

# A Child's Garden of Verses

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**By Robert Louis Stevenson**

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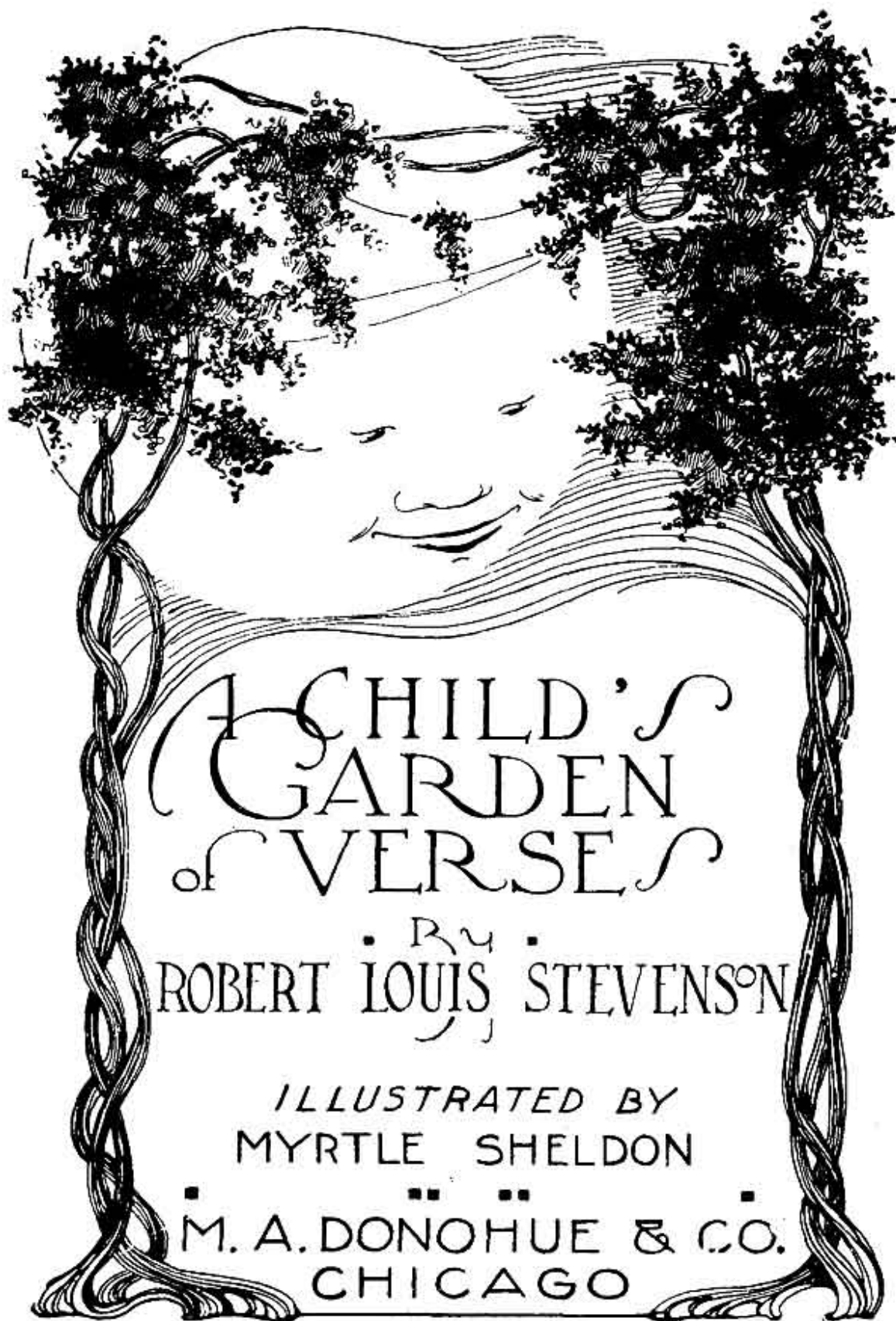
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**A CHILD'S  
GARDEN  
of VERSES**

By

**ROBERT LOUIS STEVENS<sup>ON</sup>**

*ILLUSTRATED BY*

**MYRTLE SHELDON**

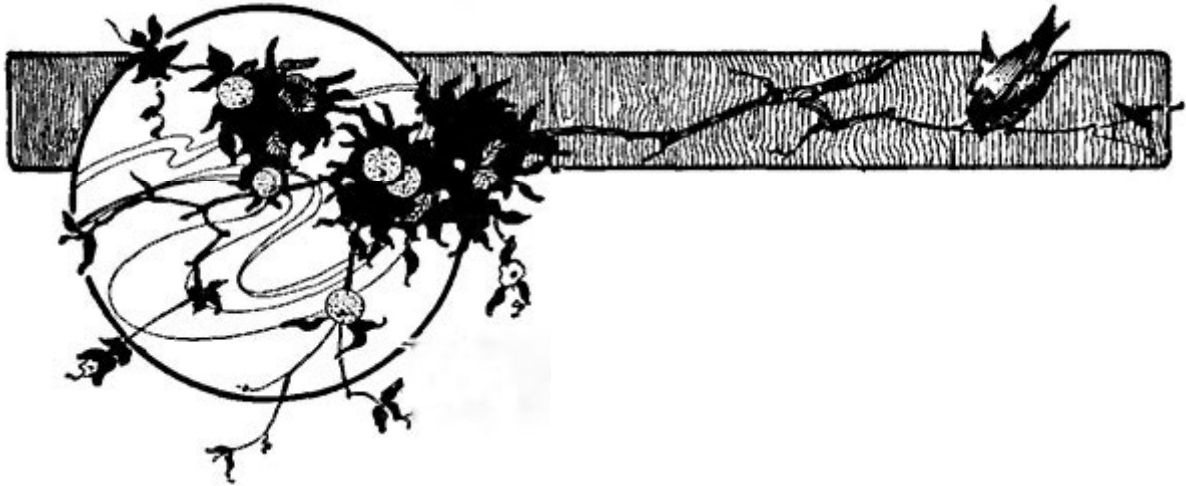
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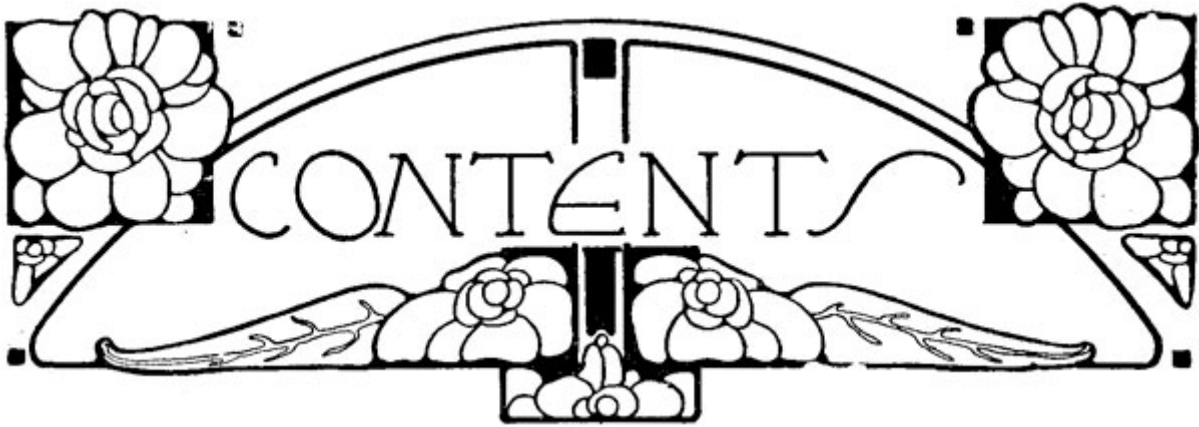
## BY WAY of INTRODUCTION

Nothing has ever been written that appeals to a child's nature more than "**A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES.**" It is written in a simple verse that a child can readily understand. It was one of the earlier efforts of the author, Robert Louis Stevenson, a Scotchman by birth, who, owing to ill-health, became a world traveler. During his travels he visited the United States, spending a year among our famous resorts. Later he visited Australia and the South Sea Islands, which climate agreed with him to such an extent that he finally settled down and made his home on the island of Samoa. He continued his travels from that point, often visiting the Hawaiian Islands, Australia and New Zealand. He formed a strong friendship for the natives of Samoa, and did a great deal to improve their conditions. He died on the island, and at his own request was buried on the top of one of its beautiful mountains, with the following lines upon his tomb:

*Here he lies, where he longed to be;  
Home is the Sailor, home from the sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill.*







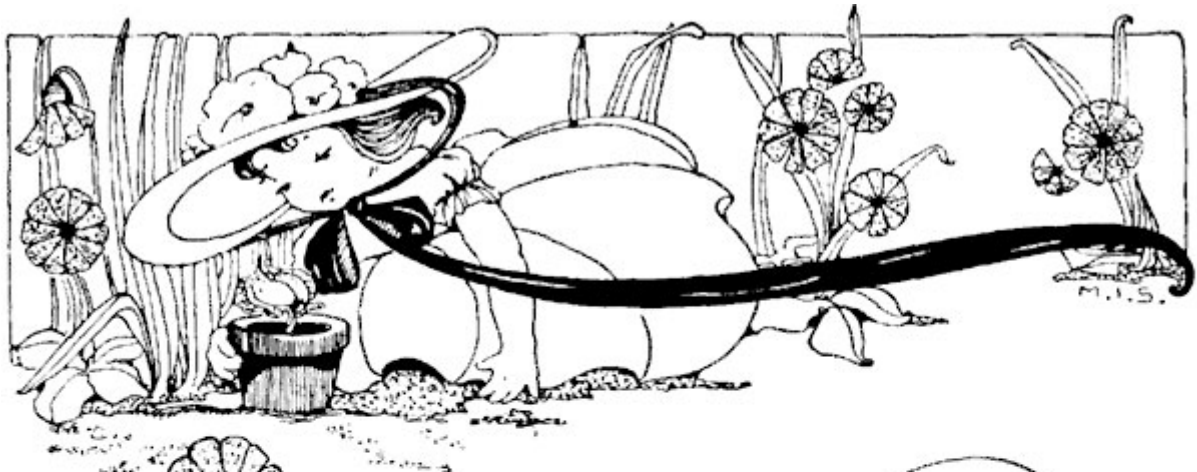
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A CHILD'S  
GARDEN of VERSES

A CHILD'S  
GARDEN of VERSES



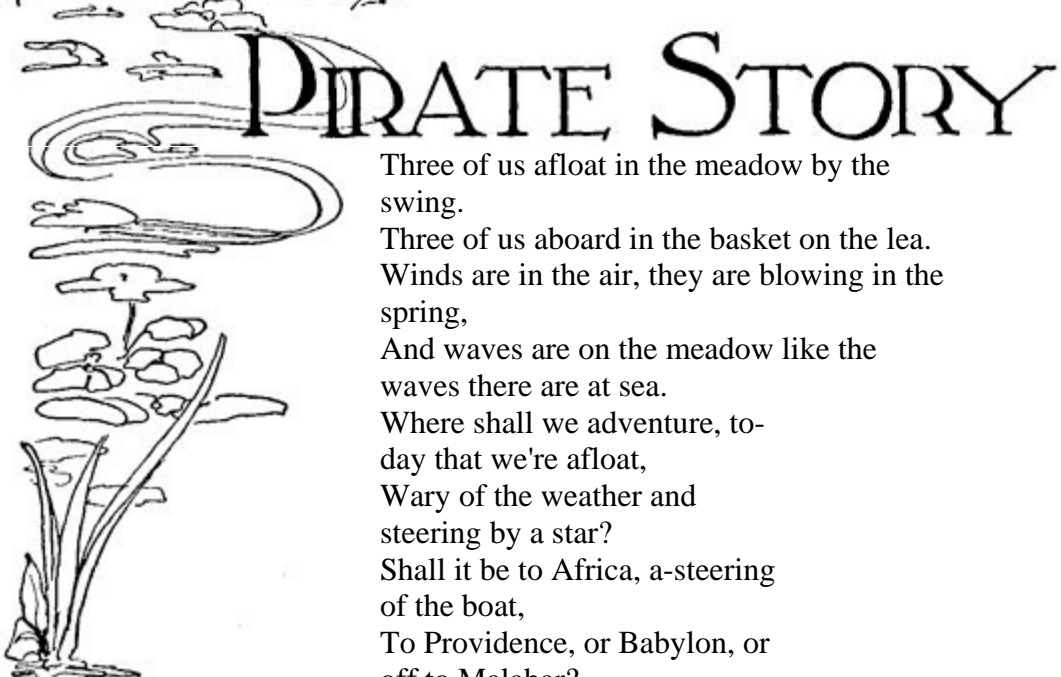
## BED IN SUMMER



In winter I get up at night,  
And dress by yellow candle light.  
In summer quite the other way,  
I have to go to bed by day.  
I have to go to bed and see  
The birds still hopping on the tree,  
Or hear the grown-up people's feet,  
Still going past me in the street.  
And does it not seem hard to you,  
When all the sky is clear and blue,  
And I should like so much to play,  
To have to go to bed by day?

## YOUNG NIGHT THOUGHT

All night long and every night,  
When my mamma puts out the light  
I see the people marching by,  
As plain as day, before my eye.  
Armies and emperors and kings,  
All carrying different kinds of things,  
And marching in so grand a way,  
You never saw the like by day.  
So fine a show was never seen  
At the great circus on the green;  
For every kind beast and man  
Is marching in that caravan.  
At first they move a little slow,  
But still the faster on they go,  
And still beside them close I keep  
Until we reach the Town of Sleep.



# PIRATE STORY

Three of us afloat in the meadow by the  
swing.  
Three of us aboard in the basket on the lea.  
Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the  
spring,  
And waves are on the meadow like the  
waves there are at sea.  
Where shall we adventure, to-  
day that we're afloat,  
Wary of the weather and  
steering by a star?  
Shall it be to Africa, a-steering  
of the boat,  
To Providence, or Babylon, or  
off to Malabar?



[13]

Hi! but here's a squadron a-rowing on  
the sea—  
Cattle on the meadow a-charging with  
a roar!  
Quick, and we'll escape them, they're  
as mad as they can be,  
The wicket is the harbor and the  
garden is the shore.





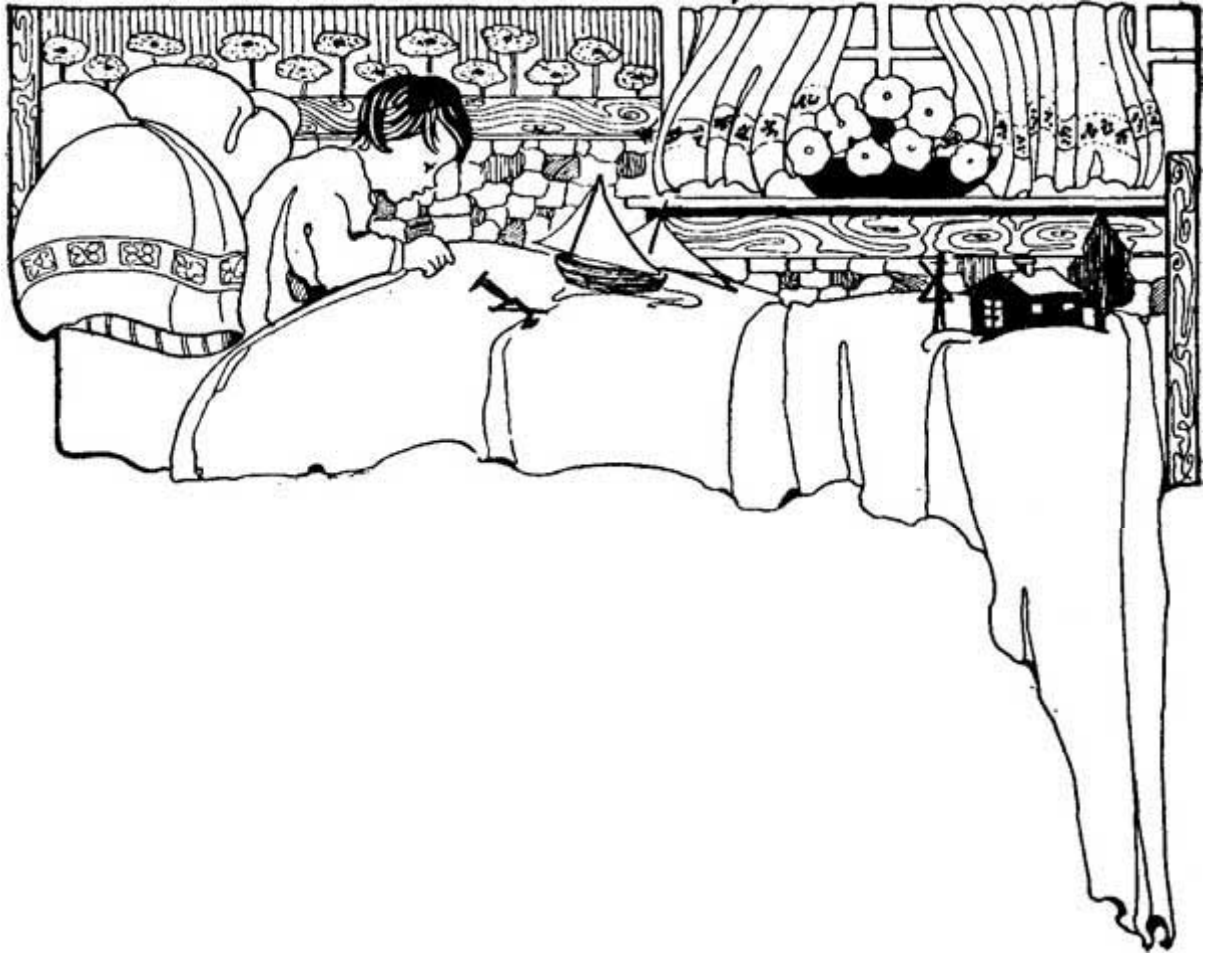
## FAREWELL TO THE FARM

The coach is at the door at last;  
The eager children, mounting fast  
And kissing hands, in chorus sing:  
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!  
To house and garden, field and lawn,  
The meadow-gates we swung upon,

[15]

To pump and stable, tree and swing,  
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!  
And fare you well for evermore,  
O ladder at the hayloft door,  
O hayloft where the cobwebs cling,  
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!  
Crack goes the whip, and off we go;  
The trees and houses smaller grow;  
Last, round the woody turn we swing:  
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!





# THE LAND OF COUNTERPANE

When I was sick and lay a-bed,  
I had two pillows at my head,  
And all my toys beside me lay  
To keep me happy all the day.  
And sometimes for an hour or so  
I watched my leaden soldiers go,  
With different uniforms and drills,  
Among the bed-clothes, through the  
hills.  
And sometimes sent my ships in fleets  
All up and down among the sheets;  
Or brought my trees and houses out,  
And planted cities all about.  
I was the giant great and still  
That sits upon the pillow-hill,  
And sees before him, dale and plain  
The pleasant Land of Counterpane.



## FAIRY BREAD

Come up here, O dusty feet!  
Here is fairy bread to eat

Here in my retiring room,  
Children, you may dine

On the golden smell of broom  
And the shade of pine

And when you have eaten well,  
Fairy stories hear and tell.



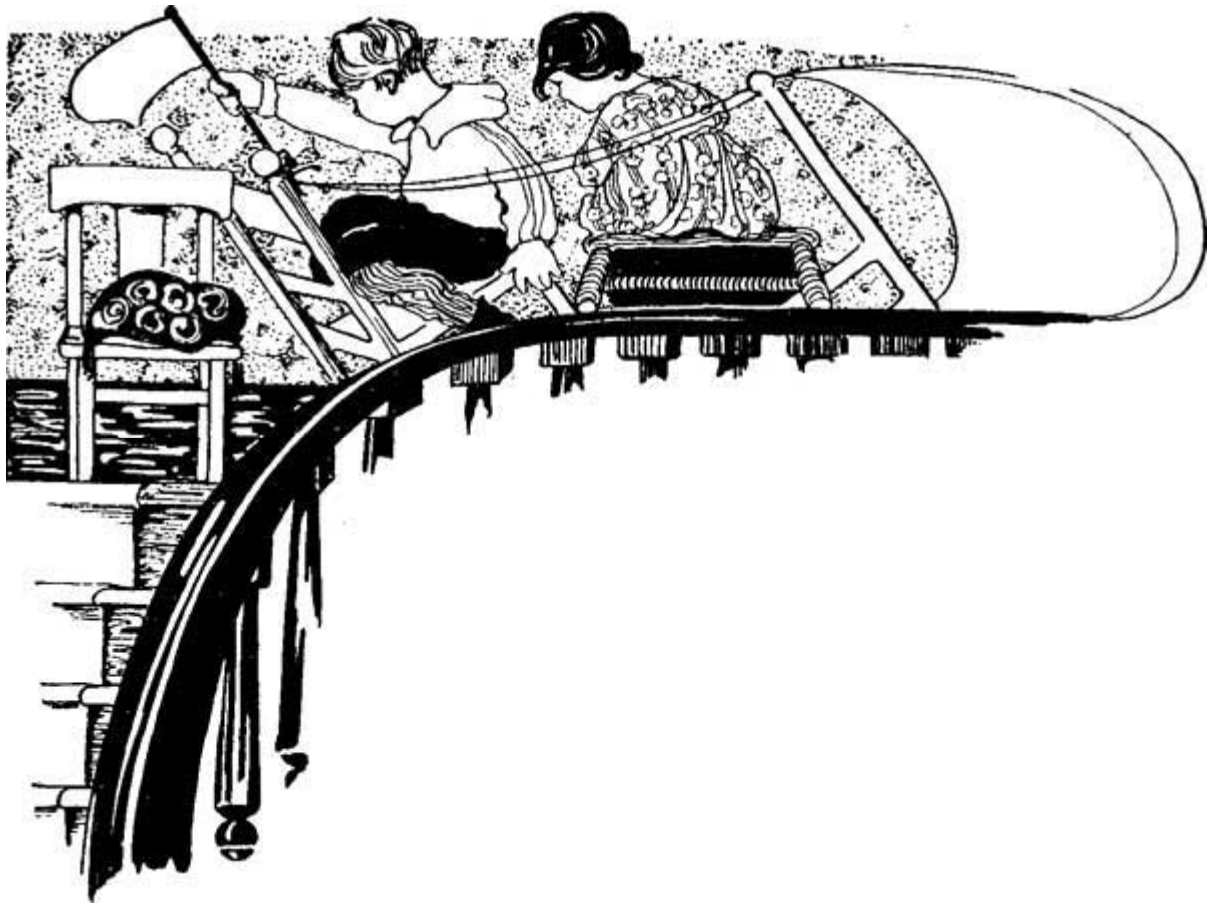


# ESCAPE AT BEDTIME

The lights from the parlor and kitchen  
shone out  
Through the blinds and the windows  
and bars;  
And high over head and all moving  
about,  
There were thousands of millions of  
stars.  
There ne'er were such thousands of  
leaves on a tree,  
Nor of people in church or the Park,  
As the crowds of the stars that looked  
down upon me,  
And that glittered and winked in the  
dark.

The Dog, and the Plough, and the  
Hunter and all,  
And the star of the sailor, and Mars,  
These shone in the sky, and the pail by  
the wall  
Would be half full of water and stars.  
They saw me at last, and they chased  
me with cries,  
And they soon had me packed into  
bed;  
But the glory kept shining and bright  
in my eyes,  
And the stars going round in my head.





# A GOOD PLAY

We built a ship upon the stairs  
All made of the back-bedroom chairs,  
And filled it full of sofa pillows  
To go a-sailing on the billows.  
We took a saw and several nails,  
And water in the nursery pails;  
And Tom said, "Let us also take  
An apple and a slice of cake;"—  
Which was enough for Tom and me  
To go a-sailing on, till tea.  
We sailed along for days and days,  
And had the very best of plays;  
But Tom fell out and hurt his knee,  
So there was no one left but me.



## MARCHING SONG

Bring the comb and play upon it!  
Marching, here we come!  
Willie cocks his highland bonnet,  
Johnnie beats the drum.  
Mary Jane commands the party,  
Peter leads the rear;  
Feet in time, alert and hearty,  
Each a Grenadier!  
All in the most martial manner  
Marching double-quick;  
While the napkin like a banner  
Waves upon the stick!  
Here's enough of fame and pillage,  
Great commander Jane!  
Now that we've been round the  
village,  
Let's go home again.



"Boats of mine a-boating"

## WHERE GO THE BOATS?

Dark brown is the river,  
Golden is the sand.  
It flows along for ever,  
With trees on either hand.

Green leaves a-floating,  
Castles of the foam,  
Boats of mine a-boating—  
Where will all come home?

On goes the river  
And out past the mill,  
Away down the valley,  
Away down the hill.

Away down the river,  
A hundred miles or more,  
Other little children  
Shall bring my boats ashore.

## THE HAYLOFT

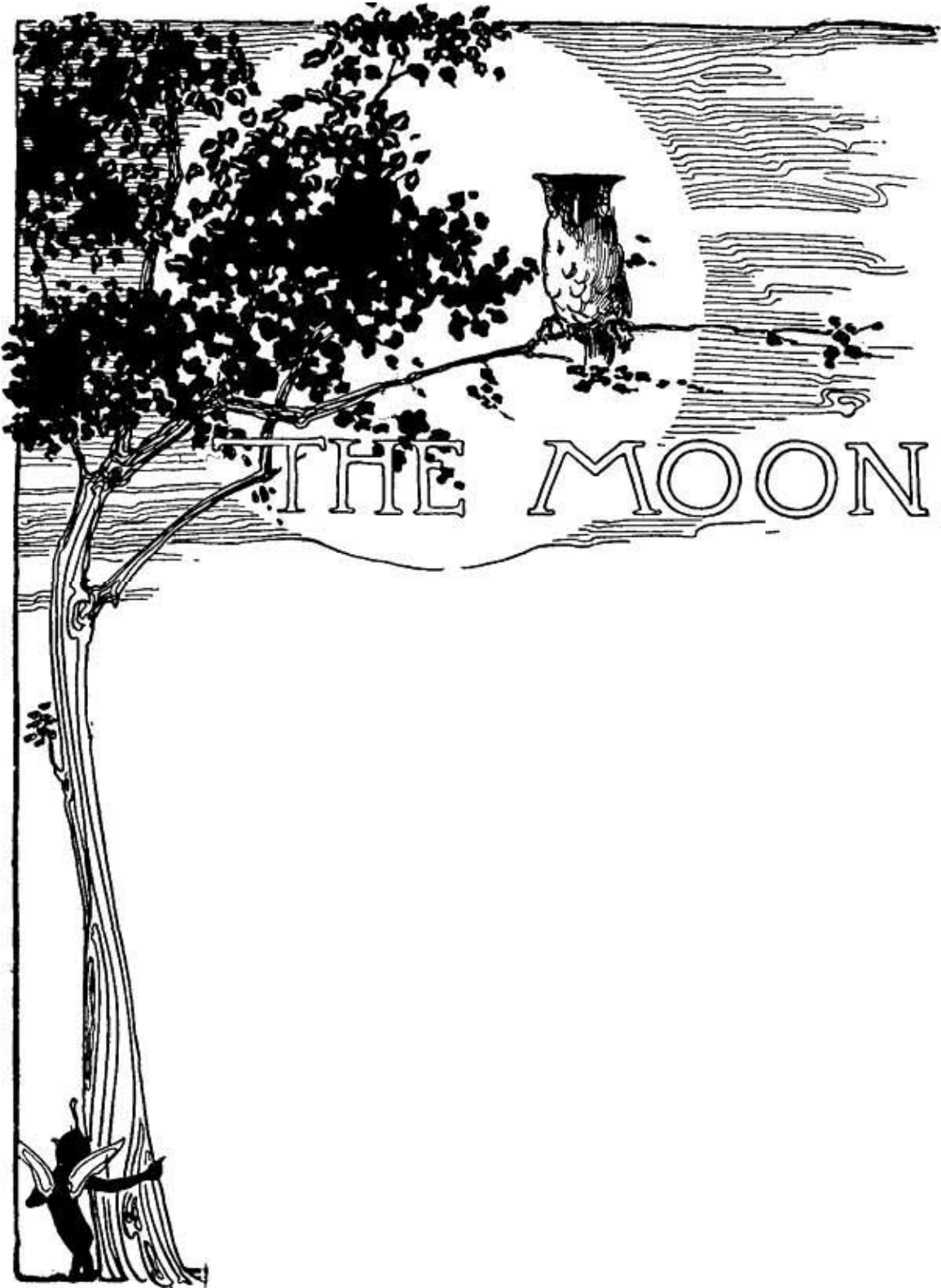
Through all the pleasant meadow-side  
The grass grew shoulder-high,  
Till the shining scythes went far and  
wide  
And cut it down to dry.  
These green and sweetly smelling  
crops  
They led in wagons home;  
And they piled them here in mountain-  
tops  
For mountaineers to roam.  
Here is Mount Clear, Mount Rusty-  
Nail,  
Mount Eagle and Mount High;—  
The mice that in these mountains  
dwell,  
No happier are than I!  
O what a joy to clamber there,  
O what a place for play,  
With the sweet, the dim, the dusty air,  
The happy hills of hay!



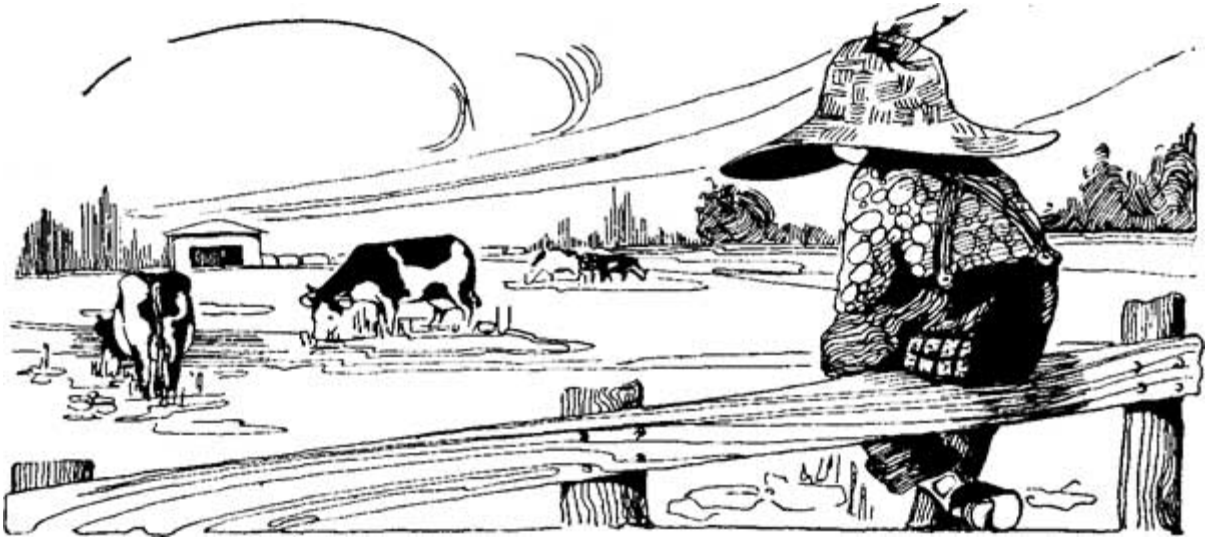


# AUNTIE'S SKIRTS

Whenever Auntie moves around  
Her dresses make a curious sound.  
They trail behind her up the floor,  
And trundle after through the door.



The moon has a face like the clock in  
the hall;  
She shines on thieves on the garden  
wall,  
On streets and fields and harbor quays,  
And birdies asleep in the forks of the  
trees.  
The squalling cat and the squeaking  
mouse,  
The howling dog by the door of the  
house,  
The bat that lies in bed at noon,  
All love to be out by the light of the  
moon.  
But all of the things that belong to the  
day  
Cuddle to sleep to be out of her way;  
And flowers and children close their  
eyes  
Till up in the morning the sun shall  
rise.



## THE COW

The friendly cow all red and white,  
I love with all my heart:  
She gives me cream with all her  
might,  
To eat with apple-tart.

She wanders lowing here and there,  
And yet she cannot stray,  
All in the pleasant open air,  
The pleasant light of day.

And blown by all the winds that pass  
And wet with all the showers,  
She walks among the meadow grass  
And eats the meadow flowers.



## FOREIGN LANDS

Up into the cherry tree  
Who should climb but little me?  
I held the trunk with both my hands  
And looked abroad on foreign lands.

I saw the next door garden lie,  
Adorned with flowers, before my eye,  
And many pleasant places more  
That I had never seen before.

I saw the dimpling river pass  
And be the sky's blue looking-glass;  
The dusty roads go up and down  
With people tramping into town.

If I could find a higher tree  
Farther and farther I should see,  
To where the grown-up river slips  
Into the sea among the ships.

To where the roads on either hand  
Lead onward into fairy land,  
Where all the children dine at five,  
And all the playthings come alive.





## SYSTEM

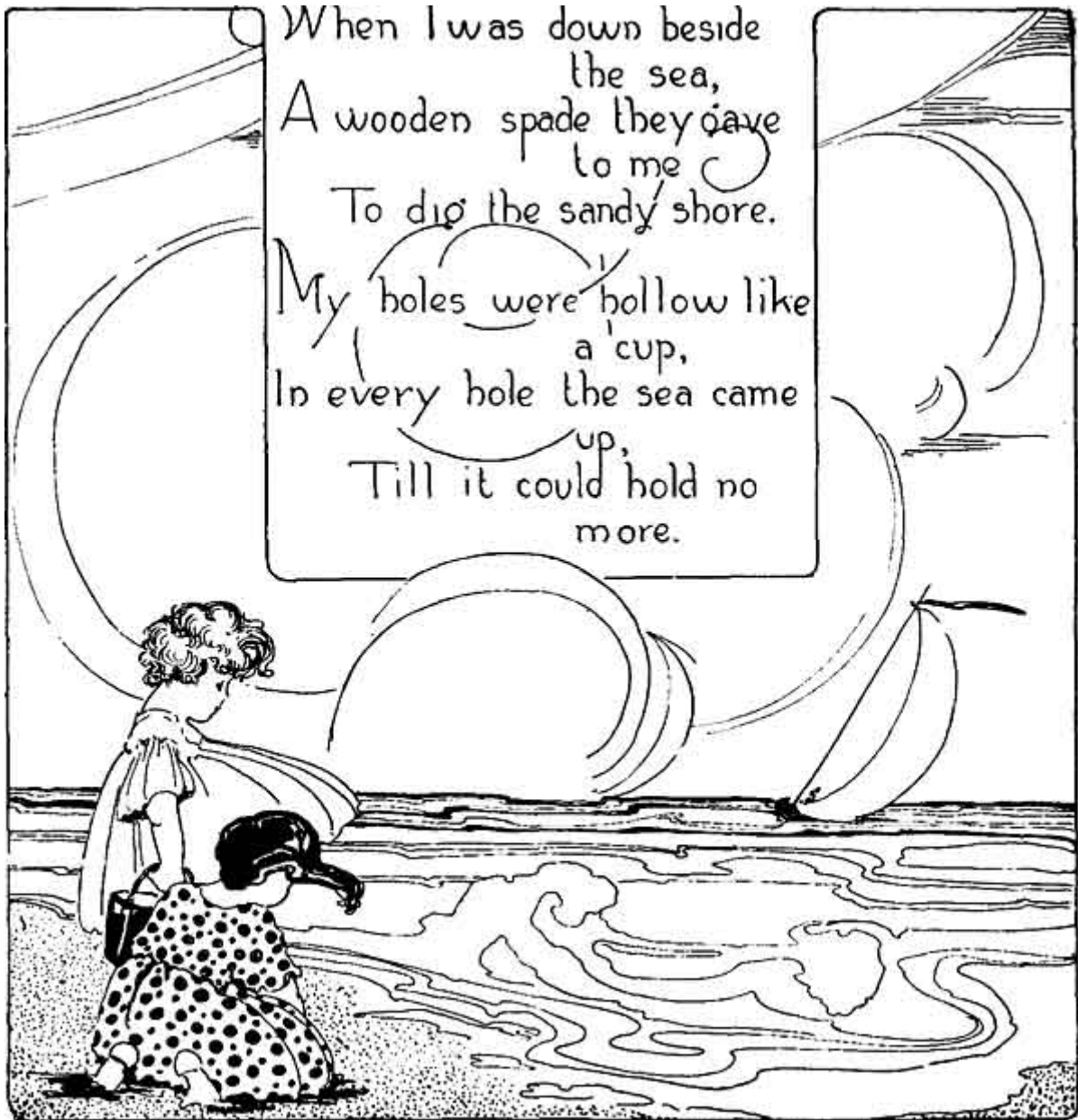
Every night my prayers I say,  
And get my dinner every day;  
And every day that I've been good  
I get an orange after food.

The child that is not clean and neat,  
With lots of toys and things to eat,  
He is a naughty child, I'm sure—  
Or else his dear papa is poor.

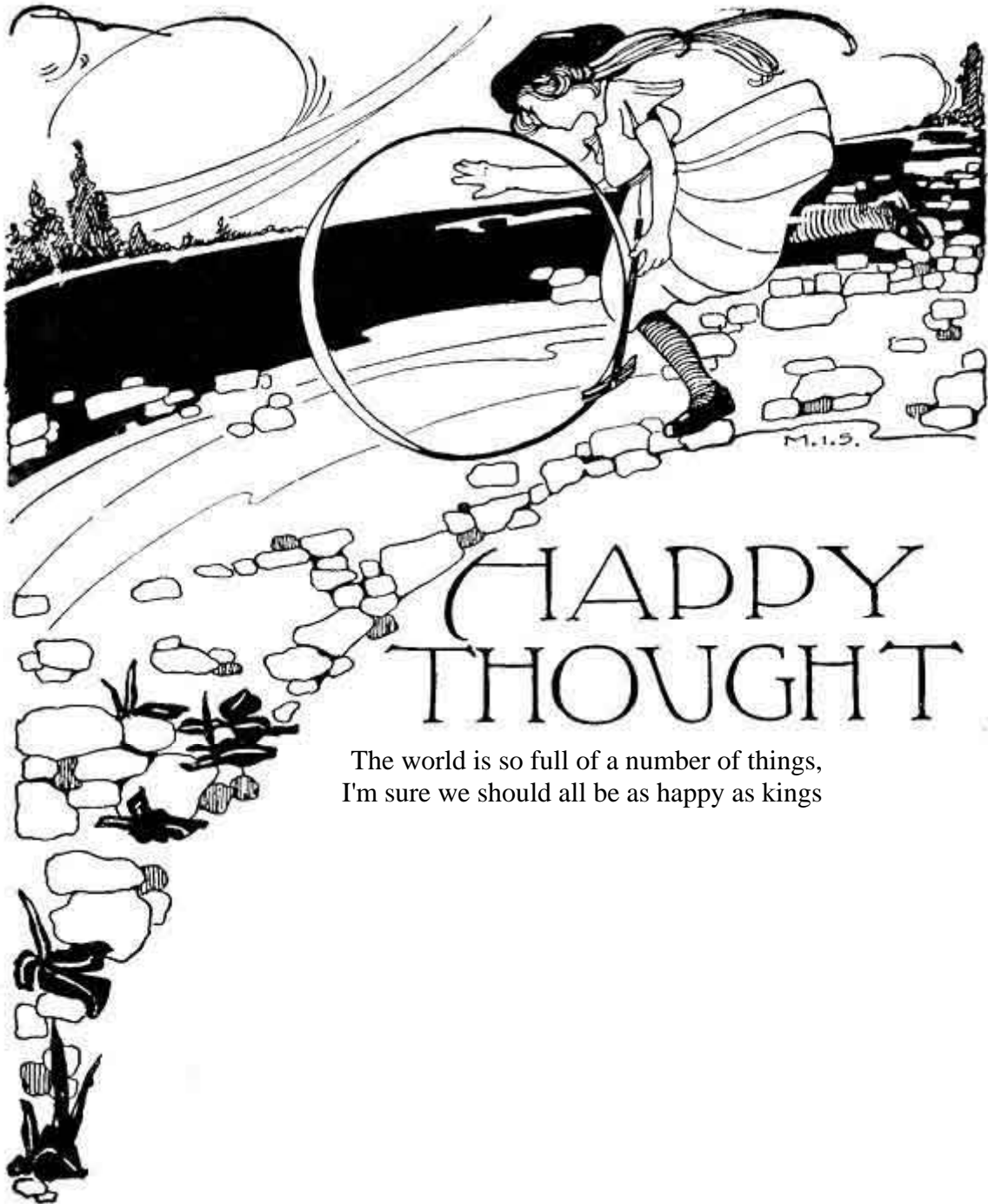




## AT THE SEASIDE

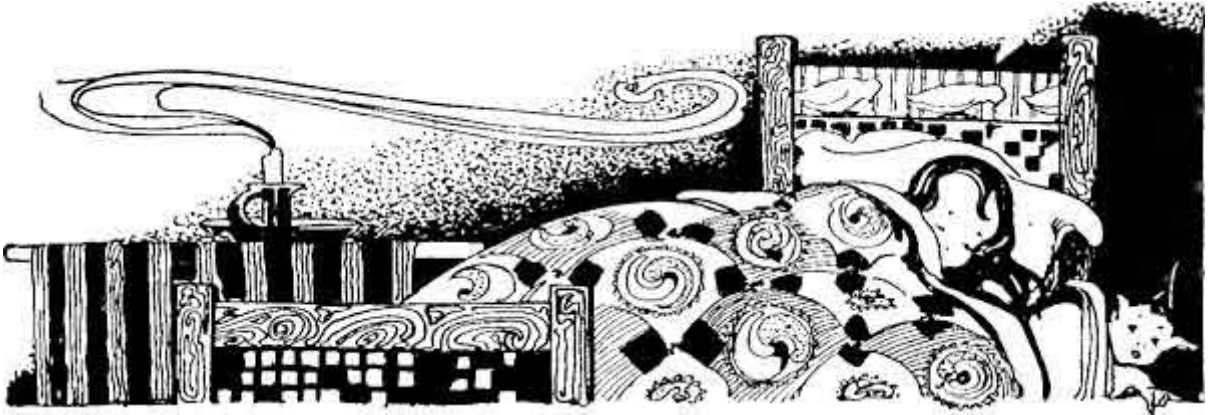


When I was down beside the sea,  
A wooden spade they gave to me  
To dig the sandy shore.  
My holes were hollow like a cup,  
In every hole the sea came up,  
Till it could hold no more.



# HAPPY THOUGHT

The world is so full of a number of things,  
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings



## THE LAND OF NOD

From breakfast on through all the day  
At home among my friends I stay,  
But every night I go abroad  
Afar into the Land of Nod.

All by myself I have to go,  
With none to tell me what to do—  
All alone beside the streams  
And up the mountain-sides of dreams.

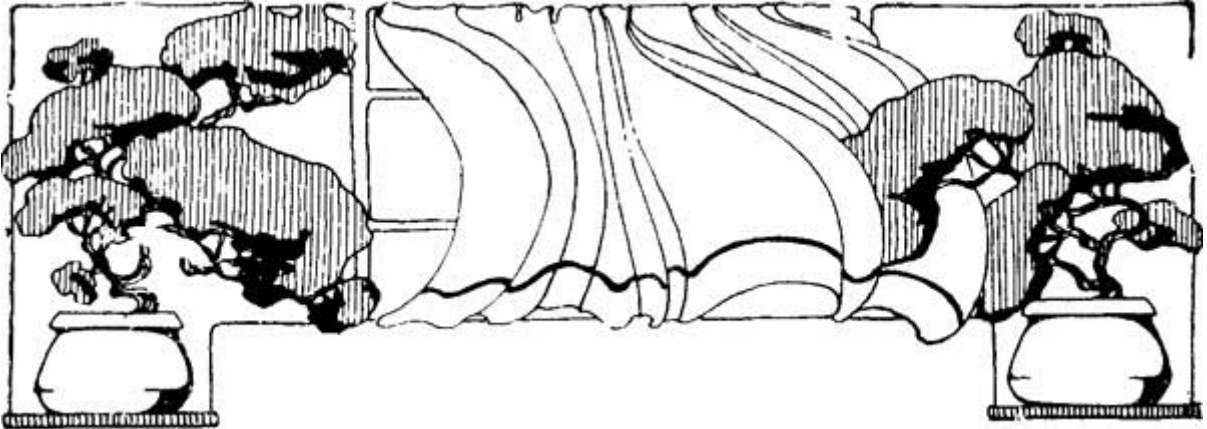
The strangest things are there for me,  
Both things to eat and things to see,  
And many frightening sights abroad  
Till morning in the Land of Nod.

Try as I like to find the way,  
I never can get back by day,  
Nor can remember plain and clear  
The curious music that I hear.



# WINDY NIGHTS

Whenever the moon and stars are set,  
Whenever the wind is high,  
All night long in the dark and wet,  
A man goes riding by.  
Late in the night when the fires are  
out,



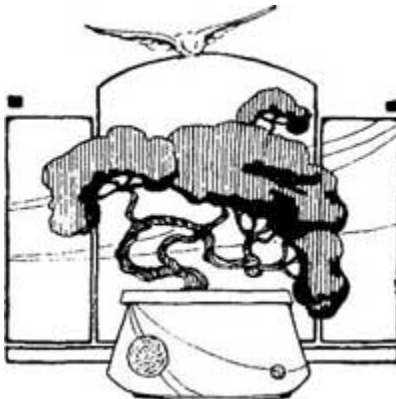
Why does he gallop and gallop about?  
Whenever the trees are crying aloud,  
And ships are tossed at sea,  
By, on the highway, low and loud,  
By at the gallop goes he.  
By at the gallop he goes, and then  
By he comes back at the gallop again.





## TIME TO RISE

A birdie with a yellow bill  
Hopped up on the window sill,  
Cocked his shining eye and said:  
'Ain't you 'shamed, you sleepy-head?'







# RAIN

The rain is raining all around.  
It falls on field and tree,  
It rains on the umbrellas here,  
And on the ships at sea.



## FOREIGN CHILDREN

Little Indian, Sioux or Crow,  
Little frosty Eskimo,  
Little Turk or Japanee,  
O! don't you wish that you were me?

You have seen the scarlet trees  
And the lions over seas;  
You have eaten ostrich eggs,  
And turned the turtles off their legs.

Such a life is very fine,  
But it's not so nice as mine:  
You must often, as you trod,  
Have wearied *not* to be abroad.

You have curious things to eat,  
I am fed on proper meat;  
You must dwell beyond the foam,  
But I am safe and live at home.



## LOOKING FORWARD

When I am grown to man's estate  
I shall be very proud and great,  
And tell the other girls and boys  
Not to meddle with my toys.

## MY SHADOW

I have a little shadow that goes in and  
out with me,  
And what can be the use of him is  
more than I can see.  
He is very, very like me, from the  
heels up to the head;  
And I see him jump before me, when I  
jump into my bed.  
The funniest thing about him is the  
way he likes to grow—  
Not at all like proper children, which  
is always very slow;  
For he sometimes shoots up taller, like  
an india-rubber ball,  
And he sometimes gets so little that  
there's none of him at all.

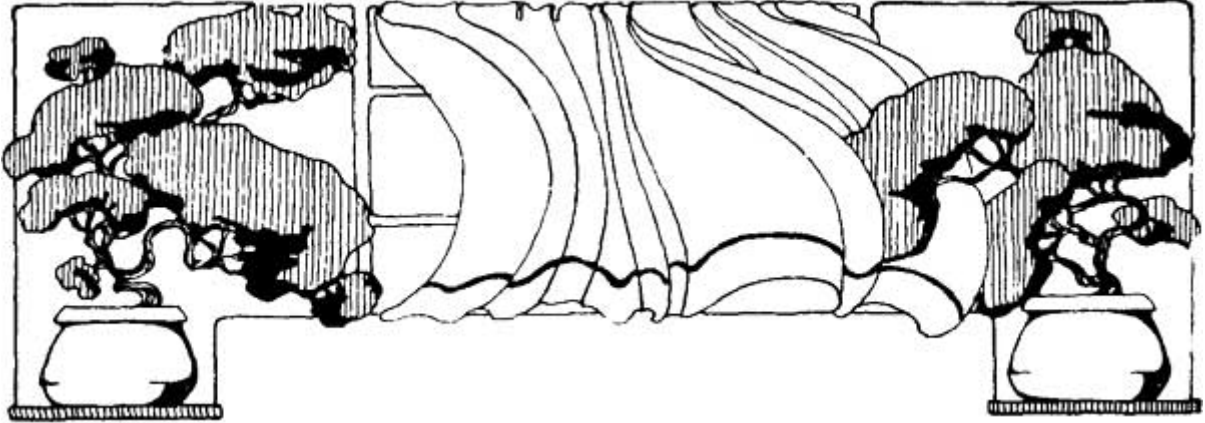


"I have a little shadow."

He hasn't got a notion of how children  
ought to play,  
And can only make a fool of me in  
every sort of way.  
He stays so close beside me, he's a  
coward you can see;  
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as  
that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the  
sun was up,  
I 'rose and found the shining dew on  
every buttercup;  
But my lazy little shadow, like an  
arrant sleepy head,  
Had stayed at home behind me and  
was fast asleep in bed.





## THE SUN'S TRAVELS

The sun is not a-bed when I  
At night upon my pillow lie;  
Still round the earth his way he takes,  
And morning after morning makes.

While here at home in shining day,  
We round the sunny garden play,  
Each little Indian sleepy-head  
Is being kissed and put to bed.

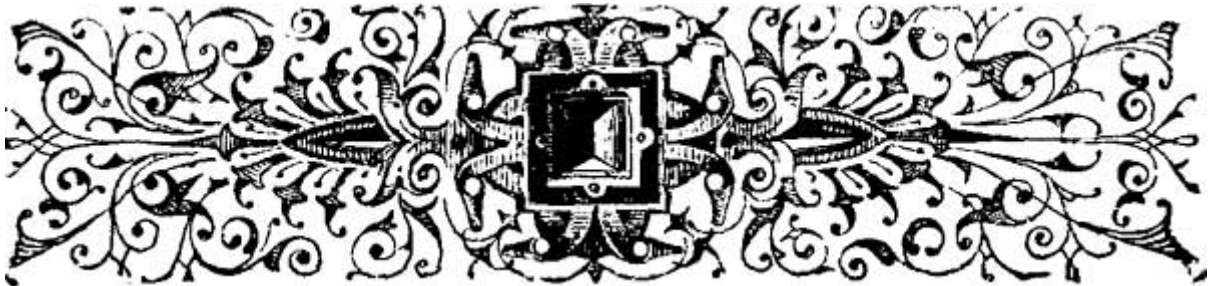
And when at eve I rise from tea,  
Day dawns beyond the Atlantic Sea;  
And all the children in the West  
Are getting up and being dressed.





# LOOKING-GLASS RIVER

Smooth it slides upon its travel,  
Here a wimple, there a gleam—  
O the clean gravel!  
O the smooth stream!  
Sailing blossoms, silver fishes,  
Paven pools as clear as air—  
How a child wishes  
To live down there!



We can see our colored faces  
Floating on the shaken pool  
Down in cool places,  
Dim and very cool;

Till a wind or water wrinkle,  
Dipping marten, plumping trout,  
Spreads in a twinkle  
And blots all out.

See the rings pursue each other;  
All below grows black as night,  
Just as if mother  
Had blown out the light!

Patience, children, just a minute—  
See the spreading circles die;  
The stream and all in it  
Will clear by-and-by.



## THE LAMPLIGHTER

My tea is nearly ready and the sun has  
left the sky;  
It's time to take the window to see  
Leerie going by;  
For every night at teatime and before  
you take your seat,  
With lantern and with ladder he comes  
posting up the street.

Now Tom would be a driver and  
Maria go to sea,  
And my papa's a banker and as rich as  
he can be;  
But I, when I am stronger and can  
choose what I'm to do,  
O Leerie, I'll go round at night and  
light the lamps with you!

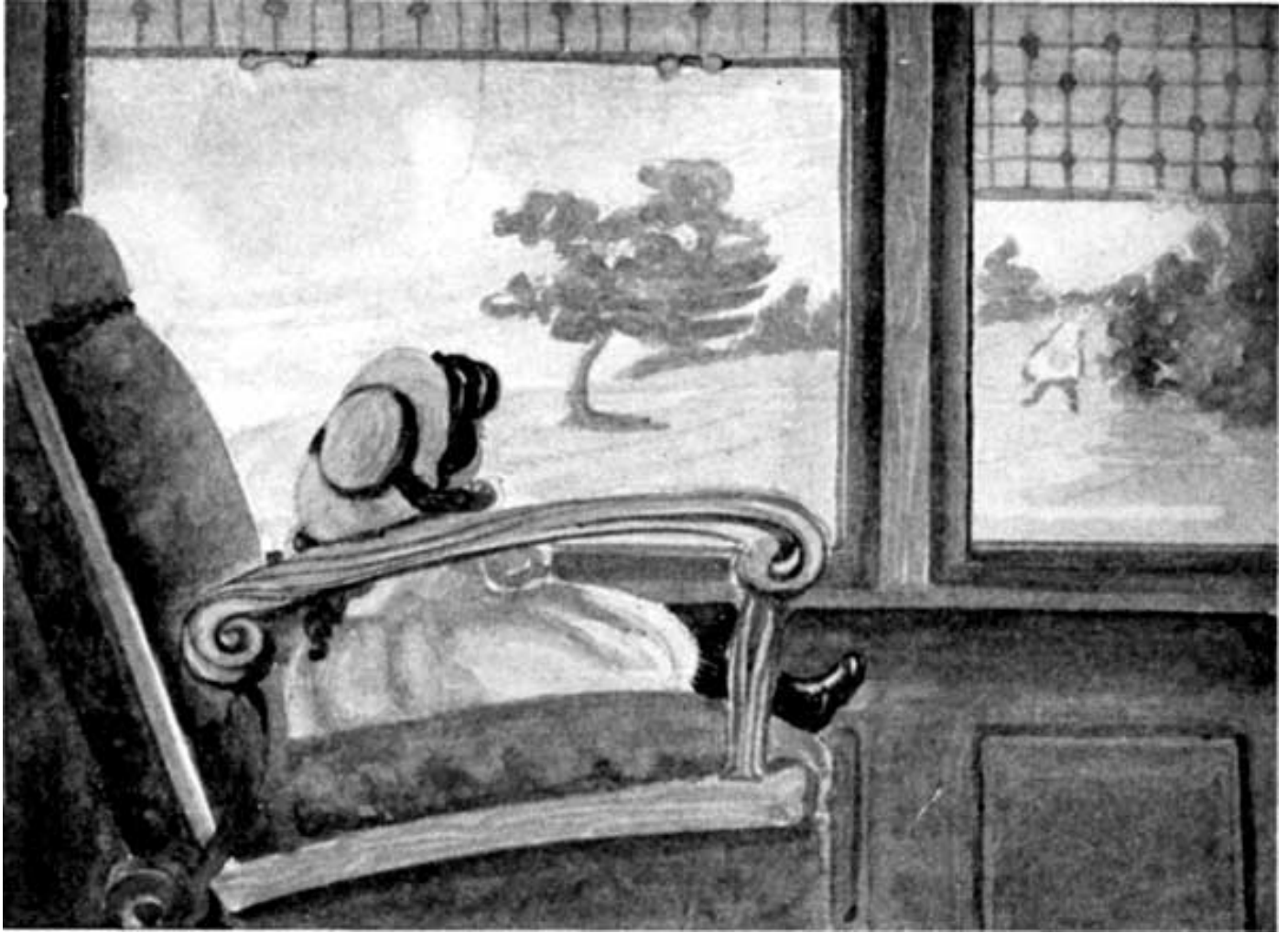
For we are very lucky, with a lamp  
before the door,  
And Leerie stops to light it as he lights  
so many more;  
And O, before you hurry by with  
ladder and with light,  
O Leerie, see a little child and nod to  
him to-night!



Of speckled eggs the birdie sings  
And nests among the trees;  
The sailor sings of ropes and things  
In ships upon the seas.

The children sing in far Japan,  
The children sing in Spain;  
The organ with the organ man  
Is singing in the rain.





## TRAVEL

I should like to rise and go  
Where the golden apples grow;—  
Where below another sky  
Parrot Islands anchored lie,  
And, watched by cockatoos and goats,  
Lonely Crusoes building boats;—

Where in sunshine reaching out  
Eastern cities, miles about,  
Are with mosque and minaret  
Among sandy gardens set,  
And the rich goods from near and far  
Hang for sale in the bazaar;—  
Where the Great Wall round China  
goes,  
And on one side the desert blows,  
And with bell and voice and drum,  
Cities on the other hum;—  
Where are forests, hot as fire,  
Wide as England, tall as a spire,  
Full of apes and cocoa-nuts  
And the negro hunters' huts;—  
Where the knotty crocodile  
Lies and blinks in the Nile,  
And the red flamingo flies  
Hunting fish before his eyes;—  
Where in jungles, near and far,  
Man-devouring tigers are,  
Lying close and giving ear

Lest the hunt be drawing near,  
Or a comer-by be seen  
Swinging in a palanquin;—  
Where among the desert sands  
Some deserted city stands,  
All its children, sweep and prince,  
Grown to manhood ages since,  
Not a foot in street or house,  
Not a stir of child or mouse,  
And when kindly falls the night,  
In all the town no spark of light.  
There I'll come when I'm a man  
With a camel caravan;  
Light a fire in the gloom  
Of some dusty dining room;  
See the pictures on the walls,  
Heroes, fights and festivals  
And in a corner find the toys  
Of the old Egyptian boys.







My bed is like a little boat

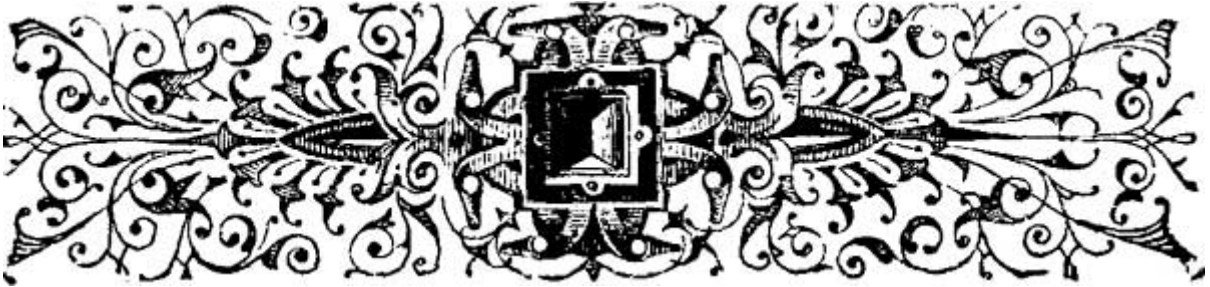
## MY BED IS A BOAT

My bed is like a little boat;  
Nurse helps me in when I embark;  
She girds me in my sailor's coat  
And starts me in the dark.

At night, I go on board and say  
Good night to all my friends on shore;  
I shut my eyes and sail away  
And see and hear no more.

And sometimes things to bed I take,  
As prudent sailors have to do;  
Perhaps a slice of wedding-cake,  
Perhaps a toy or two.

All night across the dark we steer:  
But when the day returns at last  
Safe in my room, beside the pier,  
I find my vessel fast.



## KEEPSAKE MILL

Over the borders, a sin without  
pardon,  
Breaking the branches and crawling  
below,  
Out through the breach in the wall of  
the garden,  
Down by the banks of the river, we  
go.

Here is the mill with the humming of  
thunder,  
Here is the weir with the wonder of  
foam,  
Here is the sluice with the race  
running under—  
Marvelous places, though handy to  
home!

Sounds of the village grow stiller and  
stiller,  
Stiller the note of the birds on the hill;  
Dusty and dim are the eyes of the  
miller,  
Deaf are his ears with the moil of the  
mill.

Years may go by, and the wheel in the  
river  
Wheel as it wheels for us, children, to-  
day.  
Wheel and keep roaring and foaming  
for ever  
Long after all of the boys are away.

Home from the Indies and home from  
the ocean,  
Heroes and soldiers we all shall come  
home;  
Still we shall find the old mill wheel  
in motion,  
Turning and churning that river to  
foam.

You with the bean that I gave when  
we quarreled,  
I with your marble of Saturday last,  
Honored and old and all gaily  
apparelled,  
Here we shall meet and remember the  
past.





## THE UNSEEN PLAYMATE

When children are playing alone on  
the green,  
In comes the playmate that never was  
seen.

When children are happy and lonely  
and good,  
The Friend of the Children comes out  
of the wood.

Nobody heard him and nobody saw,  
His is a picture you never could draw,  
But he's sure to be present, abroad or  
at home,  
When children are happy and playing  
alone.

He lies in the laurels, he runs on the  
grass,  
He sings when you tinkle the musical  
glass;  
Whene'er you are happy and cannot  
tell why,  
The Friend of the Children is sure to  
be by!

He loves to be little, he hates to be big,  
'Tis he that inhabits the caves that you  
dig;  
'Tis he when you play with your  
soldiers of tin  
That sides with the Frenchman and  
never can win.

'Tis he, when at night you go off to  
your bed,  
Bids you go to your sleep and not  
trouble your head;  
For wherever they're lying, in  
cupboard or shelf,  
'Tis he will take care of your  
playthings himself.





## MY SHIP AND I.

O it's I that am the captain of a tidy  
little ship,  
Of a ship that goes a-sailing on the  
pond;  
And my ship it keeps a-turning all  
around and all about;  
But when I'm a little older, I shall find  
the secret out  
How to send my vessel sailing on  
beyond.

For I mean to grow as little as the  
dolly at the helm,  
And the dolly I intend to come alive;  
And with him beside to help me, it's a-  
sailing I shall go,  
It's a-sailing on the water, when the  
jolly breezes blow  
And the vessel goes a divie-divie dive.

[59]

O it's then you'll see me sailing  
through the rushes and the reeds,  
And you'll hear the water singing at  
the prow;  
For beside the dolly sailor, I'm to  
voyage and explore,  
To land upon the island where no  
dolly was before,  
And to fire the penny cannon in the  
bow.





## THE WIND

I saw you toss the kites on high  
And blow the birds about the sky;  
And all around I heard you pass,  
Like ladies' skirts across the grass—  
O wind, a-blowing all day long!  
O wind, that sings so loud a song!  
I saw the different things you did,  
But always you yourself you hid.  
I felt you push, I heard you call,  
I could not see yourself at all—  
O wind, a-blowing all day long,  
O wind, that sings so loud a song!  
O you that are so strong and cold,  
O blower, are you young or old?  
Are you a beast of field and tree,  
Or just a stronger child than me?  
O wind, a-blowing all day long,  
O wind, that sings so loud a song!



"I felt you push, I heard you call."



## A GOOD BOY

I woke before the morning, I was  
happy all the day,  
I never said an ugly word, but smiled  
and stuck to play.

And now at last the sun is going down  
behind the wood,  
And I am very happy, for I know that  
I've been good.

My bed is waiting cool and fresh, with  
linen smooth and fair,  
And I must off to sleep in-by, and not  
forget my prayer.

[63]

I know that, till to-morrow I shall see  
the sun arise,  
No ugly dream shall fright my mind,  
no ugly sight my eyes.

But slumber hold me tightly, till I  
waken in the dawn,  
And hear the thrushes singing in the  
lilacs round the lawn.





## GOOD AND BAD CHILDREN

Children, you are very little,  
And your bones are very brittle;  
If you would grow great and stately,  
You must try to walk sedately.

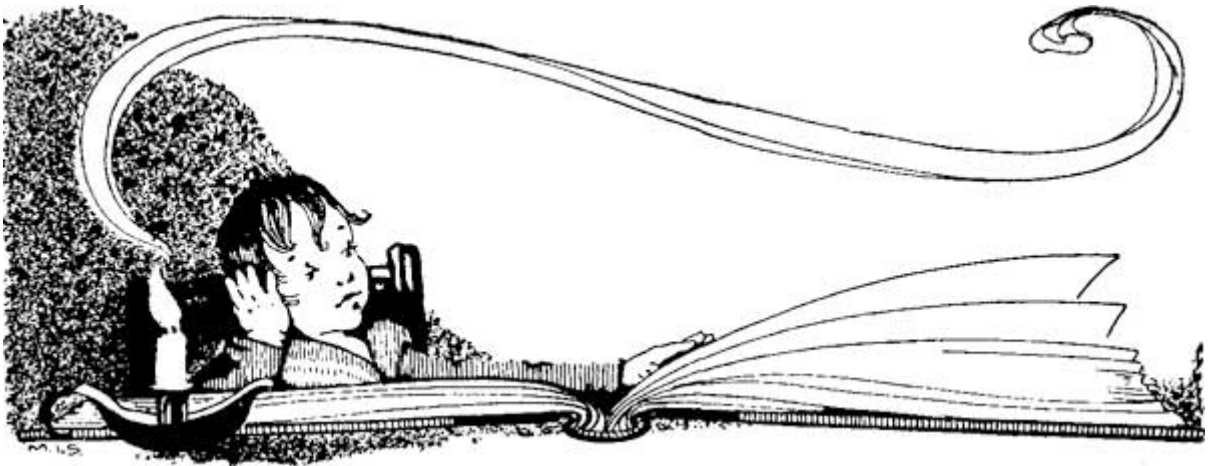
You must still be bright and quiet,  
And content with simple diet;  
And remain, through all bewild'ring,  
Innocent and honest children.

Happy hearts and happy faces,  
Happy play in grassy places—  
That was how, in ancient ages,  
Children grew to kings and sages.

But the unkind and the unruly,  
And the sort who eat unduly,  
They must never hope for glory—  
Theirs is quite a different story!

Cruel children, crying babies,  
All grow up as geese and gabies,  
Hated, as their age increases,  
By their nephews and their nieces.





## PICTURE-BOOKS IN WINTER

Summer fading, winter comes—  
Frosty mornings, tingling thumbs,  
Window robins, winter rooks,  
And the picture story-books.

Water now is turned to stone  
Nurse and I can walk upon;  
Still we find the flowing brooks  
In the picture story-books.

All the pretty things put by  
Wait upon the childrens' eye,  
Sheep and shepherds, trees and  
crooks,  
In the picture story-books.

[67]

We may see how all things are,  
Seas and cities, near and far,  
And the flying fairies' looks,  
In the picture story-books.

How am I to sing your praise,  
Happy chimney-corner days,  
Sitting safe in nursery nooks,  
Reading picture story-books?







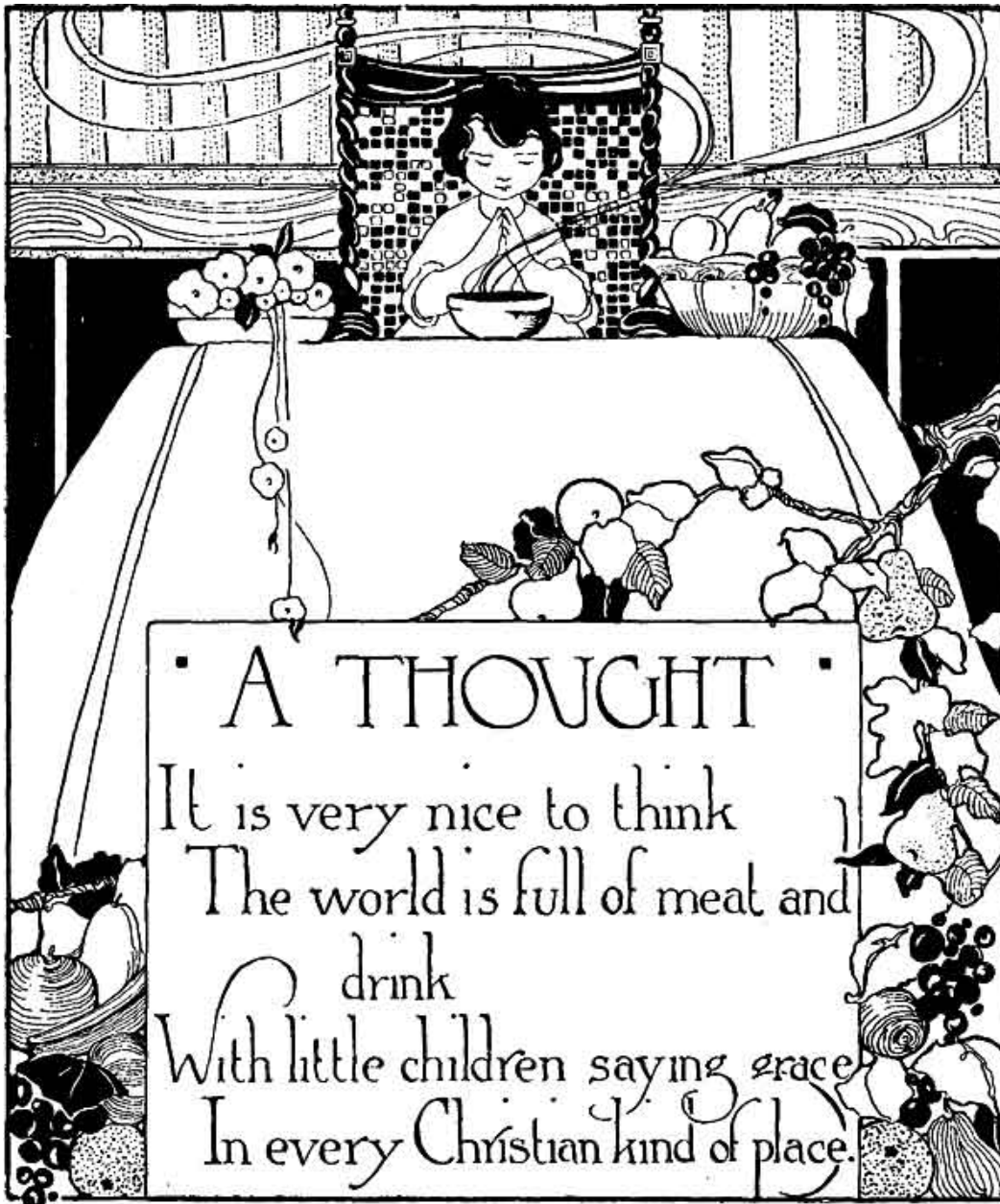


## THE SWING

How do you like to go up in a swing,  
Up in the air so blue?  
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing  
Ever a child can do!

Up in the air and over the wall,  
Till I can see so wide,  
Rivers and trees and cattle and all  
Over the countryside—

Till I look down on the garden green,  
Down on the roof so brown—  
Up in the air I go flying again,  
Up in the air and down!



▪ A THOUGHT ▪  
It is very nice to think  
The world is full of meat and  
drink  
With little children saying grace  
In every Christian kind of place.

## A THOUGHT

It is very nice to think  
The world is full of meat and drink  
With little children saying grace  
In every Christian kind of place.

## ARMIES IN THE FIRE

The lamps now glitter down the street;  
Faintly sound the falling feet  
And the blue even slowly falls  
About the garden trees and walls.  
Now in the falling of the gloom  
The red fire paints the empty room;  
And warmly on the roof it looks,  
And flickers on the backs of books.  
Armies march by tower and spire  
Of cities blazing, in the fire;—  
Till as I gaze with staring eyes,  
The armies fade, the lustre dies.  
Then once again the glow returns;  
Again the phantom city burns;  
And down the red-hot valley, lo!  
The phantom armies marching go!  
Blinking embers, tell me true  
Where are those armies marching to,  
And what the burning city is  
That crumbles in your furnaces!



## MY KINGDOM

Down by a shining water well  
I found a very little dell,  
No higher than my head.  
The heather and the gorse about  
In summer bloom were coming out,  
Some yellow and some red.

I called the little pool a sea;  
The little hills were big to me;  
For I am very small.  
I made a boat, I made a town,  
I searched the caverns up and down,  
And named them one and all.

And all about was mine, I said,  
The little sparrows overhead,  
The little minnows, too.  
This was the world and I was king;  
For me the bees came by to sing,  
For me the swallows flew.

I played there were no deeper seas,  
Nor any wider plains than these,  
Nor other kings than me.  
At last I heard my mother call  
Out from the house at evenfall,  
To call me home to tea.

And I must rise and leave my dell,  
And leave my dimpled water well,  
And leave my heather blooms.  
Alas! and as my home I neared,  
How very big my nurse appeared,  
How great and cool the rooms!





## SHADOW MARCH

All round the house is the jet-black  
night;  
It stares through the window-pane;  
It crawls in the corners, hiding from  
the light,  
And it moves with the moving flame.

Now my little heart goes a-beating  
like a drum,  
With the breath of Bogie in my hair,  
And all round the candle the crooked  
shadows come,  
And go marching along up the stair.

The shadow of the balusters, the  
shadow of the lamp,  
The shadow of the child that goes to  
bed—  
All the wicked shadows coming,  
tramp, tramp, tramp,  
With the black night overhead.





## WINTER-TIME

Late lies the wintry sun a-bed,  
A frosty, fiery sleepy-head;  
Blinks but an hour or two; and then,  
A blood-red orange, sets again.

Before the stars have left the skies,  
At morning in the dark I rise;  
And shivering in my nakedness,  
By the cold candle, bathe and dress.

Close by the jolly fire I sit  
To warm my frozen bones a bit;  
Or with a reindeer-sled, explore  
The colder countries round the door.

[77]

When to go out, my nurse doth wrap  
Me in my comforter and cap;  
The cold wind burns my face and  
blows  
Its frosty pepper up my nose.

Black are my steps on silver sod;  
Thick blows my frosty breath abroad;  
And tree and house, and hill and lake,  
Are frosted like a wedding-cake.





## THE LITTLE LAND

When at home alone I sit  
And am very tired of it,  
I have just to shut my eyes  
To go sailing through the skies—  
To go sailing far away  
To the pleasant Land of play;  
To the fairy land afar  
Where the Little People are;  
Where the clover-tops are trees,  
And the rain-pools are the seas,  
And the leaves like little ships  
Sail about on tiny trips;

[79]

And above the daisy tree  
Through the grasses,  
High o'erhead the Bumble Bee  
Hums and passes.

In that forest to and fro  
I can wander, I can go;  
See the spider and the fly,  
And the ants go marching by  
Carrying parcels with their feet  
Down the green and grassy street.  
I can in the sorrel sit  
Where the ladybird alit.  
I can climb the jointed grass;  
And on high  
See the greater swallows pass  
In the sky,  
And the round sun rolling by  
Heeding no such things as I.

Through that forest I can pass

Till, as in a looking-glass,  
Humming fly and daisy tree  
And my tiny self I see,  
Painted very clear and neat  
On the rain-pool at my feet.

Should a leaflet come to land  
Drifting near to where I stand,  
Straight I'll board that tiny boat  
Round the rain-pool sea to float.

Little thoughtful creatures sit  
On the grassy coasts of it;  
Little things with lovely eyes  
See me sailing with surprise.  
Some are clad in armour green—  
(These have sure to battle been!)—  
Some are pied with ev'ry hue,  
Black and crimson, gold and blue;  
Some have wings and swift are gone;  
But they all look kindly on.

When my eyes I once again  
Open, and see all things plain;  
High bare walls, great bare floor;  
Great big knobs on drawer and door;  
Great big people perched on chairs,  
Stitching tucks and mending tears,  
Each a hill that I could climb,  
And talking nonsense all the time—  
O dear me,  
That I could be  
A sailor on the rain-pool sea,  
A climber in, the clover tree,  
And just come back, a sleepy-head,  
Late at night to go to bed.





## IN PORT

Last, to the chamber where I lie  
My fearful footsteps patter nigh,  
And come from out the cold and  
gloom  
Into my warm and cheerful room.

There, safe arrived, we turn about  
To keep the coming shadows out,  
And close the happy door at last  
On all the perils that we passed.

Then, when mamma goes by to bed,  
She shall come in with tip-toe tread,  
And see me lying warm and fast  
And in the Land of Nod at last.







## NIGHT AND DAY

When the golden day is done,  
Through the closing portal,  
Child and garden, flower and sun,  
Vanish all things mortal.

As the blinding showers fall,  
As the rays diminish,  
Under evening's cloak they all  
Roll away and vanish.

Garden darkened, daisy shut,  
Child in bed, they slumber—  
Glow-worm in the highway rut,  
Mice among the lumber.

In the darkness houses shine,  
Parents move with candles  
Till on all, the night divine  
Turns the bedroom handles.

Till at last the day begins  
In the east a-breaking,  
In the hedges and the whins  
Sleeping birds a-waking.

In the darkness shapes of things,  
Houses, trees and hedges,  
Clearer grow; and sparrow's wings  
Beat on window ledges.

These shall wake the yawning maid,  
She the door shall open—  
Finding dew on garden glade  
And the morning broken.

There my garden grows again  
Green and rosy painted,  
As at eve behind the pane  
From my eyes it fainted.

Just as it was shut away,  
Toy-like, in the even,  
Here I see it glow with day  
Under glowing heaven.

Every path and every plot,  
Every bush of roses,  
Every blue forget-me-not  
Where the dew reposes.

'Up! they cry, 'the day is come  
On the smiling valleys;  
We have beat the morning drum;  
Playmate, join your allies!'





## NEST EGGS

Birds all the sunny day  
Flutter and quarrel  
Here in the arbor-like  
Tent of the laurel.

Here in the fork  
The brown nest is seated;  
Four little blue eggs  
The mother keeps heated.

While we stand watching her,  
Staring like gabies,  
Safe in each egg are the  
Bird's little babies.

Soon the frail eggs they shall  
Chip, and upspringing  
Make all the April woods  
Merry with singing.

Younger than we are,  
O children, and frailer,  
Soon in blue air they'll be,  
Singer and sailor.

We, so much older,  
Taller and stronger,  
We shall look down on the  
Birdies no longer.

They shall go flying  
With musical speeches  
High over head in the  
Tops of the beeches.

In spite of our wisdom  
And sensible talking,  
We on our feet must go  
Plodding and walking.



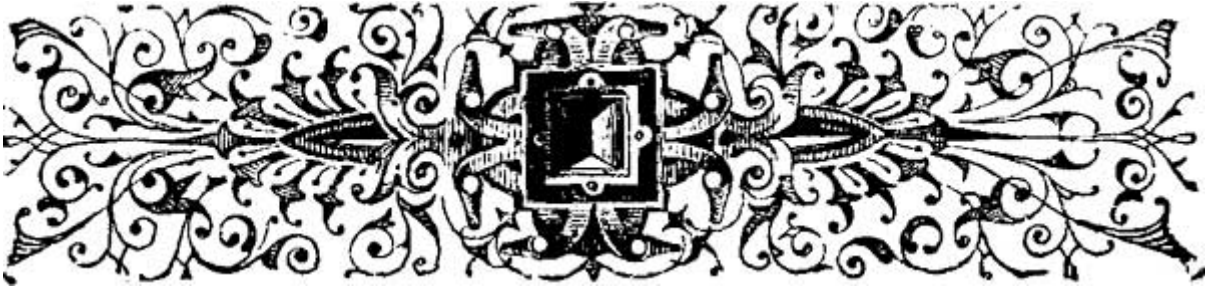
## THE FLOWERS

All the names I know from nurse:  
Gardener's garters, Shepherd's purse,  
Bachelor's buttons, Lady's smock,  
And the Lady Hollyhock.

Fairy places, fairy things,  
Fairy woods where the wild bee  
wings,  
Tiny trees for tiny dames—  
These must all be fairy names!

Tiny woods below whose boughs  
Shady fairies weave a house;  
Tiny tree-tops, rose or thyme,  
Where the braver fairies climb!

Fair are grown-up people's trees,  
But the fairest woods are these;  
Where if I were not so tall,  
I should live for good and all.



## FROM A RAILWAY CARRIAGE

Faster than fairies, faster than witches,  
Bridges and houses, hedges and  
ditches;  
And charging along like troops in a  
battle,  
All through the meadows the horses  
and cattle:  
All of the sights of the hill and the  
plain  
Fly as thick as driving rain;  
And ever again in the wink of an eye,  
Painted stations whistle by.

Here is a child who clambers and  
scrambles,  
All by himself and gathering  
brambles;  
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;  
And there is the green for stringing the  
daisies!  
Here is a cart run away in the road  
Lumping along with man and load;  
And here is a mill and there is a river,  
Each a glimpse and gone forever!



## MY TREASURES

These nuts, that I keep in the back of  
the nest  
Where all my lead soldiers are lying at  
rest,  
Were gathered in autumn by nursie  
and me  
In a wood with a well by the side of  
the sea.

This whistle we made (and how  
clearly it sounds!)  
By the side of a field at the end of the  
grounds.  
Of a branch of a plane, with a knife of  
my own,  
It was nursie who made it, and nursie  
alone!



The stone, with the white and the  
yellow and grey,  
We discovered I cannot tell *how* far  
away;  
And I carried it back although weary  
and cold,  
For though father denies it, I'm sure it  
is gold.

But of all of my treasures the last is  
the king,  
For there's very few children possess  
such a thing;  
And that is a chisel, both handle and  
blade,  
Which a man who was really a  
carpenter made.





## BLOCK CITY

What are you able to build with your  
blocks?

Castles and palaces, temples and  
docks.

Rain may keep raining and others go  
roam,

But I can be happy and building at  
home.

Let the sofa be mountains, the carpet  
be sea,

There I'll establish a city for me:  
A kirk and a mill and a palace beside,  
And a harbor as well where my  
vessels may ride.

Great is the palace with pillar and  
wall,  
A sort of a tower on the top of it all,  
And steps coming down in an orderly  
way

To where my toy vessels lay safe in  
the bay.

This one is sailing and that one is  
moored:

Hark to the song of the sailors on  
board!  
And see the steps of my palace, the  
kings  
Coming and going with presents and  
things!

Now I have done with it, down let it  
go!  
All in a moment the town is laid low.  
Block upon block lying scattered and  
free,  
What is there left of my town by the  
sea?

Yet as I saw it, I see it again,  
The kirk and the palace, the ships and  
the men  
And as long as I live and where'er I  
may be,  
I'll always remember my town by the  
sea.





## THE GARDENER

The gardener does not love to talk,  
He makes me keep the gravel walk;  
And when he puts his tools away,  
He locks the door and takes the key.

Away behind the currant row  
Where no one else but cook may go,  
Far in the plots, I see him dig,  
Old and serious, brown and big.

He digs the flowers, green, red and  
blue,  
Nor wishes to be spoken to.  
He digs the flowers and cuts the hay,  
And never seems to want to play.

Silly gardener! summer goes,  
And winter comes with pinching toes,

[96]

When in the garden bare and brown  
You must lay your barrow down.

Well now, and while the summer  
stays,  
To profit by these garden days,  
O how much wiser you would be  
To play at Indian wars with me!



The End.



