

Classic Poetry Series

Robert Kirkland Kernighan
- poems -

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Robert Kirkland Kernighan(25 April 1854 – 3 November 1926)

Robert Kirkland Kernighan (25 April 1854 – 3 November 1926) was a Canadian poet, journalist, and farmer.

Born at Rushdale Farm, Rockton, Ontario, he apprenticed as a journalist on the Hamilton Spectator staff. In about 1876 the paper printed his first poetry. Kernighan lived in Western Canada for a while working for the Winnipeg Sun. Short thereafter returned to Hamilton to farm. He worked exclusively for many years for the Toronto Telegram writing a column titled, "The Khan's Corner." The nickname "Khan" was given to him by a young French-Canadian woman who could not pronounce his name.

It was the opinion of Sir John A. Macdonald that if Canada ever went to war the soldiers would march to battle singing Kernighan's poem "The Men of the Northern Zone".

In an article reviewing personalities from Hamilton history, Kernighan was praised as a "...poet and humourist with a rare gift of sympathetic portrayal of rural Canadian life."

The Khan appeared in Toronto at old Albert Hall on October 20th, 1885 to a packed house. Toronto's Daily Amusement Record reported: "Albert Hall was jammed to the door, and many had to stand. This, more than anything else, is a substantial compliment to Mr. Kernighan, as the people of Toronto are not in the habit of throwing away fifty-cent pieces 'just for fun'." Kernighan's lecture was attended by notable local personalities who were described in the Amusement Record as the "Fourth Estate". The reviewer concluded: "The lecture was a masterpiece of native eloquence, humour and pathos, and the only fault found was that it was too short."

"The Khan's Canticles", a hardcover book containing his poetry, was published by the Hamilton Spectator Printing Company in 1896. "The Khan's Book of Verse" was published in 1925.

12 The Khans Canticles

And none but I the secret knew

Of where the precious ginseng grew.

One autumn, when the woods were brown,
I plowed the old-time fallow down,
And worked away, with tireless feet,
Until 'twas seeded down with wheat.

Next summer it was plain to view-
Thereon the harvest richer grew ;
To keep its feet it did its best
Then lodged prone lay its golden crest ;
A tangled, moist, luxuriant square
The ground-hogs all foregathered there
And only farmers, wise and skilled,
Will understand it never ' filled.'
Ere winter winds began to blow
I took my spade and dug below,
And found some curious carven stones ;
Some broken skulls, and scattered bones ;
A precious string of wampum beads ;
A little pot of roasted seeds :
Some needles, made of polished bone ;
Some broken pipes an axe of stone
For I had found the quiet graves
Of long- forgotten Indian braves !

O ! splendid Resurrection, here !
Renewed with each returning year !
To rise in grass and flowers and trees ;
To feed the wild deer and the bees ;
To fill with wealth their sheltering sod
A yearly sacrifice to God !

May I return to thee, O earth

The mother dear that gave me birth

And pay to thee, when e'er I go,

A little of the debt I owe.

Thus, resurrected every spring,

I 'll hear the merry blue birds sing

Their voices every May-day morn

Will sweeter sound than Gabriel's horn !

And oft, I hope, my grateful soul

Shall thro' my summer-fallow stroll !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

20 The Khan's Canticles

I'll dress it in white like the angels
That wait for my darling above.

' Oh, pity me not, for my bosom

Is thrilled with a wondrous delight,
For a beautiful angel in Heaven
Is calling me ' mother ' to-night.

' To think that my baby is walking

The path that its Savior has trod,
To-night He is welcoming baby

For of such is the Kingdom of God.'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

24 The Khan's Canticles

I heard a curse from a lower beast :
I heard his whip lash crack like shot :

I watched and heard till my heart was sore,
And all the blood in my veins was hot.

Thou wretch with the whip, remember this,
Remember, thou knight of the curse and rod

The voiceless cry of a stricken beast
Is heard by the pitying ears of God.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

34 The Khan's Canticles

We meet them and greet them at ev'ry turn,
We pass and know not their hidden sorrows.

O, brothers, think of the hidden fears

That throng the unseen bosoms quaking ;

It 's hard to laugh thro' the blinding tears,

It 's hard to smile when the heart is breaking.

And are we guiltless when these are met,

And our hearts are filled with a music mellow ?
Do we ask the man with eyelids wet,

Brother, what ails your heart, old fellow ?
But we nod our heads and onward go,

No worry at all at his trouble taking ;
The day may come when ourselves shall know

How hard to smile when the heart is breaking.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

A Blanket Of Leaves

The bushes and the trees
Spread the old brown blanket;
Snugly round their knees
Is the old brown blanket;

And the saucy flowers hide

'Neath its folds, to there abide
Till they hear the robin red-breast and the blue bird sing.

Yes, they '11 snuggle down and sleep

In a slumber soft and deep,
'Neath the old brown blanket, till the Spring.

The cricket and the bug

'Neath the old brown blanket
Sleep silently and snug,

'Neath the old brown blanket;
The chipmunks and the mice
Cradle daintily and nice,

Till the breezes gentle zephyrs from the south worlds
bring;

They will slumber and they '11 dream,
While the tempests o'er them scream,
'Neath the old brown blanket, till the Spring.

And when the spring has come

O, the old brown blanket!
When the bees in triumph hum

O, the old brown blanket!
They will waken from their sleep,
They will lift their heads and peep,

THE KHAN'S CANTICLES. 51

They will hark to hear the robin and the blue bird sing;
The blooms will then advance,
And the little beasts will dance
On the old brown blanket in the Spring.

But the frost will creep and prowl

On the old brown blanket,
And the winter winds will howl

O'er the old brown blanket;
But the little darlings never
Feel the least alarm whatever,

But they pnt their cheeks together and to each other cling;
Let the winter demons chafe,
The bugs and flowers are safe
'Neath the old brown blanket, 'till the Spring.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

A Day Dream

METHINKS that I can hear them churning
Outside the kitchen cellar way ;

Methinks I see the old yard turning
A perfumed green this splendid day.

Methinks I see the pet lamb jumping,
A splendid athlete, he, I trow ;

Methinks I see our Thomas pumping
Some water for the brindle cow.

Methinks I see the bran-mash mixing :
(The heifer smells it from afar)

Methinks I see the farmer fixing
Fences where the willows are.

Methinks I hear them set the table :
A feast no royal king would scorn ;

Dish up the 'taters quick 's you 're able,
And, Nelly, blow the dinner horn.'

The men troop out from barn and meadow
Their faces shine like newest silk ;

They stop beside the cellar doorway
And drink the sweet, fresh buttermilk.

The old man says an old-time prayer,
The knives and forks in chorus fly ;

The perfumed parsnips fill the air,
And Nellie passes round the pie.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

A Float On A Floe

For I was tired of the country,

And sick of the city's sin ;
So I sat on the wharf, and wond'ring, watched

The floe ice floating in.

I saw it come from Hanlan's Point,

With a sou'west wind abaft ;
And I looked on a floe 'neath my feet below

As a welcome God-sent raft.

To take me to the sea, to be fresh and free

As the grey gulls overhead ;
And I wished no more to be a babe,

Or else be asleep or dead.

So I stepped aboard like a Viking lord,

And jauntily waved my hat ;
For I was king of an acre of ice

Though it might have been more than that.

I had no sails but the waves and wind,

And I had no sweep or oar ;
I danced like mad at the very thought

That I 'd see the land no more.

My home was a Venice all made of ice :

My roof unmeasured sky ;
Did poets sing of such a king,

Or a sailor such as I ?

No ! for I was far from soil and sin,

And God had made my ship ;
Away I went, no canvas bent,

On a long an endless trip.

I stamped my foot upon the deck,
And named my ship ' Good Luck ;'

Oh ! I was the wonder of every bird,
The gull and the fleet- winged duck.

And wild geese coming from the south,

Yahonking through the sky ;
Ah, the gander thought that I was mad,

And winked his blood-red eye.

The lake that loved my own ' Good Luck,'

It sucked me south to sea ;
Oh, did n't I dance, and sing, and prance,

And scream with very glee !
And did n't the gulls with tired wings

Look down and envy me ?

But everything envied me and mine,

My chaste and sailless ship ;
And the very waves I thought my friend,

Seemed to sob and moan and sip ;
And fretted her sides with tireless lips,

Till she slowly wore away ;

And the geese they laughed at me by night

And the gulls they laughed by day.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

A Girl I Like

She bears a basket on her arm,
Athrough the crowded street ;

The sidewalk feels a soft caress
Beneath her busy feet.

Her rosy cheeks are ever warm,
Her eyes are ever bright ;

Her figure, like a willow wand,
Is supple, lithe and light.

A sight of her is welcome as
The blossoms are in March,

And when the Khan is passing by
Her smile is sweetly arch.

What 's in the basket on her arm,
As through the street she goes?

Her mother takes in washing, and
My girl takes home the clothes.

And thus she flits the city through,
This maiden fair and young ;

I write, because to tell the truth,
I dare not trust my tongue.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

A Grave In The Sunshine

His was a chance to make his grave

'Neath the storied altar high ;
But his heart was changed to a boy's again,

When they whispered that he must die.
His thoughts flew back to his native hills,

In their wonderful emerald sheen ;
Then he asked to sleep where the sunshine falls,

And the beautiful grass grows green.

He asked no grave in a chancel dim

No place in the shadowed gloom :
He wanted the birds to sing their songs

And chant o'er his sunlit tomb.
He gave his life to his country's God,

And he fought in that battle well ;
No wonder he asked for the grassy sod,

In a place where the sunshine fell.

They who knew the old man most

Were those who loved him best,
And none will wonder, who knew him well,

At their old friend's last request.
They 'll take him out from the chancel dim,

The pillared aisles between,
And lay him down in a sunlit bed,

Where the beautiful grass grows green.

Pallid niors with equal step,

At palace and cabin door,
Calls forth the priest or peasant

To the shadowless evermore.
And so he came to the good old man,

In the midnight hours between,
And took him out from his princely couch

To a bed where the grass grows green.

His armor is hung on his palace wall ;

His good sword is sheathed for aye ;
And he sleeps the sleep of a peasant child,

As he waits for the judgment day.
And years from now they will tell how he,

When the shadow of death was seen,
Said, ' Bury me out in the sunshine bright,

Where the grass that I loved grows green.'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

A Night Of Horrors

Burning blush eternal !

It was in my youthful days,
That I drunk of the cup infernal

Till my brain was in a craze !
Till my brain it burned, with drinking,

With a mixed and mad amaze
With a wild and weird thinking,

In those terrible drunken days.

It was in the days so solemn,

In a sweet and sunlit year,
When Nature's glorious volume

Was writ in pages dear
Dear with the dearest story :

Sweet with the sweetest song :
Bright with the brightest glory,

In the old year loved, and long ;
That reeling rabid raving !

Singing a soulless song,
With a crawling, creeping, craving

For something strange and strong !

I staggered home all drunken,

And there in my glass I saw
A man with red eyes sunken,

And hot lips parched and raw.
He'd a wild and weird appearance

A solemn sight to see
And he swayed and swung with a silly leer,

And I clasped my hands and cried with fear,
' My God ! can this be me?'

Oh ! I thought my heart would smother,

As I fell with a gasping groan ;
And I thought of my poor old mother,

In the little holy home ;
And then with terror turning,

I turned from myself away,
With tongue all black and burning,

I tried but I could n't pray.

And there on my cheek all glowing,

I felt a demon's breath :
I saw his eyes and knew the size

Of the thing from the land of Death !
And he caught me up in his horny hands,
That seared my form like burning brands

This thing from the land of Death !

He placed me in a drear canoe,

Half filled with reptiles fell,
That fed on the dark and deadly dew

In some still and stagnant well ;
And then like lightning we did float
Upon the deep and loathsome moat
That winds itself, like some vast throat,

Round the windowless walls of Hell.

I woke with a wild and winged scream !
But soon came another fearful dream,

And I saw a thing to be
All sloppy with slime ! In a southern sea,
A sickening saurian swam,

And my soul was filled with a sudden qualm,

As his dead eyes fell on me.
He raised his long and glittering tail,
That lashed the waters like a flail,

Till all that southern sea
Was thick with creatures full of fright,
That cried in fear with all their might,

But none so loud as me !
He took me up I know not how
And bore me, ah ! I feel it now

Swift through the southern sea.

The water from his warty sides
Rolled huge and high like tropic tides,
And his vast claws, with ponderous stroke,
The fainting waters easy broke,

Of that solemn summer sea ;
And I his high-hinged jaw bestrode,
And o'er the slippery water rode !
At last it seemed long years the shore
Before my heated eyes upbore,
Greenless 'twas a land of mud
The saurian dropped me with a thud :
I sank into the mass a cry
Rushed from my parched-up lungs on high !
And lo ! I found within my bed
A stealthy crawling thing of dread !

T knew that I was wide awake,
But saw in this vile thing a snake,
Long and strong, red-bellied he
This offspring of the southern sea.
From his dank sides oozed out a sweat
That all my form and features wet ;

154 THE KHAN'S CANTICLES.

With his firm coils he wound and wound,
Till my weak limbs were firmly bound ;
Upon my cheek I felt the float
Of his black blood within his throat ;
His gummy tongue my white lips sealed,
I could not cry my senses reeled !
I knew no more but just to be
A floating something in the sea!

Next morn I woke my sense returned ;
But still my heart and temples turned :
But on my knees, 'mid thirst and pain,
I swore I 'd never drink again.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

A Trooly Good Man

He never swears, he never smokes,
He looks not on the wine ;
He never laughs, he never jokes,
He goes to bed at nine ;
But, O, the horse he sold to me,

And guaranteed him sound,
Upon his hinder legs, alas !

Some spavins I have found.

He in the Amen corner sits

On Sundays all alone,
And when the preacher shakes the tongs

He '11 look around and groan ;

52 THE KHAN'S CANTICLES.

He cries, ' O, Lord, I have no lot
With publicans and thieves ; '

But, O, the horse he sold to me
Is troubled with the heaves.

That man will never eat a bite

Until he shades his face
Regardless of his appetite,

He sadly says a grace ;
But, O, that horse he sold to me,

And guaranteed superb,
I fear upon his leg he has

A well developed curb.

He has n't got a single tooth

To chew his chop and bran ;
Now, was n't that a trick, forsooth,

To play upon the Khan?
But when that man turns up his toes

And gains that awful place,
That foundered nag, his worst of woes,

Will stare him in the face.

And that is just the reason I

Look down upon him so ;
It strikes me he 's a hypocrite

A reg'lar crook, altho'
He never swears, he never smokes,

He looks not on the wine :
He never laughs, he never jokes,

And goes to bed at nine.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Ahab

A Library of prudent lore,
For prince or bearer of the hod ;
'Tis always an unfailing store
Of Truth such is the Word of God.

Imagine, if you can, this case :

(The proposition 's rather rough)

Destroy all man-made books the race
Would find the Word of God enough,

To teach us purity and truth,

A courage high, a sinless mirth ;

For Jezebel and loyal Ruth

Are still at large upon the earth.

David, Rachel, Ananias

There goes a Judas o'er the way !

'Mpulsive Peter, Paul the Pious
Are met with almost ev'ry day.

But when I see a Jezebel

I see the groves of Baal grow ;

Her treach'rous feet take hold on hell,
And Ahab's ghost would tell you so.

O, Ahab ! in thy kingly state,

Upon the holy wall I see
A wretched fool thy fearful fate

Hath many lessons taught to me.

I 've watched all morn the temple roof,
To see the smoke of incense rise ;

I 'm told 't was at thine own behoof
There was no morning sacrifice.

Was 't Baal set thy fathers free ?

Of Baal what can Israel boast?
Was 't Baal opened up the sea,

And smothered Pharaoh and his host?

Was 't Baal's name the waters heard,
And burst the rock, so long ago?

And tell me, was it Baal's word
O'erthrew the walls of Jericho ?

Rouse thee, O, Ahab ! and be wise,
Before the gates of God are hid ;

Bring forth to-day, for sacrifice,
A lamb, a heifer and a kid !

To Jezebel thy heart is wax :

Go sound a trumpet thro' the town ;

Gird up thy loins : take thine axe,
And hew the groves of Baal down !

You won 't ! thou craven, show thy teeth !

I know thy wolfish spirit well :

Behold thee, crouch and cower 'neath

The baneful glance of Jezebel.

Behold him, you ; he scarce can rise ;

His face is lettered with a leer ;

His breath is horrible his eyes

Blink meanly thro' their banks of blear.

120 THE KHAN'S CANTICLES.

His hands are puffed like adders' heads ;

His throat emits a husky cry ;

His cheeks are blotched with purpled reds ;

His lips are blue, and cracked, and dry.

Who is it standing by his side

Fair as the morning dark as hell?

'Tis she, while lasts all time and tide,

Hath named each harlot 'Jezebel.'

She stands beside him like a pine ;

She tow'rs above him like an Alp ;

Her eyes, triumphant, orb-like, shine

With scorn upon his pimpled scalp.

Awake, O ! Ahab ! Israel's king !

Awake, and hear the prophet call :

Lay hands on Jezebel, and fling

The splendid devil from the wall.

You won't ! then die, thou craven cur !

See, yonder dogs all slink with shame ;
But while they wait to feast on her,

Not one of them \ould hear thy name !

Poetic justice ! Baal lent,

From out his grave, the chastening rod
That to Gehenna Ahab sent,

And beckoned Israel back to God !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

At Night

Ah, yes, I miss the baby,

My little cherub bright ;
I miss it always in the day,

But miss it more at night.

It used to sleep upon my arm,

In quiet slumber there ;
One hand upon my neck, and one

Was smothered in my hair.

And now I wake from troubled sleep
Long hours before the dawn ;

The empty bed I fevered search,
To find that baby 's gone.

The weary days are full of tears,
But with the waning light

I stand beside my plundered bed
I miss it most at night.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Be Merciful To The Horse

Do the beasts of burden that strive and groan
And writhe and crouch 'neath the pitiless rod

Are they never allowed to make their moan
And lay their wrongs at the feet of God ?

All day I've watched from my window high
The infamous street where the horsewhips hiss,

And I asked myself, Will the day e'er come
When men will answer for all of this ?

For I saw a horse with starting eyes,

With straining nerves and a throbbing flank ;

I saw him strive till his strength gave out
And he on the murderous pavement sank ;

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Bushed

' Weariness can snore upon the flint,
While rusty sloth finds the down pillow hard.'

Shakespeare.

It 's Saturday night ! I 'm tired, rather :

I ve finished the job and had my supper ;
The team's tired, too : they were all in a lather ;

But now they 're free from the bit and crupper ;
I worked them an hour past quittin time

You see I wanted to finish the job
It was n't fair, and I felt it a crime,

When I heard the old mare sigh an sob ;

But she plodded on nothing will stick her

Willin as ever to hear the call ;
But she bit her mate, and gave a nicker

As soon as she heard the trace chains fall ;
But now they 're down in the beaver grasses,

Up to their bellies in blooming feed,
While over their heads the night-hawk passes,

And Dolly and Dan are glad indeed !

I 'm tired to-night ! It 's weary walkin
Behind the plow from morn till eve ;

I hear the wimmin folks, inside, talkin
I 'd ruther sleep, I do believe

That, I fancy, will serve my turn :
I 'll wash my feet and soak my head,

'N drink some buttermilk outen the churn ;
Then wind the clock, an I 'm off to bed.

That buttermilk 's good ! it 's eaten an drinkin !

It freshens one up an cools the mouth
There 's bushels uv whip o wills out, I 'm thinkin,

Whoopin away sure sign uv a drouth.
A sprinkle uv rain would n't hurt the pertaters ;

The frogs is singing the Canady reel ;
They haint got toons like that in theayters

By jing ! ef I hevnt blistered my heel !

There 's some uv the neighbors callin on Min

Swappin their little hopes and cares ;
Like 's not they 'll probly call me in

I 'll quietly mosy along up-stairs !
I 'll sleep like a chicken shet up in a coop ;

Then, at the earliest streak of light,
I 'll stand in my shirt tail out on the stoop

An see that everything 's safe an right.

The bed aint hard, ner yet aint narrow :

And O ! the pillows are cool an white,
An I could sleep on a rough wheel-barrow,

An never roll over, this blessed night !
To-morrow is Sunday ! To-night is peace !

I hope thet dog aint after the sheep :
There's somethin frightened them pesky
geese ;

I 'm falling falling falling asleep !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Butchin Hogs A Farm Idyl

They are choppin up the kindlin, an they're fillin up the

kettle ;

The folks hev et thur breakfusts before the break of

day :

Dad is at the grindstone a sharpenin up his metal,

And I Ve me ancient pants on we 're butchin hogs
to-day !

We 've built a royal gibbet,

Each carcass to exhibit ;

They 'll soon be strung upon it hark ! listen to their toon !

They 'r makin loud appealin,

An most tremendous squealin,

Fur they 've bin starved, a-purpose, since yistiddy at noon.

We 're shuvin in the kindlin to make the water scald ;

The vat is tilted nicely in the middle of the yard,

And in the handy cook-house the wimmen is installed ;

They've scoured the copper kittle fer tryin out the lard.

The nails in all the passages

Air stripped fer hangin sassages,

An best uv all, an lucky, we Ve got a bran-new moon !

The pigs air hungry feelin

No wonder that they 'r squealin,

Fer they 've bin starved, a-purpose, since yistiddy at noon.

Now everything is ready : ole dad takes up the axe ;

We move upon the pig-pen with sleeves rolled up and

ropes ;

The piggies see us coming, his chops each porker smacks :

Of buttermilk for breakfast each one of them has hopes.
Alas ! no more they 'll fill
Themselves with choicest swill,

Fer soon upon the grocery stoop on high they 'll hold
their legs ;

An they '11 be biled with greens,
Likewise be baked with beans,
Assisted by the poultry, they will furnish ham and eggs.

An now the yells of piggy rend the chill December air ;
We dump him from the pig sty, and souse him with a

rush ;

We slam him on the platform and strip him of his hair,
An all the yard is full of steam, 'n smoke, 'n hair, 'n
slush !

The girls is all excited,
When the carcass it is ' kited,'

And daddy slits its abdomen with strong an stiddy arm ;
An when the night completes it,
There is no job that beats it
This killin fat December hogs upon the dear old farm.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

By Telephone

I never saw my love ; but I

Can fancy that she 's wond'rous fair :
With splendid eyes, that flash and shine

Beneath her wealth of lustrous hair.
I know her lips are cherry red,

Her cheeks like blossoms newly blown ;
And I am wild to see her since,

I fell in love by telephone.

I never stood beside my love ;

I never held her hand in mine ;
I never saw her smile, but, oh,

Her voice is dulcet, sweet, divine !
I stand beside the instrument,

And catch with gladness every tone ;
And count myself most happy when,

I love my love by telephone.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

By The Groundhog

Don't smoke your hams till you 've killed the pig ;

Do n't buy the carpet till the roof is thatched ;

Do n't measure the milk till the calf is there ;

Do n't count the chickens till the eggs are hatched.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Canada First

To home and Country shouts we raise I
For Home and Land to Heaven we cry !

In Home and Country let us live
For Home and Land we stand to die !

This Land us bred : these Hills are ours :
These Mighty Floods that seaward roll

We know no masters but ourselves
We know no bounds this side the pole !

God gave to us these Reaching Woods :
The Spreading Lakes we sail upon ;

We hold them for our children's right
And who is he intrudes thereon?

And we shall till the Rolling Plains
That reach into the setting sun ;

'Tis our Dominion to extend

To coasts that lave the Great Ocean.

To Home and Country shouts we raise !

For Home and Land to Heaven we cry !
In Home and Country let us live

For Home and Land we stand to die !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Chickens Come Home To Roost

The world is wide and the faithful tide

Returns to the welcome sands ;
It 's often true that the work we do

Conies back to its maker's hands.
And every man knows the wondrous plan

By creation introduced :
Be it soon or late, at a certain date,

The chickens come home to roost.

JBe careful, then, ye sons of men,

What reckless words ye say ;
Be they good or ill, your sayings will

On your threshold stand some day.
You 'll bear the blame, for all the shame

Was by your lips produced ;
You 'll know it then, and feel it when

Your chickens come home to roost.

Many a time you 've dipped in slime

The name of a modest maid ;
With scandal's dirt you Ve fouled her skirt

And made her soul afraid.
Your evil tongues have snapped the rungs

Till the ladder of fame was loosed,
But you 'll get your pay at the close of day

When the chickens come home to roost.

The words you say are hidden away
On the fateful judgment shelf ;

You 'll yield your breath in a fearful death
'Neath the wall you Ve built yourself.

Be careful, then, ye sons of men,

When the shadows are all unloosed,

For soon or late you must face your fate
When your chickens come home to roost.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Dead You Say

The owner of millions, he smiling stood
And gazed through the window in laughing mood ;
And a lad came in with a frightened face,
And stood at his feet with a boyish grace ;
And, lifting his brow, he trembling said,
' They sent me tell you the baby 's dead !'

' What? dead, you say !' and the man turned white
' Why, it slept on my bosom all last night !'

He glanced at the boy with a darkening eye :
' Why should my only baby die?'

Then he staggered home and he touched his wife,
With a touch as kind as the breath of life ;
Then she looked in his eyes and she gave a moan,
And touched the forehead as cold as stone ;
She stood by the couch with her lips apart.
' Oh, baby, return to your mother's heart.'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Dolly's Foal

' Mammy, mammy !' the wee girl cried ;
The mother dropped a plate
And hurried o'er the farmyard wide,

And stood at the open gate.
Dolly was there but not alone,

For surely there 's something droll,
She stoops her head with cough and moan

As Dolly kisses her foal.

' Mammy, mammy ! it cannot rise

Oh, let 's help it, mammy, please.'
Gladness dances in Dolly's eyes

As they help it to its knees ;
She seems to know what all this means,

Each eye is a brimful ' thank,'
As the wee colt, all astonished, leans

'Gainst the old mare's quivering flank.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Don'T Come Again

There is silence in the parlor, and the pretty girl sits

still,

And her coolness fills our hero with an awful kind of

pain ;

But his spirit quite collapses when she says in tones

that kill,

' My mother does 'nt like you, and you must n't come

again.'

He stammers out a hope that she 's probably mistaken,

And a hope goes rushing o'er him like a shadow

o'er a plain ;

But she lisps a little sentence, like the lisp of babe for-

saken :

' My father does n't like you, and you must n't come

again.'

But still his heart is warlike, and he makes one more

attempt ;

But the answer that she gives him fills his noble

heart with pain

(From the pangs of living none of us were ever yet

exempt)

u My brothers do not like you, and you must n't come

again.'

His feeble knees are shaken, and the dew upon his fore-

head

Was hanging thick as Ceylon's pearls on Bishop
Heber's plain ;

But she took a little pencil and she wrote upon the door
head,

' My sisters do not like you you must n't come again.'

Then he pulled a hundred thousand from his pockets

with a swing ;

She blushed the gentle creature and the love light

came again ;

You ought 've said you had it, you naughty, naughty

thing!'

And the family sang a chorus, ' Old chappie, come
again!'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Don'T Tell Mother

I thing I'm dying, Tom, old boy; I'm all broke up

to-night ;

I feel so sick at heart I wish I 'd never see the light ;
For I 've done wrong, yes, very wrong ; I 've thrown

myself aw r ay

Oh ! if the old folks heard it, Tom, I wonder what

they 'd say !

For when I left for Winnipeg my dear old mother said,
' My boy, do always what is right and never be afraid ;
Don't drink, my boy, and keep away from those who

do what 's wrong ;

And every hour, I '11 pray to God to keep you brave

and strong.'

So if I die to-night, my boy, keep constant by my side,
And never, never, never, Tom, tell mother how I died.

Oh, Tom ; I so remember well the morn I came away ;
The air was full of singing birds and sweet with scented

hay;

And through the rustling apple trees the wind came

soft and slow,

And by my side stood mother, dear Oh ! Tom she

loved me so ;

Her poor old hands held mine, dear Tom, her eyes were

full of tears,

And in her dear old loving heart there bubbled mystic

fears ;

For, Tom, you must remember I was her only son
Oh ! God forgive me for the pain I 've caused that

suffering one !

Oh, give me water, quick ! dear Tom, and stay here by

my side,

And if I die to-night, do n't tell my mother how I died.

I kissed her lips and promised her I 'd try and do so

well

Oh ! curse the words that from my lips that summer

morning fell !

For in my heart the serpent lay, for, hear me, Tom,

just think

I swore upon my bended knees I 'd never, never drink,
And then I held her to my heart, and felt her blessing

fall,

And as I darted through the gate I heard my mother

call:

My boy ! my boy ! my only one ! my son, come back to

me!'

But I could never more come back ah ! that can never

be,

For when I said I 'd never drink the angel knew I lied ;

But if I die to-night, dear Tom, do n't tell her how I

died.

I came and did my best, old boy, but I was weak and
foiled,
And every day the serpent's folds were 'round my
reason coiled ;
I tried to break the hideous bonds and choose a better
fate;
But I was feverish, weak and faint, and now I sob,
'Too late!
Too late! too late! Oh, God! too late! I heard my
mother moan,
And in my breast to-night, old boy, my heart lies like a
stone.

Come nearer, nearer, nearer, Tom, stay closer to my
side
And promise, Tom, you '11 never tell my mother how I
died.

Oh, keep your word, old boy, if you her poor old life
would save ;
The truth would bring her old gray hair in sorrow to
the grave ;

Oh, let her die and think that I was ever true and good,
And that I always did the best, the very best I could
I see her face, I feel her hand my burning brow upon ;
I hear her whisper in my ear, and now, O God ! she 's
gone !

I cannot see now, dear Tom, come nearer to my side,

And as the God above 's your judge, don't tell her how

I died.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Draw Up To The Fire

Draw up to the fire, stranger ;
You can't go out on a day like this,
When the drifts are high an the blizzards hiss ;
Yer comfortabler with us, I wis

Stranger, draw up to the fire.

Dinner '11 be ready in half a minute ;
Th old woman 's bilin the half er a ham,
'N thurs turmots, 'n cabbage, 'n taters, 'n jam ;
Load up the stove with hickory, Sam-
Stranger, draw up to the fire.

Jim, hang up the gentleman's overcoat ;
Ye come from the city I see, like 's not
Yer welcome to stay an share what we Ve got.
Mother, what's that bubblin top of the pot?
Dumplins ? Dumplins !

Stranger, draw up to the fire.

Kind o hard weather fer March, ain't it?
I pities the poor folk in town, say I,
With pork, 'n pertaters, 'n coals so high.
Mother, is that custurd er punkin that sorrel pie ?

Punkin? Pimkin !
Stranger, draw up to the fire.

I was warmed and fed in that grand old kitchen ;
They tucked me up as I went away,
And I felt as I drove thro' the winter day,
The heartiest words a man can say

Are, ' Stranger, draw up to the fire.'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Ebenezer's Kid

Ebenezer Orin he werz a friend of mine at school,
A mighty harnsome fellow an a very decent chap ;
The teacher uster crack us with the same old hickery rule,
And warm our epidermis with the same old cowhide

strap.

We uster eat our lunches from the same old battered pail,

We uster go afishin with the same old ashen rod,
We used to sit an whistle on the same old basswood rail,

An et our stoo for dinner from the same old timer cod.

To-night I got a letter with a postmark strange and foreign,

(It 's seldom that a letter comes my lonely life to cheer),
'Twas signed by one I uster know, by Ebenezer Orin

I had n't seen my comrade old for more 'n twenty year.
He arsked about the boys an girls, with manner light an
bland ;

Bout Suze, Louise and Harriet, bout Jack an Jim an

Sid,

An then ther was a postscript in a lady's flowing hand,

' Enclosed please find a photograph of Ebenezer's kid.'

I cud beat thet Ebenezer at spellin er at writin

At adden up some figures, why, he didn't fizz on me ;
I mostly took the largest share of all the village fightin :

I cud lose him in a foot-race and beat him climb a tree ;
But in the race he 's beat me in the wondrous race of
life

For I am all alone an lost in fog and darkness hid ;

He 's got a happy little home a dainty little wife

Dear me, I think I'm envious of Ebenezer's kid.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Filling Up The Barn

The barn is full of barley and it 's loaded up with wheat :
They are pulling at the peas and the oats are all in

shock ;

The brown-armed boys that did it a-toiling in the heat,
Have made themselves this winter as solid as a rock :
Underneath the kitchen there 's a barrel full of meat,
And lovely gilt-edge butter 's nicely packed inside a

crook.

There are heroes made of muscle and splendid bone and

brawn :

They can slash the solid maple in the winter by the

cord;

So early in the morning they are up before the dawn

To feed the grateful cattle with the best they can afford ;
And they feed the watchful poultry on the wide and

pleasant lawn

They do it for their fellows and the glory of the Lord,
But while they labor steadily they live upon the best ;
You ought to see the table where these hearty fellows
eat:

Preserves and cake and apple-pie each stores inside his

vest,

To see them at the biscuits hot is really quite a treat ;
For the farmer girls as bakers have always stood the test :
They are sweeter than their citrons and richer than
their wheat.

Gentle Spring

I sit with my feet in the oven,

My nose close up to the pipe ;
I 'm as jokey as any spring robin,

That 's fresh and is rather unripe.

I still wear my ear muffs and cap ;

I still to my overcoat cling ;
Still I feel it my duty to sit

And warble of ; Beautiful Spring.

But my warble is husky and harsh,
And my melody suffers from cracks ;

For the froglets down there in the marsh
Are shivering with humps on their backs.

Of my country I 'm awfully proud ;

So I close to the cooking stove cling,
And lilt, like a dog in a shroud,

Of the coming of Beautiful Spring.

The neck of old winter's giraffic,

It reaches far out into May ;
O, come with your sonnet seraphic,

Sweet robin, come early, I pray.

But be sure and put overshoes on ;

Bring an overcoat over your wing,
And a bag full of mufflers and socks,

When you herald Ethereal Spring.

But still will I manfully sit,

While I close to the cooking stove cling ;
In the voice of a frosted tomtit

Will I sing of Ethereal Spring.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Glory Hallelujerum Jones

' How Didy git that name? you ask :'
The speaker sat on the herring cask :
He oped his knife and whittled a stick

u He got that name when the woods wuz thick ;
When roads wuz scurse and swamps wuz wide,
An the big grey wolves knew where to hide.
He toddled away from home, he did,
One day when he wuz a little kid ;
The fields he passed, the creek he crossed,
An Glory Hallelujerum Jones wuz lost !

' They blew the horn, an the neighbors kem,
An they brought their muskets 'long with them ;
Ole man Jones wuz all on the jump ;
He climbed on top of an ole pine stump.
He said : ' When the cedars ye enter in
Shout ' Glory Hallelujerum,' loud 's ye kin ;
It 's his favorite hymn that poor little coon
Will answer ye quick when he hears that toon.
Shout while yer seekin my blue-eyed boy,
Shout, ' Glory Hallelujerum, glory Hallelujerum-
Glory Hallelujerum, ahoy!"

' So they lit thur torches an all sot out,
An down in thur woods they gev er shout :

' Glory Hallelujerum !'
The song went swelling up in the dark,
Ho ! Glory Hallelujerum, hark !
An ole man Jones he led thur crowd,
An now an then he 'd holler out loud :

* Do n't fire yer guns, you 'll frighten thur boy ;
Sing glory Hallelujerum, glory Hallelujerum
Glory Hallelujerum, ahoy !'

' The moon wuz dark an the stars wuz hid

Pritty hard luck for thur little kid ;
But the neighbors sang in the darksome brush

Gul lory Hallelujerum ! hush !'
The woman folks cried in their clearings dark,

Glory Hallelujerum ! hark !'
Every art they did employ
To scar thur wolves an fin that boy ;
His father kissed his last new toy
With Glory Hallelujerum, glory Hallelujerum
Glory Hallelujerum, ahoy!'

At last a cheer burst thro the night,

Gul lory Hallelujerum !
The torches blazed in a circle of light,

Gul lory Hallelujerum !
Thur he sot as spry as a frog,
An cool an content as a knot on a log !
Fer that little kid wuz full of sand ;
He wuz singing away to beat the band

Glory Hallelujerum!'
Lost?' says he (it's whut he sed),
want a wolf to draw my sled !
Yiv frightened the Injuns with that hoorah ;
I wanted a scalp to give ter maw!'
Then the forest rocked with a song of joy,
An Jones he yelled, es he hugged his boy,
Gul lory Hallelujerum, glory Hallelujerum
Gul lory Hallelujerum, ahoy!"

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Grandmother's Quilt

There 's an old, old quilt a dear old quilt

A warm old quilt, at home,
As near and dear to my heart to-day

As when I began to roam ;
It covered the new-born baby :

It covered the solemn dead :
It covered me up when I was a boy,

Asleep on Grandmother's bed.

Of patches 't is made, and quaint old pieces

Of Grandmother's dresses are seen ;
And pieces from gowns of her sisters and nieces,

In yellow, and red and green.
There are pieces of silk O, the rare old silk !

And reds ah ! the rare old reds !
And bits of satin as white as milk,

In the quilt on Grand-ma's bed.

There are patterns, odd, that have n't been seen

Since Jaques Cartier was here ;
There are patterns you 'd think that could n't have been-

So comical, quaint and queer.
This is the dress my Grandmother wore,

When she welcomed the heroes who bled
At Queenston Heights : here 's a piece, you see,

In the quilt on Grandmother's bed.

But the patch I love, the dearest of all,
Is a glittering patch of white ;

I never can see it with out a pang
Yet mixed with a strange delight.

'T is a piece of the gown that my Mother wore,
When she to the altar was led ;

It 's the sweetest patch of them all, I think,
In the quilt on Grandmother's bed.

'T was Grandmother's bed it 's Mother's bed ;

And Grand-ma's long gone home :
She called me and kissed me before she died,

And warned me never to roam.
One wish I would to my friends bequeath,

When I my race have sped :
Just lay me down for an hour beneath

The quilt on Grandmother's bed.j

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

He Ate Their Ma

A Lonely widow, generous and kind,

And still withal a poor and friendless creature,

Was much amazed and greatly pleased one day
To get a visit from the district preacher.

The worthy man could eat as well as pray,

But her poor cupboard with its scraps and pickins

Could ill make up a meal, so forth she went
And slew the mother of a brood of chickens.

And she forthwith a toothsome pie prepared :
The preacher ate it all, pronounced it splendid

While in the yard the orphan chickens all

Their sad and hungry cries in chorus blended.

In vain from out the stubborn turf they tried

With feeble toes the luscious worms to claw up ;

And as the preacher passed, an urchin cried,
' Chickens, dere's de man wat et yer maw up.'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

He Keepeth Them

' 'Twas a long, long winter,' said the Bug,
' But I didn't have to eat,
And in the wraps of Nature's rug

I slumbered calm and sweet.
I fear no harm in sun or snow,' saith he,
' For He who keeps the children keepeth me.'

' 'Twas a long, long winter,' said the Fawn,
' But I never hungry went,
And 'gainst the wolves, at dark or dawn,

The bow of God was bent.
I fear no harm in sun or snow,' saith he,
' For He who keeps the children keepeth me.'

' The cold was long, and yet ' the Orphan said,
' I never hungry went,
And Someone warmed me in my little bed,

And food I longed for sent.
I fear no harm in sun or snow, for He

Who keeps the Bugs and Fawns, He keepeth me.'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

He Knew Jim

I 'm the same age ez Garfield wuz,
An I went t' school with him ;
But here I be in No. i
While millions is mournin Jim.
I knowed him better 'n I know you

He lived next farm to us ;
But he wuz good ez wheat, while I

Wuz allus a worthless cuss.

Why I can well remember when
He driv an Erie mule,

An I would stand aside and say,

Well, you 're a thundren fool !
But on he 'd go with laughing eye,

Whistlin a Meth'dist hymn
And here I be in No. i

While millions is mournin Jim.

I went down and he went up :

Queer when I come to think,
Jim ud never go on a whirl

An never learned to drink.
I tell you what there must hev been

A lot of sand in Jim,
Fer here I be in No. i

While millions is mournin him.

Why blame it, I remember Jim

In rags an such when I
Wuz dressed like any dry goods clerk,

An reckoned pretty fly.
I had a chance to climb the hill

God never gave to Jim,
Yet here I am in No. i

While millions is mournin him.

Why did n't they go to work and shoot

A worthless cuss like me?
But he, poor chap, wuz fit to die,

Which ain't my case, d' ye see.
I wish that I was dead an gone,

Once more along of Jim ;
But here I be in No. i

While millions is mournin him.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

He Never Hed Read It Afore

I' ve brot back thet Testment ye lent me :

I never bed read it afore ;
I know 't was a good turn ye meant me,

And now I 'm bankerin fer more.
I 've read it all throo an I 'm posted ;

One part in perticklar suits me
The place wher the Son uv Man roasted

Thet thur thunderin Pharisee !

This airth is as old as Methoosalum,

An still she 's a wantin a nurse ;
This town is es bad es Jeroosalum,

If not jest a little bit worse.
You see I 'm among the beginners,

And these, purty near, air my views :
Ef Jesus kem here he'd find sinners,

An most uv um would n't be Jews.

By Him they 'd not be a gainer

I mean by the temperance dodge
Cuz Christ ain't a total abstainer,

An could n't git into a lodge.
O, how the Sanhedrin would volley

Their charges till Heaven was dim ;
Ef Jesus should ride on a trolley

On the day that 's named after Him !

Las evenin says I to my Missus :
Ef Christ was seen in a car

On Sunday, the Pharisees' hisses
The pillars of Heaven would jar ;

The preachers would nag us an jab us,
An urge us to join in the cry

That Pilate should give us Barrabas
And let the pore Nazarene die.

I like that there book of yours, mister,

Fer sense, it 's on top of the pile
Thanks : I 'll keep it an use it to blister

A hypocrite once in a while.
Saint Paul knew how to bamboozle em :

Ef he to this city should stray
'T would rattle him worse 'n Jerooselum,

An that 's my opinion Good day !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Her Father's Dinner Pail

I see her every day at noon

Slip thro' the crowded street
Like some sweet spirit clad in black,

So noiseless are her feet.
Her eyes of brown are soft and sweet,

Her pretty figure, frail ;
She carries in her little hand

Her father's dinner pail.

How serious is her gentle face,

How wise her woman's way ;
For she has taken mother's place,

Who died the other day.
She 'tends the baby that was left

And stills its feeble wail,
Except when she must go abroad

With father's dinner pail.

She mends the children's dresses ;

Her little brothers three
They lisp their prayer at bed-time

All clustered round her knee.
Each morning she prepares a lunch

For father without fail,
And dons her shawl and hood at noon

To take the dinner pail.

A blessing on your sweet young face,

True and faithful heart,
No heroine was ere so true

Or fearless as thou art ;
And I will wait and watch each day,

And I will never fail
To see thy pretty figure pass

With father's dinner pail.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Her Pretty Print Dress

She is like a soft caress
In her pretty print dress,

And blushing she tells me that it cost her just a dollar ;

But she 's pretty as a picture, with her linen cuffs and
collar,

And her fifty cent hat-
There 's an anthem hid in that

And the reason that I like it is, it hides no shining tress ;

It matches cuffs and collar and the pretty print dress.

Each little canvas shoe

Keeps saying ' Sir,' to you,
When she 's walking in the sunshine in the August

afternoon,
Or by the inland ocean, beneath a harvest moon ;

And the little strip of stocking

Seems mocking, mocking, mocking,

And it fills the very angels that are watching with distress ;
But that shoe and stocking matches the pretty print dress.

So I buy a bunch of roses,

And soon my gift reposes

Upon the dainty bosom of her pretty print dress.
(I love to see the roses her innocence caress).

And when I praise her outfit

She takes a little pout fit,

And she hangs her pretty head as if in great distress ;
But she knows I think she 's lovely in her pretty print
dress.

1 9 0

She made that dress herself
(The handy little elf!)
She trimmed that wondrous hat, also, with cunning fingers

nimble ;
(A little humming bird's egg would make too large a
thimble !)

And when she goes out walking,
It 's really no use talking,

The admiration that I feel I scarcely can repress,
When I see her shioing in the sun in her pretty print
dress.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Here He Is Again

Did you ever try to dodge a man

A man you did n't like ?

You can't escape a man like that :

He 's the man you always strike.

He comes with open, outstretched paw ;

He smiles you 're filled with pain,

And in your soul you whisper, ' Pshaw !'

For here he is again !

On island, park or crowded street

He seems to bubble up ;

Where'er you go that man you '11 meet,

And aloes fill your cup.

He grabs you with his hated claw ;

His gall is cool as rain ;

Your stricken spirit whispers, ' Pshaw !'

Lo, here he is again !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Holding The Reins

The night was clear, the sleighing good,

The cutter seat not wide ;
She snuggled close beneath the robe

To her fond lover's side.
The horse was spirited, and jumped

With frequent tugs and strains,
Until she innocently said,
' Do let me hold the reins !'

They 're married now, perhaps because

She was so helpful then :
She loves him well, and he loves her

Well, it 's the way of men.
And yet in all their sweet delight

One sad thought makes him wince :
She held the reins that winter's night

She 's held them ever since.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

How Jim Got Religion

This preacher I speak uv his name wur Payne,

An he wur a hustler, you bet ;
To see him preach would do you good ;

He 'd holler, and jump and sweat,
An pound the bible and preach away

So furious, fast and free,
Till he 'd raise the roof of the Mefedus church

With the shout, ' Salvation's free !'

He had converted all the bums

Around the mills but one,
An thet wus Old Man Wilson's Jim

A reglar son uv a gun !
An he could lick his size and weight

A powful sort of clown
You could n't say this loafer drank :

He simply poured it down !

One night this Jim got bilin drunk,

An kem to church thet way ;
An raised a row ez Payne got down

Upon his knees to pray.
The preacher sed, ' In vain, my friends,

I 've tried to save this man ;
O, pray thet I have strength, fur now

I 'll try another plan.

An then he peeled off coat and vest,
An went fur that thur Jim,

An thumped him on the nose and made

A holy show uv him.
He jammed him here, he lammed him there,

He slammed him every way ;
And then he knelt him down an sed,
My brethern, let us pray !'

An this here Jim began to cry,

An prayed with all his might,
An asked the Lord to make him clean

An spotless in His sight ;
An ever since this Jim hez been

Ez good ez he kin be,
Fur thet was he who raised the hymn,
I 'm glad salvation's free.'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Hustle!

Look your scythe and mower over,

Hustle !

Blossoms now are on the clover ;

Hustle !

Haying time is drawing near
Perfumed nights will soon be here,
For timothy is out in ear,

Hustle !

Soon you '11 have to hump yourself,

Hustle !

And on the mower bump yourself ;

Hustle !

And while your hired help is snoring,
Or o'er the weekly paper poring,
You '11 feed the hogs and do the choring,

Hustle !

But down the lane I see your daughter

Bustling !

It 's hot she brings you fresh well water,

Rustling !

Your tired heart she brings a salve to ;
She milks the cows and feeds the calf, too-
Whoever gets that girl will have to

Hustle !

I8 The Kuan's Canticles

I hush the wail along my trail
Past hamlet, home and hollow,

While on I go with noiseless flow
And robin red-breasts follow.

And like a psalm, benign and calm,

I blight the brow of winter ;
I snap the chains that hold the reins

The fields of ice I splinter ;
And like the tide I run and ride,

The bated winds I swallow ;
Triumphant still past rock and rill,

And robin red-breasts follow.

A wing of light from night to night

My perfumed chariot passes,
And I can hear in meadows clear

The whispering of the grasses ;
With joyous face I onward race

Past hopeless height and hollow,
While swift and strong with simple song

My robin red-breasts follow.

The north wind bleeds the rustling reeds

The happy news is telling,
And I can hear in forests near

The juicy leaf -buds swelling ;
I onward rush without the thrush,

The red bird or the swallow,
You need n't mind, for close behind

My robin red-breasts follow.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

I'LI Follow Jane

I put my faith in Janey Smith,

Religion does n't bother me ;
It 's somethin I do n't monkey with ;

I never learned the trick d' ye see ?
They say I 'm on the road to hell ;

Jes so I think my course is plain,
Fer I 'm all right and doin well

I 've put my faith in little Jane.

Religious folk hev struv and raved,

An did their best at ' savin ' me
What nonsense this fer I Ve bin saved ;

The pen'tent bench was Janey's knee.
I promised Jane I would n't fight,

Ner chaw, ner swear, ner drink again ;
My Savior kem to me that night

A well- worked scheme of Him and Jane,

I uster go to church an sich,

An take pertracted meetins in,
They flummixed me, an which was which

I could n't tell, amonxt the din.

This hell menagerie business hit

Me wrong side up it was n't plain ;

I can't surround the church a bit,
But I can understand my Jane.

She does n't nag me 'bout my soul :

She does n't say I 'm soaked in sin ;
She sits an sings Roll, Jordan, Roll,

An I jist dropp a chorus in ;
An when I tell her what they say,

Thet I am damned an sway behind,
She looks up in her gentle way

With : ' Do what 's right an never mind.'

The Lord's right hand holds Janey's hand,

An her right hand is holdin me ;
Their love is my salvation, an

I 'm proud to say salvation's free ;
An when I 've kep my word a year,

An wore off all the old-time stain,
Then I will read my title clear

To heaven on earth and little Jane.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

I'LI Steal For Her

I'll steal the breath of the opening leaf

And breathe it against your cheek ;
I'll steal the scent of the autumn sheaf

For thee, oh maiden meek ;
I'll steal the catkins where willows bide,

Where bees that bumble sip ;
I'll steal the wealth of the forest wide

And splash it against your lip.

I'll steal a song from the blue bird's throat

And I'll pour it in your ear ;
From the broken nest where the hen hawks gloat,

Darling, I'll steal a tear.
I'll steal a kiss from the swallow sweet,

A laugh where the black birds be,
A dance from under the robins' feet,

Darling, I'll steal for thee !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Jezebel

Ere her career was interrupt,
Fair Jezebel, that soulless thing !

Had made the Israelites corrupt,

And with her arts debauched their king.

The city of their Lord she drenched
With blood of holy men and true ;

And where the fires of God were quenched,
The bosky groves of Baal grew.

No more the smoke of sacrifice

Rose softly in the holy air ;
Her jeweled hands were like a vise,

That stayed the pulses of a prayer.

She took the vessels : in her pride,

Their fragments on the ground she spread,
And, trampling on them, thus she cried :
' The foolish olden faith is dead !'

The God of Israel heard the word,
And thundered on a castle wall ;

Great Jehu buckled on his sword,
And came in answer to the call.

For when the tares and thistles breed,
And wheat is dead for want of rain,

God keeps His big Heart full of seed,
To sow the barren earth again.

THE KHANS CANTICLES. I 17

So Jehu hastes : his thoroughbreds

Are straining at the bit and trace ;
His casque is bound with golden threads

There is a glory in his face.

And Jezebel beholds him come :

No soul can tell what fear she feels

The sound is not of horn or drum ;

But rush of hoofs and crash of wheels.

Her minions shrink beyond her call ;

The color from her visage slips
The famished dogs beside the wall

Glare in her face, and lick their lips.

One moment, and the queen was wroth !

Another, and her doom she saw ;
She looked below the bloody froth

Was dripping from each wolfish jaw !

A rush a roar a scream of fright

Was ever such a vengeance seen !
And when the darkness fell, that night,

The dogs were kenneled with a queen.

But had she lived, and loveless grown,
She 'd been a convert, stern and good ;

She 'd lead class meetins to the throne,
And prayed for all the neighborhood !

She 'd start some kind of lodge, and screech,

And for the Lord grow very bold ;
She 'd plead, palaver, pray and preach

That 's Jezebel, when plain and old !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

John Wesley

Since last he looked on earth an age

Of rounded years is gone ;
But working still, with joy and 'peace for wage,

His soul goes marching on.

A hundred years have passed away, and yet,

Altho' the time was long,
The children that he taught cannot forget

The singer or his song.

He lit the lamps along the darkened track,

That men their way might win ;
He pushed the curtains that hid heaven back

And let the sunlight in.

He brushed aside the thorns of scorn and malice,

And kept his onward way
The frown of power or the pride of palace

Ne'er darked his shining day.

He planted fig trees in the desert places :

He pruned the barren parts :
He shed a light upon the people's faces,

And warmed their hopeless hearts.

The chains of cold neglect and sloth he sundered :

He beat their walls amain ;
And thro' the land the splendid anthem thundered

That Christ was born again.

And then the world awoke, and its awaking

Shook mountain top and glen ;
The teacher saw the hands of angels shaking

The outstretched hands of men.

And ever since the tide of life is flowing

The wakened hosts to save ;
And ever since the flowers of love are growing

On Wesley's honored grave.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Jonah And The Whale

Were I to say that Jonah was n't swollered by the whale
The Pharisees would wag their beards, and raise a fearful
gale!

Do n't get so much oxsited, me orthodox gazelles !
Ner be so ready all to onst to talk of infidels

I 'm ready to admit, fer all yore feelins sakes,
Thet Aaron's sarpint got outside the gypsy fakir's

snakes ;

Thet Pharaoh an his host in the Red Sea went to grass ;
Thet Samson whacked the Boers with the fragment of an

ass;

Thet, in that awful battle at the foot of Adjalon,
The sun above fergot to move, an wondering looked on ;
Thet David with a pebble cracked the great Goliath's

crown ;

Thet a fifteen dollar she-ass turned the prophet Baalam

down ;

Elijer on the chariot ! I believe it without fail ;
But I draw the line, me bucco, at Jonah an the whale !

Of course it 's in the Bible an it shorely beats creation
You ax me what I stumble at : I answer Ventilation !
Wher wuz the ventilation fer a gent like Jonah was ?
He cud n't keep his head outside the annermile's big jaws !
Many 's the able prophet an preacher hez gone dead,
Fer sleepin jist one night in the famerly spare bed !
Then think uv thish yer Jonah brought up from infancy,
Without a thought uv sorrer, in the lap uv luxury

Compelled inside that creechur three days to make his

home,

Without a change of underclothes, a tooth brush er a

comb !

I tell ye its reediclous ! an you kin rip an rail

I draw the line, me bucco, at Jonah an the whale !

I think I see the angels comin down an peepin in,

To see the pore ole prophet gettin punished fer his sin :

To crawl behind the liver he found some room to spare

The angels sez : ' Ah ! Peek a boo ! we see you hiding

there !

You 're tickled half to death, it seems ; it 's pretty cold

to-day :

You 're glad you did n't hump yoreself an go to Nineveh ;

Do n't be so bashful, Jonah, it 's ages since we met

Friends, see the pore ole hoo-doo he 's soakin with the

wet!

He 's down the mouth, fer certain ; but it cannot be denied

He 's hit his luck this time, fer sure, an got on the inside !'

What ye think uv that ther start fer a common circus tale?

I draw the line, me bucco, at Jonah an the whale !

The whale is all the world around, an Jonah's each uv us !

Thet whale is swallerin, every day, some pore onlucky

cuss

Dishonesty, deceit, the lie, and broken trust ;
Vice an morbid appertite, with laziness an lust ;
Envy, hatred, malice, the charity that fails
Ev course, me bucco, understand there 's many kind of
whales !

Sometimes it is an office, a title, er a name ;
Sometimes it is a bucket-shop, er other little game :

204 THE KHAN'S CANTICLES.

The brothel an the bar-room ; the insufficient pay,
Thet barely keeps the body not the soul from day to
day;
The whales thet tempt the children when they 're only in
their teens ;

The educated asses that should be raising beans ;
The wild revival meeting where young folks weep and
w r ail,
Then straggle home at twelve p. m. 's a slippry kind of
whale.

In short, their mouths are open the gate that leads to
hell!
Them 's the whales what swallers Jonahs, me gentle
young gazelle !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Just Two Friends

I ve only got two friends on earth :

I owe them both a debt ;
No matter what my trouble was

They 've never failed me yet ;
They lead me to the narrow way

They draw me from the broad ;
They seek for me by night, by day

My mother and my God.

They never place a stumbling block

Across my toilsome track,
Nor multiply my many faults

When I have turned my back.
And when I try to find the path

The blessed Savior trod,
They point His footsteps out to me

My mother and my God.

These are the two that I can trust

Wherever I may be ;
Ah, well I know they 'll never fail

Or treacherous prove to me !
And yet they do not spare I oft

Have felt their chastening rod ;
Yet, still I put my faith in them

My mother and my God.

Keep Your Mouth Shet

That 's me ! But nobody knows it,

Er's onto the racket but me ;
Wen anyone asks me, ' How goes it?'

I jes keep my mouth shet see?
Wen others are blatherin away

Argyin, chewin and frothin
I quietly cock up my hay,

Er jest saw wood and say nothin !

I 'm sparkin ole Purpletop's gal :

So 's six other fellers sides me ;
Thur talkin her hair outer curl,

Wile I keep me mouth shet see?
They chatter an splutter and hiss,

Like a big lamp-glass with a moth in ;
Wile I casionally corral a kiss,

Er jes saw wood an say nothin !

I reckon I 'm doin um up ;

Each talks too much with his mouth,
While I sit es cool as the North,

An they air as hot es the South.
She sits twixt me an the smarties

A dear little queen on her throne ;
Half-way between the two parties

An elegant Temperate zone !

Las night I held up a ring :

I said ne'er a word I wuz dumb !

She held up her pretty brown hand

Two fingers an one little thumb.

Sez I, in a whisper, ' Three days?'

She frowned, an my bosom was prodded ;

I gasped ' Do you mean in three months?'

She smiled like an angel and nodded !

So you see I am doin um up,

In spite uv ther chinnin an frothin ;

I set by the wood box an grin,

And take it all in and say nothin !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Kiss Her Everyday

Reader, have you got a wife?

Kiss her ev'ry day.
'Tis the duty of your life

To kiss her ev'ry day.
Tell her that the world is graced
By such as she, the true, the chaste ;
Then put your arm around her w r aist,

And kiss her ev'ry day.

Tell her that she's growing prettier

Every dawning day ;
Dearer, nearer, wiser, wittier

Kiss her ev'ry day.
Many lives are graveward carried,
Wounded, bruised and hurt and harried :
Courting ceased when they were married-

Often that's the way.

Tell your wife how much you 'd miss her

If she went away.
Take her in your arms and kiss her

Many times a day.
Tell her she 's your life and crown,
Never leave her with a frown,
Keep your ugly temper down,

And kiss her ev'ry day.

Winter, summer, rain or shine,
Never sulk and blame ;

Kiss Me Papa

' Kiss me, papa' but the father,

Troubled racked -with worldly care,
Hurried out alone impatient-
Left his blue-eyed baby there.

' Kiss me, papa' he could hear it
Hear the baby voice so sweet ;

' Kiss me, papa,' still he heard it
Ringing down the busy street.

All day long, amid the frenzy
Of the mighty city's roar,

He could hear his baby pleading-
Pleading till his heart grew sore.

All day long the smile of fortune
Filled his worldly soul with joy ;

Then at night, with pulses bounding,
Home he sped to meet his boy.

Home he came. The mother voiceless-
Led him to the well-known bed :

There, mid roses, crushed and fragrant,
Lay his baby, cold and dead !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Lady Lilac

Her perfume floats upon me in a perfect avalanche ;
' Glory Hallelujah!' shouts the tree toad on the branch.
She whispers to the silent night, that chilly days are

dead,
And the poorest little maiden has a bouquet by her bed.

Ah ! the pretty little maiden, with the early summer

blent,

Wears a bunch of Lady Lilac on her bosom innocent ;
Many blossoms blossom in the summer, spring and fall,
But the long-loved Lady Lilac is the sweetest of them

all.

The lissome Lady Lilac lifts her tall and graceful crest ;
' Glory Hallelujah !' sighs the cat bird in her nest ;
A little maid is dying, her half-starved life is spilt,
But a dozen plumes of lilac hide the old and shabby
quilt.

Her thin and quivering nostrils seek the sweetest of the

bloom,
And she hears an angel fluttering in the silence of the

room ;

She sees, as she is standing on the golden river's edge,
That Heaven is surrounded by a lovely lilac hedge.
Of all the flowers that blossom in the summer time or

fall,
The dainty Lady Lilac is the sweetest of them all.

Barefoot Lady Lilac is in clover to her knees ;

' Glory Hallelujah !' is the chorus of the bees.
The meanest little duffer in all of Christendom
May for a dainty favor to Lady Lilac come.

For she is what was promised us throughout the month

of May-

God is good ! no matter what evil ones may say
Rarer plants may blossom in the rich and castled hall,
But my darling Lady Lilac is the fairest of them all.

Lucky little baby ! that you were born to-day,
' Glory Hallelujah !' I hear the angels say,
For your birthday will be splendid, in the wondrous

years to come ;

You will see the lilacs pluming, you will hear the wild

bees hum.

The splendid Lady Lilac will a birthday present bring ;
You will hear the tree toad joking, you will hear the

cat bird sing ;

Of all the flowers that perfume fling, when June-time

evenings fall,

My sweetheart, Lady Lilac, is the dearest of them all.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Let Daddy In

The baby had a drunken father,
And he left the child to die.
Years rolled on, the poor old father

Staggered to the gates on high,
By crime and wrong all lit and embered,

And scored by many a foolish sin;
He heard a voice he well remembered,

' Let my poor old Daddy in.'

He leaned against the portal, wondering;

He stooped to hear the noble song,
' The Lord of Hosts,' go rolling, thund'ring

Thro' the pulsing space along,
And thro' the chorus loud and leading

Beating thro' the splendid din

He heard a child's voice faintly pleading,
' Let my poor old Daddy in.'

He wept and looked with sad eyes, tearful;

He saw the splendid Gabriel stand,
His eye benign, his forehead fearful,

Holding high the warder's brand.
A child girl robed in white completely,

Clasped his knees his eye to win,
And pleaded fondly, softly, sweetly,

' Let my poor old Daddy in.'

Then thro' the portal throng came walking

One with wounds on either hand,
He stopped a moment, smiling, talking,

Wrote a sentence in the sand;
Then kindly looked upon the squalor

Thick upon the man of sin:
He had a school behold a scholar,

' Gabriel, bring her Daddy in! '

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Little All Right's Christmas

Little All Right was sick, I ween ;

Little All Right was weak and wan,
And a beautiful angel all unseen

Was fitting his golden slippers on ;
He felt a stranger's soft caress :

He felt a stranger's soft caress :

He looked and smiled with a hopeful nod ;
' Little All Right 's in luck : I guess

He '11 spend his Christmas day with God.'

He went with the angel nurse who waits,

And All Right's boyish soul was gone ;
He hurried aloft to the golden gates

Just at the break of the Christmas dawn ;
The anthems filled his heart with fear :

He shrank away and fain would hide,
'Till he beckoned a small boy angel near

And whispered low : ' Is God inside ?'

The small boy angel sized him up,

And wiped the tears from his frightened eyes ;
He gave him a drink from a golden cup,

Looking so innocent, good and wise ;
And soon a beautiful question came

Came with a flood of heavenly light
A soft voice asked him : ' What's your name?'

And our hero answered : ' I 'm All Right !'

Open they flung the golden gate

In the rose and pearl of the Christmas dawn,

And Little All Right, with heart elate,
Walked in with his golden slippers on ;

Saint Peter bent with a reverent kiss,

And looked in the child's eyes sweet and bright ;

Then gravely asked, ' Now, who is this?'
And heaven thundered, 'He's All Right!'

His Savior came with a splendid grace,
And lifted him on his bended knee ;

All Right looked up in the beauteous face,
And, ' Many happy returns,' said he ;

His Savior gave him a crown of gold,
Studded with jewels pure and bright ;

With these sweet words thereon inscrolled :

' A Christmas present for Little All Right.'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Little Kid Cute One

So Little Kid Cute One died one night,
Arid he, next morning, early and bright,
With little bare feet, unused to plod,
Crept up the hill to the gates of God.
Timid he was in the stranger lands ;
He tapped on the bars with his tender hands :
His tears stood thick on their auburn thatch
A great archangel lifted the latch.
He held the hands of the little lad :
His eyes were full, and his heart was glad ;
He asked the pilgrim, ' Who may you be? '
' I 'm ittle Kid Cute One, sir,' said he.

And all the angels who stood around,
Laughed with a joyous and pleasant sound ;
They patted his curls and kissed his lips,
They touched his eyes with their finger tips
A mother angel, with hallowed head,
Came with a needle and bunch of thread ;

She combed his hair, and she wiped his nose,
She washed his feet and mended his clothes ;
Then asked him up where the children go ;
But he shook his curls and said, ' Ah, no,
I '11 wait till momma sail come fer me,
Fer ittle Kid Cute One 's lost,' quoth he.

They built him a house beside the gate,

And he was happy from morn till late ;

They gave him a job to keep the bolt

Of the stall where dwelt the ass's colt,

That carried our Savior once below,

In angry ages of long ago.

He curried his coat with a tomtit's toes ;

He brushed him down with a big red rose,

And oft he 'd canter the colt abroad,

Across the blossoming fields of God ;

And school-boy angels would cry, ' Hurrah ! '

Whenever they little Kid Cute One saw.

But soon a mother, in anxious plight,
Asked, ' Where is my long lost boy to-night? '

They brought her in where the cherub lay

Smiling asleep, on the scented hay ;

She drew his head on her gentle arm,

And covered his curls with kisses warm ;

He woke and looked in her beaming eyes,

And smiled a smile that was weal and wise ;

He whispered a kiss with sweet lips deft :

' Ittle Kid Cute One never dits left ! '

The mother sobbed on reverent knee :

' I knew my baby would cherished be,

For of such is the kingdom of God,' said she.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Mandy Ann McGowan

In class meetin, my Mandy Ann

She riz, and made my blood run cold :

She sed, ' I am a sinner, Lord
The biggest sinner in the fold !'

Right here I make a big complaint
Agin sich foolish talk es that ;

It makes me sick to see a saint

Stand up a-talkin thro' her hat !

Now, Lord, I'm sayin this to you :

I know my Mandy, deed I do :

Look here ! in all the righteous clan,

From Saint Bersheba down to Dan,
Ther 's nary woman, no ner man,
Kin put a patch on Mandy Ann
On Mandy Ann McGowan.

Why, look ahere ! I know her wort'i ;

Her modest soul is white as snow.
If ther 's a saint in all the yearth

Then Mandy 's one from top to toe ;
An when she says she is n't fit

To touch the white an flowin robe,
I have a pain an there I quit

I know that it would rattle Job !
Et 's just like this : Ef Mandy's shy,
Et 's time to ask, Then, where am I ?

But, pshaw ! when all the list I scan,
From Saint Bersheba down to Dan,
There 's nary preacher, maid ner man,
Kin put a patch on Mandy Ann
On Mandy Ann McGowan.

My Mandy is a spotless lamb ;

She 's far too good fer sich es me,
An ef she fails O, then, I am

A busted up community !
She won't be numbered with the grades :

Beside her other saints look tame ;
She 'd give the preachers cards an spades,

An then she 'd easy win the game.
In sayin this et 's just my ways,
Becuz, uv course, she never plays.
I 've thought it over, best I can :
Saint Bersheba, ner even Dan

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Mary Ann Is Coming Home

Mary Ann is coming home

Coming home to-night,
Daddy 's gone away to fetch her

Make her old home bright.
For a farmer all the summer

She 's been working hard,
And a purse of thirty dollars

Has been her reward.
She will bring it all to mother ;

She 's as good as wheat ;
Was there ever such another?

Make her bed-room neat !

Put a flow'r pot in her window ;

Make her pillows soft ;
She has hungered for home-coming

Many times and oft ;
Roast some apples in the ashes :

Put the kettle on ;
We will wait to make her welcome,

If we wait till dawn.

Mother, here 's your Sunday apron,
Ironed smooth and bright ;

Children, wash your faces someone 's
Coming home to-night.

We will hear poor daddy's wagon

When it 's on the ridge ;
And if not we 'll surely hear it

When it strikes the bridge.
Hester Jennie ! lay the table ;

Put ma's china down :
Move as quick as you are able :

Make the biscuits brown ;
Roast some chestnuts on the fender,

Make that lamp glass bright,
For our sister, sweet and tender,

Comes to us to-night.

Dad will drive you know he rarely

Ever misses meals.
Nero 's barking in the orchard ;

There ! I hear the wheels !
Leave the kitchen door wide open ;

Hear the wagon roll !
Listen ! that was Dolly's signal

Calling to her foal.
Hark ! a rustling in the lilacs,

Ah, I hope I 'm right
Mary Ann! is this our darling?

Welcome home to-night !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Mick's Baby

His fingers trembled on his pick,

And some one said, ' What's wrong with Mick?'

The answer came, ' His baby 's sick,'

And all the vim

Departed from the noisy crowd,
And hung upon them like a shroud,
And not a workman spoke aloud

They pitied him.

The foreman pointed with his stick,
And every eye was turned on Mick,
Till someone said, ' His baby 's sick,'

And strange to tell

He said : ' My man, lay down that pick,
I hear your little baby 's sick ;
Now don't come back to labor, Mick,

Until she 's well.'

And Mick stood up with lifted head :
' I 'm working here to earn her bread,
But I 've just got news that my baby 's dead ;'

And the feeling quick
Ran round the big hard-working crowd,
When he, with air benign and proud,
Said, ' I '11 stick to my work till I earn her a shroud.'
Well done, Mick !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Morning On The Farm

Afar the coming- steeds of day
Are shaking out their manes of grey,
And thro' the clouds of sullen dun
The gleaming threads of silver run ;

The distant woods seem creeping near,

The morning star shines, cold and clear ;

The rooster loud his signal sounds,

The house dog from his kennel bounds ;

The steaming pigs forsake the stacks,

With piles of chaff upon their backs ;

The milk cows hear the cheerful call,

And each one rises in her stall ;

For pleasant sleep they moo their thanks,

Then shake themselves, and lick their flanks ;

And all, a tip-toe, silent wait

To hear the hired man at the gate

To hear him move the sliding bar

That leads to where the turnips are.

The handsome gelding pricks an ear

He knows that feeding time is near ;

He knows that morn is almost here.

The blinking pullets stretch and yawn,
And hail the herald of the dawn ;
They hear with joy the bugle calls,
Awake ! along the hen-house walls ;
They watch the timid steps of day
First, the chilly dun and grey ;
Next, a shade of muffled blue,

With tufts of yellow shining thro'.
The waking sparrows fight outside ;
The timid stars their faces hide,
And still along the hen-house walls
The modest morning careful crawls,
And soon the soft and paling blue
Is changing to a saffron hue.
Then thro' the cobwebbed window flows
A perfect flood of pink and rose ;
Then comes a rush of liquid gold,
And morning o'er the earth is rolled
The cock complacent, with a yawn,
Winds up his watch, for this is dawn.

His call is heard in every home

Beneath the Winter's starry dome ;

The baby in its blanket warm

Turns softly on its mother's arm ;

A tremor curves its parted lips,

And stirs its wee pink finger tips

No longer motionless it lies,

But opens up its dewy eyes

And watches, wond'ring, at the walls

Where maiden morning creeps and crawls

First the dark, and then the dun,

Next gusts of cloudy cobalt run ;

Then breaths of blue and tender rose ;

A wave of crimson inward flows.

The shifting picture doth unfold

Its charming polka dots of gold :

The baby claps its hands with glee,

And wakes its mamma up to see !

Maggie heard it up the stair

The rooster's warning waked her there ;

She lifts the curtain almost dawn ;

She draws her hand-knit stockings on ;

She twists her hair of burnished brown,

And knots it on her stately crown ;

She breathes upon her finger tips ;

Then, wrapped, to the kitchen slips.

The cooking stove is roaring soon :

The big tea kettle 'gins to croon :

The table 's laid in ancient plan ;

The rashers hiss upon the pan :

The buckwheat cakes are baking- brown,

o

And Maggie deftly turns them down.

She breaks the new-laid eggs, and lo !

The bacon archipelago

Is full of snowy isles which fold

Their shining tips of toothsome gold,
And ' Breakfast 's ready ! ' Maggie sings,
As o'er the earth the morning swings.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

My Brother Tom

The old man was reading by the chimney place ;

My eldest sister Jane was getting tea ;
The baby, the dog an a tame coon we had,

Were playin in the corner long with me,
When we heard a great rumpus in the front yard,

Which round our place was an unusual din ;
And a man knocking on the door and shouting out :

'Hullo, within there, folks, hullo, within!'

Now this was long ago, before the railroads

When people went from place to place by stage,
For, mind you all, this country round was forest

When I was shoeless thirteen years of age ;
Wolves and robbers offen caught the travelers,

If they no friendly sheltered place could win :
All this I thought as I sat there a-thinkin,

And he without cried, ' Ho, there, folks within !'

The old man oped the door with shaking fingers ;

A high, slouched, dark-eyed stranger stood revealed ;
And when he saw the blood that stained his features,

My father quaked with sudden fear and reeled.
The stranger slouched him onward to the fire-place ;

His first words fell amid us like a bomb ;
He struck the blood drops from his matted whiskers,

And sullen asked, ' Where is your son called Tom?'

We all stood silent, sick at heart, and dizzy :

The room swam round and round before my eyes ;

The old man crouched him over baby Lizzie
His tongue was tied, he had no power to rise.

Out-side the door I heard poor Roxy Hamill,

Our Tom's young sweet-heart, moaning faint and low :

u It can't be Tom my own, my love, my darling

say it is not Tom I loved him so.'

Then there was speaking 't was the slouched intruder ;

His words were sullen, ominous and brief :

' Our stage was stopped by some one in the gully :

No harm was done, for I I killed the thief !

We brought his body with us. It lies yonder ;

I took this club his iron fingers from :

His hair is auburn and his eyes are hazel

Old man, come, tell me, Where 's your son called Tom ?'

Then wailed my sister, weak and broken hearted,

As father, dizzied, staggered thro' the night ;

Behind him strode the dark-eyed stranger, bearing,

High o'er his head, the red exultant light.

There, near the wood pile, on Roxy Hamill's bosom,

My brother Tom's dead face was pillowed near ;

She rained her kisses on his cold, white forehead :

She poured her love words in his heedless ear.

' The bridge was down,' she cried, ' in Franklin's gully ;

' He ran to stop the stage ere harm befell.'

' Revenge him, God !' my father screamed, back starting,

' And sink his slayer down to deepest hell !'

' Yes, down to hell!' the neighbors clamored madly,

As fled the slayer from the friendly light ;

And all gave chase, save Jane and Roxy Hamill,

Who mourned their dead alone that awful night.

A blow was struck far in the secret forest,

And who that struck it none will ever tell ;

But thro' the darkness rose an old man's crying :

' My curse upon thee down to deepest hell !'

And that is she you saw in Franklin's gully

The blighted, hopeless, helpless, mad and gray-

She waits the stage, to meet with Tom, my brother,

And God is good to such as she, they say.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

My Little Leopardess

Lissom as a lily fragrant as an herb ;

Darling, golden little one, thou art superb !

Cool as is the day-break passionate as the noon :

As fixed as any star as changeful as the moon ;

Your voice is full of music, springing, note by note,

From out the sweet song-tower of your snowy throat.

Your fingers are the petals that shade your soft pink

palm

The hand that fills my universe with either storm or calm ;
And Love has dug a pit for me and flung my fond

heart in

It does not wish escape from out that dimple in your chin.
Your lashes cast their shadows upon a cheek I prize,
To hide love's rare pond lilies afloat within your eyes.

You 're full of sweet caprices ; but I love you for your

faults :

To yield a swift forgiveness my loyal heart ne'er halts.

I know you 're not an angel hush ! let me press that

cheek

Arid whisper : If an angel you 'd tire me in a week !
When I am with you, darling 't will do me good to tell
I 'm very near to heaven and mighty close to hell.

And that 's what makes you precious, my little gem un-
priced ;

Like Judith, you would knife a man : like Mary follow
Christ.

Ah ! I can almost feel your claws in every soft caress ;

But still I love I worship thee : thou little Leopardess !

I lay my hand, unshaking, upon your tawny mane,

And welcome all the joy you bring, nor murmur at the
pain.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

My Summer Fallow

For years my summer-fallow lay,

A wealthy waste of grass and hay

A wilder place you scarce could match

The maiden's famous berry patch.

I Ve counted, when the skies were fair,

Twenty and six sun-bonnets there,

And saw them all in terror break

Before a modest garter snake !

I ever felt a joy intense

To help each fair one o'er the fence,

And praise her ankles or her face,

And get her thanks with artless grace.

Many a ground-hog I have dug

From out his habitation snug ;

And when high hung the noiseless moon

I Ve laid in wait to meet the coon.

One spot I noticed as the best :

'T was always greener than the rest :

A deeper, richer, sweeter green

Than elsewhere in the field was seen.

On high the goose grass waved her plumes ;

The sweet white clover spread her blooms ;

The red-top grew so thick and rank

That on its knees it swooned and sank !

That spot had always furnished, free,

The village dames with boneset tea:

There, 'neath the sheltering mandrake's lid,

The fledgling Bob Whites softly hid ;

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

My Window Pane

I 'm poor as a church mouse, certain,

An I live up in a lane ;
But I can 't see what is passing,

'Cause there 's frost on my window pane ;
But I'll tell you what I can see

(I've got it on the brain),
The pictur's fine that old Jack Frost

Paints on my window pane.

There 's ferns, and grass, and buckwheat,

And splendid palm trees tall ;
With here and there a geyser,

And sometimes a waterfall ;
Laburnums, lilies, leaflets,

Waving fields of grain ;
All are sketched in beauty

Upon my window-pane.

In this great peopled city,

There 's paintings rich and rare,
Of things on earth and ocean ;

But these cannot compare
With pictures all would envy,

In my deserted lane
Sketched by a hand unseen by me,

Upon my window pane.

Not The Joe I Thought He Was

I uster think that Joe was rough,

An rather fond uv a row.

You remember the man with the bushy hair,
An the big black eyes with the angry flare,

Under a low'ring brow ?

Well, I uster think that Joe was a tough ;

But I think quite diff rent now.

For he asked me home one night to tea ;

You bet I was loth to go ;

But away I went fer I did n't like

To ruffle a man like Joe ;

But when we got thar a wonderful change
Kem over the man so rough and strange ;

His voice sank soft an low,

An I kinder thought he warn't the same

Ole chap that I uster know.

Fur a flock of rompin children small

Kem runnin in like bees ;

They clapped their hands with shouts of glee,

And clustered round his knees ;

And then this Joe, this man uv strife,
Reached round and caught his pretty wife,

And kissed her lips and eyes,

And smoothed her hair with gentle hand

Wich giv me a surprise.

He romped with the little kids that night :
They tumbled an pulled his hair :

'N sung them songs to their great delight

Till he wus hoarse as a bear.
So I kunclude you never kin judge
A man by his looks. Why, that 's all fudge.

First look at his inner life,
An see if he 's good to his little kids,

An if he is kind to his wife.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Old Man Thunder

I 'm old man thunder ! Lo, I come
With roar of wind and throb of drum ;

And all the wide earth under
Looks up when I am passing by
The cattle clap their hands and cry,
'Oho! the Thunder!'

The forest trees beneath me bend
I grip, I crush, I tear, I rend

The curse of thirst asunder ;
I put the dusty day to rout :
I love to hear my people shout,
'Oho! the Thunder!'

And when I strike a match, the light
Spins round the world, in circles bright,

And fills my world with wonder ;
And when I stand and stamp my feet,
A cry goes up from field and street,
'Oho! the Thunder!'

I fill the sky with sweet ozone :
I wet the pastures to the bone

I never blunder.

Hark and hear my rain drops thud ;
I turn the dust heaps into mud
'Oho! the Thunder!'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

On New Year's Day

Out from the workshops, high and broad,
Bright as a jewel ? as smooth as rhyme ;

Launched from the wonderful docks of God,
My country floats on the crest of time.

She woos the waters, she braves the blast,
She recks no rapid, she fears no fog,

And I am a sailor before the mast,

And my name is down in the captain's log.

She dances across the harbor bar ;

The skipper he shakes his canvas free ;
She rides the tides like a man-o'-war,

And steers her course for the open sea.

For friends a welcoming smile she hath
A word and a blow for all her foes ;

The pirate that ventures across our path
Gets out of the way or down she goes !

And will she lower her sun-kissed flag,
And leave her course on the open seas,

To join the fleet of Admiral Brag,

And ferry his freight of fraud for fees?

No, no ; our flag is forever free :

The world is big and the ocean broad ;
And ever and aye shall our war cry be,
' We '11 sink or swim in the name of God.'

On The Bosom Of The Deep

In the past time long ago, when a little babe was young :
When a little baby, spotless, in its cradle went to sleep ;

When a young wife crooned and carolled, with a sweet,

melodious tongue,
And kisses fell like rain-drops on the bosom of the deep.

On baby's little hands and face the kisses downward fell,
And even in the neighborhood where little pink toes

peep;
The mother crooned a monody, and, ah ! she crooned it

well,

And a song-prayer floated Fateward o'er the bosom of
the deep.

She dreamed she saw the baby grow up to be a man ;
She dreamed she saw him climbing the dizzy hill-side

steep,
And the breath of pride came o'er her, like the rush of

Heaven's fan,

And her glad thanksgivings pattered on the bosom of
the deep.

I 'll tell you the reality : He grew to be a man :

He drank himself to death, in a ditch all dark and steep ;
She waited for him, lonely, while her face was pinched

and wan,

And her moaning chilled the angels on the bosom of
the deep.

The mother woke and saw it, like a lily bud afloat ;

She said : ' No tears of shame or pain I 'll ever o'er

thee weep !'

She took her husband's razor and she slashed its little

throat !

And the blood drops dript down softly on the bosom of
the deep.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Our Land

What land is that which welcomes him
Who flees Despair and follows Hope ?

What land is that which first he sees
Along the high Atlantic slope ? '

That land is ours ! it queens the main !

And ours it ever shall remain !

What land is that which furthest wades

Far in the deep Pacific plain,
And welcomes first the east-bound ships

That speed with Oriental gain?
That land is ours ! from main to main
And ours it ever shall remain !

What flag is that which proudly waves
Above the happiest and the best ;

O'er seas of soil and lakes of land,
The widest Empire in the West?

That flag is ours ! it bears no stain

And ours it ever shall remain !

And shall we shut our eyes to that
Fair promise in the future hid,

And sell our splendid birthright as
The hungered hunter Esau did?

Not so ! we 've got a goal to gain

What 's ours shall ever so remain !

Our Song

'Mid the murmuring pines and the hemlocks,

A down by the eastern sea ;

'Mid the tapering tamaracs, tossing

Their wide arms wild and free,

Throbs the sound of our nation's music :

The startling slogan's ring :

An infant nation awakens,

And a people stands up to sing.

O, wonderful congregation,

That rises from reverent knee,

To sound the song of a nation

And chant the hymn of the free !

The song of the free is rolling

And booming between our coasts ;

The chant of an infant people

Is led by the Lord of Hosts.

O, wonderful congregation,

Who rise in their temple broad,

To thunder a freeman's anthem

Their fathers had learned from God.

The tapering tamaracs tremble ;

The far-away prairies ring

When the song of freedom is sounded,

And a people stands up to sing.

Let traitors hark to the music :
Let rebels list to the song

That rolls, with the sound of thunder,

Our measureless coasts along.
Let the hills and fields of our nation

With our patriot anthem ring-
It 's a glorious congregation

When a nation stands up to sing.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Pepy Is Not Dead

If Peepy had lived,' the mother sighed,

' He'd be of age to-day.'

She bowed her head as she softly cried

The head that was turning grey.

Now, one would think that Peepy was dead,

Underneath the snow :

One would think that Peepy was dead

Since seventeen years ago.

'Tis true that they hid poor Peepy away,

Down in the churchyard green,

And ever since that pitiful day

Peepy 's never been seen.

No one has seen his curly head

Or heard his laughter flow ;

But it doesn't follow that Peepy 's been dead

Since seventeen years ago !

They laid his toddling feet to rest ;

They folded his fingers, small,

Around the lily upon his breast ;

Then laid him away that's all.

They curtained his vacant trundle bed

In his little room of woe ;

They really thought that Peepy was dead

Seventeen years ago.

But it wasn't Peepy they put to stay
Under the church yard sod

He 's young and gay and strong to-day

Up in the realms of God.
He walks in the light by the Savior's side,

The Savior that loved him so.
So it 's folly to think that Peepy died

Seventeen years ago.

His form returned to its mother mold

But his soul began to grow
This is the story an angel told

And I'm sure these things are so.
Creeds and churches bother my head

But this one thing I know
It isn't true that Peepy 's been dead

Since seventeen years ago !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Poker, Push And Prosperity

So talk as you will of the Poker game
It built up this country just the same ;

For it taught our people to keep their nerve,
And to never blanch going round the curve.

It taught 'em to smile when their luck was bad,
And it taught 'em to frown when feeling glad.

It taught 'em to sigh and look in the dubs,
When they held four kings and the ace of clubs.

It taught 'em to chirrup and look quite glad,
When a pair of deuces was all they had.

Many a railway was built with a rush
Its capital only a bob-tailed flush.

Many a man set the world in a craze,
When all that he held was a pair of trays.

Many an elegant business starts

On the nine of spades and the queen of hearts.

They learned that nobody need want ' the stuff :'
All they needed was nerve to bluff

A splendid confidence a courage grand
A hand unshaking, and plenty of sand :

Courting a girl, or starting a row ;
Running for office, or buying a cow ;

Sparking a widow, or building a town ;
Preaching, or calling the governor down ;

Flinging a bridge over canon or pass,

Or calmly boring for natural gas ;

Working in climates both frigid and hot
Hunting the walrus or sailing a yacht ;

Going to church, or backing a bruiser ;
Keeping hotel, or building a cruiser ;

Erecting a church, to Christians a boon,
Or running a beautiful big saloon ;

Making it easy for folks to do well,
Or rigging a slick toboggan to hell ;

Building a bank, or erecting a jail :

You 'd swear that their hand was as big as a whale ;

Marrying a wife, or gobbling their mush :
You 'd think that they 'd captured a royal flush.

You may preach, as you like, of the shame and the

blame,
Yet life is a terrible Poker game.

Life is the limit ; the jackpot, success,

Wealth and applause, and sweet love's tenderness ;

Love or dishonor triumph or disgrace

Or a bed in the ditch when you draw for an ace.

Our lifeblood, our hopes in Heaven or earth,
We gamble away from the day of our birth.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Presentation To The Earl Of Eramosa

The rooster posted notices the animals to warn,

That they should meet last evening in the shadow of the

barn ;

For the Earl of Eramosa was going to the fair,

And he hoped that everybody would assuredly be there ;

For the Earl of Eramosa is a bull of high renown :

He was booked for exhibition in the great Toronto town ;

He hoped that at the meeting every person would be seen,

To give the Earl a send-off and ' God save the Queen.'

The gathering took place and every one was there ;

An aged ram (a Cots wold) was voted to the chair:

I 'm glad to see our people of the pasture and the pen ;

We 've met to give a send-off to a feller citizen ;

That he will do us proud there 's none of us is fearing

He'll win the prize (cheers) diploma, too (loud and

continued cheering):

His very many virtues I need not here express,

So I 'll call upon Miss Buttercup to read him an address.'

Upon a rhubarb leaf she had her speech engrossed ;

Miss Buttercup stood up in the middle of the host :

She read it very nicely I need not give it here

Enough to say 'twas logical and luminous and clear.

She hoped he 'd be successful, for the glory of the cause,

At the wondrous exhibition (loud and long applause):

She hoped that when from fair to fair the noble Earl

would roam

He never would forget his many friends at home.

The Earl of Eramosa rose ; the tears were in his eyes ;
He said : ' Dear friends and comrades all, you take me by
surprise ;

Me heart is full (sensation) I know not what to say ;
I '11 do my best (hear, hear) my best to win the day.
And when I have returned then every one shall see
That calf, nor colt, nor hen, nor horse shall need to blush
for me ;

Nor pig, nor duck' the rooster in ecstasy upflew,
And, 'mid tremendous cheering, shouted, ' Cock a doodle
doo!'

They stood and cheered, and cheered, and cheered, till
dusky were their thrapples ;
The farmer brought a wagon load of toothsome harvest
apples,

And then they had a happy time enjoyed a noble feast ;
They kept the entertainment up till daylight tinged the
east.

The Earl was very happy to thank them did not fail ;
And everybody wished him luck, and shook him by the
tail.

And then they formed a circle the sight was very fine
When the rooster led the chorus in ' Auld Lang Syne.'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Saturday Night

How pleasant is Saturday night !

When all the week by our duty we 've stood ;
How pleasant is Saturday night,

When we Ve tried every day to be good.
How splendid is Saturday night !

When the trial and the labor is done :
When the frock that we promised the baby,

And the purse for his mother are won.

How bitter is Saturday night,

When your presence no fireside seeks ;
How painful is Saturday night

To the one who has idled for weeks.
How awful is Saturday night

And its lesson you sorrowing learn :
That the days full of hope that you idled away.

With their chances, will never return.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Saul

WITH blood upon my fingers and upon my brow a frown,
I wiped my knife and took my way to old Damascus town.

The Saints of God all terror struck, beneath my feet went

down

I trod on angels all the way to old Damascus town.

All hell came forth applauding as I went marching down
To stone to death and persecute in old Damascus town.

I fell ! and God stood o'er me : His hand had put me down
To-night they '11 wait in vain for me in old Damascus
town !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Scuse Me!

I HEAR I 've got to preach tomorrer,

Our pastor he be orful ill ;
An Deacon Smith, I larn with sorrer,

His lung it be a bleedin still.
I Ve prayed at funerals an sich,
An at camp meetings tuk a hitch,

But still I never preached before ;

If any party yells ' angcore,'

By the holy Mos scuse me !

At ligion I make no pretext,
A never went a seekin lambs ;

I haint achose no reglar text,

I '11 kinder ramble round the psalms.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

She Takes The Cake

I know a maiden, shy and sweet,

With eyes of hazel, soft and merry ;
She keeps the nicest little store

And makes the best confectionery.
At evening as I homeward stroll,

Especially if it 's rather late,
I step inside to pass the time

And take a currant cake from Kate.

And, as I sit and nibble cake,

A pleasant mem'ry o'er me rushes :
While she behind the counter stands,

Concealed in modest, maiden blushes.
I know right well I need n't fear

A rival in another man,
For well I know that Kitty thinks

That none the cake can take from Khan,

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Sleigh Bells Long Ago

I sit and list to the sleighbells,

As they tinkle o'er the snow,
And with the rush of their music

Come tremors of grief and woe ;
And my heart goes back to the cedars

In the wonderful long ago.

And I drive through the echoing woodlands,

Over the glimmering snow :
A maid with a face of beauty,

And sweet voice soft and low,
Sits close to my side and whispers,
' Darling, I love you so !'

I start with a cry of anguish,

For that was long ago ;
And I see a grave that 's newly made

Under the falling snow ;
But only now I heard her say,
' Darling, I love you so !'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

So

No female saint, ner yit a man,
Kin put a patch on Mandy Ann
On Mandy Ann McGowan.

Saint Paul onct said it to his flock,

So Mandy thinks it out of sight ;
It seems a saint will sometimes talk

Just like a common blatherskite.
She 's down on dancin every time :

The fiddlin fills her face with shame ;
She even thinks it half a crime

To frolic in a kissin game !
Thet kills me dead ! but I am boun
To straightway go and call her down.
I feel the more the list I scan,
From Saint Bersheba down to Dan,
There 's not a one of them thet can
Hold a light to Mandy Ann

To Mandy Ann McGowan !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

So-Ho, Bossy, So-Ho!

Outside the wind of winter blows,
Outside the thick snow falls,
But Cherry and Brindle and Spot and Rose

Are safe and snug in their stalls;
Up in the barn there are tons of hay,

And thousands of turnips below,
Breakfasts for Buttercup, Midget and May

So-ho, Bossy, So-ho!
' We 're free from the fear of frost or flood,

For the winter may come or go,'
Says the Marquis of Meadows, rolling his cud,

So-ho, Bossy, So-ho!

Up and down in the passage way

There gallops a week-old calf;
Prim old cows look up from their hay

To nudge each other and laugh;
His pretty young mother with pride is full

Affection has set her aglow,
Because he 's a beautiful pedigreed bull

So-ho, Bossy, So-ho!

From Buttercup, Midget, from Cherry and Spot,

Most delicate compliments flow;
From Daffodil, Dewdrop, Daisy and Dot

So-ho, Bossy, So-ho!

After their supper they lie and coax

Each other to tell a yarn
I know that they frequently crack their jokes

Down in the basement barn;
But hush-a-bye yearlings upon them creep

With cornstalk wands they go,
And soon the picnic is sound asleep

So-ho, Bossy, So-ho!
Rock-a-bye Bumble Bee, Brown and Spot,

To the hush-a-bye hills we go;
Lull-a-bye Daffodil, Dimple and Dot,

So-ho, Bossy, So-ho!

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Some Good Advice

Now don't you be discouraged because you 're in a hole ;

Misfortune nerves a thoro' man : disaster daunts a fool ;
A tumble is a tonic to a brave and burly soul

If baffled once just try again, is still a wholesome rule.

Once on a time young Joseph was flung down in a pit ;

They brought his blood-stained garments to Jacob, poor

old soul ;

But Joseph lived to rule the world, and hold it in his mit

So do n't you get discouraged because you 're in a hole.

Once David was an outcast, and hiding in a cave ;

And Saul, the king, was after him to prod him with a

pole;

But David, crowned, shed pitying tears on Saul's dis-
honored grave

So do n't you get discouraged because you 're in a hole.

Once in the lions' fearful den the prophet Daniel kneeled :

He heard the roar of triumph above his dungeon roll ;

Next day his foemen took his place : the swine-souled

wretches squealed ;

So do n't you be discouraged because you 're in a hole.

Faithful Meshoch, noble Shadrach, and good Abednego,

Were in a fiery furnace in great distress and dole ;

The flames they did n't fiz on them, or singe their clothes,

you know

So do n't you be discouraged because you 're in a hole.

The jewelled feet of Jezebel trod Naboth in the dirt :
The heartless harlot turned him out and all his outfit
stole ;

But Naboth got his vineyard back, and Jezebel got hurt ;
So do n't you get discouraged because you 're in a hole.

Once on a time big Samson was in a fearful pass :

Escape seemed quite impossible, his life must pay the

toll;

But, lo ! he busted up the scheme with the jaw bone of

an ass ;

So do n't you be discouraged because you 're in a hole.

Poor Jonah, swallowed by the whale, was very much cast
down :

A nasty situation : tho' some people think it 's droll ;
But, lo ! he lived to terrify the Babylonian town ;

So do n't you be discouraged because you 're in a hole.

To tumble in a pit is sometimes quite a boon ;

For learning to be careful will medicine your soul ;
And if the pit be very deep, you '11 see the stars at noon

So do n't you be discouraged because you 're in a hole.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Something Better

Let us walk upon the grasses ;

See ! our knees are steeped in slime ;
Lo ! the golden autumn passes

And I 'm sick of guilt and crime ;
For the papers that we're reading

Throb and multiply and swell
With the villainies and horrors

That are done each day in hell.

We are vultures feeding gorging

On the carrion corpse of man,
And we feed our stunted children

On a mess of husks and bran ;
'Tis enough to rot a nation

Howsoever rich and broad ;
Let us take a short vacation

In the gardens of our God.

Make a schoolhouse of the prison ;

Let its fires all lighted be
With the worn and withered branches

Of the guilty gallows tree ;
Let us wash our brains and bodies

Sweep away the webs of sin ;
Welcome home a royal blessing,

Let the ONE who gives it in.

Let us turn the golden river
From its crystal bed above,

Where it overflows forever

From the shoreless sea of love ;
Let us dig a channel for it,

Dig it deep, and wide, and well,
Turn its living waters downward,

Flooding out the flames of hell.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Something To Do

The boy that shovelled snow last month

Oft thought his lot a hard un ;
And now when lovely spring is here,
He breaks his shovel with a cheer ;
But, lo ! his father's striding near,;
He holds a spade and pulls his ear
' Go, Johnny, dig the garden.'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Song Of Bohemia's Dog

I am a Bohemian dog :

I ever am free from care :
I never come short of prog,

And I live at a place called Where.
I sit and I crunch some bones in a bunch,

And often I dine upon cat ;
I frequently munch a castaway lunch :

I 'm jolly and happy and fat.
For I 'm a Bohemian dog :

I ever am free from care ;
I never come short of prog,

And I live in a place called Where.

Oh, I 'm a Bohemian pup ;

My mother had high degree ;
My father he captured the cup,

With his elegant pedigree ;
My brothers and sisters are troubled with ' misters,'

Who give them carresses and kicks ;
Who coddle and cuff them, who praise and rebuff them,

And teach them ridiculous tricks.
But I 'm a Bohemian pup :

In a mongrel companie ;

Yet I 'm happy to say the mongrels look up

The mongrels look up to me.

O, I 'm a Bohemian dog :

I 'm nobody's servant or pet,
And never a master shall flog,

Or cuss the subscriber you bet.
The slang that I sling, the blushes would bring

To my mother of high degree ;
For never, I vow, have I made my bow-wow

In a high-toned companie.
Yet tho' a Bohemian pup,

I Ve a beautiful pedigree :
I 'm a reglar prince and the mongrels look up

The mongrels look up to me.

Bohemia land of the free !

Bohemia land of the true !
Thy gardens are fair to see

Thy skies are balmy and blue.
Tho' they dub me a scamp, and call me a tramp,

My freedom I '11 never resign
While a bone I can crunch for supper or lunch,

And a nook in Bohemia's mine.
For I 'm a Bohemian pup,

In a mongrel companie ;
But I 'm proud to relate that the mongrels look up

The mongrels look up to me.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

South Land And North Land

The truculent South is hot and dank

And treacherous, too, as her spotted snake,

That winds its coils on the steaming bank,
Or darts its length in the poisoned brake.

The North land sweet! the North land strong !

Has hair of gold and eyes of blue,
And deep and long as a sinewed song,

Is tender, loving, and brave and true.

Ah, here in the North the hands are trained
To wield the spear, or the plow, or pen ;

And courage and beauty and truth are gained,
And the white world suckles her brainy men.

The poisoned day is forever lost

In the places north where the snow wreaths cling-
In the places ruled by old King Frost

For old King Frost is a splendid king.

And soon from out of a glowing mouth,
With scented rush and a gleam and glow,

The spring will leap from the throbbing south,
And fall on the pulseless zone of snow.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Springtime All In The Morning Early

The birds awake with a toot and a tweet,

And sing a song to the morning
An anthem rare, an anthem sweet,

Is the list'ning air adorning.
The calf is bunting his sleeping dam,

With his bright head, soft and curly,
He 's hungry, so he wakes his mam

All in the tnorning early.

The ducks are waddling towards the pond :

The geese are there already ;
The lambs, they frisk in the near beyond,

While their mammas pasture sturdy.

The pig, he 's squealing inside his sty,

And he grunts with a grunt that 's surly

He 's hungry, too, and there 's fire in his eye,
All in the morning early.

The colt, he races across the grass,

And the old mare follows stumbling ;
The wren is watching a straddle-bug pass,

And the bumble-bee 's a-bumbling.
Out in the swampy place, forlorn,

You hear the hurly-burly :
The frogs are hungry, as sure's you're born,

All in the morning early.

The farmer wakes with a sudden shock :

A glance at the east he shoots ;
Another glance he gives to the clock,

And then pulls on his boots.
All hands wake up ! roll out ! hullo ! '

He roars with a voice that 's burly ;
The maids and men all rattle below,

All in the morning early.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Sunshine Always Follows Rain

It washed the faint and anxious grasses,

Through all this splendid latitude ;
And trees, and flowers and ferns in masses

Sent up a hymn of gratitude.
They felt the cooling breezes blow ;

They felt no more the sultry pain ;
And well the pretty creatures know

That sunshine always follows rain.

The wide Dominion naught could move her,

Move her like the thunder wet ;
From Halifax to far Vancouver

The gladsome cry is sounding yet.
Somewhere now the showers are falling

On mountain side or grassy plain ;
And in the trees the birds are calling,
' Sunshine always follows rain.'

The welcome thunder led the waters,

Sparkling o'er the thirsty lands ;
Nature laughed, and all her daughters

Gladly clapped their fevered hands !
So we '11 see the white wheat flowing

From the thrashers once again ;
And we '11 trust the future, knowing

Sunshine always follows rain.

Girlie, with the face so pallid,

Why weep in summer days like this ?

Your face is sweeter than a ballad

And purer than an angel's kiss ;
Thy tears are falling, falling, falling

Who has filled your heart with pain?
Hear the joyful crickets calling,
' Sunshine always follows rain.'

Why so gloomy and downhearted?

Wake up ! man, and grieve no more !
She and you in anger parted,

And I know your heart is sore.
She, herself, I know is fretting ;

She will come to you again ;
All your griefs and fears forgetting
' Sunshine always follows rain.'

For to-day we sat and sorrowed,

And our hearts were all forlorn ;
But our griefs and fears were borrowed ;

Let us wait to-morrow morn.
Then the sun in glory splendid

Will his chariot mount again,
All our heartaches will be ended
' Sunshine always follows rain.'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Supper's Ready!

WHO is the girl I love the best ?

She with the pillared neck of snow?
She with hands that never rest

And never labor? Ah! no, no !
The girl I love lifts up her hands
And in the kitchen door she stands,
And o'er the meadows and the fields
Her rich and splendid anthem peals
' Supper 's ready !'

The horses halt and slack their traces,
The weary workers lift their heads,

Light is on the hired men's faces

As through the fields the anthem spreads ;

The brown faced girl I love is standing

Tip-toed on the kitchen landing ;

She cannot cry nor call in vain,

Her sounding voice rings down the lane
' Supper 's ready.'

The horses drink, the cattle stare,

And wonder at the curious plan ;
The plow is stopped and in the air

I hear the joke of the hired man ;
But on the porch, with face of brown,
Sunburned hands and modest gown,
She startles all the fields with this
'Tis sweeter than a woman's kiss
' Supper 's ready.'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Sweet Peas

Where lilac trees are gossiping,

And whispering tell-tales to the breeze,

The sweet peas now are clambering
Across the old stump fence's knees.

Each hangs her pretty, graceful head,

The white, the pink, the mauve and red.

Above, the sunflower's golden throne
Resplendent shines across the leas ;

Below, I hear the monotone

Of happy-hearted bumble bees ;

And in the shade I hear the clink

Of some conceited bobolink.

The bumble bee is storing fast

His honey for his winter table,
And when the jars are filled at last
Each jar receives its proper label.
They 're labeled this wise, if you please ;
' Sweet Peas,' ' Sweet Peas,' ' Sweet Peas,'
' Sweet Peas.'

Once one I loved lay down to die ;

No power on earth had strength to save,
And when her soul went up on high

I planted sweet peas round her grave
To-night from out a thousand throats
To God a holy incense floats.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Table Manners

Set an eat what 's set afore ye :

Do 'nt be so blamed partickler,
Er else I 'll take a gad and score ye,

My sad-eyed perpendickler.

Yer mother's in an awful rush :
She 's scarcely time for breathin' ;

Thet 's why the pore thing burned the mush-
Ye know the young one's teethin.

Ye oughter think of yer mother,

And what a slave she is ;
Ye know yer granny, he 's got another

Touch uv the rheumatiz.

Yer granpop 's goin round an gruntin ;

Ye see he 's kinder vexed :
All day the old man 's bin a huntin,

Ter try and find a text

To go to prove that he 's elected,

Among the shinin host
It was n't quite what he expected,

An now ive get the roast.

An ther ye set and curl yer nose up,

Becuz yer mush is burned ;
My hollyhock ! ye 'll turn yer toes up

Afore that mush is earned.

Now, what 's the matter with the mush ?

I can 't desearn no smell.

Look here ! I think ye 'd better hush,

My prong-horned young gazelle.

Altho' a blue beech is a softener,

I hardly like to waste ye ;

Look here ! ye 'll read yer bible offener,

Er, b' jingoes, I 'll lambaste ye.

Ye 'll read it offen, er I 'm mistaken :

Ye 'll learn it with a rush ;

'T will sarve ye better 'n belly-achin

About a plate uv mush !

Mebbees ye 'll likely hev a qualm,

A readin here o' nights ;

A larnin wholesome lessons from

Them upstart Israelites.

It wuz jest perfectly reediclous

The way they kerried on ;

An how they raised the old Nicholas,

Wuz too dern bad, I swan !

Fer forty yeer they wur apokin

Around in thet wilderness ;

Allus kickin, an allus provokin

The Boss of the bizness.

Ef they got too much uv a good thing,
They 'd stand around an gag ;

An if, a little too much uv a rude thing
Allus chewin the rag.

The Lord himself did go an dig

A path fer them to go,
The Red sea's purty nigh es big

Es Lake Ontario

An every Hebrew went across

An stood on friendly ground ;
But, lo ! thet old bull-headed boss,

King Pharoah, he got drowned.

An on thet great an joyful day,

Escaped from Pharoah's clutch,
Do n't fer a minute think thet they

Wuz grateful : no not much !

No sirree ! sir : they was n't humbled :

In fac they got so fresh,
Them Sheenies put on airs an grumbled

Fer Egypt's pots of flesh !

What them there flesh pots wuz, I 'm puzzled,

Thet made their spirits droop ;
Mebbe head-cheese it wuz they guzzled :

Mebbe a kind uv soup.

Anyways they kicked and squealed ;

But Patience never fails :
That very night the neighborin field

Wus covered thick with quails.

Was Solomon Levi pleased with that?

I say it with a sigh :
The big barbarian put on his hat,

And howled for custard pie !

And they euchred their old-time bosses
Of jewels, an give them the laugh :

Instid uv mendin their losses,
They turned them into a calf.

And yet whenever hungry or sad,
They got their quails or manna

Hed I bin boss they 'd a got the gad,

An that 's what 's the matter with Hannah t

No matter how well they were treated,

They were sure to be at it again ;
An many 's the time poor Moses repeated,
' Them Sheenies give me a pain !'

These Hebrews they did n't do as they ought,
An most of um sickened and died,

To teach the rest to take what they got,
An allus be satisfied.

So, my gentle gazelle, take my advice :

Yid better jes hole yer hush ;
To sulk at yer feed it is n't nice,

Set up an eat yer mush !

Goin to Sodom and Gomorrah,

Three angels cool an calm ;
To rest them on their road to sorrow

They called on Abraham.

Did Sairy send them round the farm,

To see the crops, fer a fake
To give her a chance her pies to warm,

Er build up a big sponge cake?

Not much ! Old Abraham stewed a kid,

And Sairy she cooked some scones ;
The pot it hed the sky fer a lid

Her stove was a circle uv stones.

I scursly think thet Sairy was Scotch ;

But she knowed how to cook a scone,
An the kid made the rarest of good hotch-potch,

Jes fit fur a king on his throne.

Abram wanted his guests to say grace

On the old time courteous plan ;
They each said ' You !' with a smile on his face,

For each was a gentleman.

Then Abram blushed and his head let fall,

And he asked, in trembling tones.
The richest blessing upon them all

On the kid, and on Sairy's scones.

Did the angels ask for a knife an fork,

Er hint at a napkin clean?
Er a finger bowl ere they went to work

Like ignorant upstarts, green?

Did they ask for towels to kiver ther knee,

Till Sairy was ready to scream?
Did they want hot water instead uv tea,

And sneer at the so-called cream ?

Not much ! they sot an et by the book,
An they whispered, under their breath,

They 'd never et after a better cook
That tickled pore Sairy to death.

Each one over his dinner lingers,
And holds his meat in his palm ;

An each one carefully licks his fingers,
The same es old Abraham.

Boor or angel s' help me Bob !

The differ with ease you scan :
The one is an ignorant, upstart snob

The other a gentleman.

An when they departed Sairy wus sad :

She watched them afar and then,
' I 'm agittin old but it makes me glad
To trouble for gentlemen.'

Set up an eat whut 's set afore ye ;

Do n't be so blame pertickler,
Er else I 'll take a gad an score ye,

My sad-eyed perpendikler !

Look here ! ye 'll read yer bible offener,
Er, b' jingoes, I 'll lambaste ye ;

Altho' a blue beech is a softener,
I hardly like to waste ye.

Ye 'll read it offen, er I 'm mistaken

Ye 'll larn it with a rush :
'T will sarve ye betterin belly-achin

About a plate of mush !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

That The Rain Rains On

I stand by the grave the old-time grave

In the drift of the falling rain ;
My heart goes back to an afternoon

In the spring of life again,
When mother was carried the churchyard thro',

When April was dead and gone ;
And a voice said ' Happy, happy, happy,

Happy the corpse that the rain rains on.'

My heart went back much further yet,

To a time when mother and I
Stood out on the wet and the shining grass,

While above was the clearing sky ;
She plucked a lilac all drooping wet

And dark with its perfume on,
' The lilac is sweet the lilac is sweet,

The lilac is sweet that the rain rains on.'

Boy as I was when mother died,

I stole thro' the creeping wet,
And placed in her dear white hands a bunch

Of lilacs and mignonette ;
And the rain fell soft in the May morn light

Her glistening coffin on ;
And the voice said ' Happy, happy, happy,

Happy tbe corpse that the rain rains on.'

The

I 'll do it right I 'll take my perch,
I 'll hev no snickerin in the church ;
An I will thump the man, d' ye see,
Who heaves a hickory nut at me !
By the holy Mo scuse me.

Gimme a chaw thanks Miss Brown '11 lead
The quoir as usual gimme a match

An all that troo believers need
To do is come and lift the latch.

This painful dooty I 've to do,

The pastor he hez arsked me to ;
But if some funny chap, d' ye see,
Shud heave a nest egg up at me,
By the holy Mo scuse me.

The wimmin they will sit on one,

The gents upon the other side ;
And I will keep my eyes upon

The one who tries to act up snide.
I '11 sing a bass to every psalm,
An run the service cool an calm ;

But look ahere, my friends, d' ye see,

If someone hollers ' Rats ' at me,

By the holy Moses hum scuse me.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Ass's Colt

Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.' ST. MATTHBW xxi-s.

His tangled auburn locks

Lay damp on his sun-burned brow,
As he halted his team on the headland bare,

To tighten a nut on his plow.
I asked him who he was,

For my heart was touched, because
I 'd heard him sing like a woodland thing,

When it builds its nest of straws.
And he said as he handled the bolt,
' I 'm only an ass's colt
Unknown, despised I yet am prized
For I sometimes carry Jesus.'

He used his plow for a bench,

And sat him down like a king ;
In his hand he held his wrench,

Like a homely scepter thing ;
And, over his shoulder, I saw

That the furrow he turned was true
As straight as the rule of the plowman's school.

Then I looked in his eyes of blue,
For it gave my heart a jolt
When he said, ' I 'm an ass's colt.'
So my mind I bent to know what he meant
When he said that he carried Jesus.

His eyes were the eyes of an ox :

So patient, and big, and full ;
But the cringing hair was the tangled locks

That grow on the brows of a bull.
His tawny face had no lack of grace :

With thought and sadness lined ;
And a patient smile, every little while,

About his lips was twined.
So calm and quaint ! Was he savior or saint ?
Was he knave or dolt this ass's colt,
Who claimed that he carried Jesus ?

' Tho' rich, my Lord was poor, 'twould seem,

When he went up Sion's way.
Did he borrow a rich man's splendid team,

Or hire a fine koo-pay ?
A question plain I ask o' you :

When he ventured in the hive
And went as King Did big Jehu

The Son of Nimshi drive?
No, no I 'm told 'twas an ass's colt
That day that carried Jesus.

' To-day he walked beside my plow :

With grief his eyes were dim ;
He tells me all His sorrows, now,

And I tell mine to him ;
And when his weary feet are sore,

His face is sad to see ;
And when he cannot walk no more

He sometimes cries to me
I take a-holt, like the ass's colt,

And gladly carry Jesus ? '

I went my way to haunts of men,

This question ringing clear :
Why wait his Second Coming, when,

Perhaps, my Lord is here ? '
As I believe this story quaint,

I '11 seek the thorny track,
And if my Lord is weak and faint,

I '11 bear him on my back.
They '11 call me dolt yet an ass's colt
Once carried Kingly Jesus.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Aster

The fairest ladies always come

The latest to the ball ;
The grandest flowers always bloom

And sparkle in the fall.

When daisies sweet and lilies pied :
When summer roses all have died,
Thro' August fields, with stately stride,
There comes the splendid aster.

And not alone the fields she treads ;

They come a royal bevy ;
I love to see them hang their heads

With dazzling dewdrops heavy.

Some, like the princess, clad in blue,
And some prefer a livelier hue
For instance red 'twixt me and you
I love the snow-white aster.

They bloom before the country home

And blow away disaster ;
And in the village gardens you

Will always find an aster.

Till Indian summer winds are lost,
By every breeze their crowns are tossed,
For naught on earth but snow or frost
Can kill the stately aster.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Beautiful Squaw Out West

O, Waca-Ohone was a beautiful squaw,

In the wonderful woods out west ;
She knew no rule, and she knew no law,
Save the terrible rule of her awful papaw
Whose name it was Pontiac Patrick McGaw
Who flew in a passion whenever he saw
A White near his daughter, or, indeed, any squaw-

Whose blood beat warm neath his buffalo vest.

But Waca-Ohone was a cunnin squaw

The cunninest squaw in the west ;
And tho' she pretended to love her papaw,
She loved far better a youth whom she saw
On a hunting excursion his name was McGraw
A lad who was fresh from Manitobaw,
Who came to establish a beautiful saw-
Mill close to her home, in the elegant west.

Now, Waca-Ohone was a sly, sly squaw

The slyest squaw in the west ;
And she went one night to her great papaw,
Who was feeding on buffalo beef that was raw,
And asked him to let her wed Felix McGraw ;
But he opened his mouth and tried to say ' naw !'
And choked on the beef in expounding the law ;
And soon great Pontiac Patrick McGaw
Was the deadest chief that ever you saw,

In his beautiful tent in the west.

And Waca-Ohone, the beautiful squaw

The prettiest squaw in the west ;
Soon changed her name from Miss McGaw
To the elegant one of Missus McGraw,

And any one visiting Manitobaw
Will say they 're the happiest ever they saw,
In the whole of the beautiful west.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Blue Ribbon Did It

She loved him ; but she saw him drunk !

Ah ! fearful sight for her to see ;
And though it broke her heart, she said

That they could never married be ;
And other lovers crowded near
To breathe their fond hopes in her ear.
It puzzled me to see her smile

On others while she loved him so ;
For none of them were half so brave,

Or handsome, straight and tall as Joe.

I think that that was strange

Do n't you ?
But then they all wore badges blue.

Joe went and took the pledge, and said
He 'd stain his honor never more ;

And soon he on his manly breast
The badge of his redemption wore ;

And when his darling heard of that

Her faithful heart went pit-a-pat

She sacked her lovers all, and flew
To lay her head against the breast

That wore the blessed badge of blue.

I think that that was sweet
Do n't you ?

Oh, bonny, bonny badge of blue !

Were I a girl I would n't wed

A man that guzzled rum would you?

I 'd give the chances all to him

Who wore the little badge of blue ;

And if he would n't wear it, I

Would pin it on and tell him why.

'T would save us both from grief and woe,
And every mis'ry cold and black ;

It made another man of Joe,

And now he 's got the inside track.

I think I 'm talking sense
Do n't you ?

Then wear the bonny badge of blue.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Bullfrog

They may talk of the bird with plumage blue,

And the bird with the bosom red ;
They herald the spring with the song they sing

And tell us old winter is dead ;
But I bet on the bird without feathers on :

The safest prophet is he,

When he sings, 'Ker-munk ! ker-dunk ! ker-flunk !'
Down in the marshy sea.

He is n't as sweet as the robin red,

Nor as fair as the birdie blue ;
But I '11 bet my dust on his wise old head,

For his prophecies aye come true.
No feathers are stuck in his blunt old tail ;

Ah, a common old codger is he,

As he sings, ' Ker-flug ! ker-glug ! ker-slug !'
Down by the willowed sea.

The straddle-bug is n't a patch on him,

And the groundhog looks like a fool,
When he hears the song that is fresh and strong,

Down in the swampy pool.
He 's loaded right up with horse-sense, high,

A wise old snoozer is he,
As he sings, ' Ker-flog ! ker-mog ! ker-slog!'

Down in the cat-tailed sea.

Oh, he never gets left, for he waits till it comes,

For he knows the genuine thing ;
When he sees by its way it has come to stay,

He hollers aloud, ' It 's spring !'
Oh, his back it is green his belly is drab,

A comical party is he,
As he sings, ' Ker-glung ! ker-bung ! ker-slung!'

Down in the flag-filled sea.

And that is why I am satisfied quite

That summer will never be near
Till out from the bog, from the top of a log,

The mellowing song you hear.
He slips no cog does the old ^bullfrog,

Oh, a dear little lu-lu is he,
As he sings, ' Ker-glunk ! ker-slunk ! ker-plunk !'

Down in the marshy sea.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Canadian Lullaby

Tamaracks ! carry your heads on high !

Cedars ! trail your robes on the sod !
Hemlocks and spruce, that rustle and sigh,
Carry a kiss from my babe to God.
Carry it up to the steps of stone,
In front of the feet that are all alone,
Into the cradle that rocked our God.

Tamaracks ! carry your banners high !

Cedars and hemlocks ! be still and calm ;
Spruce and pine-top are wondering why
Your face is like to a southern palm.
Carry a kiss from the little hand
Far away to the children's land,
Up where the beautiful days are calm.

Tamaracks ! swing oh ! swing and rock ;
Rock and swing, oh, tamaracks strong ;
I 'll leave my baby amid the flock,

And lull her to rest with an anthem song.
Tamarack branches will carry a kiss
Up to a better land than this
Yes, tamarack branches will carry the kiss.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Children's Country

Old men have thought, and I have read,

Of streets of golden light,
Where crowns of gold wreath every head,

And all are clothed in white ;
But I would rather make my home

Where little children play
If there be such a land as that,

O, Savior, show the way.

My feet would turn from streets of gold,

To tread the grass of God,
And stand where all his fields unfold,

In daisied splendor broad ;
Where children's voices, sweet and low,

Float thro' the perfumed hay
If there be such a land as that,

O, Savior, show the way.

There every thought is understood :

No envy gives offence ;
There, to eternity, the soul

Bathes deep in innocence ;
There no mistakes are ever made ;

No errors dark the day ;
I know there 's such a land as that

My Savior, lead the way.

The City Of Damn-His Soul

He was nursed and cursed : he lied and died,

In the City of Damn-His-Soul ;
He was mothered and smothered in the slimy tide

Of the City of Damn-His-Soul,
And, strange to say, there were preachers there,

And temples, many and broad ;
But he never had taught him the simplest prayer,

Or had heard of the word of God !
For nobody cared for the poor galoot,

And fewer had cared for his soul
For they said that Hell had a new recruit

From the City of Damn-His-Soul.

But the angels they waited, outside the gate

Of the City of Damn His Soul ;
And they bore him away, with step elate,

To the City of Save-His-Soul ;
And the angels they put him to school How odd !

And they taught him the A B C
Of the Love, and the Wisdom, and Truth of God.

On the winterless side of the sea
He played and was taught, with the angels for chums,

Where the rivers of Paradise roll :
Ah, me, what a change from the bums and the slums

Of the City of Damn-His-Soul !

He has learned a trade in that wonderful place

In the City of Save-His-Soul ;

All traces of sin have been wiped from his face

In the college of Save-His-Soul ;

They Ve taught him to work : they Ve taught him to
pray:

They 've taught him to read and write ;
He works in the gardens of God, by day,

And learns new lessons by night.
The poor lone youth, who had carried the hod

For the devil's designs below,
Is a power and a prince in the realms of God

And I 'm glad that these things are so.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Death Of Murderer

Within a hut along the shore,

Where all was wild and drear,
Around whose walls the dark waves pour

As cold and damp as fear,

A wasted wretch lay dying
With none to help him near.

Along the shore and o'er the seas,

The shades of even fell ;
And Death was riding on the breeze,

And on the ocean's swell

And that poor wretch lay dying,
With none to wish him well.

The lightning flashed, the cold sleet poured,

And loud the thunder roll'd ;
And on the beach the breakers roared,

And shook the hut so old,

Wherein that wretch lay dying
Dying in the cold.

His tongue was dry, his brain was crazed,

And matted was his hair ;
His sunken eyes were hot and glazed :

No human look was there

And he was mad and raving,
With hunger, thirst and care.

He raised him on his shrivelled arm,
And fearful gazed around ;

He heard the hissing ocean barm,
The sullen breakers sound :

And thus I heard him speaking,
While groveling on the ground :

' Ye dreadful thunders and ye lightnings,
And all ye noises of the night

Be still, be still !

that the Christ, the Savior Christ,
Would walk again upon the sea !

Then would the thunders, and the lightning,
And all the noises of the night
Be still.

' Then I would die in peace for I am dying ;
Yes, dying ! and there are none to help me :
None ! none to wet my burning tongue with water
None to say a prayer to God for mercy !

' O, if I could but live another day
One short, short day my soul would have a chance
With God. Hark ! I heard a cry hush, be still !
Be still, ye thunders ! for I heard her cry
'T was I who murdered her ! I hear her screaming
On the sea ; her ghost lives among the rocks
'T was I who hid her bleeding body there !

' Why was she killed ? Unhand me and I 'll tell
'T was gold ! gold ! I worshipped it 't was my idol ;
And he came he of the smooth tongue with gold,
In the wild fury of a winter's storm.
He came with a knife in his hand, and gold,
And I listened to him, and in the deep darkness

I hastened forth, and and and she died that night,

' And I gave her bleeding body to the sea ;
But when the morning came she floated to
My door, and then I hid her 'mong the rocks ;
But she got out one winter night, and now
She walks the sea ! Why is she ever moaning ?
Hah ! I see her ! I see her bloody breast !
I see her white, white face in the darkness,
And she is coming to me. Take her away !
Save me ! Hide me ! Help me ! Her blood has dropt
Into mine eyes arid I am blind, blind, blind !
Her clammy hand is pressed upon my brow-
Mine aching temples throb as though a demon
Beat them 'gainst the rocks ! My brain burns like hell !
But O ! my heart can burn no more 't is ashes ;
My blood leaps through my veins like molten lead,
And black and loathsome serpents gnaw my flesh
And this is death, and I am dying dying !
And is there no power on earth to save me?
Will gold do gold? Be still ye thunders hush!

There 's gold at Raven's Peak I put it there

Among the rocks, an iron chest of gold ;
Hard, hard yellow gold, the price of my soul !
Take it take it all and curse me no more.
Water ! water ! Help ! Is no one near ?
Is there no one near? None to soothe the dying?
And none to close my staring eyes in death ?
Where are ye now who fawned upon me once?
Where are ye now who once basked in my smiles,
And robb'd me, at last, of all e'en my soul ?
And where art thou thou whitened sepulchre
Thou dark-eyed devil with raven hair,
Who led me to perdition where art thou ?
Hah ! I see you now in the dizzy dance

' Music, sweet music streams through the scented air,
And wealth, health, youth, beauty and dreamy love
Are there. Deceit is there, for thou art there.
And thou art queen of the dance, a royal
Princess could not be loved so well or more.
And thou art floating in the dance, and thou
Art beautiful beautiful as the moon
Of May, sailing through an ocean of clouds ;
Floating, as floats a snowy swan at morn,
Through hosts of tear-eyed water lilies.
And thou art mine, mine, mine ! body and soul !
The rubies that circle thy polished throat
Are mine ! The jewels in thy raven hair
Are mine ! Gold gleams on your snowy fingers
'T is mine ! And I am dying here with none
To help me but I will not die !
I will not die help me ! help me ye gods,
For one short day, and she I hate shall die !
I 'll tear her limb from! limb and grind her traitor's
Heart under my heel then I will
Die revenged ! Hark ! be still, I hear a moaning
A hollow moaning at my door, and now
I hear a wailing at my window ;
And now I hear a shrieking on the sea
What does it mean ? 'T is Death ! I feel his hand
Upon my brow, and O 't is cold cold as
The ice of winter ! and through my quaking flesh
A thrill creeps up ! up ! up ! e'en to my heart :
And yet I have no sickness still I feel
That this is Death, .and I have met him often ;
But never knew his strength before and I
Must go through yonder door, and he is watching ;
And, I must go with him. And on the shore

u A boat is waiting, darker than his curse,
And swifter than his hate ; and for a mast
There stands a demon, and for a sail
He spreads his somber wings, and at the helm
There sits a skeleton, pointing with one
Fleshless hand to the dark ocean, and with
The other, he beckons impatient to me ;

And now they 're calling, and I must go am [gone !'

And thus he died, and no one heard

His dying words but me ;
He ne'er again bemoaned or stirred,

Nor writhed in agony.

Among the rocks I buried him
Beside the secret sea.

And when I hear the sobbing winds,

And ocean's breakers roar,
I think of him who, with his sins,

Lies buried on the shore ;

And then his wild eyes haunt me,
And will forever more.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Depredating Hen

Of all the things in nature that afflict the sons of men,
There is nothing that I know of beats the depredating

hen;

If you see a wild-eyed woman firing brick-bats from the

shed,

You can bet a hen has busted up her little flower bed.

She plunders and she scratches, she cackles and she

hatches,

And forty thousand cowboys could n't keep her in a pen ;

She was sent on earth to fret us, to excoriate the lettuce ;

She 's a thoro'-going nuisance, is the depredating hen.

I threw a brick and missed her, as she hustled out my

beans,

But Julius Caesar's statue was smashed to smithereens !

I saw her digging rifle pits where I 'd put my pansies in ;

I threw a good sized rock, and hit my hired man on the

shin !

She busts all bounds and shackles : she giggles and she

cackles ;

She makes me say some earnest things I have n't time to

pen.

I never used bad language ; but now I 'm filled with

anguish ;

Alas ! I 've broke the record thro' that depredating hen.

But now thro'out my cabinet there floats a pleasant smell ;

And the reason for that perfume is n't very hard to tell,
For when I rose this morning, saw my cabbage bed a

wreck,

I caught that depredating hen and wrung her cussed neck !
I hear her fizz and crackle ; no more she '11 scratch and

cackle,

Or make my summer garden look like some hyena's den ;
She far too long has bossed me ; she far too much has

cost me

I 'll eat at luncheon time to-day a hundred-dollar hen.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Fall Fair

They are makin preparations for the big fall fair,
And the farmer and his family are loaded up with care ;
They are rubbin down the geldin and the big brood

mare ;

And the three-year-old is frisky you ought to see him

rear,

As they run him round the pasture when they Ve got an

hour to spare :

They make him go full sail,

With red ribbons in his tail ;

Yes, they 're makin preparations for the big fall fair.

They are combin out the fleeces on the thoro'bred rams ;

They are pickin out the best of the pretty spring lambs ;

The hired man is workin on a wicker work rig,

For the easy transportation of the pedigreed pig ;

And the boys are all constructin the cutest little pens

For the safety and the comfort of the Vere de Vere hens ;

The 'ristocratic bull

With turnip tops is full

It 'll make a great sensation at the big fall fair.

They are makin preparations for the big fall fair ;

There is very much excitement in the circumambient air ;

Each farmer has a pumpkin that can 't be beat, b' gosh !

And everybody stands to win upon a certain squash ;

Not to mention barley, wheat and oats, and buckwheat,

corn and peas,

And the products of the vine and the harvest of the trees ;

While I hear the housewife mutter,

' They 'll never beat that butter!'

Yes, they 're makin preparations for the great fall fair.

They are makin preparations for the big fall fair,
In the barnyard, in the kitchen, down cellar everywhere !
The currycomb is goin and the brush is never still,

And the girls are makin butter with a flourish and a will.
They are glancin at the wall, where diplomas in a frame
The triumphs of the past are a glory and a name.

Before each eye arises

The vision of big prizes ;
Yes, they 're makin preparations for the big fall fair.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Fittest Only Shall Survive

I stood alone, when all at once the scales
Fell from mine eyes, and lo, I saw the vales
And mountain sides, as far as eye could see,
Filled with a shining host of goodly company,
And on a ladder stretched to heaven afar,
One end on earth, one fixed against a star ;
Ascending and descending angels fair,
Whose feet made music on the golden stair,
And all the while from heaven's melodious throat
This wondrous song kept dropping note by note :
' The useful man shall save his soul alive
The fittest only shall the grave survive.'

And near me stood an angel for awhile
He watched me sadly with a pitying smile ;

' Fear not,' he said, ' and do not troubled be
By things that you may hear or things you see.
The Lord himself hath placed me by thy side
To teach thee certain truths and be thy guide.'

' Why am I here? ' I cried, ' from earth beguiled !'

' You have n't 4 got religion,' ' and he smiled ;

' You felt that God was libeled when they said
That He a place on earth called hell had made.
Thou shalt return to earth this thing to tell :
God made the heavens only man made hell !'

' But where,' I asked, 'do all the sinners go?'
I wondered when I saw him smiling so,
And when he spake I reverent held my breath :

' Dost thou not know the wage of sin is death ?
Surely thou hast not studied as you ought
The holy book wherein that truth is taught :
On every page that lesson meets the eye

The soul that sins, that soul will surely die !
And death means DEATH ! the dead man's hand no
more

Shall have a chance to knock upon the door.
Good men alone shall save their souls alive
The fittest only shall the tomb survive.

So, search the scriptures ; all your soul engage :
The world beneath you is one fruitful page :
The birds, the beasts, the fishes in the sea,
The corn and grasses brushing 'gainst thy knee,
The buzzing insects, yea, the very worms
That bide within the earth, the unseen germs
All teach this law that rules the heavens and earth.
Yea, rules each little being from his birth ;
And they will teach you by their endless strife
The victor's crown is everlasting life.
They teach it daily in their little lives
He only that is fit the strife survives.

And knowing this, then let thy soul be brave ;
Destroying hell is harnessed to the grave ;
There fixed for aye by an unyielding bond
Rejoice to think it hath no grip beyond.
God made the universe, and made it well
Dost think His holy fingers fashioned hell?
The earth of agony, the skies of gloom,
The fields of vice, are bounded by the tomb.
This law is merciful, tho' mayhap stern :
Man made of dust shall to the dust return.

' Why should the God-Head seek the dust to save?
The living only shall survive the grave.

In God's wide universe of earth and air
There 's no abiding place for dead men there ;
And in the other world beyond man's view
That constant law, unbreakable, holds true.
Go back to earth and mock their foolish strife ;
Tell every man to eat the Bread of Life.

Our Lord on earth, in troubles dark and dim,
Performed good deeds let all men copy Him.
Tell them they must, to save their souls alive,
Be numbered with the fittest to survive.'

' God made the heavens only then the earth ?'
' Is part of heaven ! ' the angel said, with mirth ;
' Know that the heavens are many, and the first

And lowest heaven is that earth accursed

Cursed not of God, as pulpit men have said ;

But cursed by hells, by human malice made.

That lower heaven is their first and last ;

Their fatal feet the grave have never passed ;

Thus far and then no farther shall they go,

To turn another heaven into woe.

Such people cannot save their souls alive

None but the fittest shall the grave survive.

' And thus you see the Lord to thee doth give
A fighting chance to either die or live :
You have your chance to turn to dust and clay,
Or be a cord of wood, or bale of hay.
Thus will you gain the angels' just contempt
To pass the tomb you never made attempt ;
And they will judge you by that awful rule :

He must have been a scoundrel or a fool.

Shall you, O Khan, then let your chances pass ;

To go on record angel or an ass?

Know that thou must, to save thy soul alive,

Be numbered with the fittest to survive.'

The Genesis Of A Soul

When I crawl and creep in the withered grass,

And, hid among rocks, I lie ;

When my nimble tongue is as smooth as glass,

And I hiss at the passer-by ;

When I crawl along in the shaded brake

With sinuous motion, slow ;

I know that my soul was the soul of a snake

Ten thousand years ago.

But when I wing my way aloft,

And float with the clouds on high ;

When I dip my wings in the azure soft,

And nations 'neath me lie ;

When thunder voices beneath me roll,

And lightnings come and go,

I know that my soul was an eagle's soul

Nine thousand years ago.

And when I long for fever beds,

On banks of slime and mud,

Where saurians rear -their hideous heads

On the brink of the sullen flood ;

When I moan for the mud of a night-time Nile,

Or deep morass, I know

My soul was the soul of a crocodile

Six thousand years ago.

But when my heart is light and gay,
I long for meadows free,

THE KHAN'S CANTICLES. 59

Where grass and flow'rs, the livelong day,

Tell wondrous tales to me ;
When I love the light and hate the dark,

And trill a song, I know
My soul was the soul of a meadow lark

Four thousand years ago.

But when I shrink from every sound

When fancies make me flee ;
And when, in hiding underground,

A whisper frightens me ;
When I crouch in fear my daily dole,

Then run and hide, I know
My soul was a poor little rabbit's soul

Three thousand years ago.

But when I trod the wood or plain,

Devoid of fear or care,
And go my way in proud disdain,

Prepared to do and dare ;
When thro' the hills my thunders roll,

When jackals crouch, I know
My soul was a lordly lion's soul

Two thousand years ago.

But when I feed the poor and weak,

And prop the lame and gray ;
And when I take my staff and seek

The lamb that 's gone astray ;
'Tis when my heart is free from taint,

Or any guile, I know
My soul of souls was the soul of a saint

One thousand years ago.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Girl Who Giggles In The Choir

Give me a club that I may kill
The tenor pert, the smirking basso;
Hand me an ax that I may spill
The blood of each upstart jackass, O.
Ah, when the preacher's touching tones

Have set my guilty soul on fire,
The flames are quenched forever by

The girl who giggles in the choir.

The basso smirks, the tenor grins,
The alto smiles behind her muff,

And I, with all my load of sins,
And seeking mercy, think it rough

I can't enjoy sweet Heaven's dawn,
Or feel the blast of Hades' fire,

Because my eye is fixed upon

The girl who giggles in the choir.

I think I 'll rise in all my might

And pass around a strong petition;
I do it cuz I think it 's right

To save our souls from sure perdition;
We 've got to kill the tenor brave

And make the basso man retire,
And bury in the same cold grave

The girl who giggles in the choir.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Girl Who Lisps

My love is light as a will-o'-the-wisp,

Oh, my, me !

My love she speaks with a little lisp,

Oh, my, me !

' Do n't kith me, pleath, it tumbth my hair,
Do n't squeeth my hand my heart is there'-
And that is more than I can bear,

Me, oh, my !

She 's wee and wise, she 's great and good,

Me, oh, my !

I 'd ring her finger if I could,

My, oh, me !

And when I say kind things to her
She drops her head ' I thank you, thir,'
I think I hear a kitten purr,
Oh, my, me !

' It ithent pothible,' she said,

Me, oh, my !

' You have really lotht your head,'

My, oh, me !

Tho' cute the cunning little crow,
Searched in my face for weal or woe,
' Now, do you really love me tho?'
Oh, my, me !

I pulled the license out, and she,

Me, oh, my !

Looked just as bashful as could be,

My, oh, me !

I said I 'd love her, life or death

I listened then with bated breath

She clasped my hand, and whispered ' Yeth,'

Me, oh, my !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Gold Og God

The royal hill was calm and still

And the silent angels slept,
Till all alone to the golden throne

A wee, wee baby crept.
Ah ! its little feet were pink and sweet,

Its steps were all unsteady ;
Yet its little voice made heaven rejoice :
' Lo ! the golden wheat is ready !'

' The wheat is ready,' rang around
The steps of the golden throne ;

The angels all their scythes unbound
In a world that was all their own ;

And the beautiful baby crept along
With lips like a golden pod ;

The harvest was brief, yet it slept on a sheaf-
On the glorious gifts of God.

Look for a dollar and find it, please,

Down in the dusty street ;
Then look in the billowed and splendid seas

Where the sweet wind wipes the wheat.
There 's where the angels have come to-night :

There 's where the baby sings ;
And all 's afire with a spark of light

From a big Archangel's wings.

So the story is told by a baby wee
With a mouth like a golden pod

A sheaf is a splendid angel's knee
It sleeps in the lap of God.

East and west, and north and south,

Angel ! whither away ?
Will the beautiful autumn fill the mouth

Of the winter's hungered day ?
Yes, out of the field the promise wings

That the wee, wee babe is right :
The yellow harvest sobs and sings

As the white days take their flight.

So the baby lives without mishap,
And its lips like a ripened pod,

Are pursed in the rich and the yellow lap
Of the golden gift of God.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Golden West

The star of empire takes its way

Towards the Golden West ;
And millions follow in its wake

The bravest and the best !

They leave the shores that fed them not,
Nor clothed their children young ;

They come to plant their myriad tents,
The prairie flowers among.

They turn their swords to ploughshares, and
Their spears to pruning hooks ;

They come to lead their flocks and herds
Beside our running brooks.

They come to till our waiting soil,

And break the stubborn sod ;
They come to make their gardens in

This country of our God.

They 'll build their mighty cities by

The wide and crystal lakes ;
Nor cease till 'gainst the Rockies high

The tide of freedom breaks.

And he who starved in wretchedness

Beyond the distant sea,
Will, in our land of bounteousness,

A lord of nature be.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Great Democracy

From ocean unto ocean our noble land is fair,

A hundred million freemen's homes await their owners
there.

Then fling the tidings broadcast, the striving world among,
Till those who kneel to despots are to independence stung ;
Till those who work in bondage beneath the tyrant's heel,
Will in th[^]ir hearts the springing tide of hope and triumph feel ;
Till people who have burst their chains, determined to be free,
By hundred thousands come to join the Great Democracy.

A home, a home for millions ! Behold these millions

come

No blast of brazen trumpet, no crash of warlike drum ;

They come with plowshares in their hands, their faces

bright and glad

An army mightier by far than monarch ever had.

Beneath their free and swinging tread the thrones of

kingdoms crack :

Kings, czars and kaisers vainly try to keep these millions

back ;

They march in time to music, an anthem of the free,
The chorus rolls to Heaven high, ' The Great Democracy.'

Ye inland oceans feel the ring ; ye forests chant and sing ;

Ye prairies clap your hands with joy, Democracy is king !

Fling open wide the golden gates, build fires along the

coast,

And welcome in with mirth and song the fast advancing

host.

Lift up your heads, ye mountains, in all your noble pride :
Make ready to receive them, ye prairies green and wide ;
They come as strong as oceans, resistless as the sea,
To help to build our nation new, the Great Democracy.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Hired Man

He upward looks upon the sea-deep
Liquid of the splendid sky ;

He sees the cattle standing knee-deep
'Neath the sheltering cedars high.
A beast of burden, yonder he
Can hear an insect chirp with glee,
While in the twenty-acre field,
Without a shelter or a shield,

See him through the tall wheat swing.
He envies every little bug
Beneath the cool and grassy rug :

The beast afield, the bird awing

He envies every creeping thing.

Why? Because that in the splendor
Of the torrid noontide high

They can seek the cool ways tender,
And hide away till night is nigh ;
And thus escaping from the noon,
Come forth to wonder at the moon ;
And to their little neighbors call,
When the eastward shadows fall.

Thus in the night-time calm and late,
Among the moss and grass and leaves,
With thoughtfulness each bosom heaves,

And every little heart elate,

Chirrup softly God is Great !

He has n't time among the stubble,
Or on the parched and burning sod,

To harken to the brooklet's babble,
Or lift his old straw hat to God.
If Christ was preaching somewhere near,
He couldn 't spare an hour to hear !
His little joys are somewhat rare :
The summer circus and the fair.

He pitchforks life aside for food ;
A slaving, tired and humble elf,
He weds a worker like himself.

Their creed is easy understood,

That God, tho' very great is good.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Irishmen's Lament

We 're aich a descindint
Av the great an resplindint
The bowld, indepindint,

Home Ruler Boroo.
We thought we hed thoighs
An arms av such soize
As wud dazzle yer oyes,

An astonish yez, too.

But the very first bound
We med on the ground, I
Begorra! we found

That mistaken we wer!
To think that ye 'd thrate us,
An faist us and fate us ;
Thin turn round and bate us !

It 's haythens ye are !
To think that a lout
Who never dhrank stout.
An knew nothing about

The rale ould potheen,
Shud hev legs loike a damon,
An arms loike a dhrayman,
An can jump loike a sayman

Bates all Oi've seen !

But a song Oi will throwl,
If you 'll fill up the bowl
For Oi'm sick, be me sowl !

An Oi 'm spacheless, agra ;
Oi wish Oi cud take

Me floight an awake
Where there 's divil a shnake

In Erin Go Bragh.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Khan's Canticles

Above the sparkling pebbles rang.

Ah, they were Indians old and grey,
Robed in the skins of bear and coon

That they had slain in days of yore
When hunting on the Waubigoon.

' Alas ! We '11 hunt no more, no more,'

The feeblest chieftain cried, ' for soon
We'll pass into the spirit land

And see no more the Waubigoon.

' No more we '11 lay us down to rest

Nor hide us from the heated noon
Upon thy shady banks of green
Thy reedy banks, O Waubigoon.

' No more within the silent night,

When lofty floats the chilly moon,
We '11 watch the deer come down to drink
Thy sacred waters, Waubigoon.

' O Waubigoon, we know that life

Is gone for us ; we feel that thou
Must be the holy stream that feeds
The heart of our great Manitou.

' How sweet to ride in birch canoe

That, anchored yonder, frets and bounds,
And painless float upon thy breast
Into the happy hunting grounds.

' Grant this, O Waubigoon, we pray,

O grant to us this simple boon,
The only winding sheet we ask
Is thy loved waters, Waubigoon.

' We wish to live no more, no more ;

We wish to see no other noon,
Three chiefs yield up their lives to thee,
Thou chief of waters, Waubigoon.'

He spoke his last, and as he ceased
His comrades caught the frail canoe,

The three grey chieftains entered in
And down the fleeting waters flew.

And they have never since been seen,
From that bright August day till now :

Their people know that they are gone
To dwell with mighty Manitou.

And when the stars are draped in black,
And all extinguished is the moon,

A ghostly boat is seen to float
Adown the secret Waubigoon ;

And in the darkness you may hear
Three spirit voices softly croon,
' We loved in life we love in death,
Thy sacred waters, Waubigoon.'

The Khan's Canticles 23

Spring or autumn, never whine,

For your own good name.

Sometimes she '11 be cross and cold,

Never mind, she 's good as gold

Let her have her little scold

And kiss her just the same.

When there 's something wrong with baby

Kiss her ev'ry day,

'Twill help to sooth her worry, may be

Kiss her ev'ry day.

Kiss her when her soul is sad,

Kiss her when her heart is glad ;

Be your fortune good or bad,

Kiss her every day.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Khan's Canticles. 25

Ah ! life is like the street to-day :

One side is dark, the other bright,
And of the road that points that way

One half is wrong, the other right
Be wise, my boy, and e'er abide
Upon the golden sunny side.

Remember, 'tis your fault if you

Are blighted with remorse and care ;

You choose the shade yourself and yet
The sunny side was always there.

Your Savior stands where death has died

And beckons from the sunny side.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Loving Leaves

Brown is the hill where the maples grow-
So brown, so calm, so cold and still ;

But the loving leaves creep snug and close,
And warm the feet of my dear old hill.

And they do n't forget the violets small,
Shivering and cold in the damp and wet ;

They cover them up in blankets brown,
Whispering, ' Darlings, we love you yet.'

Down in the hollow amid the ferns,

Their billowy wraps they wreath and roll ;

And they spread a carpet, rich and warm,
To keep the snow from the mouse's hole.

And the lady-slipper so shy and weak
They wrap a muffler about her throat ;

And the maiden's-hair they cover her deep,
And furnish the moss with an overcoat.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Man Who Hasn'T Got A Job

Where willows flickered their shadows down

On our blistered backs and our faces brown ;

Where all day long in the sunny weather,

When you and I were boys together,

We plunged and splashed in the friendly pond

In the lilled pond of the Long Ago.

Around its banks were deep, green masses,

That lifted and flourished their banners high ;
Its face, wherever unshaded by grasses,

Photographed glimpses of cloud and sky ;
And there, when the evenings were long and sweet,
We hurried and raced with eager feet,
And laughed and shouted, or yelled and pouted,
When our shirts were knotted, or mine was flouted,
As we dipped and splashed in the waters sweet,
In the lilled pond of the Long Ago.

My breast is full with a heavy sigh

When I think of its waters so calm and cool,

And I think of the days when you and I
Stole out as truants away from school,

To leap and to run in the summer sun,

And muddy each other up, just for fun ;

To hark for the bull frog's sudden hush,
As we caught the water with bound and rush,
And splashed till our bodies were all aglow

In the lilled pond of the Long Ago.

But the lilled pond of the Long Ago
Is lost and gone, and its bed is dry ;

No more, as once in the long ago,

Will it catch the lights of a summer sky.

I looked with grief at its empty bed,

And felt that a dear old friend was dead ;

No waters there but the tears that fell

From eyes that always had loved it well ;

I looked my last, for I prized it so

The lilled pond of the Long Ago.

The hopes we cherished when we were young ;

Our youthful loves so fresh and fond ;
The songs we relished are now unsung ;

Our hearts are dry as the dear old pond.
Our hopes are as dead as its old cat-tails,
Our lives as bruised as our dinner pails ;
But we, as into the future we grope,
Can live for the better and always hope,
And flower our hearts with the hopeful glow
That flowered the pond of the Long Ago.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Men Of The Northern Zone

Oh, we are the men of the Northern Zone ;

Shall a bit be placed in our mouth?
If ever a Northman lost his throne,

Did the conqueror come from the South?
Nay, nay and the answer blent
In chorus is southward sent :
' Since when has a Southerner's conquering steel

Hewed out in the North a throne?
Since when has a Southerner placed his heel
On the men of the Northern Zone?'

Our hearts are as free as the rivers that flow

To the seas where the north star shines ;
Our lives are as free as the breezes that blow

Thro' the crests of our native pines.
We never will bend the knee,
We '11 always and aye be free,
For liberty reigns in the land of the leal,

Our brothers are 'round her throne ;
A Southerner never shall place his heel

On the men of the Northern Zone.

Oh, shall we shatter our ancient name,

And lower our patriot crest :
And leave a heritage dark with shame,
To the infant upon the breast ?
Nay, nay and the answer blent
With a chorus is southward sent :
' Ye claim to be free and so are we ;

Let your fellow freemen alone :

For a Southerner never shall place his heel,
On the men of the Northern Zone.'

Shall the mothers that bore us bow the head

And blush for degenerate sons ?
Are the patriot fires gone out and dead ?
Ho ! brothers stand to the guns !
Let the flag be nailed to the mast,
Defying the coming blast !
For Canada's sons are as true steel,

Their metal is muscle and bone,
The Southerner never shall place his heel
On the men of the Northern Zone.

Oh, we are the men of the Northern Zone,

Where the maples their branches toss,
And Great Bear rides in his state alone,

Afar from the Southern Cross.
Our people shall aye be free,
They never will bend the knee,
For this is the land of the true and leal,

Where freedom is bred in the bone
The Southerner never shall place his heel

On the men of the Northern Zone.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Mortgage Big

Did y' ever see a mortgage big

A mortgage big?

It eats the farm, the cow, the pig

The cow and pig;

It eats the butter and the cheese;

It eats the hives of honey bees;

It eats the peach and apple trees

The apple trees.

It eats the handsome two-year-old

The two-year-old;

The pretty gelding must be sold

He must be sold!

It eats the wheat, the oats and corn;

The farmer's heart with grief is worn;

His overalls are tattered an' torn

Are tattered an' torn.

It eats the duck and it eats the hen

It eats the hen;

It darkly comes, you know not when

You know not when;

The farmer's wife is filled with sighs;

It puts the tear-drops in her eyes;

It steals her plums and apple pies

Her apple pies.

It makes her wear an old print dress

An old print dress;

It fills her soul with great distress

With great distress;
It hurts and injures every arm;
She knows, down in her bosom warm,
That 's why the boys all leave the farm

They leave the farm!

Did y' ever see a mortgage big

A mortgage big?
It eats the goose, the colt and pig

The colt and pig;
It eats the hay-stack and the hen;
It makes a wreck of perch and pen,
And, Oh! it makes a wreck of men

A wreck of men!

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Old Cow Bell

Bossy, it 's spring, you '11 soon be free,
Six months of gladness are yours, I hope ;
All winter you Ve been a care to me,

But now I 'm cutting your well-worn rope ;
But 'round your neck a circle I twine,
You cannot hide, you 're always mine,
At home or down on the dim side line

I '11 hear the cow bell.

The boys will search when evening falls,
Barelegged they '11 trail thro' brier and weed ;
They know the green and bosky stalls,
The place where the straying cattle feed.

The boys will hunt at the close of day,
And listen, listen amid their play,

Bossy, Bossy, what gives you away ?
The cow bell.

The mother stands with her well scrubbed pail,
And shadows her anxious eyes,
So out of the swamp, with a muddy tail,

See the family cow arise.
She 's milked, and maiden and robin bird
Wink at each other and say no word ;
And down in the swamp the ring is heard
Of the cow bell.

Many and many and many a man

W^ho o\vn's his multi-thousands, now,

THE KHAN'S CANTICLES. 41

Was raised on the good old-fashioned plan,
And lived on the milk of the family cow.
Mush and milk made his brains and bones ;
Her butter bought him his building stones
No wonder he loves the tinkling tones

Of the cow bell.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Old Hymn

The windows and the doors were op'ed,
The splendid church was full of light,
And all along the moonlit street
A stream of music thrilled last night.
A homeless tramp, beneath the trees,

Stood still to hear that river roll,
And falling on his helpless knees

Heard ' Jesu, lover of my soul.'

'Tis thirty years since last he heard

The cadence of that anthem sweet,
And all his startled soul was stirred

Alone upon the lonely street.
They sang the splendid hymn with grace

E'en children's voices swelled the song-
And down his dragged and stricken face

The scalding tear drops coursed along.

' Jesu, lover of my soul

Let me to Thy bosom fly.'
He heard the final sentence roll,

Then wandered onward with a sigh.
The music waked the better man,

For from the past, so sad and dim,
A girl with face all wet and wan

Came slowly forth and haunted him.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Old Nest

There 's an old nest down in the branches

That under my windows swing,
Where once in the long sweet evenings

Two mocking birds used to sing ;

But winter has battered and tattered
That nest near my window pane :

As spring-time freshens I often wonder,
Will the mocking birds come again

Return to the nest that they loved so well
And built with such cunning care

The nest that they changed to a golden cup
With wisps of my loved one's hair?

It seems to wait when the evenings fall,
And watch when the mornings burn ;
And say, when the branches my windows tap,
' Will the mocking birds never return ?'

But the nest will fall as our hopes will fall,

And the loves of the long ago
Will never return to the trysting place

The place that had loved them so.

At lonesome eve and at lovely morn,
We watch, with a growing pain,

For the faces sweet and the tinkling feet
That never will come again.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Orchard By The Barn

There 's a welcome perfumed blizzard blowing softly up
the lane,

And the cherry trees are snowing in a January way ;
The bees are all abuzzin in a jubilantic strain,

And the bluebirds in the maples each has something
sweet to say.

There's an old horse grazing gravely underneath the
apple trees :

There 's a pet lamb looking cutely through the fence
A little girl is feeding him with biscuit, if you please
I fancy that that pet lamb will be raised at some ex-
pense !

There 's a group of modest lilacs drooping down their
scented plumes ;
There 's a blackbird in an apple tree with voice like any
fife;
The air is bright with sunshine and is thick with rare
perfumes
Who lives beside that orchard must lead a happy life.

But he does n't, for he 's grumbling cuz there 's spavins
on the colt ;
He 's raising cane with some one cuz the hens are in
the oats ;
While he 's hoofing past the orchard, with a shuffle and a
jolt,

The lilac ladies curtsy and the song birds swell their
throats.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Pond Of Long Ago

In the beautiful meadow of long ago,
My memory turns, with a longing fond,

To the place in the meadows of long ago
Where nestled the dimpled and liliated pond;

Where willows flickered their shadows down

On our blistered backs and our faces brown;

Where all day long in the sunny weather,

When you and I were boys together,

We plunged and splashed in the friendly pond

In the liliated pond of the Long Ago.

Around its banks were deep, green masses,

That lifted and flourished their banners high;
Its face, wherever unshaded by grasses,

Photographed glimpses of cloud and sky;
And there, when the evenings were long and sweet,
We hurried and raced with eager feet,
And laughed and shouted, or yelled and pouted,
When our shirts were knotted, or mine was flouted,
As we dipped and splashed in the waters sweet,
In the liliated pond of the Long Ago.

My breast is full with a heavy sigh

When I think of its waters so calm and cool,

And I think of the days when you and I
Stole out as truants away from school,

To leap and to run in the summer sun,
And muddy each other up, just for fun;

54 TH E KHAN'S CANTICLES.

To hark for the bull frog's sudden hush,
As we caught the water with bound and rush,
And splashed till our bodies were all aglow
In the liliated pond of the Long Ago.

But the liliated pond of the Long Ago
Is lost and gone, and its bed is dry;

No more, as once in the long ago,

Will it catch the lights of a summer sky.

I looked with grief at its empty bed,

And felt that a dear old friend was dead;

No waters there but the tears that fell

From eyes that always had loved it well;

I looked my last, for I prized it so

The liliated pond of the Long Ago.

The hopes we cherished when we were young;

Our youthful loves so fresh and fond;
The songs we relished are now unsung;

Our hearts are dry as the dear old pond.
Our hopes are as dead as its old cat-tails,
Our lives as bruised as our dinner pails;
But we, as into the future we grope,
Can live for the better and always hope,

And flower our hearts with the hopeful glow
That flowered the pond of the Long Ago.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Popular Thing To Do

Smith has got into trouble :

There 's a terrible hullabaloo !
And now the quandary's bothering me :

What's the popular thing to do?
For many have classed him,
With purpose to blast him,

As being a full-fledged rogue ;
His cronies reject him,
And try to connect him

With ev'ry low crime in vogue;
For Smith has got into trouble :

There 's a terrible hullabaloo !
And now the quandary 's bothering me :

What 's the popular thing to do ?

There 's a few who defend him,
And try to befriend him ;

There 's not very many in town ;
With love they are dowered :
They say he 's a coward

Who 'll kick a poor chap when he 's down.
There 's the big human rattlers,
The gossips and tattlers,

Who strike at your heel as you go ;
There 's the good and religious,
With speeches prodigious,

Repeating : ' I told you so !'
For Smith has got into trouble :

There 's a terrible hullabaloo !
And now the quandary 's bothering me :

What 's the popular thing to do?

Will I go and denounce him
A rascal pronounce him,

And point with the mud-pelting crew?

But ere I will shout
I 'll try and find out

What 's the popular thing to do.
For I 'd feel rather meanly
If he popped up serenely,

And proved he was innocent quite ;
Such things have occurred,
So I won't say a word

Till I find if he 's wrong or he 's right.
For Smith has got into trouble :

There 's a terrible hullabaloo !
And now the quandary 's bothering me :

What 's the popular thing to do ?

My head is quite level :
Good Lord or good devil !

On either I 'm ready to call ;
If he does n't get off
I 'm ready to scoff ;

If he does I will cheer him, that 's all.
If they crush him I 'll hiss him,
If they do n't I will kiss him,

And at his reception attend ;
If he 's guilty I 'll chase him,

If not I 'll embrace him

And swear I was always his friend.
For Smith has got into trouble :

There 's a terrible hullabaloo !
And now the quandary 's bothering me :

What 's the popular thing to do?

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Razzle Dazzle

The youth who spent his money on the rink and on the

skate,

And squandered all the wealth he had on sleighing parties

late;

The youth that spent his money on the winter's choicest

plums

Oh, he gets the razzle dazzle when the joyous spring-time

comes.

The youth who went to dances in McFlinkmadingle's

hall;

The youth who spent his shekels on the ' swarry ' and

the ball ;

The youth who for his Persian lamb is owing various

sums

Oh, he gets the razzle dazzle when the happy spring-time

comes.

The youth who yelled for whisky hot in a fog-horn tone

of voice ;

The youth who bought much oysters for the lady of his

choice ;

The youth who sat around the fire, a-twiddling of his

thumbs

Oh, he gets the razzle dazzle when the gentle spring-time

comes.

For 'tis the time the tailor his horn begins to toot,
And he hangs upon the outer wall the handsome April
suit ;

22 7

The youth who hasn't money when the tailor beats his
drums,
Oh, he gets the razzle dazzle when the joyous spring-time
comes.

Oh, list to me, my tender youth, the boats they soon will
run ;

In lemonade and ice cream there 's an awful lot of fun ;

So save your nickels, every one, and keep away from
bums,

Or, you '11 get the razzle dazzle when then pleasant spring-
time comes.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Semaphores Of God

I 've winged my way, by night and day,

And many a sea I 've crossed
In broad daylight or darksome night ;

I know I can't get lost.
My wings I try, and fearless fly,

On trackless pathways broad,
For every star in the sky afar

Is a semaphore of God.

The people say we find our way,

With instinct for a guide,
And through the dark, without a mark

Upon our pathway wide.

84 THE KHAN'S CANTICLES.

It is not so, for, as we go,
The planets smile and nod,

And every star in the sky afar
Is a semaphore of God.

With love He hath defined our path :

We cannot go astray,
And every light, by day or night,

Doth guide us on our way.
The planets shine, with eyes benign,

Like daisies in the sod ;

And every star in heaven afar

Is a semaphore of God.

In storms and calms, from pines to palms,

My way is ever plain ;

When summer shines, from palms to pines

I journey back again.

The Southern Cross, the Northern Bear,

Are signals bright and broad ;

Each star in air no matter where

Is a semaphore of God.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Shantyman's Fate.

He came out of the woods when the spring-time came,

And all of his pockets were filled with lucre ;
And he left the pancake meals behind,

And the noisy evening games of euchre ;
And he struck for the town on the southern shore,

For his winter's work was over and ended ;
With thoughts of sport he was bubbling o'er,

And his dreams of the future were wide and splendid,

A ready-made suit of a gorgeous tint,

He placed on his muscular limbs of iron ;
When he donned a plug with a glossy glint

(The merchant said that he looked like Byron.)
They barbered him up to her Majesty's taste :

He pinned on his bosom a couple of roses ;
And now, like a lord, he is hailing a hack,

And soon on its cushions he graceful reposes.

Alas and alack ! for his nice plug hat,

Was drunk as an owl at about half-past two !
His roses, ah me ! were blind as a bat,

As the shadows of evening downward drew ;
His necktie was blazing just under his ear ;

His nice havana had burnt his coat,
His collar was limp and all damp with beer,

And the tout ensemble was full as a goat.

At midnight I saw him stretched out in the pen :
His mouth was open, his eyes were shut ;

230 THE KHAN'S CANTICLES.

When the sergeant asked him the why and the when,
He rolled himself over and said, ' Tut tut!'

In vain they examined his clothes for dust :
His pockets they searched in vain for lucre ;

He 'd better go back to the northern crust,

And stay with the pancakes, planks and euchre.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Sheep-Killing Dog

So yiv been killin sheep?

Ye useless whelp ;
I 'm goin t put ye t sleep

Ye need n't yelp !

Ye good fer nothin brute !

I otter whang ye ;
Yur sentence I 'll commute

An straightway hang ye.

I 'll put a rope collar on ye,
T lift ye from yearth ;

I 'm taxed a dollar on ye
Mor 'n yur worth.

I gev ye a hull liver

When I killed thur hog ;

Not nuff? howsiver,
Yur a dead dog !

Ye low-down glutton !

Didn't I warn ye?
Yiv a taste fer mutton

Yelp ! gol darn ye !

Why I took such pains

To bring ye up ;
But ye never hed no brains

Since you 's a pup.

Ye killed two sheep, and flurried

A little lamb ;
Mor 'n that, ye worried

An aged ram !

I like a rale good dog

I do, extensive ;
But a dog whut 's a hog

Is too expensive.

Go way children,

En don raise no row,
Snap ! that rope 's bewildren

Yur a dead dog now !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Singer Of Heaven

As I sit with my silent sorrow,

I sing the sad song of my soul ;
Oh ! will she not come back to-morrow,

The love of my secret soul?

My Lulu, the white-armed, the bright-eyed !

My Lulu, the yearned for and young,
Who sings with the angels for ever

She learned of the angels their tongue.

For one of them stole her and brought her

Up to the star-kissed skies,
And there, mid the maidens, he taught her

The songs that heavenward rise.

She needed no harp in her white hands,
For her voice was a gift from her God ;

And they gave her no crown but the daisies,
That sprang from the sacred sod.

And they taught her no songs but the sweet ones

They sing when our Savior is sad,
As He turns His dear eyes on our people ;

When none in His glory are glad.

All sandalless, bright-eyed and beaming,
And pure-bosomed, sacred, and sweet,

She comes with her crown of fresh daisies,
And lays it with smiles at His feet.

201

Then she clasps her white fingers and sings Him

A thrilling of sweetness and love ;
While on her bright shoulder comes perching,

A gift from great Gabriel a dove !

Her voice goes stealing and pealing

All over the city of God,
Stilling His sorrow as when He

The waves of old Galilee trod.

And I that am listening cannot

Hear that that 's she 's singing ; but I
As her voice from planet to planet,

Drops limpid adown through the sky-
Am laden with love, and crushed down

By weight of that echo of song
How long will my Lulu be coming,

How long? Oh! my Lulu ! how long?

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Socks My Mother Knit

The mother of the Khan doth dwell

Two thousand wintry miles away ;
But O, she do n't forget, for he

Received by mail some socks, to-day ;
Knit by the tender hands which led

His footsteps in his childhood's dawn ;
The tears stood in his grateful eyes :

He kissed the socks then put them on.

These socks were made of wool that grew
Upon the backs of sheep that ran

Upon the hills that early knew
The immature, bare-footed Khan.

He knows those sheep, and they know him ;

They 'd ever come when he called ' Nan !'
And, like the lamb that Mary had,

They 'd fondly follow after Khan.

This wool was spun upon the wheel

That little wheel of ancient make ;
And nothing, sir, can happen which

Can from his mind its memory take.
And o'er the storm he hears the wheel :

Its scolding, pettish, breezy purr
He hears his mother sing, and hears

The wheel join in and sing with her.
And thus the Khan dreams on of home,

Until, disturb'd by blizzard shocks,
He wakes and writes, ' Dear mother : Please

To send another pair of socks !'

The little cannons round him grin :

The old, historic building quakes ;
The snow, insidious, drifteth in ;

The table that he writes on shakes ;
And with his mind's eye can be seen

This place with Red men all astir !
The fine barbarians that have been,

Each with his pack of costly fur ;
But he can say 't will do no harm :

The pleasant compliment will fit
No beaver skin was half so warm

As these dear socks his mother knit.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Song Of The Thaw

My sandalled feet are firm and fleet,
My chariot wheels are splendid ;

I rush and run before the sun
With balmy breezes blended ;

O'er forests dry, past mountains high,
O'er snowy valleys hollow,

I sweep along with muffled song

And robin red-breasts follow.

Before my blade the snow wreaths fade,

The frosty blast I cripple ;
The frozen stream wakes from its dream,

And straight begins to ripple ;

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Sunny Side

Two newsboys stood where warehouse shade
Fell on the sidewalk chill and dun,

And left the long and splendid street
One half in shadow, half in sun ;

They saw the belt of color wide,

Then hied them to the sunny side.

Ah ! what a change ! They left behind
The chill of winter, dark and raw,

And stood a moment after where
The air is thrilling with a thaw ;

They glance where shadows chill abide ;

Then laugh upon the sunny side.

And soon adown the sounding street,
Their voices sounding like a gong,

They dart along with flying feet

And shout the welcome newsboy song ;

But thro' the city far and wide

They always keep the sunny side.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Tramp's Soliloquy

I 'm sitting in the cells, alone,

All broken down and sad ;
I hear the stifled curse and groan

Of drunken men and bad ;
I 'm hungry, thirsty, weak and sick

For hours my heart has ached ;
I 'm thinking of my mother, and

The buttered buns she baked.

I dream of home, and see the cows

Stand knee deep in the pond ;
The waving grain in yonder field

The tamaracs beyond ;
My sister blows the supper horn

The scented clover 's raked ;
I '11 hie me home and feast upon

The buns my mother baked.

I see the morning glory vines
Hang idle down, and droop

About the table where I eat
My supper on the stoop ;

Beyond the orchard stretches far,
With apple blossoms flaked ;

While sister Mary butters buns
My dear old mother baked.

I hear the twitter of the birds,

The bleating cry of sheep,

The call of Someone that I know ;

I 'm troubled in my sleep ;

I hear a groan and stupid cry

A dreaming drunk's awaked

I eat the bread of sorrow not

The buns my mother baked.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Tune Mother Played

He was only a tramp ! The organ grinder,
Fast in the thronging way,
Rolled the notes of the dear old tune

That his mother used to play.

He looked at his rags his worthless hands-
He touched his tresses grey,

And heard the notes of the lilting tune
His mother used to play.

' Move on !' He drifted adown the street

The kissless and weary way ;
But his feet kept time to the dear old tune
That his mother used to play.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Veterans Of '66

Do you forget the robber band

That made the blood of patriots boil,
When Fenian feet were on our land,

And rebel shoes had cursed our soil?
Do you forget how women wept?

How o'er our homes there fell a pall ?
But, comrades, still our oath we kept,

And all obeyed our country's call !

Do you forget his dying face,

And how the ranks with fury thrill'd,
When someone staggered in his place,

And our first volunteer was killed ?
We rested his poor fallen head ;

We wiped his lips of froth and foam
The first young patriot, boys, was dead !

He died for comrades, flag and home !

And others died ! So round the stone

That marks the heroes of that fray,
Their comrades living yet make moan

For those who fell that fatal day.
Their patriot blood baptized the land ;

They gained a grave and won a crown-
No other but the loyal hand

Can put the ingrate rebel down !

The Waubigoon

Three Red Men near it sat and sang,
While past their feet the Waubigoon

Above the sparkling pebbles rang.

Ah, they were Indians old and grey,
Robed in the skins of bear and coon

That they had slain in days of yore
When hunting on the Waubigoon.

' Alas! We '11 hunt no more, no more,'

The feeblest chieftain cried, ' for soon
We'll pass into the spirit land

And see no more the Waubigoon.

' No more we '11 lay us down to rest

Nor hide us from the heated noon
Upon thy shady banks of green
Thy reedy banks, O Waubigoon.

' No more within the silent night,

When lofty floats the chilly moon,
We '11 watch the deer come down to drink
Thy sacred waters, Waubigoon.

' O Waubigoon, we know that life

Is gone for us; we feel that thou
Must be the holy stream that feeds
The heart of our great Manitou.

' How sweet to ride in birch canoe

That, anchored yonder, frets and bounds,

And painless float upon thy breast
Into the happy hunting grounds.

' Grant this, O Waubigoon, we pray,

O grant to us this simple boon,
The only winding sheet we ask
Is thy loved waters, Waubigoon.

' We wish to live no more, no more;

We wish to see no other noon,
Three chiefs yield up their lives to thee,
Thou chief of waters, Waubigoon.'

He spoke his last, and as he ceased
His comrades caught the frail canoe,

The three grey chieftains entered in
And down the fleeting waters flew.

And they have never since been seen,
From that bright August day till now:

Their people know that they are gone
To dwell with mighty Manitou.

And when the stars are draped in black,
And all extinguished is the moon,

A ghostly boat is seen to float
Adown the secret Waubigoon;

And in the darkness you may hear
Three spirit voices softly croon,
' We loved in life we love in death,
Thy sacred waters, Waubigoon.'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Wild November Morning

The air was dark, and damp, and chill,

And the lofty trees were swaying ;

And round and round the Haunted Hill

The scattered leaves were playing ;

The wild winds swept across the lea
Cold and damp from the gurgling sea,
And Oh ! how drear it seemed to me
This wild November morning.

The storm-king beat the sounding shore
With a heavy and pond'rous hammer ;
The bleak sky caught the sullen roar,
And shook with the awful clamor ;

And the wind rush'd by with a shriek and a cry
And tore the clouds in the frowning sky,
And piled them up in mountains high !
This wild November morning.

And out upon the surging bay,

A schooner stood in the offing,
And at her struggles in the spray,

The howling winds were scoffing ;

Oh ! how the pelting snow and sleet
About her hull and rigging beat
It seemed to me her winding sheet,
This wild November morning.

A woman stood beside the rocks,

And gazed upon the ocean ;
The wild wind whipt her auburn locks,

And she wept with wild emotion.

She cried : ' My sailor true and brave
Is struggling now with the rolling wave ;
Will no one come to help and save,
This wild November morning?'

Her lover paced the swaying deck,

And waved the scarf she made him ;
While all about the creaking wreck

The winds and waves upbraid him.

' I see her boat upon the tide :
She comes to save,' he weeping cried,

' May God protect my darling bride,
This wild November morning.'

Straight as an arrow to its mark,
The little craft went speeding ;
Although the waves roll'd high and dark
'Though her little hands were bleeding,
She gained the wreck then back they go
Safe through the pelting sleet and snow ;
Two loving hearts are one I know
This wild November morningf.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Wrong Hospitality

How many skillful housewives, in this pleasant world of

ours,

Lock the mince pie in the cupboard till it 's mouldy or it

sours?

Then it 's hurried on the table, and it 's forced upon your

plate,

When to eat it you 're unable, and its advent is too late.

How many gentle words we lock in the cupboard of the

heart,

Till the ones who should have heard them are from us

far apart?

Then let us always say them when they 're formed and

first complete ;

Let us eat our mince pies, always, while they 're savory

and they 're sweet

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

The Youthful Banker

When I was young I had a bank

A tin one, painted blue ;
The chimney, it was red ; the roof

Was fastened on with glue ;
It had a slit, where daddy made

Me dropp my pennies through.

My dad intended that my wealth
Would go, with other wads,

To keep the blacks from taking stock
In mud and basswood gods

(I thought that missionaries were
The most substantial frauds).

But on the sly I 'd raise the roof,

In spite of warnings stern,
And, if I took a penny out,

I bust the whole concern ;
'T was very wrong, I know ; but, then,

I did n't give a dern !

And when my mother found it out
(She 'd find it out, of course)

She 'd gently lay me 'cross her knee,
With concentrated force,

While she revenged the heathen's cause-
You bet I felt remorse !

Now, gentle reader, as you read,

I Ve just perceived you grin :
Perhaps you also had a bank

A blue one, made of tin ;
If so, like me, could you take out

More cash than you put in?

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

There's A Bullfrog In The Well.

Homesick to-night ! My heart is sick,

And, as days of yore,
I walk again the village street,

I see the village store
The same old-timer cod-fish

Is dangling near the door.

I hear the village joker joke ;

I hear the answering roar
He 's cracked those hoary-headed jokes

These twenty years or more,
Yet I could laugh at them again

Until my sides were sore.

Before that self-same window, there,

I used to stand and feed
My boyish eyes on candy wealth,

For candy was my creed,
And if I had a copper, O,

Then I was rich indeed.

I sit in awe upon a box,

My hands upon my knees,

THE KHAN S CANTICLES.

And hear the farmers as they talk

Of politics and cheese ;
Of horses, plows, the weather, crops,

And topics such as these.

Till all at once a vision bright

Stands in the open door ;
Her face is sweet, her feet are bare,

Her little frock is tore ;
My boyhood's darling ! Ah, my heart,

I '11 see that face no more.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

These Autumnal Days

Oh, the splendid splendid morning !

Resting on a hoop of gold ;
Oh, the grand majestic sunsets,

All in purpled crimson rolled ;
And the noontides full of splendor

And the air so soft and sweet,
Make the grasses, rich and tender,

Laugh with gladness at my feet.

And the hillsides hazy hillsides

At their feet a dreamy pool ;
And the meadows oh, the meadows !

And the forests deep and cool.
Hear the gun shots in the clearing ;

Hear the quick impatient cry,
While the game goes swift careering,

Joyous through the liquid sky.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

This Is Spring

A rush of sunlight o'er the way,

A cry of wild birds in the park,
A glow of golden light by day, t

A field of blazing stars at dark
Among the trees, along the grass,

The songs of many robins ring;
And as the splendid moments pass,

The world cries out, ' So this is Spring! '

To-day my heart is like a dart

That's feathered with an eagle's plume,
And rises from the dark apart

To reach the sunlight from the gloom.
Unfettered are the waters wide,

The lakelets laugh, the rivers sing;
No matter what the hours betide,

I only know that this is Spring.

Spring is Hope and Hope is God!

Without it nothing lives or breathes;
It speaks behold the daisied sod;

The tree is glad, the water seethes;
The crows go winding Northward ho!

The cranes across the marshes swing,
The bullfrogs croak where sedges grow,

And then I know that this is Spring.

Tola Mahone

It was when my hand was galvanic,

In the days that had wings and have flown,
That its touch would send the swift panic

Through the heart of lola Mahone ;
Through the heart of lola the stately,

The shy-like lola Mahone
Whom they buried in secret quite lately,

And this is her monument stone :

That when the long winter was over

I 'd wander away all alone,
And sit on the banks of white clover,

Awaiting lola Mahone.
And she down the lake-loving river

Would float in her birchen canoe,
To win the bright bouquet I 'd give her,

Of violets scented and blue.

And never a day would I miss her,

And she would never miss me
I 'd take up my love and I 'd kiss her

My wife that was never to be !
Never, oh never! oh never!

My wife, my comrade to be ;
And I am a wanderer forever,

But lola the stately is free.

No more on the winding Umguliss,
That rolls to the innermost sea,

All hatless, barehanded and shoeless,
Will Tola come floating to me.

And I had no power to save her,
And she had no power to stay ;

God took the sweet soul that He gave her,
And now my lola 's away.

But she gave me a tress that is golden,

And left me a smile and a tear
Ah ! no man has ever beholden

Gifts half so precious and dear.
Gifts from lola the splendid :

Gifts from lola the dead
But the days of our loving are ended,

And low lies the tress-covered head !
The head of lola the stately,

My darling lola Mahone
Whom they buried in secret quite lately,

And this is her monument stone.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

To-Night He Is Welcoming Baby

The baby is dead, but its mother's
Sweet eyes with a radiance shine

As she says in a whisper, ' No fingers
Shall touch it or dress it but mine.

' Oh, let me do this for my baby,
To me 'tis a labor of love ;

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Too Many Squirts

I asked him his opinion :

Is it government or what?
Whose fault is 't ? What 's the reason

The country 's got dry rot ?
Something 's blue moulding the nation

Whatever it is, it hurts.
And he answered : ' Thish yer country

Raises too many squirts.

u Thur 's too many cock-robin doctors,

While there 's scarce a good hired man ;
An pee- wee lawyers are thicker

Than dust on a grist mill ben.
Bob-o'-link preachers air numerous :

Thish yer I boldly asserts :
This kentry ' his visage was humorous

' She cultivates too many squirts.

44 Thur 's too many agents an drummers ;

I reckon thur 's peddlars galore ;
Thur's too many tiddly-wink farmers

A-keepin hotel er a store.
'Taint thistles, ner yet 'taint ragweed,

Ner docken, ner witch grass, wot hurts
Our crop as a nation 's teetotally

Smothered with too many squirts ! '

Too Much Liberty

If you get upon your legs to start a new reform,
And pull your jacket off, reformation to begin,
' The Liberty of the Subject ' will raise an awful storm,
And the crowd that's all around you will ring the
chestnut in.

If you want to curb the vices and the passions of the age,
And smash the ugly idols of the heathen and the bad,

The crowd will roar of ' Liberty,' and fly into a rage,
And claim the same old idols that their tart ancestors
had.

We 've got a splendid climate, and our soil is very good,
And I 'm filled with honest pride as I watch my

country grow ;

We Ve got enough to wear, and plenty wholesome food ;
But we Ve got too much of Freedom to the acre, don't
you know?

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Tough Men

Of all the saints within my ken
(Of them I hardly know enough),

I think God always chooses men

Who once were known as rather tough.

The story thro' my mem'ry croons :

These saints, once on a time, were ' off ;'

God hunted thro' the beer saloons,

And whiskey dives, for John B. Gough.

The fiercest of the Pharisees
The bloody-handed ruffian, Saul :

He heard his Lord, and from his knees
Arose, the great Apostle Paul.

The Three went up thro' Canaan's land
The story in The Book occurs

In danger from a bigot band :
A harlot hid His messengers.

Did holier women hear the call ?

Don't know ! The facts are simply these
A harlot let them from the wall,

And saved the threatened refugees.

THE KHAN'S CANTICLES.

A man ! the serpent's head to bruise ;

A man ! a man ! he 's hard to get !
I never knew my Lord to choose

A sniv'ling holy Willie yet !

But when my Lord hath found His man,
To do His work, and do it well,

Upon a strange and wondrous plan,
He takes His champion down to hell.

And leaves him there in grief and pain ;

'Mid malice, envy, hatred, spleen
Then brings him forth to earth again,

To tell the world what he has seen.

My granny oft to me hath said :
' These men are choosed to set to rights
The mess that, every day, is made

By windy, loud-lunged blatherskites.'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Uncle Sam To Miss Canada

' So this is your birthday, Canuck darling,
Jeroosalem ! but you 're mighty sweet ;

Darn my skin ! you 're a reglar daisy,

Plumb from your head clean down to yer feet.

Now listen to bizness, little girl

Pack up and buckle your lot with me!'

She gives her answer her sweet lips curl :

' I 'm meat for your master, sir,' says she.

' Gee Whittaker ! Christmas ! ain't you sassy,
To turn up your nose at a duck like me?

Get onto my shape why, lor a massy !
A foolisher girl I never did see.

Supposin I undertook to make you
I 'm kinder customed to makin free

Supposin I undertook to take you?'

' I 'd scratch your eyes out, sir,' says she.

' 'T was me invented the basswood ham ;

With wooden nutmegs I made my pile ;
You can't do better than Uncle Sam,

In this here world wa'll, I should smile !
In course I Ve got consid'able gall
She drew herself up with dignity,
' Dare to come over the garden wall,

And I '11 loosen the bull dog, sir,' said she.

' I 'll dress you up like a daughter of Zion :

Your choice, my beauty, you 'll never bewail ;

You 'll help pelt mud at the British Lion,

An assist the gang at twisting his tail.'

Miss Canada grabbed at a kettle of water,

Fresh from the stove and as hot as well,

He was warm before, but he was hotter

When the seance closed and the curtain fell !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Up The Moonlit Road Came She

Yes we 'd letters from Liz for quite a while :

The dear writ that she wuz doin well ;
She said she mixed with folks of style,

But all at once a curtain fell !
Out at the gate we waited long,

Oft in the warm and in the cold ;
My arm was not as big and strong

Me and my wife was growng old.

We watched, and watched. One moonlit night

Something was crossing the bridge below ;
My heart beat high my soul -was light

I whispered, ' Mother, do you know ?'
The form came up the moonlit road ;

I saw her baby and tearful eye
Ah, then was lifted the fearful load,

For Lizzie I loved came home to die.

Often I asked who was he

She 'd close her eyes and shake her head :
His accursed name is a mystery

It 's buried with my darling dead.

But still at even time I wait,

And watch the road at dying day ;

And mother joins me at the gate,
And that is why my hair is gray.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

What They Found In The Snow

Sifting, sifting, sifting,
Till all the black street was clean ;

Drifting, drifting, drifting,
Till not a dark spot was seen.
And so, from the faraway northward,

Where the pine trees were hooded with white,
The snow that was rending the branches down bending,
Came south to our city last night.

On temple, on dungeon, on den ;
It covered them all just the same ;
To houses of rich, to huts of poor men,
Like a beautiful blessing it came.
And so, from the faraway northward,

The snow came to carpet and wreath ;
The sky like a mother with white seemed to smother
Her beautiful comrade beneath.

Sighing, sighing, sighing ;
I see it as if I were there ;

Dying, dying, dying
The girl with the beautiful hair.
And so, from the faraway northward,

The snow comes to cover and warm,
And there she is sleeping : all stilled is her weeping ;
Alas, that Thy snow should do harm.

Growling, growling, growling,
The wolves 'neath a shadowy pine ;

Prowling, prowling, prowling,
They sniff at the night wind and whine.

And so, from the faraway northward,

The pack comes galloping fast :

Cover her deeper, my beautiful sleeper !

O God ! they have found her at last !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

When Baby's Sick

The very birds sing soft and low,
And noiseless nod the lilac trees;
The spring time breezes lighter blow,
Soft hum the sympathetic bees;
The very clouds, up in the sky,

Their soundless footsteps lightly pick;
And if a stranger asked me why,

I 'd whisper soft, The baby 's sick.'

The dog sits silent in the shade,

The cat sits silent in the sun;
The shadows by the noon time made

Slip past her lightly one by one.
Inside, the clock upon the stair

Subdues her once resonant tick
She seems to know, she seems to care

That something 's wrong and baby 's sick.

We speak in whispers as we go

Upon our household's daily round,
For fear the baby, worshiped so,

Should startled be by shock or sound.
We lay beside its pillow crest

The flowers that loving fingers pick,
And watch it in its troubled rest,

And sob a prayer, for baby 's sick.

It's yellow curls are limp and wet,
The lips we kiss are wide apart,

It's pretty teeth are dry and set,

It's sleep is broke by moan and start;

And we can only watch and pray

While life's hot sands are running quick;

And kneeling by the cradle say,

' Be kind, oh God, for baby 's sick.'

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

When I Go Home To-Night

When I go home a light will be

Upon the old veranda rail ;
The dog will bark, and I will see

The welcome in his friendly tail.
I 'll enter thro' the open door,
I 'll hark to hear the hired man snore ;
I 'll seek for apple pie in store,

When I go home to-night.

Behold the loaf of home-made bread ;

The dew upon the salad shines ;
Behold the snowy feather bed,

Beside the window dark with vines.
The old-time pictures on the wall
Will smile, and smiling, me enthrall ;

I 'll hear the familiar night-birds call,
When I go home to-night.

When I go home to-night, the horse

Behind the barn will say me ' Neigh ;'
I 'll go to see the pigs, of course,

And count the cattle o'er the way ;
I 'll plan to meet the chipmunk cute
The rascal knows I never shoot
I 'll hark to hear the kilddeer toot,
When I go home to-night.

When I go home to-night, a calm
Will settle down upon my life ;

The lilac leaves will chant a psalm
To hush away the worldly strife ;

And in the morn, no whistles deep,

Nor trolley bells will bedlam keep ;

And I will sleep and sleep and sleep
When I go home to-night.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

When It's Very, Very Cold

Are you thinking of the children,

And the helpless, and the old,
When the windy days are wintry

And the endless nights are cold ?
When the little ones are crying
And the helpless mother 's sighing,
When their only fire is dying,
And it 's very, very cold ?

Are you thinking of the cradle
And the baby blue with cold?

It hears a frozen lullaby

That once was gaily trolled.

The dying fire is blinking,

The mother's heart is sinking ;

My brother are you thinking,
When it 's very, very cold ?

Are you thinking of the weak ones
Whose tongue no tale has told?

How they fell against the rushing
Of the hearty ones and bold !

Their wretched bosoms quiver,

As shelterless they shiver

Beside the awful river,
For it 's very, very cold.

My brother to the sepulcher !

Go soon it 's very cold.

See that the stone of Destiny
Is from the entrance rolled.

Let no more hurt alarm them ;

Let no more evil harm them ;

Oh, let their Savior warm them,
For it 's very, very cold.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

When The Hens Begin To Lay

There is laughter in the barnyard,
There is cackling o'er the way,

When the rooster sounds his trumpet
And the hens begin to lay.

There are holes around the straw stack ;

There are others in the hay ;
There is watching round the corner

When the hens begin to lay.

There are smiles within the farm-house
When the lambs are at their play ;

When the baby calves are dancing,
And the hens begin to lay.

There are omelettes superior
On the table every day ;

And the hired man is happy
When the hens begin to lay.

Now 's the feathered harvest time ;

Then list to what I say :
Be sure and leave a nest egg,

When the hens begin to lay.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

When The Old Cow Calves

I 'm poor, mister ; my friends are gone,

And the people on yonder farm
Are cold ; and ever from dark to dawn ;
There 's nothing to keep me warm.
I owe it, mister ; I won't gainsay you :
You hold the law I must obey you ;
Oh, mister, wait and I will repay you
When the old cow calves !

Do n't take her away : she 's bread and life

And food for me and mine ;
Oh, would you draw a cruel knife
And hurt a child of thine !

Keep the black bailiff from my gate ;
A hope, oh usurer, is my estate ;
Mister, will you but kindly wait
Till the cow calves?

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

When The Old Dog Die

THERE was grieving in the woodshed,

In the kitchen there were tears,
When morning showed that Tray was dead
Our friend of many years.

Ah, I can well remember

How the little children cried
And lifted up their voices
When the old dog died.

They clasped his rough and shaggy neck,

They called his name in vain.
No more when Tommy whistled
Would Tray bound forth again.
The children ate no breakfast,

But seated by his side
They mourned their dearest \ play mate
When the old dog died.

For thirteen summers he had brought

The milk cows home at night,
And all that time he 'd watched the house
From dark till morning light.
He 'd even rock the cradle

With a sort of canine pride;
No wonder that the baby wept
When the old dog died.

He 'd go half way to school with them,
Then stand in lonesome plight

And wag his Demosthenic tail
Till they were out of sight;

Then trot him home to sleep and snooze

Within his kennel wide.
Ah, how the children missed him,
When the old dog died.

They smoothed that dear old head of his,

And offered milk and meat,
And little Tommy tried to lift
His old friend on his feet.

In vain! that old tail wagged no more,

The son'rous tongue was tied,
And Tommy brought the cattle home,
When the old dog died.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

When Your Heart Is Breaking

When troubles are piled about your feet,
When shadows are falling across your way,
When your face is lashed by rain and sleet,
It 's hard to look joyous and bright and gay;
It 's hard to laugh when your soul is sad,

It 's hard to jest when your brain is aching;
When they 're sick at home and the times are bad

It 's hard to smile when your heart is breaking.

But many and many and many a man,

As he goes with a jaunty step to his labor;
Tho' his brain be sick and his soul be wan,

He greets with a genial smile his neighbor!
The wolves go galloping thro' the town,

And ruin wakes with a rude awaking;
But he must laugh tho' they hunt him down,

And smile a smile tho' his heart is breaking.

His wife has a hollow and troubled eye,

His half fed table is bare and scanty,
He sleeps like a man who is doomed to die,

And dreams of a peace that shelters a shanty.
What will the terrible morning bring?

He wakes! his hand and his lips are shaking;
But he goes down town with a daring swing,

And smiles and smiles tho' his heart is breaking.

We see no sacrifice, hiss or burn,

We hear no cry at the dark to-morrows,

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Where The Grass Grows Green

I never was there ; but I Ve heard them declare
That, away over where the shamrocks are seen,

There 's beautiful isle, where it 's well worth your while
To see how the sile grows the freshest of green.

And that is the land where St. Patrick the grand

Came, with crozier in hand great heathendom's foe ;

Each Irishman wild, by his words was beguiled,
And came like a child to the altar aglow.

In the shamrock's abode, religion he sowed,
And the divil a toad did he lave in his way

He cleaned out the brake, the mountain and lake ;
And never a snake can be seen t' this day.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Who Will Answer?

Who, when the ages are all complete,
And a voice comes forth from the Judgment Seat
' Ye orphaned their children ye widowed their wives,
Ye emptied their homes and blasted their lives'-
Then who will answer to all of this?
Not men with sinless souls, I wis.

And must it be that the world must wait
'Till the ages are done and it 's all too late ?
'Till the mountains fall and the seas are dry,
And the stars fall thick from the startled sky?
Ah, must we wait till that hour to know
Who wrought the wrong on this earth below?

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Wilson Keeper's Thrashing

' I 'm out uv breath, Matildy Nunn ;

I Ve come some spoons and plates to borry,
Fer women's work is never done

You see we 're goin to thrash tomorry.
The big masheen is braced an sot :

They Ve got the biler full uv water ;
We 've twenty pies, an I 've furgot,

As sure 's I 'm Wilson Keefer's daughter,
How many tarts ! We cooked a sheep.
We Ve got a peck uv apples, canned ;

The weather 's hot I hope they'll keep
An Paw, he says he wants a hand.'
' An here he is ! ' says Silas Nunn ;
' I heerd ye talk as I went pas ;

I 'll eat a piece uv lamb fer fun '-
' Now, Silas Nunn, you go to grass !

Quit ! there now, yer mother 's looking :
Just see ! you 've rumped up my hair :

I ain 't half dressed fer I Ve bin cookin ;
I 'm out uv temper, too, so there !
' We 'll send the hierd man,' cool says he
Then pretty Susie changed her plan :
' Oh, Silas, come yoreself,' says she,
Fer Paw don't like the hierd man !'

Her shining eyes are laughing through
Her tumbled mop of tawny hair :
' Paw says they hardly ever do
A gee-up job, cep you are there.'

She blushes ; full of vague alarms

And maiden fears, her heart-strings tug ;

But Silas takes her in his arms,
And gives the girl he loves, a hug.

The whistle screams at five o'clock ;

Its echoes whoop around the farms ;
The hands are wakened by the shock,

And nimbly leap from ' Morphy's ' arms.
Again th' impatient engine roars :

The echoes once again entreat :
The farmers nimbly do their chores,

And then swarm out to thrash the wheat.
Big Bill and Fleming's hired man,

Young Skeesicks Kent and Tom Maguire,,
The Awful Swede and Hairy Dan,

And Andy Krouse, as tough as wire ;
Along the sideroads, on they come,

All full of fight, fatigue and fun ;
All strong of thew and thigh and thumb,

Their pitchforks shining in the sun.
They gather joking in the yard ;

They work for love and not for pay-
None half so tender none so hard-
No barn so full of chaff as they.
'Hillo! Skeesicks, how air you? '

' Great Caesar's ghost ! there 's Hairy Dan ! '
' I say there, Tom, kin it be true

That Skeesick's gone on Mary Ann?'
' I did heer tell,' says Thrasher Jack,

As he the concave bar is ' fittiii,'
' Thet Skeesicks got the inside track,

An Andy Krouse he 's got the mitten.'

Then Andy gives a furnace sniff,

And Skeesicks gapes like any pot hole :
Look here, don't Skeesicks look as if

Somebody 'd pulled him thro' a knot hole ?
He sot up all uv Sunday night

With Mary Ann ; now ain't he fresh ?
He 's lookin scart, an pale an white ;

He 's kinder fallin off in flesh.'
' He 's knee sprung, too,' says Levi Hutch

Three fingered ; but a handy chap
u She weighs three hundurd, that 's too much
To hold all night upon yore lap!

' Hillo ! you grannies, git a movin,

Lift off that door ye strong mow hands,
To build a table. Yer, be hoovin,
Whoever 's goin to cut ther bands.'

Then Wilson Keef er gives a shout :

' Look here ! I 'm layin down the law :
One man will kerry bushels out,

An three will take away the straw.
You, Skeesicks, you will cut ther bands ;

If yore in love, then that is play
Them worthless scamps, the other hands,

Will use their pitchforks in the bay ! '

The plug of ' chewin ' goes the round ;

Each takes his place with high resolves ;
The gearing makes a moaning sound ;

The mighty fly-wheel now revolves.
The driver, standing on the wheel,

Speaks softly to his matchless team ;
The barn and all its inmates feel

The trampling stallion's steam and steel.
The flooring trembles 'neath their feet ;

The beams, the girts, the braces quake ;
The strain is felt on clamp and cleat

The purlines ring, the rafters shake.
The big machine begins to throb ;

The sheaves her fierce embraces meet
With half a cry and half a sob ;

She starts her song, ' I thresh the wheat ;'
Her voice is mellow, rich and strong,

Deep toned, and round her phrases surge :
A medley 'tis a comic song

A hymn a slogan and a dirge.
She tells the story of the wheat,

The windy fields, the torrid skies,
The wholesome frost, the rain and sleet,

The rust, the smut, the hessian flies ;
Unto the hands you hear her cry :

' You hav n't time to parley, O,'
She sings : ' I 'm coming thro' the rye,'

Or ' The wind that shakes the barley, O.'
She laughs, and then her breath regaineth :

She sinks her tones in love and peace,
That while the wond'rous earth remaineth,
' Seed time and harvest shall not cease.'
She talks of thorny fields and stones,

Of barren spots where thistles grow ;
And then, with hell-like tongue, intones :

' Behold a sow'r went forth to sow.'
She drops it there, and tries a ruse

To start the workers all forlorn,
And shrieks out ' Susie, Susie, Suse !

Susie ! the cows are in the corn ! '

An angry song is on her tongue ;

A wet sheaf strikes the cylinder
Zip-biff! zip-bong! zip-bang! zip-bung!

Zip-boom ! zip-bing ! zip-boom ! zip-birr !
That tried her strength she coughs and rasps

A belt flies off the thrashers run ;
The mow-men pause, the engine gasps ;

She waits until repairs are done,
Then, with a rising roar of wrath,

A leaping web of straw she weaves ;
She hurls the dust along her path

And thunders out, ' More sheaves ! more sheaves !'
The hands out on the straw-stack stamp,

The hurried mow-men strive and sweat ;
The bushel-bearer's shirt is damp,

And every brow is dripping wet ;
Till, far above the rumbling rhyme,

Long Skeesicks yells the lazy loon :
' I say there ! hey there ! what 's the time ?

Becuz me stumach says it 's noon ! '

The loon was right ; for as he spoke,

And while the thrashers winked and grinned,
Sweet Susie from the cook-house broke,

And waved a white cloth in the wind.
A table cloth ! it worked a spell :

The grinning driver kissed his hand,
The engine gave a frantic yell,

And ' Noon hour ! ' rang o'er all the land.
The sound the workers' ears refreshed :

They tumbled down with faces swart ;
Big Bill reported that they 'd thrashed

Four hundred bushels since the start.

They went at Skeesicks with a noise :
' Does Skeesicks want some bread and pork ?
Jist watch him at his dinner, boys,

And see him swing a table fork.'
With many jokes, and many rubs,

They wend them to the kitchen door ;
They plunge their faces in the tubs,

And rub them till they 're almost sore.
Sweet Susie comes out with a broom,

And sweeps the dust from Silas Nunn ;
Poor Silas knows 't will be his doom

To be the butt of barn-yard fun.
But Susie sweeps her father, too ;

Her cousin Bob and Uncle John,
While Mary Ann McGinnis, true,

Like tiger on a hapless fawn,
Leaps down on Skeesicks with a rush,

As any loving maiden would,
And soon transforms him, with a brush,

Into a rather likely dude.
Again the table cloth unfurls :

All rush inside, with one accord,
Where all the pretty neighbor girls

Are pinafores around the board ;
And such a board ! 't is groaning, quite,

Beneath a rich and varied feast,
To take the edge off appetite

From man or insect, bird or beast.
There 's mutton roast and mutton stew,

Cabbage, taters, and turnip mash ;
Cold slaw and biting peppers, too,

And beets as red as Nellie's sash ;
And butter worth its weight in gold

No epicure would dare to pass
And bowls as full as they can hold

Of toothsome cider apple-sass ;
There 's pickles sweet and pickles sour,

Tomatter ketchup by the quart ;
There 's buttered squash and cauliflower,

And onions dressed with wondrous art ;
There 's apple, peach and punkin pie,

Big doughnuts richly fried in lard,
A handsome sponge cake, brown and high,

And ginger bread both soft and hard.
But best of all were Susie's pride :

Great stacks of wholesome, home-made bread ;
And on the slices, thick and wide,

The weary workers freely fed.
But while their jaws were hard at work

Those merry jaws so hard to bridle
They boldly bandied quip and quirk,

And not a tongue was ever idle :
' Ain't Mary Ann as sweet as peaches ?'

' Now Tom, you shet, er jes especk
Thet I '11 tell Kate,' she o'er him reaches,

And spills some gravy down his neck.
When Kitty squeezes past Big Bill,

He pinches her and makes her squeak ;
Enough of tea to turn a mill

Makes Bill's backbone warm for a week.
To girls, no sight is half so grand

'Tis world-wide true ; I know indeed
A maiden dearly loves to stand

And watch a hearty lover feed.
The buckskinned maiden of the woods,

The beggar girl upon the street,

The choice of princes or of dudes

Each loves to see her lover eat.
For be it lizard, crow or hog ;

Seal blubber, cocoanut or whale ;
Sharks' fins, birds' nests or roasted dog ;

A piece of snake or cakes an ale
So, see him with his breech clout on,

Or in high collar, scourge himself ;
For be his dinner bread or braun,

She loves to see him gorge himself.
And so the girls stood round about,

Each gladly filling plate on plate ;
They loved to hear the fellows shout,

And relish everything they ate.
At last the boys uprise to go :

Each gives the girls a parting joke,
And then with sluggish motions, slow,

Sprawled in the shade to grunt and smoke.
So when the men had all retired,

The panting girls gazed on the scene :
The tables they erstwhile admired

Were different from they once had been.
A garden, where a herd of steers

Has trod the roses all to pieces ;
The sheep, when hungry wolf appears,

And tears and rends the pretty fleeces
So looked the table framed with bones,

A waste, a slashing and a wreck ;

With polka dots of cherry stones

And broken pie to fill a peck.

A board where Christians late have dined !

If you will careful mark the ravage

Then you '11 conclude, unless you 're blind,

We 're only once removed from savage.

Now, whether you be fed on beef,

Or live a loyal vegetarian ;

Or be your title ' reeve ' or ' chief,'

Your blood 's essentially barbarian.

So thought the girls. They swiftly piled

The dirty dishes on the shelves,

Then 'mid the ruins, meek and mild,

They all sat down to feed themselves,

And while they nibbled this and that

The best in pantry, cask or cellar

Each maiden, in their reckless chat,

Discussed her dusty shirted ' feller.'

Meanwhile a loud increasing drone

A deep and smutty-throated roar,

Was telling with a snarl and moan

The men were all at work once more.

All afternoon the music ran :

All day in dust the scene was cloaked ;

But all throughout the noisy plan

The sweating workers joyous joked.

The mow went downward inch by inch,

The graceful stack was upward pushed,
And not a man would dare to flinch

Or have it said that he was 'bushed.'
The news would all the county shock

'T would be discussed at every table,
And after church 't would be the talk

In every grocery store and stable.
And he who got the awful name

Of being 'bushed' at Keefer's thrashing,
Would have to hang his head in shame,

And never try his hand at mashing.
Each girl, however poor and plain

By soulless Time however pushed,
Would still look down with deep disdain

Upon a man who had been 'bushed.'
So every one works with a will,

Till all at once the joking ceases ;
A pitchfork thunders thro' the mill

And tears the concave all to pieces !
The farmers from the building stream,

And Keefer stares around in sorrow ;
The driver closes off the steam

The jig is up until to-morrow.

At thrashings once in ancient days

The whiskey circulated freely ;
Yet 't was a time of prayer and praise,

And folks that drank were Christians, really,
Our late religion of the lip

Has rather changed our noble breed.
When every farmer took a nip

When he was putting in the seed ;
And when the bottle passed around

The bright and busy harvest field,
Then not a drunkard could be found,

And cider every autumn sealed.
But our religion of the lip

Will from the highest housetop tell
That he who dares to take a nip,

Is bound to sweat it out in hell.
Methinks our land was just as well

Before these modern days had fallen.
Ah, they were further off from hell,

With whiskey at twenty cents a gallon

Than we are now ; but on my pate

I 'll soon have tem'prance brick-bats crashing ;
I Ve talked so much, it 's now too late

To finish Wilson Keefer's thrashing.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Ya-Honk!

' Ya-Honk! ' Up north out on a bay
The rocking flock of wild geese lay,
The gander swimming round them all,
His voice 'Ya-honk! Ya-honk! ' let fall.
He looked above and saw the snow
Come sifting to the earth below;
He felt his wives were better far
Where warmer winds and waters are.
Ya-honk! Ya-honk! ' They know him well
His meaning none hath need to tell:
He counts them all with anxious eye,
Then southward like the storm they fly,
While ever and anon the note

Falls from his red and panting throat

'Ya-honk! '

' Ya-honk! Ya-honk! ' His eye is red,
His bill is yellow and his head
Is strong and broad, his breast is white,
The grey upon his back is light,
His neck is wondrous straight and long,
His wings are mighty, swift, and strong;
His voice is masculine and harsh:

It falls on meadow, mere and marsh
' Ya-honk! '

'Ya-honk! Ya-honk! ' 'Tis in the night
He takes his wild and weird flight;
He leads his wild wives thro' the sky.
With winkless and unerring eye;
He guides them safe from dark to dawn:
He comes 'Ya-honk! Ya-honk! ' he's gone.
The list'ning hunter crys, ' Yo-ho! '
He, scornful, drops his voice below

'Ya-honk! '

' Ya-honk! ' He leads them with that cry;
They, faithful, follow him or die.
'Ya-honk! Ya-honk! Ya-honk! ' he calls,
None faithless from his rude rank falls.
They urge their wings, the wind 's outstript,
The cobwebs from the moon are whipped;
They fondly follow him who leads
Who sows the swamps with sounding seeds
'Ya-honk! Ya-honk! '

' Ya-honk! Ya-honk! ' To-night afar
They rest their wings where waters are;
They rock and rest in some still lake
Which they for months will not forsake;
But when the spring time comes again
And skies are wet with April rain,
Go, listen on the marshy shore,
You'll hear them surging north once more;
But fear not if you are alone
To hear a voice fall like a stone
'Ya-honk! '

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

Your Mother Died Last Night

O, baby mine !

Your lips unsheath,
And show your tongue

And pearly teeth ;

Do n't throb and cry, do n't start in fright ;
Do n't weep,
But sleep
Your mother, baby, died last night.

Come in and see
Her lying dead,

Upon her snowy bed :
How sweet she is, how calm and white

Do n't weep,

But sleep,
Your mother, baby, died last night.

She does not speak,
Or even smile ;

But in the splendid after-while
You '11 see her stand in radiant light ;

Beneath her feet

The golden street,
And round her neither death nor night.

My orphaned young,

O, baby mine !
My loss is nought

At all, to thine :

For when her spirit took its flight,

Your greatest stay

Was ta'en away

And soared aloft to God last night.

Robert Kirkland Kernighan

You'Re A Fool To Get Rejected

So the girl you love said ' No,' and you 're rejected !

Raddy addy umpty turn ta tee !
Unless you 're blind, 'twas what you had expected !

Raddy addy umpty turn ta tee !
Fur if the girl had loved you she'd a-showed it :
Loved you very dearly you'd a-knowed it :

By the flutter of her hand,

By her glances shy an bland,

By the drooping of her head,

By her cheeks so hot an red ;

By her bosom's gentle sigh,

By the love-light in her eye,

By her little gusts of rage,

By her little sermons sage ;

Wen she rubbed against you witchin,

Like the kitten in the kitchen ;

Wen she 'd sit and sulk or tease

You saw no signs of these !

Then listen, if you please ;
You never had a chance to be elected !

Raddy addy umpty turn ta tee !

Served you right, you clumsy loon, to get rejected 1

Raddy addy umpty turn ta tee !

Robert Kirkland Kernighan