic in its day,  
Known as The National Road—old-travellers, all  
Who linger yet, will happily recall  
It as the scheme and handiwork, as well  
As property, of "Uncle Sam," and tell  
Of its importance, "long and long afore  
*Railroads wuz ever dream' of!*"—Furthermore  
The reminiscent first inhabitants  
Will make that old road blossom with romance  
Of snowy caravans, in long parade  
Of covered vehicles, of every grade  
From ox-cart of most primitive design,  
To Conestoga wagons, with their fine  
Deep-chested six-horse teams, in heavy gear,  
High hames and chiming bells—to childish ear  
And eye entrancing as the glittering train  
Of some sun-smitten pageant of old Spain.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And, in like spirit, haply they will tell  
Ye of the roadside forests, and the yell  
Of "wolfs" and "painters," in the long night-ride,  
And "screechin' catamounts" on every side.—  
Of stage-coach days, highwaymen, and strange crimes,  
And yet unriddled mysteries of the times  
Called "Good Old." "And why 'Good Old'?" once a  
rare

Old chronicler was asked, who brushed the hair  
Out of his twinkling eyes and said,—“Well, John,  
They're 'good old times' because they're dead and  
gone!”

The old home site was portioned into three  
Distinctive lots. The front one—natively  
Facing to southward, broad and gau'y-fine  
With lilac, dahlia, rose, and flowering vine—  
The dwelling stood in; and behind that, and  
Upon the alley north and south, left hand,  
The old wood-house,—half, trimly stacked with wood,  
And half, a workshop, where a work-bench stood  
Steadfastly through all seasons.—Over it,  
Along the wall, hung compass, brace-and-bit,  
And square, and drawing-knife, and smoothing-plane—  
And little jack-plane, too—the children's vain  
Possession by pretense—in fancy they  
Manipulating it in endless play,  
Turning out countless curls and loops of bright,  
Fine satin shavings—Rapture infinite!  
Shelved quilting-frames; the tool-chest; the old box  
Of refuse nails and screws; a rough gun-stock's

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Outline in "curly maple"; and a pair  
Of clamps and old kraut-cutter hanging there.  
Some "patterns," in thin wood, of shield and scroll,  
Hung higher, with a neat "cane-fishing pole"  
And careful tackle—all securely out  
Of reach of children, rumaging about.

Beside the wood-house, with broad branches free  
Yet close above the roof, an apple-tree  
Known as "The Prince's Harvest"—Magic phrase!  
That was *a boy's own tree*, in many ways!—  
Its girth and height meet both for the caress  
Of his bare legs and his ambitiousness:  
And then its apples, humoring his whim,  
Seemed just to fairly *hurry* ripe for him—  
Even in June, impetuous as he,  
They dropped to meet him, half-way up the tree.  
And O their bruised sweet faces where they fell!—  
And ho! the lips that feigned to "kiss them *well*!"

"The Old Sweet-Apple Tree," a talwart, stood  
In fairly sympathetic neighborhood  
Of this wild princeling with his early gold  
To toss about so lavishly nor hold  
In bounteous hoard to overbrim at once  
All Nature's lap when came the Autumn months.  
Under the spacious shade of this the eyes  
Of swinging children saw swift-changing skies  
Of blue and green, with sunshine shot between,  
And "when the old cat died" they saw but green.  
And, then, there was a cherry tree.—We all  
And severally will yet recall

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

From our lost youth, in gentlest memory,  
The blessed fact—There was a cherry tree.

There was a cherry tree. Its bloomy snows  
Cool even now the fevered sight that knows  
No more its airy visions of pure joy—  
As when you were a boy.

There was a cherry tree. The Bluejay set  
His blue against its white—O blue as jet  
He seemed there then!—But *now*—Whoever knew  
He was so pale a blue!

There was a cherry tree—Our child-eyes saw  
The miracle:—Its pure white snows did thaw  
Into a crimson fruitage, far too sweet  
But for a boy to eat.

There was a cherry tree, give thanks and joy!  
There was a bloom of snow—There was a boy—  
There was a Bluejay of the realest blue—  
And fruit for both of you.

Then the old garden, with the apple trees  
Grouped round the margin, and "a stand of bees"  
By the "white-winter-pearmain"; and a row  
Of currant-bushes; and a quince or so.  
The old grape-arbor in the center, by  
The pathway to the stable, with the sty  
Behind it, and *upon* it, cootering flocks  
Of pigeons,—and the cutest "martin-box"!—  
Made like a sure-enough house—with roof, and doors  
And windows in it, and veranda-floors  
And balusters all round it—yes, and at  
Each end a chimney—painted red at that  
And penciled white, to look like little bricks;  
And, to cap all the builder's cunning tricks,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Two tiny little lightning-rods were run  
Straight up their sides, and twinkled in the sun.  
Who built it? Nay, no answer but a smile.—  
It *may* be you can guess who, afterwhile.  
Home in his stall, "Old Sorrel" munched his hay  
And oats and corn, and switched the flies away,  
In a repose of patience good to see,  
And earnest of the gentlest pedigree.  
With half pathetic eye sometimes he gazed  
Upon the gambols of a colt that grazed  
Around the edges of the lot outside,  
And kicked at nothing suddenly, and tried  
To act grown-up and graceful and high-bred,  
But dropped, *k'whop!* and scraped the buggy-shed,  
Leaving a tuft of woolly, foxy hair  
Under the sharp-end of a gate-hinge there.  
Then, all ignobly scrambling to his feet  
And whinnying a whinny like a bleat,  
He would pursue himself around the lot  
And—do the whole thing over, like as not! . . .  
Ah! what a life of constant fear and dread  
And flop and squawk and flight the chickens led!  
Above the fences, either side, were seen  
The neighbor-houses, set in plots of green  
Dooryards and greener gardens, tree and wall  
Alike whitewashed, and order in it all:  
The scythe hooked in the tree-fork; and the spade  
And hoe and rake and shovel all, when laid  
Aside, were in their places, ready for  
The hand of either the possessor or  
Of any neighbor, welcome to the loan  
Of any tool he might not chance to own.

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*The Old Home-Folks*

**S**UCH was the Child-World of the long-ago—  
The little world these children used to know:—  
Johny, the oldest, and the best, perhaps,  
Of the five happy little Hoosier chaps  
Inhabiting this wee world all their own.—  
Johny, the leader, with his native tone  
Of grave command—a general on parade  
Whose punctilious order was obeyed  
By his proud followers.

But Johny yet—  
After all serious duties—could forget  
The gravity of life to the extent,  
At times, of kindling much astonishment  
About him: With a quick, observant eye,  
And mind and memory, he could supply  
The tamest incident with liveliest mirth;  
And at the most unlooked-for times on earth  
Was wont to break into some travesty  
On those around him—feats of mimicry  
Of this one's trick of gesture—that one's walk—  
Or this one's laugh—or that one's funny talk,—  
The way "the watermelon-man" would try  
His humor on town-folks that wouldn't buy;—  
How he drove into town at morning—then  
At dusk (alas!) how he drove out again.

Though these diversions of Johny's were  
Hailed with a hearty glee and relish, there  
Appeared a sense, on his part, of regret—  
A spirit of remorse that would not let

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Him rest for days thereafter.—Such times be,  
As some boy said, “jist got too overly  
Blame’ good fer common boys like us, you know,  
To ‘sociate with—’less’n we ‘ud go  
And jin’ ’s church!”

Next after Jolinty came  
His little towhead brother, Bud by name.—  
And O how white his hair was—and how thick  
His face with freckles,—and his ears, how quick  
And curious and intrusive!—And how pale  
The blue of his big eyes;—and how a tale  
Of Giants, Trolls or Fairies, bulged them still  
Bigger and bigger!—and when “Jack” would kill  
The old “Four-headed Giant,” Bud’s big eyes  
Were swollen truly into giant-size.  
And Bud was apt in make-believes—would hear  
His Grandma talk or read, with such an ear  
And memory of both subject and big words,  
That he would take the book up afterwards  
And feign to “read aloud,” with such success  
As caused his truthful elders real distress.  
But he *must* have *big words*—they seemed to give  
Extremere range to the superlative—  
That was his passion. “My Gran’ma,” he said,  
One evening, after listening as she read  
Some heavy old historical review—  
With copious explanations thereunto  
Drawn out by his inquiring turn of mind,—  
“My Gran’ma she’s read *all books*—ever’ kind  
They is, ’at tells all ’bout the land an’ sea  
An’ Nations of the Earth!—An’ she is the

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Historical-est woman ever wuz!"  
(Forgive the verse's chuckling as it does  
In its erratic current.—Oftentimes  
The little willowy water-brook of rhymes  
Must falter in its music, listening to  
The children laughing as they used to do.)

Who shall sing a simple ditty all about the Willow  
Dainty-fine and delicate as any bending spray  
That dandles high the happy bird that flutters there to trill a  
Tremulously tender song of greeting to the May.

Bravest, too, of all the trees!—none to match your daring,  
First of greens to greet the Spring and lead in leafy sheen;—  
Ay, and you're the last—almost into winter wearing  
Still the leaf of loyalty—still the badge of green.

Ah, my lovely Willow!—Let the Waters lift your graces,—  
They alone with limpid kisses lave your leaves above,  
Flashing back your sylvan beauty, and in shady places  
Peering up with glimmering pebbles, like the eyes of love.

Next, Maymie, with her hazy cloud of hair,  
And the blue skies of eyes beneath it there.  
Her dignified and "little lady" airs  
Of never either romping up the stairs  
Or falling down them; thoughtful every way  
Of others first—The kind of child at play  
That "gave up," for the rest, the ripest pear  
Or peach or apple in the garden there  
Beneath the trees where swooped the airy swing—  
She pushing it, too glad for anything!  
Or, in the character of hostess, she  
Would entertain her friends delightfully

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

In her playhouse,—with strips of carpet laid  
Along the garden-fence within the shade  
Of the old apple trees—where from next yard  
Came the two dearest friends in her regard,  
The little Crawford girls, Ella and Lu—  
As sly and lovely as the lilies grew  
In their idyllic home,—yet sometimes they  
Admitted Bud and Alex to their play,  
Who did their heavier work and helped them fix  
To have a "Festibal"—and brought the bricks  
And built the "stove," with a real fire and all,  
And stove-pipe joint for chimney, looming tall  
And wonderfully smoky—even to  
Their childish aspirations, as it blew  
And swooped and swirled about them till their sight  
Was feverish even as their high delight.  
Then Alex, with his freckles, and his freaks  
Of temper, and the peach-bloom of his cheeks,  
And "*amber-colored* hair"—his mother said  
'Twas that, when others laughed and called it "*red*"  
And Alex threw things at them—till they'd call  
A truce, agreeing "'tuz n't red *ut-tall!*"  
But Alex was affectionate beyond  
The average child, and was extremely fond  
Of the paternal relatives of his  
Of whom he once made estimate like this:—  
"*I'm* only got *two* brothers,—but my *Pa*  
He's got most brothers'n you cver saw!—  
He's got *seven* brothers!—Yes, an' they're all my  
Seven Uncles!—Uncle John, an' Jim,—an' I'  
Got Uncle George, an' Uncle Andy, too,  
An' Uncle Frank, an' Uncle Joe.—An' you

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

*Know Uncle Mart.*—An', all but *him*, they're great  
Big mens!—An' nen's Aunt Sarah—She makes eight!—  
I'm got *eight* uncles!—'cept Aunt Sarah *can't*  
Be ist my *uncle* 'cause she's ist my *ount!*"

Then, next to Alex—and tie last indeed  
Of these five little ones of whom you read—  
Was baby Lizzie, with her velvet lisp,—  
As though her elfin lips had caught some wisp  
Of floss between them as they strove with speech,  
Which ever seemed just in, yet out of, reach—  
Though what her lips missed, her dark eyes could say  
With looks that made her meaning clear as day.

And, knowing now the children, you must know  
The father and the mother they loved so:—  
The father was a swarthy man, black-eyed,  
Black-haired, and high of forehead; and, beside  
The slender little mother, seemed in truth  
A very king of men—since, from his youth,  
To his hale manhood *now*—(worthly as then,—  
A lawyer and a leading citizen  
Of the proud little town and county-seat—  
His nopes his neighbors', and their fealty sweet)—  
He had known outdoor labor—rain and shine—  
Bleak Winter, and bland Summer—foul and fine.  
So Nature had ennobled him and set  
Her symbol on him like a coronet:  
His lifted brow, and frank, reliant face.—  
Superior of stature as of grace,  
Even the children by the spell were wrought

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Up to heroics of their simple thought,  
And saw him, trim of build, and lithe and straight  
And tall, almost, as at the pasture-gate  
The towering ironweed the scythe had spared  
For their sakes, when The Hired Man declared  
It would grow on till it became a *tree*,  
With cocoanuts and monkeys in—maybel

Yet, though the children, in their pride and awe  
And admiration of the father, saw  
A being so exalted—even more  
Like adoration was the love they bore  
The gentle mother.—Her mild, plaintive face  
Was purely fair, and haloed with a grace  
And sweetness luminous when joy made glad  
Her features with a smile; or saintly sad  
As twilight, fell the sympathetic gloom  
Of any childish grief, or as a room  
Were darkened suddenly, the curtain drawn  
Across the window and the sunshine gone.  
Her brow, below her fair hair's glimmering strands,  
Seemed meekest resting-place for blessing hands  
Or holiest touches of soft finger-tips  
And little rose-leaf cheeks and dewy lips.

Though heavy household tasks were pitiless,  
No little waist or coat or checkered dress  
But knew her needle's deftness; and no skill  
Matched hers in shaping plait or flounce or frill;  
Or fashioning, in complicate design,  
All rich embroideries of leaf and vine,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

With tiniest twining tendril,—bud and bloom  
And fruit, so like, one's fancy caught perfume  
And dainty touch and taste of them, to see  
Their semblance wrought in such rare verity.

Shrined in her sanctity of home and love,  
And love's fond service and reward thereof,  
Restore her thus, O blessed Memory!—  
Throned in her rocking-chair, and on her knee  
Her sewing—her work-basket on the floor  
Beside her,—Spring-time through the open door  
Balmily stealing in and all about  
The room; the bees' dim hum, and the far shout  
And laughter of the children at their play,  
And neighbor children from across the way  
Calling in gleeful challenge—save alone  
One boy whose voice sends back no answering tone—  
The boy, prone on the floor, above a book  
Of pictures, with a rapt, ecstatic look—  
Even as the mother's, by the selfsame sp.<sup>11</sup>,  
Is lifted, with a light ineffable—  
As though her senses caught no mortal cry.  
But heard, instead, some poem going by.

The Child-heart is so strange a little thing—  
So mild—so timorously shy and small,—  
When *grown-up* hearts throb, it goes scampering  
Behind the wall, nor dares peer out at all!—  
It is the veriest mouse  
That hides in any house—  
So wild a little thing is any Child-heart.

*Child-heart!—mild heart!  
Ho, my little wild heart!  
Come up here to me out o' the dark,  
Or 'let me come to you!*

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

So lorn at times the Child-heart needs must be,  
With never one maturer heart for friend  
And comrade, whose tear-ripened sympathy  
And love might lend it comfort to the end,—  
Whose yearnings, aches and stings,  
O'er poor little things  
Were pitiful as ever any Child-heart,

*Child-heart!—mild heart!*  
*Ho, my little wild heart!*  
*Come up here to me out o' the dark,*  
*Or let me come to you!*

Times, too, the little Child-heart must be glad—  
Being so young, nor knowing, as we know,  
The fact from fantasy, the good from bad,  
The joy from woe, the—all that hurts us so!  
What wonder then that thus  
It hides away from us?—  
So weak a little thing is any Child-heart!

*Child heart!—mild heart!*  
*Ho, my little wild heart!*  
*Come up here to me out o' the dark,*  
*Or let me come to you!*

Nay, little Child heart, you have never need  
To fear us;—we are weaker far than you—  
'Tis we who should be fearful—we indeed  
Should hide us, too, as darkly as you do,—  
Safe, as yourself, withdrawn,  
Hearing the World roar on  
Too wilful, woeful, awful for the Child-heart!

*Child-heart!—mild heart!*  
*Ho, my little wild heart!*  
*Come up here to me out o' the dark,*  
*Or let me come to you!*

The clock chats on confidingly; a rose  
Taps at the window, as the sunlight throws  
A brilliant, jostling checkerwork of shine  
And shadow, like a Persian-loom design,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Across the home-made carpet—fades,—and then  
The dear old colors are themselves again.  
Sounds drop in visiting from everywhere—  
The bluebird's and the robin's trill are there,  
Their sweet liquidity diluted some  
By dewy orchard-spaces they have come:  
Sounds of the town, too, and the great highway—  
The Mover-wagons' rumble, and the neigh  
Of over-traveled horses, and the bleat  
Of sheep and low of cattle through the street—  
A Nation's thoroughfare of hopes and fears,  
First blazed by the heroic pioneers  
Who gave up old-home idols and set face  
Toward the unbroken West, to found a race  
And tame a wilderness now mightier than  
All peoples and all tracts American.  
Blent with all outer sounds, the sounds within:—  
In mild remoteness falls the household din  
Of porch and kitchen: the dull jar and thump  
Of churning; and the "glung-glung" of the pump,  
With sudden pad and scurry of bare feet  
Of little outlaws, in from field or street:  
The clang of kettle,—rasp of damper-ring  
And bang of cook-stove door—and everything  
That jingles in a busy kitchen lifts  
Its individual wrangling voice and drifts  
In sweetest tinny, coppery, pewtery tone  
Of music hungry ear has ever known  
In wildest famished yearning and conceit  
Of youth, to just cut loose and eat and eat!—  
The zest of hunger still incited on  
To childish desperation by long-drawn

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Breaths of hot, steaming, wholesome things that stew  
And blubber, and up-tilt the pot-lids, too.  
To bring the sense with zestful rumors of  
The dear old-fashioned dinners children love:  
Redolent savorings of home-cured meats,  
Potatoes, beans and cabbage; turnips, beets  
And parsnips—rarest composite entire  
That ever pushed a mortal child's desire  
To madness by new-grated fresh, keen, sharp  
Horserradish—tang that sets the lips awarp  
And watery, anticipating all  
The cloyed sweets of the glorious festival.—  
Still add the cinnamony, spiey scents  
Of clove, nutmeg, and myriad condiments  
In like-alluring whiffs that prophesy  
Of sweltering pudding, cake and custard-pie—  
The swooning-sweet aroma haunting all  
The house—up-stairs and down—porch, parlor, hall  
And sitting-room—invading even where  
The Hired Man sniffs it in the orchard-air,  
And pauses in his pruning of the trees  
To note the sun minutely and to—sneeze.

Then Cousin Rufus comes—the children hear  
His hale voice in the old hall, ringing clear  
As any bell. Always he came with song  
Upon his lips and all the happy throng  
Of echoes following him, even as the crowd  
Of his admiring little kinsmen—proud  
To have a cousin *grown*—and yet as young  
Of soul and cheery as the songs he sung.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

He was a student of the law—intent  
Soundly to win success, with all it meant;  
And so he studied—even as he played,—  
With all his heart: And so it was he made  
His gallant fight for fortune—through all stress  
Of battle bearing him with cheeriness  
And wholesome valor.

And the children had  
Another relative who kept them glad  
And joyous by his very merry ways—  
As blithe and sunny as the summer days,—  
Their father's youngest brother—Uncle Mart:  
The old "Arabian Nights" he knew by heart—  
"Baron Munchausen," too; and likewise "The  
Swiss Family Robinson."—And when these three  
Gave out, as he rehearsed them, he could go  
Straight on in the same line—a steady flow  
Of arabesque invention that his good  
Old mother never clearly understood.  
He *was* to be a *printer*—wanted, though,  
To be an *actor*.—But the world was "show"  
Enough for *him*,—theatrical, airy, gay,—  
Each day to him was jolly as a play.  
And some poetic symptoms, too, in sooth,  
Were certain.—And, from his apprentice youth,  
He joyed in verse-quotations—which he took  
Out of the old "Type Foundry Specimen Book."  
He craved and courted most the favor of  
The children.—They were foremost in his love;  
And pleasing *them*, he pleased his own boy-heart  
And kept it young and fresh in every part.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

So was it he devised for them and wrought  
To life his quaintest, most romantic thought:—  
Like some lone castaway in alien seas,  
He built a house up in the apple trees,  
Out in the corner of the garden, where  
No man-devouring native, prowling there,  
Might pounce upon them in the dead o' night—  
For lo, their little ladder, slim and light,  
They drew up after them. And it was known  
That Uncle Mart slipped up sometimes alone  
And drew the ladder in, to lie and moon  
Over some novel all the afternoon.  
And one time Johnny, from the crowd below,—  
Outraged to find themselves deserted so—  
Threw bodily their old black cat up in  
The airy fastness, with much yowl and din  
Resulting, while a wild periphery  
Of cat went circling to another tree,  
And, in impassioned outburst, Uncle Mart  
Loomed up, and thus relieved his tragic heart:

*"Hence, long-tailed, ebon-eyed, nocturnal ranger!  
What led thee hither 'mongst the types and cases?  
Didst thou not know that running midnight races  
O'er standing types was fraught with imminent danger?  
Did hunger lead thee—didst thou think to find  
Some rich old cheese to fill thy hungry maw?  
Vain hope! for none but literary jaw  
Can masticate our cookery for the mind!"*

So likewise when, with lordly air and grace,  
He strode to dinner, with a tragic face

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

With ink-spots on it from the office, he  
Would aptly quote more "Specimen-poetry—"  
Perchance like "Labor's bread is sweet to eat,  
(*Ahem!*) And toothsome is the toiler's meat."

Ah, could you see them *all*, at lull of noon!—  
A sort of *boisterous* lull, with clink of spoon  
And clatter of deflecting knife, and plate  
Dropped saggingly, with its all-bounteous weight,  
And dragged in place voraciously; and then  
Pent exclamations, and the lull again.—  
The garland of glad faces round the board—  
Each member of the family restored  
To his or her place, with an extra chair  
Or two for the chance guests so often there.—

The father's farmer-client brought home from  
The court room, though he "didn't *want* to come  
Tel he jist saw he *had* to!" he'd explain,  
Invariably, time and time again,  
To the pleased wife and hostess, as she pressed  
Another cup of coffee on the guest.—  
Or there was John's special chum, perchance,  
Or Bud's, or both—each childish countenance  
Lit with a higher glow of youthful glee,  
To be together thus unbrokenly,—  
Jim Offut, or Eck Skinner, or George Carr—  
The very nearest chums of Bud's these are,—  
So, very probably, *one* of the three,  
At least, is there with Bud, or *ought* to be.  
Like interchange the town-boys each had known—  
His playmate's dinner better than his own—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yet blest that he was ever made to stay  
At *Almon Keefer's*, any blessed day.  
For any meal! . . . Visions of biscuits, hot  
And flaky-perfect, with the golden blot  
Of molten butter for the center, clear,  
Through pools of clover-honey—*dear-o-dear!*—  
With creamy milk for its divine "farewell":  
And then, if any one delectable  
Might yet exceed in sweetness, O restore  
The cherry-cobbler of the days of yore  
Made only by Al Keefer's mother!—Why,  
The very thought of it ignites the eye  
Of memory with rapture—cloys the lip  
Of longing, till it seems to ooze and drip  
With veriest juice and stain and overwaste  
Of that most sweet delirium of taste  
That ever visited the childish tongue,  
Or proved, as now, the sweetest thing unsung.  
Ah, Almon Keefer! what a boy you were,  
With your back-tilted hat and careless hair,  
And open, honest, fresh, fair face and eyes  
With their all-varying looks of pleased surprise  
And joyous interest in flower and tree,  
And poising humming-bird, and maundering bee.

The fields and woods he knew; the tireless tramp  
With gun and dog; and the night-fisher's camp—  
No other boy, save Bee Lineback, had won  
Such brilliant mastery of rod and gun.  
Even in his earliest childhood had he shown  
These traits that marked him as his father's own.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Dogs all paid Almon honor and bow-wowed  
Allegiance, let him come in any crowd  
Of rabbit-hunting town-boys, even though  
His own dog "Sleuth" rebuked their acting so  
With jealous snarls and growlings.

But the best  
Of Almon's virtues—leading all the rest—  
Was his great love of books, and skill as well  
In reading them aloud, and by the spell  
Thereof enthralling his mute listeners, as  
They grouped about him in the orchard-grass,  
Hinging their bare shins in the mottled shine  
And shade, as they lay prone, or stretched supine  
Beneath their favorite tree, with dreamy eyes  
And Argo-fancies voyaging the skies.  
"Tales of the Ocean" was the name of one  
Old dog's-eared book that was surpassed by none  
Of all the glorious list.—Its back was gone,  
But its vitality went bravely on  
In such delicious tales of land and sea  
As may not ever perish utterly.  
Of still more dubious caste, "Jack Sheppard" drew  
Full admiration; and "Dick Turpin," too.  
And, painful as the fact is to convey,  
In certain lurid tales of their own day,  
These boys found thieving heroes and outlaws  
They hailed with equal fervor of applause;  
"The League of the Miami"—why, the name  
Alone was fascinating—is the same,  
In memory, this venerable hour  
Of moral wisdom shorn of all its power,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

As it unblushingly reverts to when  
The old barn was "the Cave," and hears again  
The signal blown, outside the buggy-shed—  
The drowsy guard within uplifts his head,  
And "*Who goes there?*" is called, in bated breath—  
The challenge answered in a hush of death,—  
"Sh!—*Barney Gray!*" And then "*What do you seek?*"  
"*Stables of the League!*" the voice comes spent and weak,  
For, ha! the *Law* is on the "Chieftain's" trail—  
Tracked to his very lair!—Well, what avail?  
The "secret entrance" opens—closes.—So  
The "Robber-Captain" thus outwits his foe;  
And, safe once more within his "cavern-halls,"  
He shakes his clenched fist at the warped plank-walls  
And mutters his defiance through the cracks  
At the balked Enemy's retreating backs  
As the loud horde flees pell-mell down the lane,  
And—*Almon Kreefer* is himself again!

Excepting few, they were not books indeed  
Of deep import that Almon chose to read;—  
Less fact than fiction.—Much he favored those—  
If not in poetry, in hectic prose—  
That made our native Indian a wild,  
Feathered and fine-preened hero that a child  
Could recommend as just about the thing  
To make a god of, or at least a king.  
Aside from Almon's own books—two or three—  
His store of lore The Township Library  
Supplied him weekly: All the books with "or"s—  
Sub-titled—lured him—after "Indian Wars,"  
And "Life of Daniel Boone,"—not to include  
Some few books spiced with humor,—"*Robin Hood*"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And rare "Don Quixote."—And one time he took  
"Dadd's Cattle Doctor." . . . How he hugged the book  
And hurried homeward, with internal glee  
And humorous spasms of expectancy!—  
All this confession—as he promptly made  
It, the day later, writhing in the shade  
Of the old apple tree with Johnny and  
Bud, Noey Bixler, and The Hired Hand—  
Was quite as funny as the book was not. . . .  
O Wonderland of wayward Childhood! what  
An easy, breezy realm of summer calm  
And dreamy gleam and gloom and bloom and balm  
Thou art!—The Lotus-Land the poet sung,  
It is the Child-World while the heart beats young. . . .

While the heart beats young!—O the splendor of the Spring,  
With all her dewy jewels on, is not so fair a thing!  
The fairest, rarest morning of the blossom-time of May  
Is not so sweet a season as the season of to-day  
While Youth's diviner climate folds and holds us, close caressed,  
As we feel our mothers with us by the touch of face and breast;—  
Our bare feet in the meadows, and our fancies up among  
The airy clouds of morning—while the heart beats young.

While the heart beats young and our pulses leap and dance,  
With every day a holiday and life a glad romance.  
We hear the birds with wonder, and with wonder watch their flight—  
Standing still the more enchanted, both of hearing and of sight,  
When they have vanished wholly,—for, in fancy, wing-to-wing  
We fly to Heaven with them; and, returning, still we sing  
The praises of this *lower* Heaven with tireless voice and tongue,  
Even as the Master sanctions—while the heart beats young.

While the heart beats young!—While the heart beats young!  
O green and gold old Earth of ours, with azure overhung  
And looped with rainbows!—grant us yet this grassy lap of thine—  
We would be still thy children, through the shower and the shine!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

So pray we, lisping, whispering, in childish love and trust,  
With our beseeching hands and faces lifted from the dust  
By fervor of the poem, all unwritten and unsung,  
Thou givest us in answer, while the heart beats young.

Another hero of those youthful years  
Returns, as Noey Bixler's name appears.  
And Noey—if in any special way—  
Was notably good-natured.—Work or play  
He entered into with selfsame delight—  
A wholesome interest that made him quite  
As many friends among the old as young,—  
So everywhere were Noey's praises sung.

And he was awkward, fat and overgrown,  
With a round full-moon face, that fairly shone  
As though to meet the simile's demand.  
And, cumbersome though he seemed, both eye and hand  
Were dowered with the discernment and deft skill  
Of the true artisan: He shaped at will,  
In his old father's shop, on rainy days,  
Little toy-wagons, and curved-runner sleighs;  
The trimmest bows and arrows—fashioned, too,  
Of "seasoned timber," such as Noey knew  
How to select, prepare, and then complete,  
And call his little friends in from the street.  
"The very *best* bow, Noey used to say,  
"Hain't made o' ash ner hick'ry thataway!—  
But you git *mulberry*—the *bearin'*-tree,  
Now mind ye! and you fetch the piece to me,  
And lemme git it *seasoned*; then, i gum!  
I'll make a bow 'at you kin brag on some!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Er—ef you can't git *mulberry*,—you bring  
Me a' old *locus*' hitch-post, and i jingl  
I'll make a bow o' *that* 'at *common* bows  
Won't dast to pick on ner turn up their nose!"  
And Noey knew the woods, and all the trees,  
And thickets, plants and myriad mysteries  
Of swamp and bottom-land. And he knew where  
The ground-hog hid, and why located there.—  
He knew all animals that burrowed, swam,  
Or lived in tree-tops: And, by race and dam,  
He knew the choicest, safest deeps wherein  
Fish-traps might flourish nor provoke the sin  
Of theft in some chance pecking, prying sneak,  
Or town-boy, prowling up and down the creek.  
All four-pawed creatures tamable—he knew  
Their outer and their inner natures too;  
While they, in turn, were drawn to him as by  
Some subtle recognition of a tie  
Of love, as true as truth from end to end,  
Between themselves and this strange human friend.  
The same with birds—he knew them every one,  
And he could "name them, too, without a gun."  
No wonder *Johnny* loved him, even to  
The verge of worship.—Noey led him through  
The art of trapping redbirds—yes, and taught  
Him how to keep 'em when he had them caught—  
What food they needed, and jst where to swing  
The eage, if he expected them to *sing*.

And *Bud* loved Noey, for the little pair  
Of stilts he made him; or the stout old hair  
Trunk Noey put on wheels, and laid a track  
Of scantling-railroad for it in the back

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Part of the barn-lot; or the cross-bow, made  
Just like a gun, which deadly weapon laid  
Against his shoulder as he aimed, and—'Sping!'—  
He'd hear the rusty old nail zoon and si:g—  
And *zip!* your Mr. Bluejay's wing would drop  
A farewell-feather from the old tree-top!

And *Maymie* loved him, for the very small  
But perfect carriage for her favorite doll—  
A *lady's* carriage—not a *baby-cab*,—  
But oil-cloth top, and two seats, lined with drab  
And trimmed with white lace-paper from a case  
Of shaving-soap his uncle bought some place  
At auction once.

And *Alex* loved him yet  
The best, when Noey brought him, for a pet,  
A little flying-squirrel, with great eyes—  
Big as a child's: And, childlike otherwise,  
It was at first a timid, tremulous, coy,  
Retiring little thing that dodged the boy  
And tried to keep in Noey's pocket;—till,  
In time, responsive to his patient will,  
It became wholly docile, and content  
With its new master, as he came and went,—  
The squirrel clinging flatly to his breast,  
Or sometimes scampering its craziest  
Around his body spirally, and then  
Down to his very heels and up again.

And *Little Lizzie* loved him, as a bee  
Loves a great ripe red apple—utterly.  
For Noey's ruddy morning-face she drew  
The window-blind, and tapped the window, too;

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Afar she hailed his coming, as she heard  
His tuneless whistling—sweet as any bird  
It seemed to her, the one lame bar or so  
Of old "Wait for the Wagon"—hoarse and low  
The sound was,—so that, all about the place,  
Folks joked and said that Noey "whistled bass"—  
The light remark originally made  
By Cousin Rufus, who knew notes, and played  
The flute with nimble skill, and taste as well,  
And, critical as he was musical,  
Regarded Noey's constant whistling thus  
"Phenominally unmelodious."  
Likewise when Uncle Mart, who shared the love  
Of jest with Cousin Rufus hand-in-glove,  
Said "Noey couldn't whistle 'Bonny Doon'  
Even! and, *he'd* bet, couldn't carry a tune  
If it had handles to it!"

—But forgive

The deviations here so fugitive,  
And turn again to Little Lizzie, whose  
High estimate of Noey we shall choose  
Above all others.—And to her he was  
Particularly lovable because  
He laid the woodland's harvest at her feet.—  
He brought her wild strawberries, honey-sweet  
And dewy-cool, in mats of greenest moss  
And leaves, all woven over and across  
With tender, biting "tongue-grass," and "sheep-sour,"  
And twin-leaved beech-mast, pranked with bud and flower  
Of every gipsy-blossom of the wild,  
Dark, tangled forest, dear to any child.—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

All these in season. Nor could barren, drear,  
White and stark-featured Winter interfere  
With Noey's rare resources: Still the same  
He blithely whistled through the snow and came  
Beneath the window with a Fairy sled;  
And Little Lizzie, bundled heels-and-head,  
He took on such excursions of delight  
As even "Old Santy" with his reindeer might  
Have envied her! And, later, when the snow  
Was softening toward Spring-tir and the glow  
Of steady sunshine smote upon,—then  
Came the magician Noey yet again—  
While all the children were away a day  
Or two at Grandma's!—and behold when they  
Got home once more;—there, towering taller than  
The doorway—stood a mighty, old Snow-Man!

A thing of peerless art—a masterpiece  
Doubtless unmatched by even classic Greece  
In heyday of Praxiteles.—Alone  
It loomed in lordly grandeur all its own.  
And steadfast, too, for weeks and weeks it stood,  
The admiration of the neighborhood  
As well as of the children Noey sought  
Only to honor in the work he wrought.  
The traveler paid it tribute, as he passed  
Along the highway—paused and, turning, cast  
A lingering, last look—as though to take  
A vivid print of it, for memory's sake.  
To lighten all the empty, aching miles  
Beyond with brighter fancies, hopes and smiles.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

The cynic put aside his biting wit  
And tacitly declared in praise of it;  
And even the apprentice-poet of the town  
Rose to impassioned heights, and then sat down  
And penned a pauegyric scroll of rhyme  
That made the Snow-Man famous for all time.

And though, as now, the ever warmer sun  
Of summer had so melted and undone  
The perishable figure that—alas!—  
Not even in dwindled white again the grass  
Was left its latest and minutest ghost  
The children yet—*materially*, about—  
Beheld it—circled round it hand-in-hand—  
(Or rather round the place it used to stand)—  
With "Ring-a-round-a-rosy! Bottle full  
O' poscy!" and, with shriek and laugh, would puff  
From seeming contact with it—just as when  
It was the *real-est* of old Snow-Men.

Even in such a scene of senseless play  
The children were surprised one summer day  
By a strange man who called across the fence,  
Inquiring for their father's residence;  
And, being answered that this was the place,  
Opened the gate, and, with a radiant face,  
Came in and sat down with them in the shade.  
And waited—till the absent father made  
His noon appearance, with a warmth and zest  
That told he had no ordinary guest  
In this man whose low-spoken name he knew  
At once, demurring as the stranger drew

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

A stuffy note-book out, and turned and set  
A big fat finger on a page, and let  
The writing thereon testify instead  
Of further speech. And as the father read  
All silently, the curious children took  
Exact ing inventory both of book  
And man:—He wore a long-napped white fur hat  
Pulled firmly on his head, and under that  
Rather long silvery hair, or iron-gray—  
For he was not an old man, anyway,  
Not beyond sixty. And he wore a pair  
Of square-framed spectacles—or rather there  
Were two more than a pair,—the extra two  
Flared at the corners, at the eyes' side-view,  
In as redundant vision as the eyes  
Of grasshoppers or bees or dragon-flies.  
Later the children heard the father say  
He was "A Noted Traveler," and would stay  
Some days with them—in which time host and guest  
Discussed, alone, in deepest interest,  
Some vague, mysterious matter that defied  
The verbal of them, spluttering outside  
The space of the room. There had required a quite  
New list of log-words—such as "Disunite,"  
And "Slibbok'th," and "Aristocracy,"  
And "Juggernaut," and "Squatter Sovereignty,"  
And "Anti-slavery," "Emancipate,"  
"Irrepressible Conflict," and "The Great  
Battle of Armageddon"—obviously  
A pamphlet brought from Washington, D. C.,  
And spread among such friends as might occur  
Of like views with "The Noted Traveler."

253 *Maymie's Story of Red Riding-Hood*

**W**'Y, one time wuz a little-weenty dirl,  
 An' she wuz named Red Riding-Hood, 'cause her  
 Her Ma she maked a little red cloak fer her  
 'At turnt up over her head—An' it 'uz all  
 Ist one piece o' red cardinal 'at's like  
 The drate-long stockin's the store-keepers has.—  
 Oh! it 'uz purtiest cloak in all the world  
 An' *all* this town er anywheres they is!  
 An' so, one day, her Ma she put it on  
 Red Riding-Hood, she did—one day, she did—  
 An' it 'uz *Sund'y*—'cause the little cloak  
 It 'uz too nice to wear ist *ever* day  
 An' *all* the time!—An' so her Ma, she put  
 It on Red Riding-Hood—an' telled her not  
 To dit no dirt on it ner dit it mussed  
 Ner nothin'! An'—an'—nen her Ma she dot  
 Her little basket out, 'at Old Kriss bringed  
 Her wunst—one time, he did. And nen she fill'  
 It full o' whole lots an' 'bundance o' dood things t' eat  
 (Allus my Dran'ma *she* says "bundance," too.)  
 An' so her Ma fill' little Red Riding-Hood's  
 Nice basket all ist full o' dood things t' eat,  
 An' tell her take 'em to her old Dran'ma—  
 An' not to *spill* 'em, neever—'cause ef she  
 'Ud stump her toe an' spill 'em, her Dran'ma  
 She'll haf to *punish* her!

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' nen—An' so  
Little Red Riding-Hood she p'omised she  
'Ud be all careful nen an' cross' her heart  
'At she won't run an' spill 'em all fer six—  
Five--ten—two-hundred-bushel-dollars-gold!  
An' nen she kiss her Ma doo'-by an' went  
A-skippin' off—away fur off frough the  
Big woods, where her Dran'ma she live at—No!—  
She didn't do *a-skippin'*, like I said:—  
She ist went *walkin'*—careful-like an' slow—  
Ist like a little lady—walkin' 'long  
As all polite au' nice—an' slow—an' straight—  
An' turn her toes—ist like she's marchin' in  
The Sund'y-School k-session!

An'—an'—so  
She 'uz a-doin' along—an' doin' along—  
Ou frough the drate-big woods—'cause her Dran'ma  
She live 'way, 'way fur off frough the big woods  
From *her* Ma's house. So when Red Riding-Hood  
Dit to do there, she allus have most fun—  
When she do frough the drate-big woods, you know—  
'Cause she ain't feard a bit o' anything!  
An' so she sees the little hoppty-birds  
'At's in the trees, an' flyin' all around,  
An' singin' dlad as ef their parunts said  
They'll take 'em to the magic-lantern show!  
An' she 'ud pull the purty flowers an' things  
A-growin' round the stumps—An' she 'ud ketch  
The purty butterflies, an' drasshoppers,  
An' stick pins frough 'em—No!—I ist *said* that!—  
'Cause she's too dood an' kind an' 'bedient

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

To *hurt* things thataway.—She'd *kech* 'em, though,  
An' ist *play* wiv 'em ist a little while,  
An' nen she'd let 'em fly away, she would,  
An' ist skip on ad'in to her Dran'mas.

An' so, while she 'uz doin' 'long an' 'long,  
First thing you know they 'uz a drate-big old  
Mean wicked Wolf jumped out 'at wanted t' eat  
Her up, but *dassent* to—'cause wite clos't there  
They wuz a Man a-choppin' wood, an' you  
Could *hear* him.—So the old Wolf he 'uz *feard*  
Only to ist be *kind* to her.—So he  
Ist 'tended-like he wuz dood friends to her  
An' says "Dood morning, little Red Riding-Hood!"—  
All ist as kind!

An' nen Riding-Hood  
She say "Dood morning," too,—all kind an' nice—  
Ist like her Ma she learn'—No!—mustn't say  
"Learn," 'cause "*Learn*" it's unproper.—So she say  
It like her Ma she "*teached*" her.—An'—so she  
Ist says "Dood morning" to the Wolf—'cause she  
Don't know ut-tall 'at he's a *wicked* Wolf  
An' want to eat her up!

An' nen old Wolf smile  
An' say, so kind: "Where air you doin' at?"  
Nen little Red Riding-Hood she say: "I'm doin'  
To my Dran'ma's, 'cause my Ma say I might."  
Nen, when she tell him that, the old Wolf he  
Ist turn an' light out frough the big thick woods,  
Where she can't see him any more. An' so  
She think he's went to *his* house—but he hain't,—  
He's went to her Dran'ma's, to be there first—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' *ketch* her, ef she don't watch mighty sharp  
What she's about!

An' nen when the old Wolf  
Dit to her Dran'ma's house, he's purty smart,—  
An' so he 'tend-like *he's* Red Riding-Hood,  
An' knock at th' door. An' Riding-Hood's Dran'ma  
She's sick in bed an' can't come to the door  
An' open it. So th' old Wolf knock' *two* times.  
An' nen Red Riding-Hood's Dran'ma she says,  
"Who's there?" she says. An' old Wolf 'tends-like he's  
Little Red Riding-Hood, you know, an' make'  
His voice soun' ist like hers, an' says: "It's me,  
Dran'ma—an' I'm Red Riding-Hood an' I'm  
Ist come to *see* you."

Nen her old Dran'ma  
She think it *is* little Red Riding-Hood,  
An' so she say: "Well, come in nen an' make  
You'se'f at home," she says, "'cause I'm down sick  
In bed, and got the 'ralgia, so's I can't  
Dit up an' let ye in."

An' so th' old Wolf  
Ist march' in nen an' shet the door ad'in,  
An' *droxel*, he did, an' *splunge* up on the bed  
An' et up old Miz Riding-Hood 'fore she  
Could put her spees on an' see who it wuz.—  
An' so she never knowed *who* et her up!  
An' nen the wicked Wolf he ist put on  
Her nightcap, an' all covered up in bed—  
Like he wuz *her*, you know.

Nen, purty soon  
Here come along little Red Riding-Hood,  
An' *she* knock' at the door. An' old Wolf 'tend-

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Like *he's* her Dran'ma; an' he say, "Who's there?"  
Ist like her Dran'ma say, you know. An' so  
Little Red Riding-Hood she say: "It's *me*,  
Dran'ma—an' I'm Red Riding-Hood and I'm  
Ist come to *see* you."

An' nen old Wolf nen  
He cough an' say: "Well, come in nen an' make  
You'se'f at home," he says, "'cause I'm down sick  
In bed, an' got the 'ralgia, so's I can't  
Dit up an' let ye in."

An' so she think  
It's her Dran'ma a-talkin'.—So she ist  
Open' the door an' come in, an' set down  
Her basket, an' taked off her things, an' bringed  
A chair an' clumbed up on the bed, wite by  
The old big Wolf she thinks is her Dran'ma—  
Only she thinks the old Wolf's dot whole lots  
More bigger ears, an' lots more whiskers, too,  
Than her Dran'ma; an' so Red Riding-Hood  
She's kind o' skeered a little. So she says  
"Oh, Dran'ma, what *big eyes* you dot!" An' nen  
The old Wolf says: "They're ist big thataway  
'Cause I'm so dlad to see you!"

Nen she says,—  
"Oh, Dran'ma, what a drate-big nose you dot!"  
Nen th' old Wolf says: "It's ist big thataway  
Ist 'cause I smell the dood things 'at you bringed  
Me in the basket!"

An' nen Riding-Hood  
She says, "Oh-me-oh-my! Dran'ma! what big  
White long sharp teeth you dot!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Nen old Wolf says:

"Yes—an' they re thataway."—an' drowled—  
"They're thataway," he says, "to *eat* you wiv!"  
An' nen he ist *jump* at her.—

But she *scream*'—

An' *scream*', she did.—So's 'at the Man  
'At wuz a-choppin' wood, you know,—*he* hear,  
An' come a-runnin' in there wiv his ax;  
An', 'fore the old Wolf know' what he's about,  
He split his old brains out an' killed him s' quick  
It make' his head swim!—An' Red Riding-Hood  
She wuzn't hurt at all!

An' the big Man

He tooked her all safe home, he did, an' tell  
Her Ma she's all right an' ain't hurt at all  
An' old Wolf's dead an' killed—an' everything!—  
So her Ma wuz so tickled an' so prond,  
She divved *him* all the dood things t' eat they wuz  
'At's in the basket, an' she tell him 'at  
She's much oblige', an' s'iy to "call ad'in."  
An' story's honest *truth*—an' all *so*, too!

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### *Bud's Fairy Tale*

**S**OME peoples thinks they ain't no Fairies *now*  
No more yet!—But they *is*, I bet! 'Cause ef  
They *wuzn't* Fairies, nen I' like to know  
Who'd wite 'bout Fairies in the books, an' tell  
What Fairies *docs*, an' how their *picture* looks,  
An' all an' ever'thing! W'y, ef they don't  
Be Fairies any more, nen little boys

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Ud ist *sleep* when they go to sleep an' won't  
Have ist no *dweams* at all,—'cause *Fairies—good*  
*Fairies*—they're a-purpose to make *dweams*!  
But they *is* *Fairies*—an' I *know* they *is*!  
'Cause one time *wunst*, when it's all *Summer-time*,  
An' don't haf to be no *fires* in the *stove*  
Er *fireplace* to keep warm wiv—ner don't haf  
To wear old *scwatchy flannen shirts* at all,  
An' ain't no *fweeze*—ner *cold*—ner *snow*!—An'—an'  
Oid *skwecky twees* got all the *gween leaves* on  
An' ist keeps *noddin'*, *noddin'* all the *time*,  
Like they 'uz *lazy* an' a-*twyin'* to go  
To *sleep* an' couldn't, 'cause the *wind* won't quit  
A-*blowin'* in 'em, an' the *birds* won't stop  
A-*singin'*, so's tney *kin*.—But *twees* *don't* *sleep*,  
I guess! But *little boys* *sleeps*—an' *dweams*, too.—  
An' that's a sign they's *Fairies*.

So, one time,  
When I be'n playin' "Store" *wunst* over in  
The *shed* of their old *stable*, an' *Ed Howard*  
He maked me quit a-bein' *pardners*, 'cause  
I *dwinkeled* the 'tend-like *sody-water* up  
An' et the *shore-nuff cwackers*,—w'y, nen I  
Clumbed over in our *garden* where the *gwapes*  
Wuz *put'* nigh *ripe*: An' I wuz ist a-*layin'*  
There on th' old *cwooked seat* 'at *Pa* maked in  
Our *arber*.—an' so I 'uz *layin'* there  
A-*whittlin'* *beets* wiv my new *dog-knife*, an'  
A-*lookin'* wite up thue the *twimby leaves*—  
An' wuzn't 'sleep at all!—An'-*sir!*—first thing  
You know, a little *Fairy* hopped out there!  
A *lettle-teenty Fairy!*—*hope-may-die!*

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' he look' down at me, he did—an' he  
Ain't bigger'n a *yellerbird!*--an' he  
Say "Howdy-do!" he did—an' I could *hear*  
Him—ist as *plain!*

Nen I say "Howdy-do!"

An' he say "*I'm* all hunky, Nibsey; how  
Is *your* folks comin' on?"

An' nen I say

"My name ain't '*Nibsey,*' neever—my name's *Bud.*—  
An' what's *your* name?" I says to him.

An' he

Ist laugh an' say, "'*Bud's*' awful *funny* name!"  
An' he ist laid back on a big bunch o' gwapes  
An' laugh' an' laugh', he did—like somebody  
'Uz tick-el-un his feet!

An' nen I say—

"What's *your* name," nen I say, "afore you bu'st  
Yo'se'f a-laughin' 'bout *my* name?" I says.  
An' nen he dwy up laughin'—kind o' mad—  
An' say, "W'y, *my* name's *Squidjicum,*" he says.  
An' nen I laugh an' say—"Gee! what a name!"  
An' when I make fun of his name, like that,  
He ist git awful mad an' spunky, an'  
'Fore you know, he ist gwabbed holt of a vine—  
A lig long vine 'at's danglin' up there, an'  
He ist helt on wite tight to that, an' down  
He swung quick past my face, he did, an' ist  
Kicked at me hard's he could!

But I'm too quick

Fer *Mr. Squidjicum!* I ist weached out  
An' ketched him, in my hand—an' he't him, too,  
An' *squeezed* him, ist like little wobins when

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

They can't fly yet an' git flopped out their nest.  
 An' nen I turn him all wound over, an'  
 Look at him clos't, you know—wite clos't,—'cause ef  
 He is a Fairy, w'y, I want to see  
 The wings he's got.—But he's dwessed up so fine  
 'At I can't see no wings.—An' all the time  
 He's twyin' to kick me yet: An' so I take  
 F'esh holts an' squeeze ag'in—an' harder, too;  
 An' I says, "*Hold up, Mr. Squidjicum!*—  
 You're kickin' the wrong man!" I says; an' nen  
 I ist squeeze' him, purt' nigh my *best*, I did—  
 An' I heerd somepin' bu'st!—An' nen he cwied  
 An' says, "You better look out what you're doin'!—  
 You' bu'st my spiderweb-suspenners, an'  
 You' got my woseleaf-coat all cwinkled up  
 So's I can't go to old Miss Hoodjicum's  
 Tea-party, 's afternoon!"

An' nen I says—  
 "Who's 'old Miss Hoodjicum'?" I says  
 An' he  
 Says, "Ef you lemme loose I'll tell you."  
 So

I helt the little skeezies 'way fur out  
 In one hand—so's he can't jump down t' th' ground  
 Wivout a-gittin' all stove up: an' nen  
 I says, "You're loose now.—Go ahead an' tell  
 'Bout the 'tea-party' where you're goin' at  
 So awful fast!" I says.

An' nen he say,—  
 "No use to *tell* you 'bout it, 'cause you won't  
 Believe it, 'less you go there your own se'f  
 An' see it wiv your own two eyes!" he says.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' he says: "Ef you lemme *shore-nuff* loose,  
An' p'omise 'at you'll keep wite still, an' won't  
Tetch nothin' 'at you see—an' never tell  
Nobody in the world—an' lemme loose—  
W'y, nen I'll *take* you there!"

But I says, "Yes  
An' ef I let you loose, you'll *run!*" I says.  
An' he says, "No, I won't!—I hope-may-die!"  
Nen I says, "Cwoss your heart you won't!"

An' he  
Ist cwoss his heart; an' nen I weach an' set  
The little feller up on a long vine—  
An' he 'uz so tickled to git loose ag'in,  
He gwab' the vine wiv boff his little hands  
An' ist take an' turn in, he did, an' skin  
'Bout forty-'leben eats!

Nen when he git  
Thue whirlin' wound the vine, an' set on top  
Of it ag'in, w'y, nen his "woseleaf-coat"  
He bwag so much about, it's ist all tored  
Up, an' ist hangin' strips an' rags—so he  
Look like his Pa's a dwunkard. An' so nen  
When he see what he's done—a-actin' up  
So smart,—he's awful mad, I guess; an' ist  
Pont out his lips an' twis' his little face  
Ist ugly as he kin, an' set an' tear  
His whole coat off—*an' sleeves an' all.*—An' nen  
He wad it all together an' ist *the wad*  
It at me ist as hard as he kin *draw!*  
An' when I weach to ketch him, an' 'uz goin'  
To give him 'nuyver squeezein', he *ist flewed*  
*Clean up on top the arber!*—'Cause, you know,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

They *wuz* wings on him—when he *tor-d* his *coat*  
Clean off—they *wuz* wings *under there*. But they  
Wuz purty wobbly-like an' wouldn't work  
Hardly at all—'Cause purty soon, when I  
Th'owed clods at him, an' sticks, an' got him slooed  
Down off o' there, he come a-floppin' down  
An' lit k-bangl on our old chicken-coop,  
An' ist laid there a-whimper'n' like a child!  
An' I tiptoed up wite clos't, an' I says, "What's  
The matter wiv ye, Squidjicun?"

An' he  
Says: "Dog-gone! when my wings gits stwaight ag'in,  
Where you all *exampl'd* 'em," he says, "I bet  
I'll ist fly clean away an' won't take you  
To old Miss Hoodjicun's at all!" he says.  
An' nen I ist weach out wite quick, I did,  
An' gwab the sassy little snipe ag'in—  
Nen tooked my top-string an' tie down his wings  
So's he *can't* fly, 'less'n I want him to!  
An' nen I says: "Now, Mr. Squidjicun,  
You better ist light out," I says, "to old  
Miss Hoodjicun's, an' show *me* how to git  
There, too," I says; "er ef you don't," I says,  
"I'll climb up wiv you on our buggy-shed  
An' push you off!" I says.

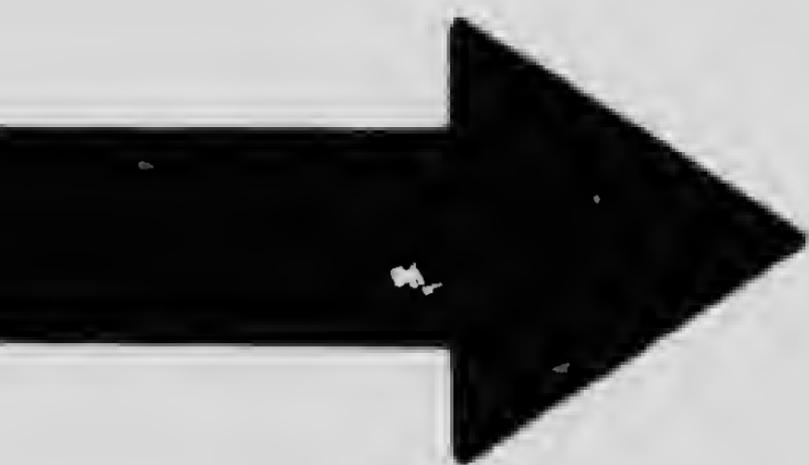
An' nen he say  
All wight, he'll show me there; an' tell me nen  
To set him down wite easy on his feet,  
An' loosen up the stwing a little where  
It cut him under th' arms. An' nen he says,  
"Come on!" he says; an' went a-limpin' 'long  
The garden-path—an' limpin' 'long an' 'long

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Tel—purty soon he come on 'long to where's  
A grea'-big cabbage-leaf. An' he stoop down  
An' say, "Come on inunder here wiv me!"  
So I stoop down an' crawl inunder there,  
Like he say.

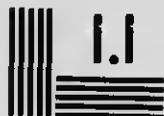
An' inunder there's a grea'-  
Big clod, they is—a' awful grea'-big clod!  
An' nen he says, "*It's all this-here clod away!*"  
An' so I woll' the clod away. An' nen  
It's all wet, where the dew'z inunder where  
The old clod wuz,—an' nen the Fairy he  
Git on the wet-plae: Nen he say to me,  
"Git on the wet-place, too!" An' nen he say,  
"Now hold yer breff an' shet yer eyes!" he says,  
"Tel I say *Squinchy-winchy!*" Nen he say—  
Somepin' in *Dutch*, I guess.—An' nen I felt  
Like we 'uz sinkin' down—an' sinkin' down!—  
Tel purty soon the little Fairy weach  
An' pinch my nose an' yell at me an' say,  
"*Squinchy-winchy! Look wherever you please!*"  
Nen when I looked—Oh! they 'uz purtyest place  
Down there you ever saw in all the World!—  
They 'uz ist *flowers* an' *roses*—yes, an' *trees*  
Wiv *blossoms* on an' *big ripe apples* boff!  
An' butterflies, they wuz—an' hummin'-birds—  
An' *yellerbirds* an' *bluebirds*—yes, an' *reed!*—  
An' ever'wheres an' all aound 'uz vines  
Wiv ripe p'serve-pears on 'em!—Yes, an' all  
An' ever'thing 'at's ever gwowin' in  
A garden—er canned up—all wive at wunst!—  
It wuz ist like a garden—only it  
'Uz *little bit* o' garden—'bout big wound





# MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



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## THE HOOSIER BOOK

As ist our twun'el-bed is.—An' all wound  
 An' wound the little garden's a gold fence—  
 An' little gold gate, too—an' ash-hopper  
 'At's all gold, too—an' ist full o' gold ashes!  
 An' wite in th' middle o' the garden wuz  
 A little gold house, 'at's ist 'bout as big  
 As ist a bird-cage is: An' in the house  
 They 'uz whole-lots *more* Fairies there—'cause I  
 Picked up the little house, an' peeked in at  
 The winders, an' I see 'em all in there  
 Ist *buggin'* wound! An' Mr. Squidjicum  
 He twy to make me quit, but I gwab *him*,  
 An' poke him down the chimibly, too, I did!—  
 An' y'ort to see *him* hop out 'mongst 'em there!  
 Ist like he 'uz the boss an' ist got back!—  
 "Hain't ye got on them-air *deze-dumplin's yet?*"  
 He says.

An' they says no.

An' nen he says—  
 "Better git at 'em nen!" he says, "*wite quick—*  
 'Cause old Miss Hoodjicum's a-comin'!"

Nen

They all set wound a little gold tub—an'  
 All 'menced a-peelin' dewdwops, ist like they  
 'Uz *peaches*.—An', it looked so funny, I  
 Ist laugh' out loud, an' *dwopped* the little house,—  
 An' 't bu'sted like a soap-bubble!—An' 't skeered  
 Me so, I—I—I—I,—it skeered me so,—  
 I—ist *waked* up.—No! I *ain't* be'n *asleep*  
 An' *dream* it all, like you think,—but it's shore  
 Fer-certain *fact* an' cwiss my heart it is!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

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*The Bear Story*

THAT ALEX "IST MAKED UP HIS-OWN-SE'F"

W'Y, WUNST they wuz a Little Boy went out  
In the woods to shoot a bear. So, he went out  
'Way in the grea'-big woods—he did.—An' he  
Wuz goin' along—an' goin' along, you know,  
An' purty soon he heerd somepin' go "*W'oooh!*"  
Ist thataway—"Woo-oooh!" An' he wuz *skeered*,  
He wuz. An' so he runned an' elumbed a tree—  
A grea'-big tree, he did,—a sicka-more tree.  
An' nen he heerd it ag'in: an' he looked round,  
An' 'tuz a Bear!—a grea'-big, *shorc-nuff* Bear!—  
No: 'tuz *two* Bears, it wuz—two grea'-big Bears—  
One of 'em wuz—ist *one's* a grea'-big Bear.—  
But they ist *boff* went "*W'oooh!*"—An' here *they* come  
To elimb the tree an' git the Little Boy  
An' eat him up!

An' nen the Little Boy  
He 'uz *skeered* worse'n ever! An' here come  
The grea'-big Bear a-elimbin' th' tree to git  
The Little Boy an' eat him up—Oh, *no!*—  
It 'uzn't the *Big* Bear 'at elumb the tree—  
It 'uz the *Little* Bear. So here *he* come  
Climbin' the tree—an' elimbin' the tree! Nen when  
He git wite clos't to the Little Boy, w'y, nen  
The Little Boy he ist pulled up his gun  
An' *shot* the Bear, he did, an' killed him dead!  
An' nen the Bear he falled clean on down out

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

The tree—away clean to the ground, he did—  
*Spling-splung!* he falled *plum* down, an' killed him,  
too!

An' lit wite side o' where the *Big Bear's* at.

An' nen the *Big Bear's* awful mad, you bet!—  
'Cause—'eause the *Little Boy* he shot his gun  
An' killed the *Little Bear*.—'Cause the *Big Bear*  
He—he 'uz the *Little Bear's* Papa.—An' so here  
*He* come to elimb the big old tree an' git  
The *Little Boy* an' eat him up! An' when  
The *Little Boy* he saw the *grea'-big Bear*  
A-comin', he 'uz badder skeered, he wuz,  
Than *any* time! An' so he think he'll elimb  
Up *higher*—'way up higher in the tree  
Than the old *Bear* kin elimb, you know.—But he—  
He *can't* elimb higher 'an old *Bears* kin elimb,—  
'Cause *Bears* kin elimb up higher in the trees  
Than any little *Boys* in all the *Wo-r-r-ld!*

An' so here come the *grea'-big Bear*, he did,—  
A-climbin' up—an' up the tree, so git  
The *Little Boy* an' eat him up! An' so  
The *Little Boy* he elumbed on higher, an' higher,  
An' higher up the tree—an' higher—an' higher—  
An' higher'n iss-here *house* is!—An' here come  
Th' old *Bear*—clos'ter to him all the time!—  
An' nen—first thing you know,—when th' old *Big*  
Bear

Wuz wite clos't to him—nen the *Little Boy*  
Ist jabbed his gun wite in the old *Bear's* mouf

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' shot an' killed him dead!—No; I *fergot*,—  
 He didn't shoot the grea'-big Bear at all—  
 'Cause *they 'uz no load in the gun*, you know—  
 'Cause when he shot the *Little Bear*, w'y, nen  
 No load 'uz any more nen *in the gun*!

But th' Little Boy clumbed *higher* up, he did—  
 He clumbed *lots* higher—an' on up *higher*—an' higher  
 An' *higher*—tel he ist *can't* elimb no higher,  
 'Cause nen the limbs 'uz all so little, 'way  
 Up in the teeny-weeny tip-top of  
 The tree, they'd break down wiv him ef he don't  
 Be keerful! So he stop an' think: An' nen  
 He look around—An' here come the old Bear!  
 An' so the Little Boy make up his mind  
 He's got to ist git out o' there *some* way!—  
 'Cause here come the old Bear!—so clos't, his bref's  
 Purt' nigh so's he kin feel how hot it is  
 Ag'inst his bare feet—ist like old "Ri" ' bref  
 When he's be'n out a-huntin' an' 's all to ed.  
 So when th' old Bear's so clos't—the Little Boy  
 Ist gives a grea'-big jump fer 'nother tree—  
 No!—no, he don't do that!—I tell you what  
 The Little Boy does:—W'y, nen—w'y, he—Oh, yes—  
 The Little Boy *he finds a hole up there*  
 'At's in the tree—an' elimbs in there an' *hides*—  
 An' nen the old Bear can't find the Little Boy  
 At all!—But purty soon the old Bear finds  
 The Little Boy's *gun* 'at's up there—'cause the *gun*  
 It's too *tall* to tooked wiv him in the hole.  
 So, when the old Bear find' the *gun*, he knows

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

The Little Boy ist *hid* 'round *somers* there,—  
 An' th' old Bear 'gins to snuff an' sniff around,  
 An' sniff an' snuff around—so's he kin find  
 Out where the Little Boy's hid at.—An' nen—nen—  
 Oh yes!—W'y, purty soon the old Bear climbs  
 'Way out on a big limb—a grea'-long limb,—  
 An' nen the Little Boy climbs out the hole  
 An' takes his ax an' chops the limb off! . . . Nen  
 The old Bear falls *k-splunge!* clean to the ground  
 An' bu'st an' kill hisse'f plum dead, he did!

An' nen the Little Boy he git his gun  
 An' 'menced a-climbin' down the tree ag'in—  
 No!—no, he *didn't* git his *gun*—'cause when  
 The *Bear* falled, nen the *gun* falled, too—An' broked  
 It all to pieces, too!—An' *nicest* gun!—  
 His Pa ist buyed it!—An' the Little Boy  
 Ist cried, he did; an' went on climbin' down  
 The tree—an' climbin' down—an' climbin' down!—  
*An'-sir!* when he 'uz purt' nigh down,—w'y, nen  
*The old Bear he jumped up ag'in!*—an' he  
 Ain't dead at all—*ist* 'tendin' thataway,  
 So he kin git the Little Boy an' eat  
 Him up! But the Little Boy he 'uz too smart  
 To climb clean *down* the tree.—An' the old Bear  
 He can't climb *up* the tree no more—'cause when  
 He fell, he broke one of his—He broke *all*  
 His legs!—an' nen he *couldn't* climb! But he  
 Ist won't go 'way an' let the Little Boy  
 Come down out of the tree. An' the old Bear  
 Ist growls 'round there, he does—ist growls an' goes

THE HOOSHER BOOK

"W'oooh!—wooo-oooh!" all the time! An' Little Boy  
 He haf to stay up in the tree—all night—  
 An' 'thout 'o *supper* neever!—Only they  
 Wuz *apples* on the tree!—An' Little Boy  
 Et apples—ist all night—an' cried—an' cried!  
 Nen when 't 'uz morning th' old Bear went "W'oooh!"  
 Ag'in, an' try to climb up in the tree  
 An' git the Little Boy.—But he *can't*  
 Climb t' save his *soul*, he can't—An' *oh!* he's *mad!*—  
 He ist tear up the ground! an' go "W'oo-oooh!"  
 An'—*Oh, yes!*—purty soon, when morning's come  
 All *light*—so's you kin see, you know,—w'y, nen  
 The old Bear finds the Little Boy's *gun*, you know,  
 'At's on the ground.—(An' it ain't broke at all—  
 I ist *said* that!) An' so the old Bear think  
 He'll take the gun an' *shoot* the Little Boy:—  
 But *Bears they* don't know much 'bout shootin' guns:  
 So when he go to shoot the Little Boy,  
 The old Bear got the *other* end the gun  
 Ag'in' his shoulder, 'stid o' *th' other* end—  
 So when he try to shoot the Little Boy,  
 It shot *the Bear*, it did—an' killed him dead!  
 An' nen the Little Boy clumb down the tree  
 An' chopped his old woolly head off.—Yes, an' killed  
 The *other* Bear ag'in, he did—an' killed  
 All *boff* the bears, he did—an' tuk 'em home  
 An' *cooked* 'em, too, an' *et* 'em!  
 —An' that's all.

*Uncle Mart's Poem*

## THE OLD SNOW MAN

**H**O! the old Snow-Man  
 That Noey Bixler made  
 He looked as fierce and sassy  
 As a soldier on parade!—  
 'Cause Noey, when he made him,  
 While we all wuz gone, you see,  
 He made him, jist a-purpose,  
 Jist as fierce as he could be!—  
 But when we all got *ust* to him,  
 Nobody wuz afraid  
 Of the old Snow-Man  
 That Noey Bixler made!

'Cause Noey told us 'bout him  
 And what he made him fer:—  
 He'd come to feed, that morning,  
 He found we wuzn't here;  
 And so the notion struck him,  
 When we all come taggin' home  
 'Tud *s'prise* us ef a' old Snow-Man  
 'Ud meet us when we come  
 So, when he'd fed the stock, and milked,  
 And be'n back home, and chopped  
 His wood, and et his breakfast, he  
 Jist grabbed his mitts and hopped  
 Right in on that-air old Snow-Man  
 That he laid out he'd make

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Er bu'st a trace *a-tryin'*—jist  
Fer old-acquaintance-sake!—  
But work like that wuz lots more fun,  
He said, than when he played!  
Hol the old Snow-Man  
That Noey Bixler made!

He started with a big snow-ball,  
And rolled it all around;  
And as he rolled, more snow 'ud stick  
And pull up off the ground.—  
He rolled and rolled all round the yard—  
'Cause we could see the *track*,  
All wher' the snow come off, you know,  
And left it wet and black.  
He got the Snow-Man's *legs-part* rolled—  
In front the kitchen-door.—  
And then he hat to turn in then  
And roll and roll some more!—  
He rolled the yard all round ag'in,  
And round the house, at that—  
Clean round the house and back to wher'  
The blame legs-half wuz at!  
He said he missed his dinner, too—  
Jist clean fergot and stayed  
There workin'. Oh! the old Snow-Man  
That Noey Bixler made!

And Noey said he hat to *hump*  
To git the *top-half* on  
The *legs-half*!—When he *did*, he said,  
His wind wuz purt' nigh gone.—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

He said, i jucks! he jist drapped down  
There on the old porch-floor  
And panted like a dog!—And then  
He up! and rolled some more!—  
The *last* batch—that wuz fer his head,—  
And—time he'd got it right  
And clumb and fixed it on, he said—  
He hat to quit fer night!—  
And *then*, he said, he'd kep' right on  
Ef they'd be'n any *moon*  
To work by! So he crawled in bed—  
And *ould* 'a' slep' tel *noon*,  
He wuz so plum wore out! he said,—  
But it wuz washin'-day,  
And hat to cut a cord o' wood  
'Fore he could git away!

But, last, he got to work ag'in,—  
With spade, and gonge, and hoe,  
And trowel, too—(All tools 'nd do  
What *Noey* said, you know!)  
He cut his eyebrows out like cliffs—  
And his cheek-bones and chin  
Stuck *furder* out—and his old *nose*  
Stuck out as fur-ag'in!  
He made his eyes o' walnuts,  
And his whiskers out o' this-  
Here buggy-cushion stuffin'—*moss*,  
The teacher says it is.  
And then he made a' old wood'-gun,  
Set keerless-like, you know,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Acrost one shoulder—kind o' like  
Big Foot, er Adam Poe—  
Er, mayby, Simon Girty,  
The dinged out Renegade!  
*Woo!* the old Snow-Man  
That Noey Bixler made!

And there he stood, all fierce and grim,  
A stern, heroic form:  
What was the winter blast to him,  
And what the driving storm?—  
What wonder that the children pressed  
Their faces at the pane  
And scratched away the frost, in pride  
To look on him again?  
What wonder that, with yearning bold,  
Their all of love and care  
Went warmest through the keenest cold  
To that Snow-Man out there!

But the old Snow-Man—  
What a dubious delight  
He grew at last when Spring came on  
And days waxed warm and bright.—  
Alone he stood—all kith and kin  
Of snow and ice were gone;—  
Alone, with constant tear-drops in  
His eyes and g<sup>l</sup>ittering on  
His thin, pathetic beard of black—  
Grief in a hopeless cause!—  
Hope—hope is for the man that *dies*—  
What for the man that *thaws*!

THE HOOFIER BOOK

O Hero of a hero's make!—  
Let *marble* melt and fade,  
But never *you*—you old Snow-Man  
That Noey Bixler made!

## MISCELLANY

257      *The Ginoine Ar-tickle*

TALKIN' o' poetry--There're few men yit  
'At's got the stuff b'iled down so's it'll pour  
Out sorghum-like, and keeps a year and more  
Jes' sweeter ever' time yo' tackle it!  
W'y, all the jinglin' truck 'at hes been writ  
Fer twenty year and better is so pore  
You cain't find no sap in it any more  
'N you'd find jilice in puff-balls!--*And 'd quit!*  
What people wants is facts, I apperhe ;  
And naked Natur is the thing to gi -  
Your writin' bottom, eh? And I contend  
'At honest work is allus bound to live.  
Now them's my views; 'cause you kin recommend  
Sich poetry as that from end to end.

258      *Lines to An Onsettled Young  
Man*

"O, WHAT is Life at last," says you,  
'At woman folks and man folks too,  
Cain't, oncomplainin', worry through?

"An' what is Love, 'at no one yit  
'At's monkeyed with it kin forgit,  
Er gits fat on remember'n' hit?

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"An' what is Death?"—W'y, looky hyur—  
Ef Life an' Love don't suit you, sir,  
Hit's jes' the thing yer lookin' fer!

259      *What Smith Knew About  
Farming*

THERE wasn't two purtier farms in the state  
Than the couple of which I'm about to relate;—  
Jiniu' each other—belongin' to Brown,  
And jest at the edge of a flourishin' town.  
Brown was a man, as I understand,  
That allus had handled a good 'eal o' land,  
And was sharp as a tack in drivin' a trade—  
For that's the way most of his money was made.  
And all the grounds and the orchards about  
His two pet farms was all tricked out  
With poppies and posies  
And sweet-smellin' rosies;  
And hundreds o' kinds  
Of all sorts o' vines,  
To tickle the most horticultural minds;  
And little dwari trees not as thick as your wrist  
With ripe apples on 'em as big as your fist:  
And peaches,—Siberian crabs and pears,  
And quinces—Well! *any fruit any tree bears;*  
And the purtiest stream—jest a-swimmin' with fish,  
And—*jest a'most everything heart could wish!*  
The purtiest orch'ards—I wish you could see  
How purty they was, fer I know it 'ud be

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

A regular treat!—but I'll go ahead with  
My story! A man by the name o' Smith—  
(A bad name to rhyme,  
But I reckon that I'm  
Not goin' back on a Smith! nary time!)  
'At hadn't a soul of kin nor kith,  
And more money than he knowed what to do with,—  
So he comes a-ridin' along one day,  
And *he* says to Brown, in his offhand way—  
Who was trainin' some newfangled vines round a bay-  
Winder—"Howdy-do—look-a-here—say:  
What'll you take fer this property here?—  
I'm talkin' o' leavin' the city this year,  
And I want to be  
Where the air is free,  
And I'll *buy* this place, if it ain't too dear!"—  
Well—they grumbled and jawed aroun'—  
"I don't like to part with the place," says Brown;  
"Well," says Smith, a-jerkin' his head,  
"That house yonder—bricks painted red—  
Jest like this'n—a *partier view*—  
Who is it owus *it*?" "That's mine too,"  
Says Brown, as he winked at a hole in his shoe,  
"But I'll tell you right here jest what I *kin* do:—  
If you'll pay the figgers I'll sell *it* to you."  
Smith went over and looked at the place—  
Badgered with Brown, and argied the ease—  
Thought that Brown's figgers was rather too tall,  
But, findin' that Brown wasn't goin' to fall,  
In final agreed,  
So they drewed up the deed  
Fer the farm and the fixtures--the live stock an' all.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And so Smith moved from the city as soon  
As he possibly could—But “the man in the moon”  
Knewed more’n Smith o’ farmin’ pursuits,  
And jest to convince you, and have no disputes,  
How little he knowed,  
I’ll tell you his “mode,”  
As he called it, o’ raisin’ “the best that growed,”  
In the way o’ potatoes—  
Cucumbers—tomatoes,  
And squashes as lengthy as young alligators.  
’Twas allus a curious thing to me  
How big a fool a feller kin be  
When he gits on a farm after leavin’ a town!—  
Expectin’ to raise himself up to renown,  
And reap fer himself agricultural fame,  
By growin’ of squashes—*without any shame*—  
As useless and long as a technical name.  
To make the soil pure,  
And certainly sure,  
He plastered the ground with patent manure.  
He had cultivators, and double-hoss plows,  
And patent machines fer milkin’ his cows;  
And patent hay-forks—patent measures and weights,  
And new patent back-action hinges fer gates,  
And barn locks and latches, and such little dribs,  
And patents to keep the rats out o’ the cribs—  
Reapers and mowers,  
And patent grain sowers;  
And drillers  
And tillers  
And cucumber hillers,

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And harriers;—and had patent rollers and scrapers,  
And took about ten agricultural papers.  
So you can imagine how matters turned out:  
But *Brown* didn't have not a shadder o' doubt  
That *Smith* didn't know what he was about  
When he said that "the *old* way to farm was played out."  
But *Smith* worked ahead,  
And when any one said  
That the *old* way o' workin' was better instead  
O' his "modern idees," he allus turned red,  
And wanted to know  
What made people so  
*Infernally* anxious to hear theirselves crow?  
And guessed that he'd manage to hoe his own row.  
*Brown* he come onc't and leant over the fence,  
And told *Smith* that he couldn't see any sense  
In goin' to such a tremendous expense  
Fer the sake o' such no-account expeeriments:—  
"That'll never make corn!  
As shore's you're horn  
It'll come out the leetlest end of the horn!"  
Says *Brown*, as he pulled off a big roastin'-ear  
From a stalk of his own  
That had tribble outgrown  
*Smith's* poor yaller shoots, and says he, "Looky here!  
*This* corn was raised in the old-fashioned way,  
And I rather imagine that *this* corn'll pay  
Expenses fer *raisin'* it!—What do you say?"  
*Brown* got him then to look over his erop.—  
*His* luek that season had been tip-top!  
And you may surmise  
*Smith* opened his eyes

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And let out a look o' the wildest surprise  
When Brown showed him punkins as big as the lies  
He was stuffin' him with—about offers he's had  
Fer his farm: "I don't want to sell very bad,"  
He says, but says he,  
"Mr. Smith, you kin see  
Fer yourself how matters is standin' with me,  
*I understand farmin'* and I'd better stay,  
You know, on my farm;—I'm a-makin' it pay—  
I oughtn't to grumble!—I reckon I'll clear  
Away over four thousand dollars this year."  
And that was the reason, he made it appear,  
Why he didn't care about sellin' his farm,  
And hinted at his havin' done himself harm  
In sellin' the other, and wanted to know  
If Smith wouldn't sell back ag'in to him.—So  
Smith took the bait, and says he, "Mr. Brown,  
I wouldn't *sell* out, but we might swap aroun'—  
How'll you trade your place fer mine?"  
(Purty sharp way o' comin' the shine  
Over Smith! Wasn't it?) Well, sir, this Brown  
Played out his hand and brought Smithy down—  
Traded with him an', wor'cin' it cute,  
Raked in two thousand dollars to boot  
As slick as a whistle, an' that wasn't all,—  
He managed to trade back ag'in the next fall,—  
And the next—and the next—as long as Smith stayed—  
He reaped with his harvests an annual trade.—  
Why, I reckon that Brown must 'a' easily made—  
On an *average*—nearly two thousand a year—  
Together he made over seven thousand—clear.—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Till Mr. Smith found he was losin' his health  
In as big a proportion, almost, as his wealth;  
So at last he concluded to move back to town,  
And sold back his farm to this same Mr. Brown  
At very low figgers, by gittin' it down.  
Further'n this I have nothin' to say  
Than merely advisin' the Smiths fer to stay  
In their grocery stores in flourishin' towns  
And leave agriculture alone—and the Browns.

260 *Two Sonnets to the June-Bug*

I

YOU make me jes' a little nervouser  
Than any dog-gone bug I ever see!  
And you know night's the time to pester me—  
When any tetch at all 'll rub the fur  
Of all my patience back'ards! You're the myrrh  
And ruburb of my life! A bumblebee  
Cain't hold a candle to you; and a he  
Bald hornet, with a laminated spur  
In his hip-pocket, daresent even cheep  
When you're around! And, dern ye! you have  
made  
Me lose whole ricks and stacks and piles of sleep,—  
And many of a livelong night I've laid  
And never shut an eye, hearin' you keep  
Up that eternal buzzin' serenade!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

II

And I've got up and lit the lamp, and elum  
On cheers and trunks and wash-stands and bureaux,  
And all such dangerous articles as those,  
And biffed at you with brooms, and never come  
In two feet of you,—maybe skeered you some,—  
But what does that amount to when it throws  
A feller out o' balance, and his nose  
Gits barked ag'inst the mantel, while you hum  
Fer joy around the room, and churn your head  
Ag'inst the ceilin', and draw back and butt  
The plasterin' loose, and drop—behind the bed,  
Where never human-bein' ever putt  
Harm's hand on you, er ever truthful said  
He'd choke yer dern infernal wizen shut!

261

*My First Womern*

I BURIED my first womern  
In the spring; and in the fall  
I was married to my second,  
And hain't settled yit at all!—  
Fer I'm allus thinkin'—thinkin'  
Of the first one's peaceful ways,  
A-bilin' soap and singin'  
Of the Lord's amazin' grace.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And I'm thinkin' of her, constant,  
Dyin' carpet chain and stuff,  
And a-makin' up rag carpets,  
When the *floor* was good enough;  
And I mind her he'p a-feedin',  
And I riccollect her now  
A-drappin' corn, and keepin'  
Clos't behind me and the plow!

And I'm allus thinkin' of her  
Reddin' up around the house;  
Er cookin' fer the farm-hands;  
Er a-drivin' up the cows,—  
And there she lays out yonder  
By the lower medder fence,  
Where the cows was barely grazin'  
And they're usin' ever sence.

And when I look acrost there—  
Say it's when the clover's ripe,  
And I'm settin', in the evenin',  
On the porch here, with my pipe,  
And the *other'n* hollers "Henry!"—  
W'y they ain't no sadder thing  
Than to think of my first womer:  
And her funeral last spring  
Was a year ago—

262 *Our Old Friend Neverfail*

**O** IT'S good to ketch a relative 'at's richer and don't run  
 When you holler out to hold up, and'll joke and have  
     his fun;  
 It's good to hear a man called bad and then find out he'  
     not,  
 Er strike some chap they call lukewarm 'at's really red-hot  
 It's good to know the Devil's painted jes' a leetle black,  
 And it's good to have most anybody pat you on the back;—  
 But jes' the best thing in the world's our old friend  
     Neverfail,  
 When he wags yer hand as honest as an o'd dog wags his  
     tail!

I like to strike the man I owe the same time I can pay,  
 And take back things I've borried, and su'prise folks that  
     away;  
 I like to find out that the man I voted fer last fall,  
 That didn't git elected, was a scoundrel after all;  
 I like the man that likes the pore and he'ps 'em when he  
     can;  
 I like to meet a ragged tramp 'at's still a gentleman;  
 But most I like—with you, my boy—our old friend Never  
     fail,  
 When he wags yer hand as honest as an old dog wags his  
     tail!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

263 To—"The J. W. R. Literary Club"

WELL, it's enough to turn his head to have a feller's name  
Swiped with a *Literary Club!*—But you're the ones to blame!—

I call the World to witness that I never *agged* ye to it  
By ever writin' *Classic-like*—because I couldn't do it.  
I never run to "Hellicon," ner writ about "Per-nas-sus,"  
Ner never tr'ed to rack er ride around on old "P-gassus"!  
When "Tuneful Nines" has cross'd my lines, the ink 'ud  
blot and blur it,  
And pen 'nd jest putt back fer home, and take the short-  
way fer it!

And so, as I'm a-sayin',—when you name your LITERARY  
In honor o' this name o' mine, it's raily nessesary—  
Whilse I'm a-thankin' you and all—to warn you, ef you  
do it,  
I'll haf to jine the thing myse'f 'fore I can live up to it!

264

Old Indiany

FRAGMENT

INTENDED FOR A DINNER OF THE INDIANA SOCIETY  
OF CHICAGO

OLD Indiany, 'course we know  
Is first, and best, and *most*, also,  
Of *all* the States' whole forty-four;—  
She's first in ever'thing, that's shore!—

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And *best* in ever'way as yet  
Made known to man; and you kin bet  
She's *most*, because she won't confess  
She ever was, or will be, *less!*  
And yet, fer all her proud array  
Of sons, how many gits away!—  
No doubt about her bein' *great*  
But, fellers, she's a leaky State!  
And them that boasts the most about  
Her, them's the ones that's dribbled out  
Law! jes' to think of all you boys  
'Way over here in Illinois  
A-celebratin', like ye air,  
Old Indiany, 'way back there  
In the dark ages, so to speak,  
A-prayin' for ye once a week  
And wonderin' what's a-keepin' you  
Front comin', like you ort to do.  
You're all a-lookin' well, and like  
You wasn't "sidin' up the pike,"  
As the tramp-shoemaker said  
When "he sacked the boss and shed  
The blame town, to hunt fer one  
Where they didn't work fer fun!"  
Lookin' *entry* well, I'd say,  
Your old home so fur away.—  
Maybe, though, like the old jour.,  
Fun ain't all yer workin' fer.  
So you've found a job that pays  
Better than in them old days  
You was on *The Weekly Press*,  
Heppin' run things, more er less;

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

Er a-learnin' telegraph-  
Operatin', with a half-  
Notion of the timmer's trade,  
Er the dusty man's that laid  
Out designs on marble and  
Hacked out little lambs by hand,  
And chewed fine-cut as he wrought,  
"Shapin' from his bitter thought"  
Some squashed mutterings to say,—  
"Yes, hard work, and porer pay!"  
Er you'd kind o' thought the far-  
Gazin' cuss that owned a car  
And took pictures in it, had  
Jes' the snap you wanted—bad!  
And you even wondered why  
He kep' foolin' with his sky-  
Light the same on shiny days  
As when rainin'. ('T leaked always.)  
Wondered what strange things was hid  
In there when he shet the door  
And smelt like a burnt drug store  
Next some orchard-trees, i swan!  
With whole roasted apples on!  
That's why Ade is, here of late,  
Buyin' in the dear old State,—  
So's to cut it up in plots  
Of both town and country lots.

**A**BE MARTIN!—dad-burn his old picture!  
 P'tends he's a Brown County fixture—  
 A kind of a conical mixture

Of hoss-sense and no sense at all!  
 His mouth, like hi's pipe, 's allus goin',  
 And his thoughts, like his whiskers, is flowin',  
 And what he don't know ain't wuth knowin'—  
 From Genesis clean to baseball!

The artist, Kin Hubbard, 's so keerless  
 He draws Abc most eyeless and earless,  
 But he's never yet pictured him cheerless  
 Er with fun 'at he tries to conceal,—  
 Whuther on to the fence er clean over  
 A-rootin' up ragweed er clover,  
 Skeered stiff at some "Rambler" er "Rover"  
 Er newfangled automobile!

It's a purty steep climate old Brown's in;  
 And the raius there his ducks nearly drowns in  
 The old man hisse'f wades his rounds in  
 As ca'm and serene, mighty nigh,  
 As the old handsaw-hawg, er the mottled  
 Mileh ew, er the old rooster wattled  
 Like the mumps had him 'most so well throttled  
 That it was a pleasure to die.

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

But best of 'em all's the fool-breaks 'at  
Abe don't see at all, and yit makes 'at  
Both me and you lays back and shakes at  
His comic, miraenlous craeks  
Which makes him—clean back of the power  
Of genius itse'f in its flower—  
This Notable Man of the Hour,  
Abe Martin, The Joker on Facts.

266

### *My Conscience*

**S**OMETIMES my Conscience says, says he,  
"Don't you know me?"  
And I, says I, skeered through and through,  
"Of course I do.  
You air a nice chap ever' way,  
I'm here to say!  
You make me cry—you make me pray,  
And all them good things thataway—  
That is, at *night*. Where do you stay  
Durin' the day?"

And then my Conscience says, onc't more,  
"You know me—shore?"  
"Oh, yes," says I, a-trimblin' faint,  
"You're jes' a saint!  
Your ways is all so holy-right,  
I love you better ever' night  
You come around,—tel plum daylight,  
When you air out o' sight!"

## THE HOOSIER BOOK

And then my Conscience sort o' grits  
His teeth, and spits  
On his two hands and grabs, of course,  
Some old remorse,  
And beats me with the big butt-end  
O' *that* thing—tel my closest friend  
'Ud hardly know me. "Now," says he,  
"Be keerful as you'd orto be  
And *allus* think o' me!"

267      "*A Happy Dream*"

WRITTEN JUNE 26, 1916

AS fair as summer just begun,  
Come Cornelia Allison  
With a lovely poem made for me  
Lovely as a poem can be.  
"O how wondrous!" I exclaim.  
"Poem in theme and poem in name!"  
What a triumph you have won,  
O Cornelia Allison!

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