

The Old Sunday School at Home.



HEN I sit in meditation in the quiet evening hour,
And the witchery of fancy manifests its magic power,
Making all the place about me like a garden scene at night,
When the summer stars are gleaming, and the moonbeam's gentle light
Gives the dew-drops on the roses glow like angel-tears of love,
And the vision so transcendent turns my joyous thought above
Till some sound among the bushes interrupts my pleasing muse,
And the noise my trembling fancy follows out among the dews,—
Then I wander in the distance and survey some childhood scenes,
Which regain their shape and beauty through the mist that intervenes,
And I breathe new inspiration as I visit, 'midst the gloam,
That one place of all the dearest—the old Sunday School at home.

Though the night comes close about me yet I love to wander back,
When the zephyrs softly sighing give the holy awe I lack,
And beneath the moonbeam's glimmer and my memory's hallowed light
Scenes of other days surround me, and I view them with delight :
I can see the red-brick chapel standing there beside the road,
With the cedar trees that front it, where the singing birds abode,
And the wasp-nests on the windows, and the rose-bush growing wild
Near the gateway where we gathered and our Sabbath greetings smiled ;
I can see the chapel basement, with its benches and its map,
Where we boys and girls assembled, and the leader with a rap
On his table got us quiet, so that soon the heavenly dome
With our songs and prayers seemed ringing—in the old Sunday School at home.

Oh, how holy seemed the Sabbath when we met in that old school !
Oh, how sacred was that basement, and in summer days how cool !
When the old folks would all gather there to have their Bible class,
And the teachers, with the glory of devotion in their face,
Would hear verses we recited, and then tell the story sweet
Of the love that sent from heaven its most precious gift complete,
And we boys would give our answers, telling what we knew of Paul,
And of Daniel and his lions, and of Moses, John, and Saul,
Till we felt an inspiration filling every youthful soul
As the music bore us upward on its ever-swelling roll :
Oh, the place seemed very holy when we read the sacred tome,
For no critics ever entered the old Sunday School at home.

But the Sunday School is over, or at least it's not the same,
For though some who then attended still have there enrolled their name,
Though the one who then presided with a tact both wise and sweet,
Still each Sabbath with his Bible wends his way along the street,
Yet there's new boys in the classes and new teachers teaching there,
And the old friends are departed : some have sought a western air,
Some have settled down and married, some have passed to rest above,
And there's one that's gone out preaching, telling men the Gospel love,
For he's ever truly grateful for that prophets' school of truth,
Where he was so kindly nurtured and enlightened in his youth,
And there's nothing so delights him when his evening fancies roam,
As to visit in the gloaming the old Sunday School at home.