

DIGBY  
CHICKENS

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CAUGHT AND CURED IN  
DIGBY, NOVA SCOTIA

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CHICKENS



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DIGBY, NOVA SCOTIA

BY D. E. H.

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"DIGBY CHICKENS."

They have scales instead of feathers,  
They have fins instead of wings,  
And are unlike common chickens  
In a multitude of things,  
But their friends will recognize them,  
For, though others may despise them,  
They're to us the good old, sweet old  
"Digby Chickens."

It is said, by those instructed  
In the local fishing lore,  
They were caught as little herring  
By the weirs along the shore,  
In the brine awhile men soaked them  
And then hung them up and smoked them  
Until they were fit to stencil  
"Digby Chickens."

You can boast of Yarmouth bloaters,  
And extol smoked gaspereaux,  
Or declare that well-smoked salmon  
Is the finest fish that grows,  
You can rave of finnan haddies,  
But for us who are grand-daddies  
There's no smoked fish in the world like  
"Digby Chickens."

Here's a box of "Digby Chickens,"  
Caught, as you may well opine,  
In the neighborhood of Digby,  
Put to soak in local brine,  
In the fumes of meditation  
Was completed the creation  
Of these simple literary  
"Digby Chickens."



ACADIE.

(Acadian-French Dialect.)

Oh Acadie, dem fleurs-de-lis  
Is not your sign today,  
But still you be, dear Acadie,  
De place I lak for stay.

For, Acadie, de Maple Tree  
Grow on a t'ousan' hill,  
Dat's do for me, ma Acadie,  
Ma own sweet countrie still.

Chere Acadie, how glad I be  
W'en springtam melt de snow  
An' I can see, fair Acadie,  
W'ere small mayflower grow.

Now, Acadie, de honey bee  
Once more fly to an' fro,  
I know dat she, sweet Acadie,  
Is love you too, also.

Hear, Acadie, how merrily  
De bird sing w'ole day troo,  
We all agree, oh Acadie,  
No place is lak chez nous.

So, Acadie, please tak' de key  
An' lock de outside door,  
Answer dis plea, dear Acadie,  
Don' let me roam no more.



IN THE SPRING.

Loosened in each icy chain  
By the genial sun and rain,  
Overflowed with joy the wayside brooks all sing,  
No more needing then at night  
Hills exchange their blankets white  
For a more becoming cover, in the Spring.

When the sap is flowing free  
In the sugar maple tree  
And the pussy-willows cuddle where they cling,  
Then the mayflowers appear,  
First and sweetest of the year,  
Harbingers of coming beauty in the Spring.

Now the trees begin to bud,  
And the sun dries up the mud,  
In the orchard in the flash of dainty wing,  
All the birds will soon be here  
With their minstrelsy of cheer,  
And we'll bless their merry music in the Spring.

Days are gliding swiftly by,  
Nesting time is drawing nigh,  
And true-lovers soon will choose the wedding  
ring,  
Underneath the mystic moon  
Will be wisperings of June,  
And the things that fancy turns to in the Spring.

Nature's preference is seen  
In her lavish use of green,  
Multitudes of cherry trees are blossoming,  
Honey bees are all about,  
And at last it's time to trout,  
Best of all our glad diversions in the Spring.

Doors and windows open wide  
To the air on every side,  
Golden sunlight is the universal King,  
Nature now is teaching men  
This sweet lesson, once again,  
Human hearts must not be frost-bound in the  
Spring.

HOW DEY DEEG DEEGBEE GUT.

(Acadian-French Dialect.)

You know dem mountain, lay  
 'Tween de Basin an' de Bay  
 W'ere every day de water  
 Is rise an' fallin', but  
 If you be leevin' here  
 For two, tree honder year  
 You may never hear how dey deeg Deegbee Gut.

Before de Gut is deeg  
 De Basin is more deep  
 For some very muddy reever  
 Bring plaintee water down  
 Till she rise an' overflow  
 W'erever lan' is low,  
 Leave no place, at all for buil' in' Deegbee town.

From de Joggin' all aroun'  
 To de Racquette lan' is drown,  
 W'at place you goin' show me  
 Buil' flake for dry de feesh,  
 An' it kip you goin' some  
 W'en dem touris' feller come  
 To fin' accommodation lak dey weesh.

So de Beeg Chief', leev dem day,  
 Come togedder, an' dey say,  
 "Can't put dam on dat reever  
 Or mebbe Valley drown,  
 So only t'ing to do  
 Is deeg Nort' Mountain troo,  
 She's one cinch we mus' mak' place for Deegbee  
 town."

Dat job look pooty beeg  
 But dey all commence to deeg  
 An' work de spade an' shovel  
 De way you never see,  
 W'ere Deegbee got dat hill  
 Is some place dem feller fill—  
 How dey trow de stuff so far please don' ax me.

Bimeby de job is done  
 An' de water start to run  
 Until she fin' de level  
 De sam' as on de Bay,

Den all dem Beeg Chief' smile,  
An' after leetle w'ile  
De beeges' of dem all stan' up an' say.

" Better place I never know  
For any town to grow,  
Deegbee can be de fines'  
In de countrie if she will,  
So unless somewan git sore  
An' fill up de Gut encore,  
Deegbee kip her head on top de water still".

Den dem Chief' go far away,  
But everywan can say  
All t'ing Beeg Chief is spikin'  
She's comin' very true,  
We still have de Basin dere,  
An' as long as Gut is clear,  
We have de Bay an' 'Lantic Ocean' too.

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#### CHERRIES.

Cherries, cherries,  
This is where they grow,  
Fairyland is Digby  
When cherry blossoms blow.

Cherries, cherries,  
Black and white and red  
On a thousand branches  
Cluster overhead.

"Cherries, cherries."  
Robin trills away,  
In the tallest treetop  
Feasting all the day.

"Cherries, cherries,"  
Far away they hear  
This familiar music  
Sounding every year.

"Cherries, cherries,"  
Back again they come  
Digby's son's and daughter's  
Hungry to have some  
Cherries.



"POP."

" We may prate about the problem  
That confronts unmarried females,  
But 'twill simply get us nowhere  
To step on the stoop and stop,  
Doors of privilege will open  
To the tactful and persistent,  
Who have learned the art of making  
The male population pop."

So thought lovely Sarah Smithers,  
As she donned a jaunty jacket,  
Put her bonnet on and started  
For the little corner shop,  
With a view to bringing pressure  
On a certain William Withers  
Who was very fond of drinking  
"Soft stuff", commonly called "pop."

Sarah kept the house for father,  
But she doted much on William,  
Who was not the least inclined to be  
A dandy, or a fop;  
William came to call that evening  
And the trouble soon got started,  
For, when she uncorked the bottles,  
There was no pop to the pop.

Then she went and brought the pop-corn  
And the popper from the pantry  
Where she always kept them lying  
On the next shelf to the top,  
But life's troubles come not singly,  
And it drove her 'most distracted,  
When, however much she shook it,  
The pop-corn refused to pop.

Then she sidled up to William,  
Looking woe-begone and pretty,  
But he only stared at Sarah,  
While he scratched his tousled mop;  
When he left her at eleven  
She was still an unclaimed blessings,  
For, in spite of all her efforts,  
William simply wouldn't pop.

But she still was father's darling,  
And that gave her consolation,

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So she dried her tears, determined  
That no one should see her flop;  
Then she broke the old pop bottles,  
Fed the pop-corn to the chickens,  
Jilted William, and you'll find her  
Making pop-overs for pop.

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WHEN THE DIGBY TOURIST COMES.

When the Winter's cold is over  
And the backward Spring is ended  
We citizens of Digby have no time to twirl our  
thumbs,  
All the house is cleaned and dusted  
And we mend the broken rocker  
So that we can *seat* the Tourist when he comes.

Next we hang the canvas hammock  
Underneath the front veranda,  
And take an inventory of preserves and pickled  
plums,  
After that we make arrangements  
For some method of conveyance  
So that we can *meet* the Tourist when he comes.

Then we gather at the station  
With glad smiles upon our faces,  
Anxious that the greatest strangers should regard  
us as their chums,  
It is second nature to us,  
Putting on our best behavior,  
So that we can *greet* the Tourist when he comes.

We can beat the world's best records  
When we get to beating carpets,  
And those of us who have them are experts at  
beating drums,  
Oh it really beats believing,  
Our accomplishments in beating.  
And you bet we *beat* the Tourist when he comes.

FEESHIN'.

(Acadian-French Dialect.)

T'ree summer touris' feller,  
Dunno nam' de House dey stay,  
Ax me I will tak' dem feeshin'  
In laa motor boat nex' day.

I say, "For sure, wit' pleasure,  
I will tak' you, mes amis,  
An' we start out in de mornin'  
Half-pas' four, or mebbe t'ree."

Dey holler all togeder,  
"Dat's too soon for touris' men,  
An' I t'ink it suit us better  
If we go 'bout half-pas' ten.

"We git de lunch all ready,  
Plaintee for you'se'f also,  
An' somet'ing for feed de feesh wit',  
Lak' de feeshin' book is show."

Nex' mornin' I am startin'  
Very early clean ma boat  
So dat evert'ing be ready  
Half-pas' ten for tak' dem out.

Well, shorten up de story,  
She' mos' twelve on top de clock  
W'en I hear dem feller comin'  
Lak' Ford truck upon de dock.

"Mus' hurry up," dey tol' me,  
"Or de feesh will have hees lunch,  
Af'er dat she's no use feeshin',  
Now's de tam, we got de hunch."

Don' tak' long start de injine,  
An' away we go, Put! Put!  
Till bimeby we drop de anchor  
Two, t'ree mile outside de Gut.

All tam' we're eating beeskit,  
Plaintee fruit also dey got,  
An' somet'ing dat w'en you drink heem  
Dunno if you drink or not.

W'en anchor hit de bottom  
Touris' men is t'row some bait,



Drop hees spoon into de water  
On de en' of line, an' wait.

In mebbe half-an-hour  
Wan dem feller change hees tune,  
"T'ink I try some hook wit' bait on,  
Dey don' seem lak' eat wit' spoon."

Bait hardly touch de bottom  
W'en beeg dogfeesh grab de hook,  
Touris' man mos' tumble over,  
Never see such fonny look.

Dere's very moche excitement  
As de line ronne off de rail,  
An' he tol' de 'noder feller,  
"Boys, I t'ink I hook de whale."

"Dat's dogfeesh," I was tol' dem,  
"How you know, you hear heem bark"?  
Dat is w'at some feller ax me,  
"I t'ink he's man-eat-heem shark."

It's hard for kip from smilin'  
W'en dem touris' look so pale,  
"No." I say, "Not hear heem barkin',  
But I see heem wag hees tail."

By dis tam win' is blowin',  
An' he t'row line overboar';  
"Dogfeesh, shark, or feesh-diable,  
It is tam we mak' for shore."

So I pull up de anchor,  
Head for shore de sam' dey weesh;  
Easy tell, de way dey're groanin',  
Plaintee now for "feed de feesh."

At las' we reach de lan'in'  
An' dem man jump on de shore,  
Wipe hees mout' an' say, "Ba Golly  
Here's de good ol' lan' once more"

Dey geev me each good l'argent,  
Say, "Kip lunch an' fancy line,  
Glad you don't let dogfeesh bite us,  
Au revoir, she's tam to dine."

Ma children leev on beeskit  
Mos' de tam for two, t'ree day,



An' for mak' w'at you call "tidy,"  
Wife put nice silk line away.

De spoon go wit' dat tackle,  
W'en I tak' de small hook out,  
Jes' de t'ing for cut de toot' on,  
Dey fit bot' de twin she's mout'.

Good money dat trip geev me,  
Better dan de lobster trap,  
So I t'ink dat ke'ch de dogfeesh  
Mak' it w'at you call "de snap."

MINGLED SWEETNESS.

'Tis good to see the orchards  
All up and down the Valley,  
In blossom-time embowering  
The road in which we drive,  
To revel in the fragrance  
And beauty of the blossoms  
Where honey-bees with sweetness  
Have overflowed the hive.

And good it is to wander  
Through hardwood-forest arches  
When leaves are newly-opened  
And sweet wild-flowers blow,  
Match-making bees are busy,  
And hidden sweets of Nature  
Are tribute for their labor  
As they fly to and fro.

But orchard here meets forest,  
And meeting they have mingled,  
While honey that is garnered  
From orchard-tree and field,  
Is mingled with the harvest  
More daring workers gather  
From that delicious product  
The forest blossoms yield.

Life here has all the sweetness  
Of honey from the orchard,  
Most delicately mingled  
With flavor of the wild;  
Like honey-bees, go gather  
Your store of mingled sweetness,  
And in the ways of Nature  
Be Nature's happy child.



THE BASIN.

When the Basin is a mirror  
And the fascinated mountains  
Are enamored by the beauty  
Of their forms reflected there,  
Then the South-East wind, in mischief,  
Brings his witching pipe to action  
And the wakened waves go dancing,  
In a moment, everywhere.

Soon the Piper grows exhausted  
And the waves sink back to slumber,  
While the Basin, brimming over  
With the fulness of the tide,  
Becomes an artist's palette,  
Upon which the Sunset mingles,  
In a thousand combinations,  
All the colors of her pride.

Richer grow the gorgeous tintings  
And the shades are ever deeper,  
While more wondrous schemes of color  
Wondrous color-schemes displace,  
Till the eye no longer functions  
And the Basin lies in shadow;  
Then the rising Full-Moon floods it  
With the glory of her face.

Tempests vex you with their fury,  
Swirling tides force constant changes,  
On your soiled and burdened bosom  
Move our passengers and freight,  
And yet you mirror mountains,  
And o'erwhelm our souls with splendor,  
When the golden light is gleaming  
Through the Sunset's open gate.

### ICE CREAM.

It may be love of color  
Furnished the connecting link—  
There were creams and browns to choose from,  
And a dainty shade of pink—  
It may have been the colors,  
In part, that made me think.

Perhaps it was the texture  
So smooth and velvety,  
Like the finest fruit, tree-ripened,  
That fascinated me;  
It may have been the texture  
That appealed so forcefully.

Or was it the rich flavor,  
So delicious to my taste,  
With a whole octave to choose from  
On the dainty list I faced?  
It may have been the flavor,  
But I will not speak in haste.

And then there was the coolness,  
For the day was very hot  
And that dainty frozen poem  
Seemed to go right to the spot;  
It may have been the coolness,  
And I won't say it was not.

There remains the perfect service,  
For the room was cool and clean,  
And the waitress knew her business,  
That was easy to be seen;  
It may have been the service  
That made me feel so keen.

Or was it a combination  
I had never found before—  
Color, texture, flavor, coolness,  
And the smile the waitress wore?  
Yes, the perfect combination  
Made me think I wanted more.



"JURDANTOWN."

(Negro Dialect.)

You can brag, you Digby folks,  
An' hand us out yer jokes,  
Until de big No'th mountain tumbles down,  
But you know as well as me  
Dat your rale prosperity  
Is mos'ly what you gits from Jurdantown.

You whites is mighty keen  
About keepin' awful clean,  
At ebery little bit of dirt you frown,  
But who do you suppose  
Scrub de flo' and wash de clo'es  
Ef our wimmen don' come in f'om Jurdantown.

You t'ink it's not good fo'm  
Ef de house aint allus wa'm,  
You can't bear to see de 'mometer go down,  
Dat all sounds very good,  
But whar you git de wood  
Ef it ain't hauled in to you f'om Jurdantown.

So when you make a fuss  
'Bout yourse'ves, remember us,  
For even if we ain't got much renown,  
You would soon find sumpin' wrong  
Ef you tried to git along  
Widout de *Colored Help* from Jurdantown.

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GOD'S GREAT OUT-OF-DOORS.

Fair lies the lake in the moon's soft beams!  
We live to-night in a world of dreams,  
Never a breath stirs our limp tent-flap,  
Our drowsy fire prepares to nap;  
Far from the haunts and worries of men  
Here we renew our souls again;  
The moon rides high in a flood of light —  
Our hearts are too full for sleep to-night.

Deep in the forest re-echoes the tone  
Of the great horned owl on his bass trombone,  
Her voice like the sound of a clarionet  
His lady-love joins in the sweet duet,  
Far to the right, where the big swamp lies,  
A cow-moose calls, and her mate replies,  
Its sweet insistence pervading all,  
Comes the ceaseless song of the waterfall.

Impudent woodmice, insatiable thieves,  
Scamper and rustle among the dry leaves;  
An inquisitive rabbit sits, gazing, awhile,  
Then plunges headlong in the old brush pile;  
A huge bull-frog, on a log half-sunk,  
Makes the welkin ring with "Kerunk, chunk,  
chunk";  
Like the cry of a soul in hysterical fright,  
The loon's wild laughter disturbs the night.

I know that whispered-whistling sound,  
It's a flock of ducks, see them circle round,  
What music their stiffened feathers make  
As they glide to rest on the mirrored lake;  
Hear their "Quack, quack, quack," as they sport  
and dive,  
With the very joy of being alive,  
I should hate to disturb their innocent fun,  
And I'm glad that nobody brought a gun.

Now the moon declines and a night wind stirs,  
In the clump of birches a partridge "whirrs;"  
The fire brightens, then seems to sleep,  
And delightful sensations upon us creep —  
Till the cry of the loon rises wild once more,  
And a muskrat splashes close to the shore;  
Our fire is low and the air is chill,  
And dawn is striking the highest hill.

We've all been sleeping — 'twill do us good —  
Hand me those pieces of dry hard-wood,



We'll have a bite and a cup of tea—  
Hear that robin sing in the tall pine tree.  
Aha! The trout are already awake,  
See their widening circles all over the lake,  
We must get afloat, let the dishes lie,  
We'll attend to their washing bye and bye.

Look there! Was ever more charming sight!  
A doe and fawn in the dawning light  
Come boldly down to the water's brink  
And lower their heads for a long, cool drink.  
Like golden bell in Cathedral hush,  
Comes the mellow note of the hermit-thrush.  
Silly red-squirrel, why do you chatter,  
A scene like this is no scolding matter.

What a perfect morning, and how they rise,  
And strike at the lightly skimming flies;  
There's nothing so purges a soul of doubt  
As playing a three-pound speckled trout.  
Now the dragon-flies join in foolish chase  
As the rising sun shows a genial face,  
The kingfishers clatter and fuss around,  
And like pneumatic drills the woodpeckers pound.

We've caught enough, let's go ashore;  
What a time and place to kneel, and adore;  
An ineffable Presence seems coming near,  
And a subtle Something, is prompting to prayer;  
Who planned all this loves the thing He planned,  
And must want His creatures to understand;  
Near the heart of Nature 'tis sweet to dwell,  
For Nature's heart, is His heart, as well.

Oh dear, deep woods, How I dream of you!  
And when, oh, when shall my dreams come true?  
There are parks, and gardens, not far to seek,  
And a thousand wonders of which men speak;  
All due regard for the works of man,  
And his genius shown in the city's plan,  
But I long for the lake with its wooded shores,  
And the things in God's great Out-of-Doors.



LOVELY LAKE.

I marvel not thou liest  
So mirror-like, at dawn,  
A polished, silvery surface  
No ripple plays upon,  
Save where two soft-eyed creatures  
Their thirst, unstartled, slake,  
Thou hast so much to mirror,  
Lovely Lake,

On high the wooded mountain,  
The verdant hills below,  
The brightening blue above thee,  
Where soft clouds come and go;  
Save where the speckled beauties  
In rippling circles break,  
No marvel thou art placid,  
Lovely Lake.

Unruffled, and unsullied,  
Thou mirrorest to me,  
In softened tones, all beauty  
The light reveals to thee;  
Of that great One whose garments  
So fair a picture make,  
I, too, would be a mirror,  
Lovely Lake.



“MOTHER.”

The brightness of a golden summer day  
When sunlight claims a universal sway  
And Nature calls her children out to play.

The beauty and the freshness of the rose  
That in the dew of early morning blows  
And with the blush of deep affection glows.

The music of the pleasant summer breeze,  
The song of birds and murmuring of bees,  
Brooks flowing underneath o'erhanging trees.

The breath of blossoms at the close of day,  
Fragrance of flowers carpeting the way, [hay.  
The scent that floats from fields of new-mown

Sweetness of honey from the summer comb,  
When bees are boldest and the farthest roam  
To find and bring their choicest treasures home.

The warmth of sunshine tempered by the shade  
The interlacing boughs above have made  
Where we recline at noontide, unafraid.

The inspiration of a lofty thought,  
A phase of truth we long had vainly sought,  
To us by some revered life-teacher brought.

The glow of sweet emotion in the breast  
When Love arrives, to be an honored guest,  
To share and glorify all that is best.

An echo of the Parenthood Divine, [shine  
That truth in which such wondrous beauties  
Because such earthly parentage is mine.

All these, and whatsoever else there be  
Needed to make a perfect harmony,  
It takes to tell what “Mother” means to me.



### AU REVOIR!

(Acadian-French Dialect.)

Au revoir! I'm very sorry  
Dat I now mus' part wit' you,  
W'en you are no longer wit' me,  
Ah, ma frien', w'at I shall do?  
Good long tam I have you near me,  
But you now mus' leave for sure,  
Oh, its hard for see you goin'—  
Au revoir!

Au revoir! We be so happy,  
All de summer, you an' me,  
Every bird is sing more sweeter  
An' de sun shine w'ere we be;  
W'en I t'ink de summer's over,  
Ah, ma heart is feelin' sore,  
Cannot kip de tear from fallin'—  
Au revoir!

Au revoir! All troo de winter  
W'en I hear de lonesome win'  
I will t'ink about nex' summer  
Dat will bring you back agin;  
How ma heart will dance wit' pleasure  
W'en I see your face once more,  
So, until dat happy meetin',  
Au revoir!

Au revoir! Can't tell de trouble  
Dat may come upon us two,  
Mebbe bot' won't see de springtam  
W'en de winter's col' is troo,  
But if one of us is taken  
'Fore we meet on eart' encore,  
An' nex' meetin' be in Heaven,  
Au revoir!

