

SELECTED  
POEMS

*by*

ANNIE FOSTER HOWSON

(Mrs. Thomas Pickard)

1841 — 1914

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*her son*

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## *The Home of My Childhood*

The home of my Childhood, the place of my birth,  
That spot, it seems dearer, than any on earth,  
Its hills and its valleys, are dearer to me  
Than those of old England or fair Italy.

'Twas there that my grandfather felled the tall pine,  
And made him a home in the forest sublime;  
And now as I gaze on the meadows so green  
I never could think it a forest had been.

The noble old orchard, where I, when a child  
Have sported and frolicked, in gambols so wild,  
Or roamed in the woodland where wild flowers grow,  
And gathered the snowdrop, and violet blue.

The clear, sparkling streamlet, meandering along;  
Through pastures and meadows she murmurs a song:  
And by her side willows bend lovingly low,  
And kiss the cool waters as swiftly they flow.

And down the old lane are the hedgerows so long,  
Where birds feed their nurslings and carol a song:  
At the end of which poplars as sentinals sway  
Their towering heads through the long summer day.

It was not its beauty that made my home dear,  
But 'twas that my Father and Mother dwelt there.  
Oh! home, dearest home, where I passed all my time  
From infantile moments to maidenhood prime.

But now I have left thee, my loved childhood's home,  
And come to reside in a home of my own;  
Yet bright glowing visions of days that are passed  
Will float o'er my memory long as it lasts.

## Friendship

Friendship, 'tis not a passing cloud  
That vanishes away,  
With every stormy wind that blows,  
And will not longer stay.

Friendship, 'tis not a meteor's glare,  
Appearing to the sight,  
So beautiful, but flits away  
Like spectres in the night.

But friendship is a lovely flower,  
And, like the early rose,  
It sheds a fragrance o'er the soul  
And mitigates our woes.

And as the sun—that mighty orb—  
Emits his cheering ray,  
And with increasing lustre shines,  
Just at the close of day;

So friendship grows more dear, more true,  
As days and years depart,  
And twines its strong enduring cord  
More closely round the heart.

## Spring

Cold winter snow has disappeared,  
And spring her gorgeous head has reared;  
No more the hoary frost is feared,  
For spring has come.

Yes, austere winter bowed his head,  
And snow is numbered with the dead;  
But o'er his grave no tears are shed,  
For spring has come.

The bird is singing in the trees;  
Far from a southern clime he flees,  
And wafts his song o'er many a breeze,  
To welcome spring.

The lambs that sport o'er dale and hill,  
And yonder little rippling rill,  
All speak the praise of spring, and fill  
Our hearts with joy.

The snowdrop, too, appears in sight,  
So delicate and yet so bright;  
It seems as if it might  
Enchant us all.

The tiny grass puts forth her leaf  
And cries, my stay will not be brief,  
I come, I come to bring relief  
To hungry ones.

The noble trees, they also raise  
A glowing tribute to the days  
Of verdant spring, and in a maze  
    The spring has come.

All nature does with one accord  
Proclaim the kindness of the Lord,  
In sending spring to be adored,  
    Then praise His name.

## *Home Influence*

Love other places as we may,  
    Delight in distant lands to roam;  
There, uneffaceably, is fixed  
    Above them all, the love of home.

Gaze as we may on other scenes,  
    Look as we may on faces fair;  
The scenes of home most pleasing are,  
    And faces fairer far are there.

To other influences bend,  
    But rising high above life's foam,  
And reaching into bygone years,  
    Is th' silent influence of home.

When tossing oceans separate,  
    And years have rolled their measured span;  
When sorrow, toil, and care have joined  
    To make the self-reliant man;

E'en then a word, perhaps forgot,  
    Steals o'er the soul with magic power:  
Those words, once uttered in our home,  
    Will soothe dejection's trying hour.

## Mother

Mother! what delightful thoughts  
Are circled round that name;  
Through sickness, joys, and sorrows,  
She always is the same.

Does trouble mar our happiness,  
Is our frail heart distressed?  
She whispers to us comfort,  
And soothes our aching breast.

Should sickness lay its finger  
Upon our feeble frame;  
She near our couch doth linger,  
And tries to swage our pain.

Is happiness our portion;  
Does joy our bosom swell?  
She tries not for a moment,  
Our happiness to quell.

And oft she does endeavour,  
With kind alluring voice,  
To lead us to the Saviour  
And make His paths our choice.

## The Widow

Let me wander by the river,  
At the silent close of day,  
In some lone sequestered valley  
Let me sigh my life away.

Yes, when twilight, calm still twilight  
Wraps her mantle round us all,  
I will wander to the churchyard;  
On his grave my tears will fall.

Though the grass hath wove a carpet  
O'er his grave, yet still I weep;  
Time can never cease my loving  
The place where his relics sleep.

Friends oft chide me for my weeping,  
Say 'tis wrong to mourn so long,  
That 'tis time that I should mingle  
With the gay and busy throng.

Did they know how much I loved him;  
Could they see my bleeding heart!  
Oh; they surely would not wonder  
That I feel it hard to part.

Often in my dreams I see him,  
As in happy days of yore;  
But I wake in sad remembrance  
That I'll see his face no more.

Time with all its wondrous changes  
May to some its joys impart;  
But it cannot move his image  
From the tablet of my heart.

## *The Drunkard's Resolve*

Here I sit alone, dejected,  
None to soothe my drooping heart,  
None to whisper to me comfort,  
Or consoling words impart.

Once I had kind friends who loved me,  
And who sought my company;  
Once I had a lovely sister,  
Whose sweet smile I seem to see.

Once I had a gentle Mother,  
Who in words so fraught with love,  
Bade me walk in paths of virtue  
And to her a comfort prove.

Once I loved a fair young maiden,  
Loved her as I loved my life,  
And I hoped e'er long to have her  
For my own, my darling wife.

But alas! my hopes are blighted,  
Friends have vanished from my side,  
And my lover she has left me  
To become another's bride.

Where is now my gentle mother?  
Ah! I broke her tender heart,  
And she lies in yonder churchyard,  
While I feel the awful smart.

Why am I thus sad and wretched:  
What has stolen all my joy?  
Ah! 'twas rum, that ruthless monster;  
He did all my peace destroy.

Yes, 'twas rum that worse than demon;  
He has made me what I am,  
Once I was esteemed, respected;  
Now, what am I? Scarce a man.

But I'll make a desperate effort,  
And will break the slavish chain;  
I'll be bound with it no longer,  
I am weary of its pain.

Farewell th' winecup, now, forever!  
I'll with tipplers no more stand;  
But will join the hosts of temperance,  
That exalted noble band.

## An Acrostic

**D**earest friend, though far from me,  
**E**ncircled perhaps by friends more dear,  
**B**ut still I ask one thought from thee,  
**O**ne thought of me as near.

**R**eview the happy days of yore,  
**A**s we in childhood met for play,  
**H**ow we enjoyed each passing hour,  
**M**eeting with pleasures new each day.

**I**n all the changing scenes of time,  
**L**et fortune smile or troubles come,  
**L**et us be friends, sincere and kind,  
**E**ncouraging each other on,  
**R**ising above the trifling troubles here.

## To the Members of Hornby Division, S. of T.

Altho I'm but a sister,  
I hope you will excuse  
My forwardness in writing  
Those lines that you peruse.

If I were a gentleman  
And an orator, I'd tell  
Of the noble cause of temperance,  
The cause I love so well.

But as I'm not an orator,  
Much less a gentleman,  
I will trouble you by writing  
Of the faults of some of them.

In our beloved order  
There is very much to love,  
Yet you allow a practice,  
Which all must disapprove.

What is the practice, you will say;  
You'd really like to know?  
I will tell you in sentence,  
'Tis the use of tobacco.

'Tis nice to see our brethren,  
Dressed in regalia white,  
Contending all for temperance;  
'Tis animating, quite.

But then, to see regalias,  
That once were pure and clean,  
Besmeared with vile tobacco juice;  
It really does look mean.

'Tis bad enough for loafers  
To spit upon the floor,  
But how much worse for gentlemen  
To daub their garments o'er.

I further think that brethren,  
When in division, need  
Not puff their dear Havanas,  
Or chew the poisonous weed.

It more becometh brethren,  
When in division found,  
To cast the vile seducer  
Down to the very ground.

Imagine how repulsive  
'Tis to a lady's mind  
To have to cleanse regalias,  
All spattered as you'll find.

I ask of you a favour,  
If we have them to wash,  
It is that you abandon  
The abominable trash.

And now, my dearest brethren,  
If I have been too plain  
I hope you will forgive me,  
And no hard thoughts retain.

## A Soliloquy

They tell me I'm a coquette,  
They say that I am changed;  
That love, that tender passion,  
And I are far estranged;

They say that I'm a flirt, too;  
I love but for a day,  
I win the sex to scorn them,  
And throw their hearts away;

They say: "She'll never marry,  
For man with every art  
Can ne'er inspire affection  
In her adamant heart;"

'Tis true I will not marry,  
Ne'er give my hand to man,  
But not because I cannot  
Love true as others can.

For deep within my bosom  
There beats a heart as true,  
As constant, and as loving  
As mortal ever knew.

Yes, in this beating casket  
An image is enshrined,  
An image, whose great beauty  
Dwells in a lovely mind.

And now no vain usurper  
Shall ever take his place,  
Ah! no, no man has power  
His image to erase.



And memory fondly treasures  
His every look, and word,  
And every pulse throbs wildly  
Whene'er his name is heard.

But, why those strong emotions?  
His charms are not for me,  
And one who far less loves him,  
Perhaps, more blest will be.

Why? Why did I thus love him?  
Oh cruel, cruel fate!  
Perhaps, one far less tender  
Will be more fortunate.

Oh! may his heart ne'er suffer  
And bleed, as mine has bled,  
But heaven's choicest blessing  
Be ever on him shed.

May no dark cloud o'ershadow  
His pathway here below,  
The buds of hope ne'er wither,  
Nor storms of sorrow blow.

But may the holy angels  
Watch o'er him night and day,  
And comfort, soothe, and cheer him  
When I am far away.

Oh God of heaven, bless him,  
Protect him from all harm,  
Oh! gently guide and guard him  
By thy almighty arm.

And when death's chilling surge  
Sweeps o'er his heaving breast,  
Oh! bear him, angels bear him  
Into the promised rest.

## A Valentine

Thy face, I own, is passing fair,  
'Twould capivate a Venus;  
Such lovely eyes and glossy hair  
Might well become a Phoebus;

Thy manly form and noble brow  
Excite my admiration,  
Thy nice address, I really vow,  
Creates a strange sensation.

Thy breath, 'tis like the zephyrs bland,  
Thy azure eyes they twinkle,  
Like stars that in the heavens stand,  
The light on all they sprinkle.

*To a Friend Who Was Unjustly  
Slandered*

Could I e'er forget thee, Lizzie,  
Could I e'er forget thy smile?  
No! I can't, I won't forget thee,  
Though all men should deem thee vile.

Should the world accuse thee falsely,  
Should they slander and condemn,  
Should they e'en evade thy presence,  
Would my love diminish then?

No! Oh! no, 'twould only kindle  
That bright spark into a flame;  
None can change the love that hovers  
Round thy dear, thy long loved name.

*True Love*

Riches may vanish and friends prove untrue,  
One after another, they flit from our view.  
Beauty will wither and fade like the rose;  
All things, but true love, will come to a close.

But true love will never, no never depart,  
Though every thing else were torn from the heart;  
In times of indifference, it may wane, but you'll find  
A spark of affection is still left behind.

## Unreciprocated Love

Dear friend, though oft we part and meet,  
I'm sure you do not know,  
How my poor heart is apt to beat,  
When far from me you go.

You do not hear the rising sigh,  
Or see the falling tear;  
You do not know when you are nigh,  
You are to me so dear.

You do not know how 'tis my cheek,  
Doth red and white alternate go,  
Whenever we may chance to meet,  
But, oh! the cause I too well know.

I sometimes try to think of some  
More loving and more likely swain;  
But 'tis in vain for memory comes,  
And brings the image back again.

Can this be love, I sometimes think  
If 'tis, I then maintain,  
It makes the weary spirit sink,  
To love, and not be loved again.

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Though time may pass and years roll on,  
And I am far from thee,  
And though I should be dead and gone,  
Wilt thou still think of me.

## Watching

Watching, watching, watching,  
A much loved form to see,  
While minutes seem like hours,  
They pass so drearily.

Listening, listening, listening,  
To catch the faintest sound  
Of dear familiar footsteps,  
Which make the heart rebound.

Wondering, wondering, wondering,  
What has detained him so,  
Can hearts e'er lose their fervor,  
And his its former glow.

Thinking, thinking, thinking,  
Of happy moments fled,  
When hours sped by like minutes,  
So pleasantly they sped.

Building, building, building,  
Castles in the air,  
Some as dark as midnight,  
Others bright and fair.

Sighing, sighing, sighing,  
For the loved one tarries long,  
She sings to ease this aching,  
Some low, pathetic, song.

Smiling, smiling, smiling,  
For her lover now appears,  
Bringing joyous sunshine,  
Chasing all her fears.

## Who Would Be a Teacher?

Oh! who would be a teacher, who?  
'Tis surely neither I nor you,  
I think there are but very few  
Who love the work of teaching.

He has a hundred folks to please  
All parents, scholars, and trustees,  
And who on earth could please all these?  
Oh! who would be a teacher?

He has to mind each twisty rule,  
Or else be dubbed by all a fool,  
And no where fit to teach a school,  
Oh! who would be a teacher?

He must not whip, he must not scold,  
Or pa and ma will quick be told,  
For some are young and some too old  
To be punished by the teacher.

He must not scold poor little Kate,  
Oh no, she's quite too delicate,  
'Twould put her nerves in such a state.  
Oh! who would be a teacher?

He must not whip the mother's pet;  
"She's rather young to study yet."  
And then you know he'd pout and fret,  
"So please excuse him, teacher."

He enters school at nine o'clock  
And there he meets a motley flock,  
Ready to talk, and boldly mock  
Their poor, devoted teacher.

Just think (poor fellow) how that he  
Has got them all to oversee,  
And some to teach their A B C.

Oh! who would be a teacher?

They now commence their talk in full,  
While some are bright and some are dull;  
And oh! the noise would crack the skull  
Of any mortal teacher.

And so it goes day after day,  
He toils and works for little pay,  
And none a cheering word to say.  
Oh! who would be a teacher?

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Lines written when asked to write a note  
to the friends of the Sabbath School  
requesting them to contribute four pies  
to a Sabbath School tea meeting.

By this my dear friend, you see that we send,  
For four very nice apple pies.  
Do not use too much lard, nor yet make them so hard  
One would think they were flint in disguise.

But make them so sweet, and do them so neat  
That they may be fit to be set  
Before the best men that ever were seen,  
Or ever in tea-meeting met.

### *Christ's Love to Sinners*

Not for righteous men, the Saviour  
Came to earth and bled and died;  
Not for those whose lives are holy,  
Christ, the Lord, was crucified.

But for sinners Jesus suffered,  
Hopeless, helpless, and undone.  
For the wretched and forsaken  
Came the Lord's anointed one.

What a rich display of mercy,  
Love unbounded, grace unknown;  
Well may gazing angels wonder,  
Christ should thus vacate his throne.

Was there ever love so ardent,  
Pity ever felt so keen?  
Was there ever such forgiveness,  
As was in the Saviour seen?

Even when they rudely mocked him;  
Pierced with thorns his sacred brow;  
Father, Oh! forgive he pleaded,  
What they do they know not now.

See the cruel soldiers pierce him,  
While he hangs upon the tree.  
Oh! my soul adoring, ponder,  
He endured all this for me.

Sink my heart in deep contrition;  
For my sins his blood has shed;  
Wrung his holy soul with anguish;  
Crowned with thorns his sacred head.

Yes, 'twas thee, stern conscience whispers,  
Brought the son of God from heaven;  
See thy sin and guilt appalling,  
Can'st thou hope to be forgiven?

Yes, for e'en the chief of sinners  
Christ has promised to receive;  
Precious promise, oh how cheering!  
Trusting in it may I live.

## *Soul Longings*

Oh! that I could with Christians say,  
I truly love the Lord;  
That I delighted in His ways,  
And loved His holy word.

Oh! that the Lamb who once was slain  
On Calvary's bloody mount,  
Would fill my soul with love divine  
From Him the living fount.

Oh! it would be transporting joy  
To know that Christ was mine;  
To know that I was His alone,  
Would be happiness divine.

But here I am a worthless worm,  
Unworthy of his grace;  
How shall I e'er approach His throne  
Or dare to seek His face?

Oh! Lord look down with pitying eye,  
And guide my wandering feet,  
Into the path of holiness,  
That path to Christians sweet.

Forgive the follies of my youth,  
Forgive my sins of heart,  
And when my days are numbered here,  
Take me to where Thou art.

## *The Heavenly Feast*

Behold! a feast in Heaven is spread,  
The marriage feast of Christ, our head.  
For us He spreads the festal board;  
Come to the banquet of the Lord.

He has prepared for each a dress,  
The robe of His own righteousness;  
This ether robe we all may wear,  
Who wish this marriage feast to share.

From Christ the smitten rock there bursts  
A copious stream to quench our thirst;  
This is the stream which maketh glad  
The city of our living God.

Ye hungry souls, who cry for food,  
Behold! in glorious amplitude  
The bread of life, so rich and free  
Is spread for you, is spread for me.

There fruit and flowers regale the feast,  
And add new pleasure to the guest,  
While baling odors charge the breeze  
That wafts from Zion's blooming trees.

The Rose of Sharon there is found,  
And sheds it's heavenly fragrance round;  
The spotless lily, too, is there—  
The lily of the valley fair.

There we may quaff the ruby wine,  
Drawn pure from Christ, the living vine;  
And eat the fruit so freely given,  
Plucked from the tree of life of Heaven.

No flickering lamp illuminates,  
And sheds it's light within the gates,  
For Christ, our sun, our shield, our light,  
Disperses every trace of night.

And interspersed are praise and song,  
Seraphic choirs their notes prolong,  
And chant glad anthems to the praise  
Of Him who lives through endless days.

Oh! may our souls with transport rise,  
And meet our Saviour in the skies,  
And share with Him that feast above,  
And sing His wondrous matchless love.

## Sons of God

"Now are we the sons of God."

The sons of God! Stupendous thought  
That sinners vile as we,  
Should by the God of heaven be brought,  
His sons and heirs to be.

The sons of God; heirs to a crown,  
Inheriters of bliss:  
Was e'er such condescension known?  
Was ever love like this?

The sons of God; and we but dust,  
And ashes in his eyes:  
How can Omnipotence be just,  
And take us to the skies.

The sons of God; and yet His word  
Declares most solemnly,  
The soul that sinneth it shall die;  
And that eternally.

But God is also God of love  
As well as truth; and lo!  
He sent his son from heaven above,  
To pay the debt we owe.

Though mortals have his wrath defied,  
Through Christ he pardon gives;  
He can be just, yet justify  
The sinner who believes.

The sons of God; oh! promise sweet;  
Let every Christian now  
Rejoice, and sing, and at his feet  
In adoration bow.