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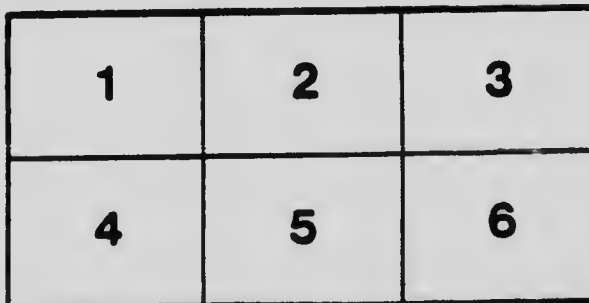
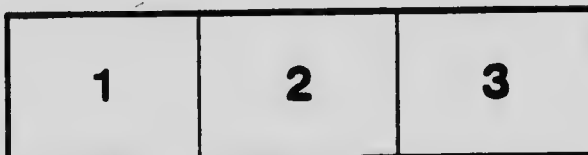
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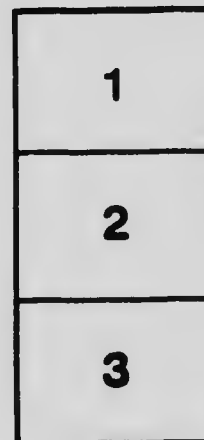
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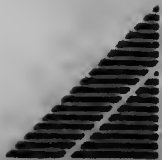
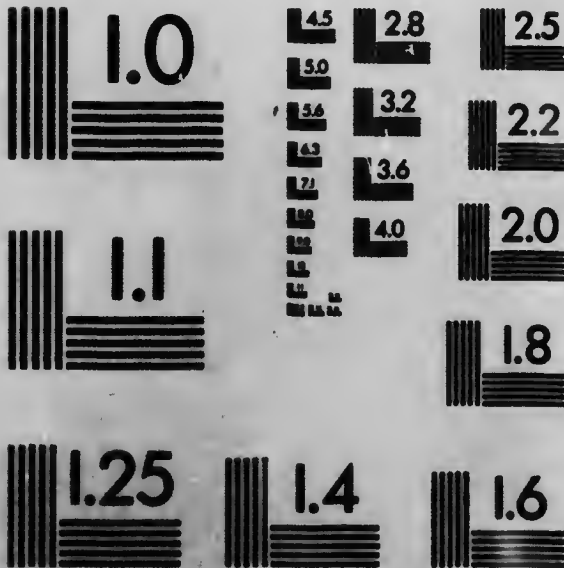
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Gathered from my Garden

by

Apple

(MISS) B. J. THOMPSON.

Box 1, Thorold, Ont.

Printed by THE THOROLD POST Printing & Publishing House,
Thorold, Ont., Can.

In giving this little book of poems to a very small portion of the public I have used only those verses which I think will be most acceptable to the largest class. I know they are doomed to criticism—even severe criticism—and I see many imperfections myself, especially in the earlier ones. To revise them now, however, would be manifestly misleading, as the dates are attached; and I would ask those who read to bear in mind that the earliest ones given were written when not more than well launched in my 'teens. The poems are necessarily mixed up, but if friends see any improvement with the advancing years it is all I could wish--except that the reading affords some little enjoyment.

THORNAPPLE.

Down by the Spring

Down by the clear little trickling spring ;
Down where the rushes grew ;
Down where the pebbles were round and smooth ;
Down where the green leaves blew ;
There 'mid the grasses bending down low
Baby was sleeping away her woe.

I found her at eve, when the whippoorwill
Cried through the sighing trees,
And folded her close to my beating heart,
Trying its pain to ease ;
Then with the breezes blowing farewell
Homeward I sped through the sweet-smelling dell.

Brightly a firefly glittered and flashed
Over the winding way ;
'Close I fondled our orphaned babe,
Rueing my tongue that day ;
And all the way home the leaves rustled low :
" Scolding our motherless darling so ! "

Down by the clear little trick'ling spring ;
Down where the rushes grow ;
Down where the pebbles are round and smooth ;
Down where the green leaves blow ;
There 'mid the grasses waving above
Baby knows now that she found our love.

May, 1901.

Alliteration

Oh, sad was my soul as I sat me down
By the side of the sobbing sea ;
And the salt tears splashed on the sloping sands,
As the waters wept for me.

And fain would I sleep and think no more
Of the words that were spoken low,
But the land of dreams o'er the broad sea lay,
Where none but the peaceful go.

A step on the sand was so swift and still
That I heard not a sound, but knew
There were two soft lips on my throbbing brow,
With " Forgive me—I am true."

Then sweet was the sound of the singing waves
As they washed the shining shore,
And silver the sheen of the springing spray—
And I slumbered, and sighed no more.

August, 1899.

A Moral

I walked all day in the shadow ;
My soul was sick ; and then
I said as the hot tears faltered
The sun would not shine again.

The sun came out in the morning ;
It shone down bright and strong ;
And then, as the radiance thrilled me,
I said it would not be long.

Again the darkness descended ;
My soul was chill as night ;
But now, with my eyes turned upward,
I said : " I will watch for light."

And the light was in and about me ;
I heard the bluebirds sing ;
I stooped for the breath of violets,
And knew 't was the dawn of spring.
July, 1901.

Friendship

I had erred toward the friend who loved me,
And whom I loved ;
Yet I smiled when his eyes turned to me,
And seemed not moved.

Had he known how my heart was bleeding,
His lip had paled
Out of pitying pain, and not that
His love had failed.

But I stood by his side at gloaming,
And told him all ;
And I brokenly said our friendship
Was past recall.

Then he smiled as his dear hands clasped me,
And whispered free :
“ Ah, what were the value of friendship
If that could be ? ”

July, 1901.

“ Pore Little Wockie-Chair! ”

Pore little wockiechair, wif a leg bwoked !
Did oo know it was me 'fore ever I spoked ?
'At gweat big man kicked oo out fum his woad,
'N I dess oo feels hurt whur die naughty gwoun' goed.

Pore little wockie-chair ! Here is a cwack !
Did oo fink I could wock wifout oo wed back ?
Oo see 'at big wain-dwop splas' on my s'oe ?
It cum fum my eyes wot is cwying fur oo.

Oo is my wockie-chair wen oo *is* smassed—
Do oo see all die wain-dwops coming down fast ?
I feels a big lump come up in my fwoat,
'N I finks it's fur oo wif oo pwitty wed coat !

Never mind, wockie-chair ! Here is my stwap !
'N I'll sit on die gwoun' wif my head on oo lap.
My eyes is so wet 'at now I can't see,
But I feels wif my han's oo is cwying wif me.

July, 1901.

The Mermaid's Lament

A Childhood Fancy

The waves rock to and fro—ah, me !
I look me up through the deep, green sea,
And methinks the winds are rough and high
From the dashing spray and low, gray sky—
Ah, the world is cold today ?

I lay me down in my soft sand bed,
With the seaweeds waving over my head,
And turn to the frowning shore,
And, hark ! how the wild waves roar !
Yes, the world is cold today.

Once, long ago, when the sky was fair,
I brought me down to the seashore there ;
And my eyes roved over the white-capped waves
To where I had heard were the mermaids' caves,
But that was long ago.

My mother said : " Child, don't go too far :
The waves will sweep you beyond the bar !"
But I would not obey, and swam off away,
And could not return. Do you wonder I say
That was long ago ?

And now the sea, so dark and deep,
Cares not, but laughs, to see me weep ;
And I yearn for the world, but cannot go
Because I grieved my mother so !

Alas for that fair, dark day !
Ah, me ! ah, me ! this cruel sea,
And the great sea-monsters gliding free !
Alas that I came this way !

March, 1895.

A Message

Written at the second request of Rev. John Waite of London, Eng.

'T is a soft night in the summer, and the scented breezes blow
To a wayworn heart a message, wafted from the long ago,
Ringing sweet its golden notes to a world of mortal woe.

Will you take the sweet-blown message, in its beauty wafted free—
Wafted o'er the rippling waters: "Jesus died for you and me?"—
Answer, answer, loving, low: "Jesus, Lord, I trust in Thee."

Will you not? Oh, see Him pleading as He waiting, anxious, stands!
See Him to the lost creation holding out His love-worn hands—
Hands that will be dyed with blood to fulfil the law's demands.

Do you hear the night wind sobbing as it fans the fevered brow
Of a Figure meekly kneeling? All the air is waiting now.
He is praying—let your soul low in awful silence bow.

Time has passed. 'T is but the breathing of the spirit's mighty power.
See Him in His holy beauty, meekly, in that dying hour,
Blessing those who late have cursed Him, while the sternest of them
cower.

For they see the black'ning heavens frown an anger well they know
Yet veil soft the heartrent Witness of a love forsaken so—
One whose anguish opens heaven with a piercing cry of woe.

And the earth in terror sickens—quakes and groans in mortal pain,
As it vomits forth its buried—emblems of the risen Slain.
Yea, it seems the very heavens in their weakness rend in twain.

So has died the spotless Jesus, only innocence within,
With a heart—that matchless heart—bruised and broken for your sin,
And He, risen, stands before you, saying: "I would enter in."

August, 1897. Revised July, 1901.

To Estella

Written on the death of a sweet young cousin, and really the result of a dream. The one alluded to in the eighth verse is an elder brother, who died several years before Estella.

Oh, darling ! when they told to me
Your life was slowly fading,
That when the autumn leaves should fall,
The wav'ring sun-rays shading,

Your precious soul would soar away
To realms of unknown glory,
My selfish heart was dumb with grief—
I could not bear the story.

But in the night—the soft, still night—
When slumber's folds had bound me,
A dream in all its beauty came
And threw its arms around me.

It showed to me a rushing stream,
Above a deep gulf tow'ring ;
Its source was in a garden, where
A single rose was flow'ring ;

And on its waters, foaming high,
I saw your white face lying ;
I saw you linger at the brink,
And knew that you were dying ;

And in my heart there rose a joy
That smothered grief there waking—
Oh, not because the stream's wild course
Your father's heart was breaking ;

Nor that, with hot, fast-falling tears,
Your bosom friend and lover
Saw but the lonesome, longing pain,
And not the sun above her ;

But on the other shore, so near,
With arms outstretched and waiting,
Stood one dear form with smiling face,
'Mid music undulating ;

Then from the mist that hung between
You and the plunging billow
A strong, true arm came forth, and made
Just on the brink a pillow.

And when they said that you were gone
No thrill of fear came o'er me,
But in its vivid loveliness
This scene appeared before me.

October, 1897.

Song of a Ship

My life is on the grand old sea,
Where waves are lightly foaming ;
The sporting shadows follow me
As softly comes the gloaming ;

With fond caress the dancing spray
Would ever round me hover,
As though I were a winsome maid
And it my smiling lover.

Oh, the sea ! the bonny sea !
My life were unavailing
Were it to change to aught but sea
As I go proudly sailing.

I love my life too well, I trow,
Thereon to muse and ponder ;
I shudder at the thought, and in
The old sea nestle fonder.

I breathe into my glistening lungs
The west wind's blithesome kisses ;
I quiver in my terror when
The storm king round me hisses.

Yet I was made to master all—
Surmount the tossing billow ;
To glide content, or lie at rest,
The sea my downy pillow.

And if, perchance, my native strength
Should fail 'mid tempest's roaring,
Against what heavy odds I must
Again go onward soaring!

Oh, man! thou art in all thy strength
The Master's wise creation;
Destroy not, by thy puny brain,
The holy, sweet relation.

Let not the mind within thy frame,
Propelling life's rough sailing,
Upon a billow strand thy soul,
Mid force's shriek and wailing.

Plow forth! stay not! for in thy wake
May wearied hearts beat lighter:
To whom alone sways not at storm
The clouded sky shines brighter.

June, 1897.

“All’s Fair in Love”

Fair Mistress Fay went out one morn
Her choice pet hens to feed,
But they were gone ; not even one
Remained of any breed.

“Alack-aday !” quoth Mistress Fay,
“ My hens, where can they be ?
They all were here but yester eve,
Now one I fail to see.

“ Now I bethink me, yester night,
While filling cups for tea,
I spilt— now I remember well—
The salt all over me.

“And Granny Gray, who knoweth well,
Doth say ’t’s an omen true,
That ‘ ere another day is done
Some ill will come to you.’

“And then—alas ! I laughed, and said
’T was just a saying vain !
Had I but wisely listed then,
I would not have this pain !

“ For well I know in all around
No fowl are quite so fine ;
I might have known that all tthrough them
Would come this ill of mine !”

She stood forlorn. Her tearful eyes
Scanned all the barnyard o'er,
Yet failed to see a boyish face
Peep from the haymow door.

“Oh! who could be so mean to me?
In one short week the fair!
And now, as never heretofore,
I'll win no prizes there.”

Sly Jack, a handsome neighbor lad,
Crept quickly to her side,
And then, before the tears could dry,
In merry accents cried:

“Why, Mistress Fay! you here alone,
And weeping, this bright morn?
Forsooth, I'd better thoughts of thee—
Thou'rt wetting all thy corn!”

“Ay, Master Jack, who would n't cry?
My hens have gone astray;
I fear some envious villager
Hath stolen them away.”

“What! all your choice and lovely hens?”
Jack's face bespoke surprise,
Yet one who closely looked could see
The laughter in his eyes.

"Well, then, my lady fair," quoth he,
"If thy surmise be true,
Why, let us search both high and low
Till we've the thieves in lieu."

"Sh-h! hark! I thought I heard the noise
My choicest Dorking makes
When calling for her meal and corn."
A step she barnward takes.

But no! sly Jack has pulled her back;
He says: "The other way!"
And draws her to the cornfield near,
Where full an hour they stay

A-searching for the missing fowl
Among the cornstalks tall,
Until once more the maiden hears
The Dorking's hungry call.

"'T is from the barn—I know full well!"
She says at Jack's dissent;
And, 'spite his contradicting words,
Straight to the door she went.

"Oh, Biddy, Biddy! come!" she cried,
As naught appeared to view:
"You know full well the township fair
Awards first prize to you!"

Yet Biddy stayed ; and, blind with tears,
Fay stumbled through the door,
And dropped the corn ; it scattered down
The cracks that lined the floor.

Then what a bedlam thrived below !
"Cluck, cluck !" the Dorking said ;
And Fay looked up at laughing Jack,
Who, half ashamed, and red,

Told how he'd risen while 't was dark
And sawed the board behind them,
Then hid her hens beneath the floor
So he could help her find them.

September, 1895.

Only a Bird

A little boy stands, with guilty air,
One hand in a nest in the hawthorne there,
While a little brown thrush hovers wild round the bush,
And the grasses would fain, in that infinite hush,
Stop even the noise of their growing.
Oh, fie, little boy, with jacket of blue !
With pretty straw hat and pretty face, too !
Think well of the seed you are sowing !

A dark'ning cloud crosses the face of the sun,
Portending a storm ere the day is done,
While the strengthening breeze leaves a sigh in the trees,
Then carries the news to the wide, ruffled seas,
That soon will lash high in their groaning.
Yet the boy lingers on ; he takes all the rest—
The pretty, smooth eggs from the once-bridged nest—
While even the bees stop their droning.

The empty home now has no charm for the bird,
Which starts to fly off as its mate's cry is heard ;
But a shot from a sling makes nerveless its wing,
And down to the ground drops the poor little thing,
Its form on earth's bosom to pillow.
The poplar trees whistle and moan in their pain
For the innocent bird so ruthlessly slain,
While low bends the weeping willow.

The blowing winds gather the leaves in a mound
All over the thrush that lies on the ground.
Oh ! the furious storm rages wild round the form
Of the little dead birdling so silent and warm,
Yet to it is but tenderness wielding.
Blow on, ye wild winds ! your raging is just,
For one of God's creatures lies still in the dust
Through a little boy's thoughtless yielding.
September, 1895.

In a Treetop

So lightly I swing
 In the highest of trees,
My brow gently fanned
 By the soft western breeze ;

So blithely I sway
 In the apple-tree olden,
Among its gnarled branches
 Spend moments so golden ;

So happy am I
 Up here all alone,
Watching the robins
 That past me have flown ;

That I hear not a voice,
 Melodiously sweet,
Calling to me
 In my rude, swaying seat.

I hear not till Some One
 Is touching my heart--
Grant that this Presence
 May ne'er from me part!—

And voice whispers low,
 For hearing but mine :
“ Why keep but for you
 These pleasures of thine ?

“ Think of it reverently,
Head bending low :
God made the beautiful
Apple-trees grow :

“ God made the grass
Beneath here so soft,
The billowy clouds
Now floating aloft ;

“ God made the waters
Incessantly flowing,
Created the breezes
Now soothingly blowing ;

“ All that you see
On this beautiful earth
By God was created,
To Him owes its birth.

“ Withhold not your thanks
For aught you receive,
By which your kind Father
You needlessly grieve.”

And I said from my heart,
From the old apple tree :

“ Nevermore shall my thanks
Be withholden from Thee ”

July, 1895.

Romance

In the early spring of 1894, during the time Rev. John Waite of London, England, was conducting revival services at Thorold, he related, while visiting one of the families, the story of his courtship. Up to sixteen years of age he had never "had a girl," and the boys teased him unmercifully, taunting him with "Oh, Johnnie can't get a girl!" and "The girls won't have Johnnie!" etc., until he was almost desperate. One evening as he was returning from church a young girl living near his home accompanied him, and, the walks being very slippery, both swayed dangerously. Suddenly the maiden said: "Johnnie, can't you take my arm?" which he gladly did. "I thought bashfully," concluded Mr. Waite, "that it was so nice of her to ask me to take her arm. After that we always walked home that way whether it was slippery or not, and in one year from the first night we walked together we were married." Shortly after relating the incident the reverend gentleman received the following verses. In answering, he said: "I laughed until the tears ran down my cheeks, and the perspiration stood out on my forehead—promise me you'll not do it again, won't you?"

Once a lad and lassie, walking home from church
On a wintry evening, 'gan to sway and lurch.
Now, the way was slippery, and what could be the harm?
So "Johnnie," said the maiden, "can't you take my arm?"

Gladly Johnnie acquiesced, and thought, as he did muse:
"I might have walked like this before, but thought that she'd refuse."
And so he slowly onward walked, the maiden at his side,
And wished, while he was walking, that she had been his bride.

The stars, they winked together, and whispered, with a smile:
"O yes, we know that's loving, but just you wait awhile!"
And so they waited patiently, these twinklings of a feather,
And saw the two go arm in arm in every kind of weather.

And at last they were rewarded—the little stars so bright,
Who made the world some happier, and shed around their light—
For in just a single year from the time of that new life
They saw the lad and lassie walk home as man and wife.

And now the little twinkling stars will have to wait no more,
For there are lots of little Waites to watch the years roll o'er.
And now, when Mr. Papa Waite looks back upon that day,
He thinks : " Oh, what a lucky thing 't was such a slippery way ! "

April, 1894.

