

To J. W. R.

IN summer I 'm a-raisin' flowers,
An' gardenin', an' weedin',
But durin' o' the winter hours
I do a deal o' readin';
An' the 's one man with sech an art
O' settin' thoughts a-rhymin',
Ez makes a feelin' in my heart
Ez sweet ez bells a-chimin'.

I read a piece o' his to-day
(It 's goin' 'round the papers)—
The words wuz dancin' all the way
An' cuttin' happy capers,
An' shinin' up to meet my eye
Jes like my blushin' roses
A-smilin' as I pass 'em by—
The dearest o' my posies.

A-hummin' right along it goes,
Like bees among the clover;
It says the honeysuckle-blows
Are vases tippin' over
An' spillin' odors all around
Upon the breezes floatin'.
That 's jes the sense, an' not the sound—
I 'm ruther poor at quotin'.

One piece was in a magazine,
It made my old eyes water
(The man with naught to say, I mean,
Who said it to his daughter);
But when I read, "Take keer yerself,"
An' how poor Jim lay dyin',
I flung the paper on the shelf
An' boo-hooed out a-cryin'.

I 'm jes a plain, hard-workin' man
An' lackin' eddication,
An' writin' things ez some folks can
Puts 'em above my station;
But, arter all, I 'm some like him
Whose rhymin's please me highly,
For jes to think I *ain't* like him
Does sort o' make me Riley.

Patty Caryl.

Mac's Old Horse.

WHAT horse is that away by the railin',
Lookin' so gayly, an' sleek, an' fat?
Great Scotland, man! Why never, surely!
You can't be askin' what horse is *that*!
Not know *him*? Old Billy? Mac's pony!
Whar 'd you come from, stranger—say?
Some outlandish divide, I reckon,
Or else you 'd a-hearn o' the good old bay.

New to the country, I 'm thinkin', stranger?
Tenderfoot! Fresh on the range, o' course.
There is n't a fellow in western Texas
But tumbles to chat about that old horse.
A good one? Yes, he 's a dandy, surely;
They raise none better whar that un grew,
Mac an' the boys would smile to hear me
Introducin' *that* nag to you.

A pioneer? Well, I should n't wonder
If he was a sort of a one out here.
Mac's own "locate" ain't a recent issue,
And Billy 's beat him a good nine year.
Thar is n't a trail on the prairie yonder,
Rollin' away thar beyond your view,
Nor a wagon track, nor a foot of country,
Unfamiliar to that old shoe.

Knowin'? You bet! Why, the boys was tellin'
A tale o' the old horse here one day,
That freezes intelligence merely human
Out of the country—clean away.
Anxious to hear it? Well, r'a'ly, stranger,
I 'm green at the business o' yarnin'—still,
If you 'resot—Here 's luck! Nowyer pipe needs fillin';
Fasten yer boots to the window-sill.

More than a year ago this season
Mac was abroad on a big survey,
Away beyond the Canadian country
Campin' out with the good old bay.
The feelin' a man on the border ranges
Gives to his horse is a love so true,
An' stout o' grip, that an Eastern coot, sir,
Could n't begin fur to gauge it through.

Darkness out on the prairie, stranger,
Drops on the earth like a funeral pall,
An' travelers peltin' along seem borin'
A tunnel out through a big, black wall.
It 's lonely, too, in the depth o' midnight,
When stars up yonder are burnin' dim
An' the wind an' you are the sole things movin'
In the belt o' the far horizon rim.

Over the border ranges speedin'
Mac an' the outfit came that night,
Strainin' to make the post by daybreak—
Ridin' by faith, fur the lack o' sight.
Splittin' along through the dark an' silence
All of a sudden the old bay horse
Stood in his tracks like a graven image,
Thar in the midst o' his headlong course.

Mac, he coaxed, an' he spurred, an' grumbled,
Billy was holdin' the fort, you bet;
Muscles steady, an' sinews strung, sir,
Head thrown back'rd, an' forefeet set.
Mac cussed hard as he peered around him,
Nary a thing could he find or see;
Never a ghost, nor a witch, nor spirit,
Nor even the trunk of a blasted tree.

Well, sir, findin' the horse meant business,
Mac dismounted an' rustled round,
Huntin' a hole, or an old dog village,
Or anythin' else to be felt or found;
An' thar right away in the track before him
The prairie yawned, an' the ground just fell
Sheer in a cañon a hundred fathoms—
Deep an' black as the mouth of hell.

Killed? Well, I reckon a fall like that, sir,
Over the side of a cañon wall,
Ain't quite so healthy a pastime, maybe,
As shakin' a leg at a rancher's ball.
An' sure as a gun, that night I tell of,
Mac an' the brute would 'r shaped a course,
Freight close laid, fur a better country,
But fur the sense o' the old bay horse.

Sell that horse! Old Billy! Now, stranger,
You must be runnin' insurance high
To ask a question like that in Texas,
An' look to a man for a soft reply:
Or else you 're jokin'! A poor jest, surely,
An' one unbecomin' a man to make;
I would n't repeat it to Mac exactly,
Unless I was willing to move my stake.

M. G. McClelland.

[A crude version of the above by the author appeared in a newspaper several years ago.]

Gladness.

My ole man named Silas: he
 Dead long 'fo' ole Gin'l Lee
 S'rendah, whense de Wah wuz done.
 Yanks dey tuk de plantation —
 Mos' high-handed evah you see! —
 Das rack roun', an' fiah an' bu'n,
 An' jab de beds wid deir baynet-gun,
 An' sweah we niggahs all scotch-free.—
 An' massah John C. Pemberton
 Das tuk an' run!

"Gord Almighty, marm!" he 'low,
 "He'p you an' de chillen now!"
 Blaze crack out 'n de roof inside
 Tel de big house all das charified!
 Smoke roll out 'n de ole hay-mow
 An' de wa'house do—an' de fiah das roah—
 An' all dat 'backer, 'bout half dried,
 Hit smell das fried!

Nelse, my ol'est boy, an' John —
 Atter de baby das wuz bo'n,
 Erlongse dem times, an' lak ter a-died,
 An' Silas he be'n slip an' gone
 'Bout eight weeks ter de Union side,—
 Dem two boys dey start fo' ter fine
 An' jine deir fader acrost de line.
 Ovalseeah he wade an' tromp
 Evah-which-way fo' ter track 'em down —
 Sic de bloodhoun' fro' de swamp —
 An' bring de news dat John he drown'—
 But dey save de houn'!

Someway ner Nelse git fro',
 An' fight fo' de ole Red, White, an' Blue,
 Lak his fader is, ter er heart's delight —
 An' nen crope back wid de news, one night,
 Sayes, "Fader 's killed in a skrimmage-fight,
 An' saunt farewell ter ye all, an' sayes
 Fo' ter name de baby 'Gladness,' caze
 Mighty nigh she 'uz be'n borned free!"
 An' de boy he smile so strange at me
 I sayes, "Yo 's hurt, yo'se'f!" an' he
 Sayes, "I 's killed, too — an' dat 's all else!"
 An' dah lay Nelse!

Hope an' Angrish, de twins, be'n sole
 'Fo' dey mo 'n twelve-year-ole:
 An' Mary Magdeline sole too.
 An' dah I 's lef, wid Knox Andrew,
 An' Lily, and Maje, an' Margaret,
 An' little gal-babe, 'at 's borned dat new
 She scaisely ole fo' ter be named yet —
 Less 'n de name 'at Si say to—
 An' co'se hit do.

An' I taken dem chillen, evah one
 (An' a-oh my Mastah's will be done!),
 An' I break fo' de Norf, wha dey all raised free,
 (An' a-oh good Mastah, come git me!)
 Knox Andrew, on de day he died,
 Lef' his fambly er shop an' er lot berside;
 An' Maje die ownin' er team — an' he
 Lef' all ter me.

Lily she work at de Gran' Hotel —
 (Mastah! Mastah! Take me — do!)
 An' Lily she ain' married well —
 He stob a man — an' she die too;
 An' Margaret she too full er pride
 Ter own her kin tel er day she died!
 But Gladness! — 'tain soun' sho-nuff true,
 Yit she teach'd school! — an' er white folks, too,
 Ruspec' dat gal 'mos' high es I do!

Caze she uz de bes' an de mos' high bred —
 De las' chile bo'n, an' de las' chile dead
 O' all ten head!

Gladness! Gladness! a-oh my chile!
 Wa'm my soul in yo' sweet smile!
 Daughter o' Silas! o-rise an' sing
 Tel er heart-beat pat lak er pigeon-wing!
 Sayes, O Gladness! wake dem eyes —
 Sayes, a-li'f dem folded han's, an' rise —
 Sayes, a-coax me erlong ter Paradise,
 An' a-hail de King,
 O Gladness!

James Whitcomb Riley.

The Way to Win.

If on the field of love you fall,
 With smiles conceal your pain;
 Be not to Love too sure a thrall,
 But lightly wear his chain.
 Don't kiss the hem of Beauty's gown,
 Or tremble at her tear,
 And when caprices weight you down,
 A word within your ear:
 Another lass, another lass,
 With laughing eyes and bright —
 Make love to *her*,
 And trust me, sir,
 'T will set your wrongs aright.

Whene'er a sweetheart proves unkind
 And greets you with a frown,
 Or laughs your passion to the wind,
 The talk of all the town,
 Plead not your cause on bended knee
 And murmured sighs prolong,
 But gather from my minstrelsy
 The burden of my song:
 Another lass, another lass.—
 There 's always beauty by,—
 Make love to *her*,
 And trust me, sir,
 'T will clear the clouded sky.

Samuel Minturn Peck.

Minnie vs. Minerva.

"LOVE me and I will bring you as my dower
 Knowledge and wisdom and perpetual power."
 So speaks Minerva of the azure eyes,
 Wooing me boldly to be overwise.

Now, Minnie, who is not a Grecian myth,
 But a young lady by the name of Smith,
 Never says "Love me" in so bold a way,
 But when I rise to leave her begs me stay;
 Blushes, or pales a little, and lets down
 Her long black lashes o'er her eyes of brown.

And so I linger; though I must admit,
 Delicious nonsense is her highest wit;
 And what she does n't know would fill more books
 Than Boston's library holds in all its nooks.
 Yet the good humor of her turned-up face
 Outshines Minerva's mass of marble grace;
 And in the race for this weak heart of mine
 Between fair Minnie and Minerva fine,
 Although to jilt a goddess were a sin,
 I 'm very much afraid that Minnie 'll win.

Henry W. Austin.