

THE POET AND THE CHILDREN.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

With a glow of winter sunshine
Over his locks of gray,
In a coat of many colors
He sat on his last birthday.
With his books and his pleasant pictures
And his household and his kin,
While a sound of myriads singing
From far and near him.

It came from his fair city,
From the prairie boundless plain,
From the Golden gate of sunset,
And the cedar woods of Maine.

And his heart grew warm within him,
In his music, in his song,
For he sang the songs of his children
Singing the songs of him:

The lays of his life's glad morning,
The psalms of his evening time,
When the winds of winter blow over
On the winds of every clime.

All their beautiful consolations,
Sent forth like birds of cheer,
Came flocking back to his windows,
And sang the roses.

Grateful, but sorrowful and tender,
The music rose and fell,
With a joy akin to sadness,
And a greeting like farewell.

With a sense of awe he listened
To the music of the children singing;
The lays of earth and the first of heaven
Seemed in the songs they sung.

And to him, in a hollow voice,
Was the mystic meaning given
Of the words of the blessed Master:
"Of such is the kingdom of heaven!"

WIDOW APPLEDORE'S ROMANCE.

"A man that thinks of nothing but my penn'it oil an' price of wheat! No! Emma Jane, my life has been humdrum enough, without my endin' it with Deacon Bliss. I shan't have him!"

"Well, Rosetta, if you won't I don't know anybody's goin' ter try 'em," chirped plump, rosy Mrs. Phlox, looking up from the stool she was spinning. "I know it's a fact I've seen the deacon thought he'd be right to ask you, bein' it's a free country. Caleb Appledore was a swif' nice man, but so's the deacon. Lone winnem are put on. Job Whittemore n-glects your gar-din, an' just see what work you have with your fires winters an' keepin' roads broke out."

"I'm not going to marry just to have some one tend to the garden and do the chores," said Mrs. Appledore, never found fault with that's dead and gone; but I know what it is to live with a woman who does not care two pines for the things I do, and if I ever do marry again it will be some one who can sympathize with me. I can't say I swallow all 'Lias Bradshaw says about the marryin' of souls and affinities, but there's some truth in it you may depend, Mrs. Deacon, I'd like a little romance to my life before I die."

"Romance is all well 'nuff," said Mr. Phlox, "but I'm 39 years old, Mrs. Rosetta, and such a man as Deacon Bliss don't grow on every bush. Boin' a good provider, an' a splendid farmer, an' a deacon, an' a pillar in the church may not be romantic, but they're good recommendations in a man you're thinkin' of marryin'. I hope you'll think twice."

"I have thought, and I shan't marry the deacon," said Mrs. Appledore decisively; "but if she's being romantic, I'm not ashamed of it."

The little widow did not look romantic. Her complexion was a dull white, and her hair was a dull brown. Dull, too, were her large gray eyes that blinked behind short-sighted glasses, but her form, though meager and devoid of curve, was not without grace, and she had a clear, sweet soprano voice, which, though it was untrained, she could use with effect. The Dixville musical association made her the head of all their contestants, and relied upon her to sing the solo.

Indeed, without her it could not have existed. The wheezy melody, which was a dozen years old before it became the property of the society, had at last collapsed under the energetic finings of Prof. Jackson Jones, who did not the accompanying, and they were trying to buy a piano. They had given a concert, and had oyster suppers till Dixville was tired, when Dr. Ollapod suggested a lecture. It was whispered that the doctor had expected the committee to invite him to read one of his papers on the Semitic tongue; but if he did he was disappointed. They corresponded with many popular lecturers, who all declined to go. Dixville, the little village, whom they knew, was sending their message to address them. The professor had suddenly appeared in Dixville mounted on a fine gray horse. The next day he was seen to enter the postoffice with a green bag on his arm, and the gossip immediately reported that he was wealthy and had come from Boston. He at once accepted the invitation, and his Harmonium concert was announced that his lecture would be on the "Philosophy of Art." The meeting house was hired, and Mrs. Appledore, with a select few, began practicing some music for the occasion.

It was the afternoon before the lecture, and Mrs. Appledore had invited her sister to spend the day with her. Domestic duties seemed to be all that Mrs. Phlox was made for. Her husband and sister usually did all her thinking. In return she served them with her hands; but the few notions that did creep into her round head she clung to pernickety.

"The worst kind of a fool is a beetle-headed one," she said, after a long pause, "an' puttin' this and that together, Rosetta, I think you're preparin' with your manchon to be just that kind of a one."

"I don't see how sisters can be so unlike," and Mrs. Appledore drummed a harsh accompaniment to her words on the middle C of her piano. "To be sure, you are the oldest; but age need not be a handicap."

"It would be well for you to remember that all the advantages are not on your side," cried Mrs. Phlox, rising with dignity. "There are bodies, yes, and dispositions, that are clo'd, an' and Mrs. Phlox jerked on her calash and went home."

The meeting house was full, and the lecture, in the Dixville Times, was well received. Mrs. Appledore's attention wandered, and she only knew that the entertainment was to be concluded by Dr. Ollapod's sonorous call for "moosic."

"I am delighted," said Prof. St. Clair Smith, bowing low before her, as soon as possible after the "moosic." "I never heard such a delicious voice."

Mr. Appledore gazed at him in dull wonder. These were almost his only words he had used to his sister, but they did not sound pleasantly now.

"I love you, Rosetta," went on the little man, approaching her; "and I want to ask you just one question: Were I a single man would you marry me?"

"Dear Mrs. Appledore," he began, but she checked him.

"You had better go home to your wife, Mr. Smith," she said coldly.

Tears, real tears, came into the professor's big blue eyes. "But I love you," he cried, and she has always been an innocent upon my son."

"But she's your wife," persisted Mrs. Appledore.

"I know it," moaned the professor, rubbing his brow distractedly. "Ients out my vitality when I think of it. She don't feel as I feel. There's no wings to me as long as I am tied to her. We're no good."

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