

Gems of Poetry, for Girls and Boys

Unknown

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Title: Gems of Poetry, for Girls and Boys

Author: Unknown

Release Date: February 10, 2004 [eBook #11023]

Language: English

Character set encoding: US-ASCII

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GEMS OF POETRY, FOR GIRLS AND BOYS

1850.

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[Illustration: View of Cincinnati.]

[Illustration: Cotton Plant.]

MAY-DAY SONG.

[Illustration]

"The flowers are blooming everywhere,
On every hill and dell,
And O, how beautiful they are!
How sweetly, too, they smell!

"The little brooks, they dance along,
And look so glad and gay;
I love to hear their pleasant song,
I feel as glad as they.

"The young lambs bleat and frisk about,
The bees hum round their hive,
The butterflies are coming out,--
'Tis good to be alive.

"The trees, that looked so stiff and gray,
With green wreaths now are hung;
O mother! let me laugh and play,
I cannot hold my tongue.

"See yonder bird spread out his wings,
And mount the clear blue skies;
And hark! how merrily he sings,
As far away he flies."

[Illustration]

"Go forth, my child, and laugh and play,
And let your cheerful voice,
With birds, and brooks, and merry May,
Cry aloud, Rejoice! rejoice!

[Illustration]

"I would not check your bounding mirth,
My little happy boy,
For He who made this blooming earth
Smiles on an infant's joy."

ALEXANDER SELKIRK.

[Illustration]

I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute,
From the centre all round to the sea,
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
O solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place.
I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech,--
I start at the sound of my own.

[Illustration]

The beasts, that roam over the plain,
My form with indifference see,
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

[Illustration]

Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestowed upon man,
O had I the wings of a dove.
How soon would I taste you again!
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheered by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver or gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Ne'er sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a Sabbath appeared.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report,
Of a land I shall visit no more.
My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

[Illustration]

How fleet is a glance of the mind!
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-winged arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land,
In a moment I seem to be there;
But, alas! recollection, at hand,
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest.
The beast is laid down in his lair,
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There is mercy in every place;
And mercy, encouraging thought!
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

[Illustration]

DON'T KILL THE BIRDS.

[Illustration: D]

Don't kill the birds!--the little birds,
That sing about your door,
soon as the joyous spring has come,
And chilling storms are o'er.

The little birds!--how sweet they sing!
O! let them joyous live;
And do not seek to take their life,
Which you can never give.

Don't kill the birds!--the pretty birds
That play among the trees!
'T would make the earth a cheerless place,
Should we dispense with these.

The little birds! how fond they play!
Do not disturb their sport;
But let them warble forth their songs,
Till winter cuts them short.

[Illustration]

Don't kill the birds!--the happy birds
That bless the field and grove:
Such harmless things to look upon,
They claim our warmest love.

[Illustration]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

[Illustration: W]

Who showed the little ant the way
Her narrow hole to bore,
And spend the pleasant summer day

In laying up her store?

The sparrow builds her pretty nest
Of wool, and hay, and moss;
Who told her how to build it best,
And lay the twigs across?

Who taught the busy bee to fly
Among the sweetest flowers,
And lay his store of honey by,
To eat in winter hours?

'Twas God who showed them all the way,
And gave them all their skill;
He teaches children, if they pray,
To do his holy will.

[Illustration]

WINTER SPORT.

[Illustration: D]

Down, down the hill how swift I go!
Over the ice, and over the snow;
A horse or cart I do not fear.
For past them both my sled I steer.

[Illustration]

Hurra! my boy! I'm going down,
While you toil up; but never frown;
The far hill-top you soon will gain,
And then, with all your might and main,

You'll dash by me; while, full of glee,
I'll up again to dash by thee!
So on we glide--O, life of joy;
What pleasure has the glad school-boy!

THE OLD OAKEN BUCKET.

[Illustration: H]

How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood,
When fond recollection presents them to view;
The orchard, the meadow, the deep-tangled wild-wood,
And every loved spot which my infancy knew;
The wide-spreading pond, and the mill that stood by it,
The bridge, and the rock where the cataract fell;
The cot of my father, the dairy-house nigh it,

And e'en the rude bucket which hung in the well.
The old oaken bucket--the iron-bound bucket--
The moss-covered bucket which hung in the well.

That moss-covered vessel I hail as a treasure--
For often, at noon, when returned from the field,
I found it the source of an exquisite pleasure,
The purest and sweetest that nature can yield.
How ardent I seized it, with hands that were glowing,
And quick to the white-pebbled bottom it fell;
Then soon, with the emblem of truth overflowing,
And dripping with coolness, it rose from the well.
The old oaken bucket--the iron-bound bucket--
The moss-covered bucket arose from the well.

How sweet from the green mossy brim to receive it,
As, poised on the curb, it inclined to my lips!
Not a full, blushing goblet could tempt me to leave it,
Though filled with the nectar that Jupiter sips.
And now, far removed from that loved situation,
The tear of regret will intrusively swell,
As fancy reverts to my father's plantation,
And sighs for the bucket which hangs in the well.
The old oaken bucket--the iron-bound bucket--
The moss-covered bucket which hangs in the well.

[Illustration]

THE GOOD-NATURED GIRLS.

[Illustration: T]

Two good little girls, Julia-Ann and Maria,
As happily lived as good girls could desire;
And though they were neither grave, sullen, nor mute,
They seldom or never were heard to dispute.

If one wants a thing that the other could get,
They don't go to scratching and fighting for it;
But each one is willing to give up her right,
For they'd rather have nothing than quarrel and fight.

If one of them happens to have something nice,
Directly she offers her sister a slice;
And not like to some greedy children I've known,
Who would go in a corner to eat it alone.

When papa or mamma had a thing to be done,
These good little girls would immediately run;
And not stand disputing to which it belonged,
And grumble and fret and declare they were wronged.

Whatever occurred in their work or their play,
They were willing to yield and give up their own way;
Then let us all try their example to mind,
And always, like them, be obliging and kind.

"WHAT IS THAT, MOTHER?"

"What is that, mother?"

"The lyre-bird, my child--
The morn has just looked out and smiled,

[Illustration]

When he starts from his humble grassy nest,
And is up and away with the day on his breast,
And a hymn in his heart to yon pure, bright sphere,
To warble it out in his Maker's ear.
Ever, my child, be thy morn's first lays
Tuned, like the lyre-bird's, to thy Maker's praise."

"What is that, mother?"

"The dove, my son--
And that low, sweet voice, like a widow's moan,

[Illustration]

Is flowing out from her gentle breast,
Constant and pure, by that lonely nest,
As the wave is poured from some crystal urn,
For her distant dear one's quick return.
Ever, my son, be thou like the dove,
In friendship as faithful, as constant in love.

"What is that, mother?"

"The eagle, boy--
Proudly careering his course of joy.

[Illustration]

Firm on his mountain vigor relying,
Breasting the dark storm, the red bolt defying;
His wing on the wind, his eye on the sun,
He swerves not a hair, but bears onward, right on.
Boy! may the eagle's flight ever be thine,
Onward and upward, true to the line!"

"What is that, mother?"

"The swan, my love--
He is floating down from his native grove,

[Illustration]

No loved one now, no nestling nigh;
He is floating down by himself to die;
Death darkens his eyes, and unplumes his wings,
Yet the sweetest song is the last he sings.
Live so, my love, that when death shall come,
Swan-like, and sweet, it may waft thee home."

[Illustration]

CHILDREN PROMISING THEIR GRANDFATHER THEY WILL BE GOOD.

[Illustration: T]

Though I am now in younger days,
Nor can tell what shall befall me,
I'll prepare for every place
Where my growing age shall call me.

Should I e'er be rich or great,
Others shall partake my goodness;
I'll supply the poor with meat,
Never showing scorn or rudeness.

When I see the blind or lame,
Deaf or dumb, I'll kindly treat them;
I deserve to feel the same,
If I mock, or hurt, or cheat them.

If I meet with railing tongues,
Why should I return their railing?
Since I best revenge my wrongs
By my patience never failing.

When I hear them telling lies,
Talking foolish, cursing, swearing,
First I'll try to make them wise,
Or I'll soon go out of hearing.

What though I be low and mean,
I'll engage the rich to love me,
While I'm modest, neat and clean,
And submit when they reprove me.

[Illustration]

If I should be poor and sick,
I shall meet, I hope, with pity;
Since I love to help the weak,
Though they're neither fair nor witty.

I'll not willingly offend,
Nor be easily offended;
What's amiss I'll strive to mend,
And endure what can't be mended.

LOVE AND DUTY TO PARENTS.

[Illustration: M]

My father, my mother, I know,
I cannot your kindness repay;
But I hope that, as older I grow,
I shall learn your commands to obey.

You loved me before I could tell
Who it was that so tenderly smiled;
But now that I know it so well,
I should be a dutiful child.

I am sorry that ever I should
Be naughty and give you a pain;
I hope I shall learn to be good,
And so never grieve you again.

But, for fear that I should dare
From all your commands to depart,
Whenever I'm saying my prayer
I'll ask for a dutiful heart.

THE APPLE-TREE.

[Illustration: L]

Let them sing of bright red gold;
Let them sing of silver fair;
Sing of all that's on the earth,
All that's in the air;
All that's in the sunny air,
All that's in the sea;
And I'll sing a song as rare,
Of the apple-tree!

The red-bloomed apple-tree;
The red-cheeked apple-tree;
That's the tree for you and me,
The ripe, rosy apple-tree!

Learned men have learned books,
Which they ponder night and day;
Easier leaves than theirs I read,--
Blossoms pink and white;
Blossom-leaves all pink and white,
Wherein I can see
Charactered, as clear as light,
The old apple-tree;

The gold-cheeked apple-tree;
The red-streaked apple-tree;
All the fruit that groweth on
The ripe, rosy apple-tree!

[Illustration: W]

Winter comes, as winter will,

Bringing dark days, frost and rime;
But the apple is in vogue
At the Christmas-time;
At the merry Christmas-time
Folks are full of glee;
Then they bring out apples prime,
Of the primest tree;

Then you the roast apple see,
While they toast the apple-tree,
Singing, with a jolly chime,
Of the brave old apple-tree!

[Illustration]

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[Illustration]

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