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### Benjamin Russel Hanby - Author of "Darling Nelly Gray"

Charles Burleigh Galbreath

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BENJAMIN RUSSEL HANBY

AUTHOR OF

"DARLING NELLY GRAY"

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GALBREATH

BENJAMIN RUSSEL HANBY

AUTHOR OF "DARLING NELLY GRAY."

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By

CHARLES BURLEIGH GALBREATH.

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Illustrated.

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Columbus, Ohio :  
Press of Fred. J. Heer,  
1905.



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By  
CHARLES BURLEIGH GALBREATH



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This sketch, in substantially its present form, first appeared in the *Quarterly* of the Ohio Archæological and Historical Society, April, 1905. For the privilege of reproducing it thanks are due to the Society and its obliging Secretary, Hon. E. O. Randall.

That sweet, pathetic song,  
"Darling Nelly Gray," written not  
long before the Civil war, con-  
tained a sentiment which dep-  
ressed the feeling already aroused  
for the oppressed and touched  
a responsive chord, which though  
many years have passed, still  
vibrates. Who can, even now, sing  
the touching lines without sym-  
pathy for the poor bondman  
so cruelly separated from his love?

Alhambra, Cal.

Jan. 26 - 1905.

Kate Hanby.



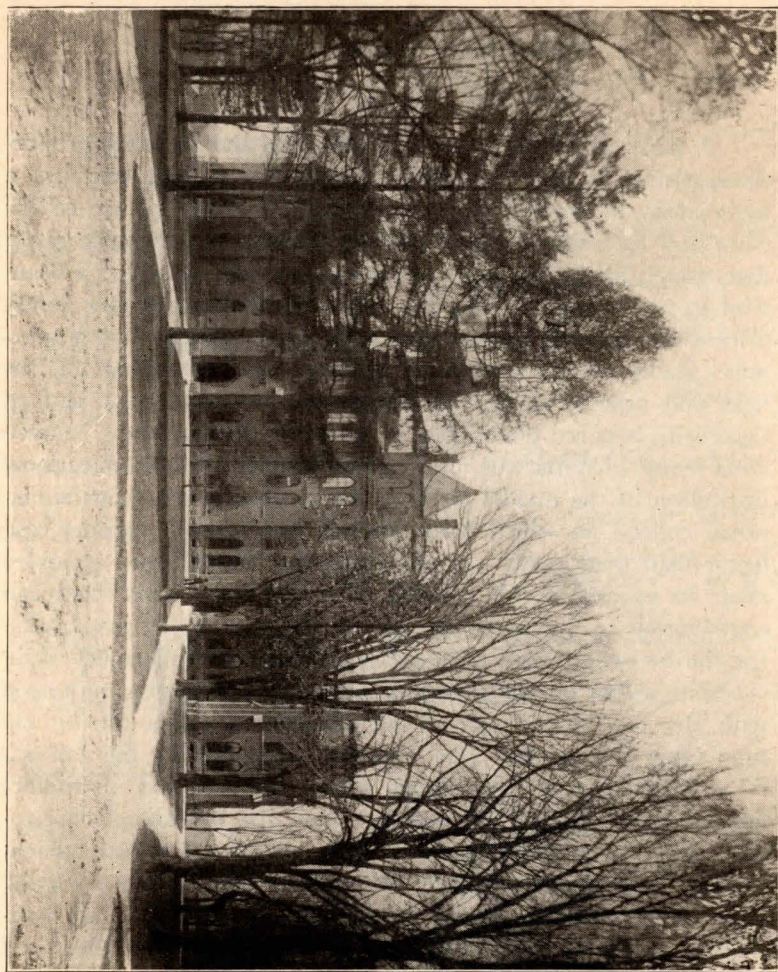
## BENJAMIN RUSSEL HANBY.

Author of "Darling Nelly Gray."

A plain brick structure of ample size and pleasing proportions, rising on firm foundations from a well-kept campus; a mute array of sentinel trees, guarding the shady silence of the place and leading outward along the avenue in two noble ranks that stretch forth their arms in salutation to the passerby; a beautiful stretch of lawn, facing the afternoon sun and sloping gently toward the winding stream that with never failing current murmurs gladly on its southward journey; and, bordering all, the neat and orderly village of Westerville, — such is the seat of Otterbein, honored preceptress of a worthy student body, beloved *alma mater* of numerous and devoted alumni, typical educational institution of the middle west, in the strictest sense a denominational college, in which founders and faculty built broader and better than they knew. In glorifying the Master, they ennobled man; in advancing the interests of a sect, they made no mean contribution to the world outside of the church; in preparation for the hereafter, they achieved something of immortality here.

The visitor entering the spacious main building is impressed with the fact that many of the excellent features of the old time Ohio college are here retained unmarred by the innovations of later years; the chapel, where students and instructors assemble daily; recitation rooms, where the traditional curriculum, with its preponderance of pure mathematics and ancient classics, is faithfully taught; the halls of the literary societies, with richly carpeted floors, immaculate tinted walls and varicolored windows, admitting a softened radiance by day and transmitting by night something of the mellow glory that glows within; below, a carefully selected library, administered in accordance with modern methods and frequented by the student body, whose clean-cut, thoughtful faces are at once a study and an





CUYAHOGA UNIVERSITY, WESTERVILLE, OHIO.



inspiration. Even the modern conveniences of life enter unobtrusively. Natural gas and electricity blaze and beam silently, and at the end of the avenue of trees the interurban cars come and go without a rumble to disturb the student as he bends over his books. Athletics are not excluded, but football, with its glorious concomitants of stentorian hilarity and broken heads, is still subordinate to music and debate.

But why dwell upon this institution unknown to fame and unambitious to emerge from the delightful seclusion peculiar to numbers of its kind? Again, we repeat that the founders built broader and better than they knew.

It is worthy of note in passing, that one of the great universities of the East is even now considering the raising of an endowment fund of two and one-half million dollars for the avowed purpose of greatly increasing the teaching force and "importing into the university the methods and personal contact between teacher and pupil which are characteristic of the small college." It is refreshing to know that a great university can learn something from such a source. It encourages the hope that further investigation may reveal other features worthy of imitation.

That the denominational college, with all its limitations, has rendered an important service to the cause of education, is attested by results—the men and women it has sent into the world.

If a single alumnus of this particular institution should be known as widely as his work, his name would be a household word in America. When Otterbein was young, from her classic shades he gave to music and to human liberty that sweetly pathetic song, *Darling Nelly Gray*.

Occasional comment has been made upon the fact that most of the southern melodies have been composed by northern men. It is a singular coincidence that the authors of *Dixie* and *Darling Nellie Gray* were both born in the North and in the central part of the same state. In the little village of Rushville, that nestles among the picturesque hills of Fairfield County, O., Benjamin Russel Hanby began life July 22, 1833. The same county gave

to Ohio and the Union Thomas Ewing, the younger, and the famous Sherman brothers.

The subject of this sketch was the eldest son of Bishop William Hanby, a prominent minister of the United Brethren Church, who early espoused the cause of universal liberty in America and by word and deed supported the anti-slavery cause. His humble home was for a time a station on the "underground railroad," and in the family the wrongs of the sable bondman was frequently the absorbing theme of conversation.

In many respects the childhood of young Hanby did not differ from that of his fellows in the isolated hamlet of that day. The boy was prophetic of the man. Blessed with a happy temper and bubbling over with good humor, the pious teaching of his parents, to whom he was devotedly attached, usually kept him in his sportive hours well within the limits of harmless mischief and innocent fun.

Of a teachable nature, he early found engrossing interest in his books, and with advancing years he aspired to follow in the footsteps of his father.

The salary of the itinerant minister to-day is usually far from munificent. Sixty years ago it was meager and sometimes precarious. Bishop Hanby was a power in the pulpit and held in high esteem throughout his circuit; his good wife was careful and frugal, but his stipend was not sufficient to provide for the family of children and give to each a collegiate education. Young Benjamin, like many a youth of his time, went cheerfully and resolutely to work "to earn his way," with a baccalaureate degree and the ministry as his goal.

At the age of sixteen, he enrolled at Otterbein, the college of his church, in which his father was deeply interested, and in a short time was commissioned to teach in the common schools. This gave him thorough drill in the common branches, opportunity for study, and employment to earn his way through college. At the age of seventeen, he taught his first school at Clear Creek, in his home county; later he had charge of the schools of his native hamlet. He formally united with the church before the close of his first term in college.



From childhood he manifested a fondness for music. His genial, sensitive nature found soul-satisfying expression in song. At the regular church service on the Sabbath day and through protracted religious revivals, his voice was heard in the choir. In his first school teaching, long before he had received formal instruction in the art, he taught his pupils to sing. To his other gifts were added the graces of speech. In the school he was at once teacher and companion. He mingled with the children on the playground. With the older boys, outside of school hours, he roamed over the surrounding hills, through the lonely forests and along the murmuring stream. They followed where his spirit led, and many at that early day through his influence united with the church.

An event of first importance in the history of the family and the cause of general rejoicing among the children, who thoroughly appreciated the opportunities it would bring, was the choice by Bishop Hanby of a new home in the village of Westerville. Thither the family moved after many farewells, and soon the older children were enjoying the advantages of higher education in the little college, already launched on an auspicious career under the ambitious name of "University of Otterbein."

Here the natural gifts and winning personality of "Ben," as he was familiarly called, made him a leader among the students. True, he did not have the advantages of physical culture enjoyed by the college boy of to-day. His gymnasium was the wood-pile; his natatorium was Alum Creek; his stadium was chosen at will in the wide valley of meadow and woodland that stretched away on either side. In spite of the absence of trapeze and arena, he excelled in athletics, was fleet of foot, accurate of eye, a lithe, agile wrestler and an expert swimmer. On one occasion a student got beyond his depth in the stream and with a gurgling shriek sank from sight.

"Hanby, Hanby," shouted the affrighted companions. Hanby rushed to the water's edge, leaped in, dived, caught, raised and rescued the drowning boy.

In the college literary society he took a prominent part, participating in debate and always assisting in the arrangement and rendition of the musical program. He wrote a play that

was acted with great success by a selected cast of amateurs. His enthusiasm in these diversions, however, did not cause him to neglect his regular studies, and he was graduated in due time with the degree of bachelor of arts.



# DARLING NELLY GRAY.

As already intimated, the convictions of the father were shared by the son. In the troublous times before the war, Bishop Hanby from the platform and the pulpit sternly denounced the slave power. His milder mannered son, through the avenue of song, rendered more effective service to the cause. In 1856, two years before graduation, he composed *Darling Nelly Gray*.

Definite and trustworthy details in regard to the composition of a popular melody are usually very difficult to obtain. Especially is this true when the witnesses who were personally competent to bear testimony have passed away. Even when those who knew the facts are still living, the difficulty is not wholly removed, for memory is treacherous. Fortunately, in this instance, while the composer does not survive to relate the origin of his famous lay, friends and relatives qualified to speak with almost equal authority are still living, among them the cousin of the author who was present when the song was sung from manuscript and the announcement was made that it had been dedicated to the young lady who was then teaching music at Otterbein.

The song had its origin in the composer's sympathy for the slaves of the South. The immediate inspiration, if such it had, is not definitely known. Among the stories of its origin, one that gained considerable currency is to the effect that while on the cars, Hanby read in a newspaper an account of the separation of a slave girl from her lover in Kentucky. A planter from the far South bought her and took her to Georgia. After reading the article, Hanby took out some blank paper and wrote a part of the song. He finished it and composed the music on his return home. This story is plausible, but careful investigation has failed to reveal any basis for it in fact. It is quite probable that the words of the song suggested this origin to the imagination of a newspaper correspondent or his informant.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. W. C. Lewis, of Rushville, O., contributes the following reminiscence relative to the writing of *Darling Nellie Gray*:

"Ben Hanby and myself were very intimate when boys, and well along into our young manhood. I think it was during the autumn of 1855, when he taught school here. His assistant was a young man he brought



This much seems beyond dispute. A number of young friends, including the music teacher, Miss Cornelia Walker, were invited to the Hanby home, where as usual on such occasions,

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with him from Westerville, Samuel Evers. They were then attending the Otterbein University, of that village. The same winter I taught a graded school about one mile from Rushville, but lived in town.

"Mr. Hanby and myself frequently spent the evenings together. We also attended a singing school, taught by Peter Lamb. Even at that early day Ben. Hanby was recognized wherever he was known as possessing musical ability of a very high order.

"It was in this winter when he first composed what afterward became the noted popular song, *Darling Nelly Gray*. He read the manuscript to me, and said at the time that when he was perfectly satisfied with the composition he would set it to music. I am not able to say how long it was before he did this, or how many changes, if any, he afterward made; but I very well know that I caught the following lines from his reading the manuscript:

Oh, my Darling Nelly Gray, they have taken you away,  
And I'll never see my darling any more."

A well-known local historian of Hamilton, O., gives quite a different account. In a recent published article he says:

"When living in Sevenmile, the Rev. Hanby was a regular subscriber to the *Cincinnati Gazette*, and while reading this paper one day, on the train between Sevenmile and Cincinnati, his attention was drawn to an account of a slave sale in Kentucky. Nelly Gray, a beautiful mulatto girl, was among the list of slaves sold. She was to be taken to Georgia, far away from home, early scenes and kindred. This incident created an impression upon the mind of Rev. Hanby, and suggested the theme for his world renowned southern song, *My Darling Nelly Gray*. He drafted a skeleton sketch of this familiar air on the train, and when he returned home, that same night, completed the song. It was first published in the *Cincinnati Gazette*, and immediately became very popular."

In a letter the author of the above adds that he personally heard Hanby relate the circumstances under which the song was written.

It may be observed that the song bears the copyright date of June 17, 1856. Mr. Hanby did not go to Sevenmile until about four years afterward. He therefore could not have written it while a citizen of that village. There is nothing in Mr. Lewis's statement that conflicts with the accounts given by other friends and relatives. The song might have been commenced at Rushville. It was certainly completed and set to music in Westerville.

singing was the leading feature of the evening's meeting. Mrs. Cornelia (Walker) Comings of Girard, Kansas, distinctly recalls the evening in a recent letter to Mrs. Hanby, and we give in her own words her statement relative to the initial singing of the song for the entertainment of guests. She says:

"I well remember the first time I heard it. We were at a little gathering at the Rev. Mr. Hanby's one evening. We always had music at such



HANBY HOME AT WESTERVILLE, O., WHERE "DARLING NELLY GRAY" WAS COMPOSED AND FIRST SUNG.

times. At last I was called upon to listen to a song by the Hanby family. I admired it *very* much, and then Ben. told me it was intended for me."

As explained elsewhere in the same letter, Mrs. Comings meant to say that it was dedicated to her. She urged the young author to send it to a publisher, which he did.

She was evidently under the impression that it had been composed very shortly before the gathering. Collateral testimony



sustains this view and disposes of a number of conflicting traditions in regard to the origin of the song. Reliable information leads to the conclusion that it was written in Westerville early in the year 1836.

As no response came from the publisher, the young composer supposed that the manuscript had been consigned to the waste basket and oblivion. He gave the matter no further consideration. He had written it without a thought of publication and he was not disappointed. In fact, the word disappointment had no place in the vocabulary of this optimistic youth. He and his family were genuinely surprised some months later on learning that it had been published and was already on the road to popularity. He procured a printed copy and saw that it bore his name, with the dedication to Cornelia Walker.<sup>1</sup> The words, which have a merit peculiarly their own, aside from the melody, are as follows:

There's a low, green valley, on the old Kentucky shore,  
Where I've whiled many happy hours away,  
A sitting and a singing by the little cottage door,  
Where lived my darling Nelly Gray.

CHORUS.

Oh! my poor Nelly Gray, they have taken you away,  
And I'll never see my darling any more;  
I am sitting by the river and I'm weeping all the day,  
For you've gone from the old Kentucky shore.

When the moon had climbed the mountain and the stars were shining too,  
Then I'd take my darling Nelly Gray,  
And we'd float down the river in my little red canoe,  
While my banjo sweetly I would play.

One night I went to see her, but "She's gone!" the neighbors say,  
The white man bound her with his chain;  
They have taken her to Georgia for to wear her life away,  
As she toils in the cotton and the cane.

My canoe is under water, and my banjo is unstrung;  
I'm tired of living any more;

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<sup>1</sup> All printed copies bear Hanby's name. Only the first edition has the dedicatory imprint.



My eyes shall look downward, and my song shall be unsung,  
While I stay on the old Kentucky shore.

My eyes are getting blinded, and I cannot see my way.  
Hark! there's somebody knocking at the door—  
Oh! I hear the angels calling, and I see my Nelly Gray,  
Farewell to the old Kentucky shore.

CHORUS.

Oh, my darling Nelly Gray, up in heaven there they say  
That they'll never take you from me any more.  
I'm a coming, coming, coming, as the angels clear the way,  
Farewell to the old Kentucky shore.

It is very difficult to apply to a popular song the rules of literary criticism; it is nevertheless safe to affirm that the foregoing verses are not without poetic merit. What is said of Foster's songs is true of Hanby's first successful composition: "There is meaning in the words and beauty in the air." Indeed we may go further and aver that the author of *Old Folks at Home*, first though he be among the writers of southern melodies, never wrote verses more sweetly simple, more beautifully and touchingly suggestive, more sadly pathetic, than *Darling Nelly Gray*. Perfect in rhyme and almost faultless in rhythm, the words flow on, bearing their message directly to the heart. The tragic climax is delicately veiled behind the picture of the bondman pouring forth his sorrow for his lost lady love. Her vain appeal to the slave driver; the insult of the heartless new master; the burdens of the cotton and the cane fields; her comfortless grief, wild despair and pitiful decline to the merciful release of death,—these were too awful to find expression in song. We are spared the heart-rending reality; even the pain from what we see is relieved by the vision of a happy reunion. *Darling Nelly* goes to her cruel fate—and meets her lover in heaven.

It has been urged in criticism of the song that it idealizes the colored race. The sable twain are clothed with the refined sentimentality of the Caucasian. We are told that the bondman and his love are creatures of the imagination without counterparts in the realm of reality; that death from the pangs of separation is about the last thing that, under the circumstances,

would have occurred; that the beautiful Nelly down in Georgia would have yielded gracefully to the new situation; that her dusky lover would soon have drifted again down the river and twanged his banjo to the delectation of another "lady of color"; that constancy was foreign to the slaves of the Southland.

That this was often true is one of the saddest commentaries on the brutalizing system that held the black man in a "debasing thralldom." Despite his unhappy condition, however, there is abundant evidence that home was held dear and that ignorance did not blunt the pain when love's ties were ruthlessly sundered.

A well known poetess, now a resident of Ohio, whose father and grandfather were slaveholders in Kentucky before the war, and who recalls vividly and relates entertainingly much that occurred on the old plantation, tells a story from real life that may not inappropriately be introduced here. Frederick Brown was the name of a slave who had grown up on the Brown estate. Physically well formed, tall and commanding, he was a natural leader among the slaves. Though gifted with a high degree of natural intelligence, he was, with his less favored fellows, forbidden the privilege of acquiring even the rudiments of an education. Of a somewhat fervid religious temperament, he frequently preached to the slaves on the Sabbath day, leafing over, as he did so, a Bible in which he could not read a word. Though popular among his people, by the master's family he was regarded somewhat impertinent. He had married, shortly before the events we are about to narrate, one of the most beautiful and gentle slave girls on the plantation. Finally the old master died and the slaves, sharing the fate of other property, were divided among the children. "Rev." Fred fell to the share of a daughter whose husband did not appreciate his worth and magnified his irritating delinquencies.

"I will sell the impertinent rascal," said the new master. "I will sell him and send him South."

The slave buyer, that ubiquitous person of shadowy repute, detested alike by the poor black whom he drove and the master with whom he bargained, hearing of the threat, presented himself one day and made an offer for "Rev." Fred, which was promptly accepted.



Consternation reigned among the cabins when the driver came to claim his purchase. Fred was overpowered and chained. Into the midst of the throng rushed the poor wife, and with pitiful tones pleaded not to be separated from her husband. The driver laughed at her. Fred was dragged away and his wife, shrieking wildly, was carried back half dead to her broken home. To the cabin sleep came not that night. At frequent intervals a plaintive moan was heard and then piercing shrieks that sent the tremor of despair through the darkness, penetrated the stately mansion and broke the slumbers of luxury and pride.

As a son of the late master heard the cries, he muttered, "Slavery is an accursed institution."

Day brought small comfort to the weeping wife. Nights came and went, but rest and dreamless sleep returned no more. For a time the stricken soul was buoyed up with the hope that Fred would find some one to write. No message came. In spite of kind attentions of mistress and friends—for she was a favorite with all—her sturdy frame succumbed beneath the weight of woe, the luster faded from her eye and after a few months of agony she sank into the grave. This picture was a reality. Witnesses of the tragedy still live.

*Darling Nelly Gray* was a protest against a wrong that was terribly real. The characters were not ideal; they were typical of the better slave element on the "old Kentucky shore." The song rendered a distinct service in the great movement that culminated in the emancipation proclamation and gave the Republic "under God, a new birth of freedom."

While it almost immediately became a great favorite in the North and was echoed back from lands beyond the sea, it brought neither fame nor fortune to the composer. In no work does the author so completely bury himself as in the lay that gains a measure of universality. The statesman and the warrior each goes down to posterity conspicuously associated with his immortal work. The world accepts the melody that nurtures the noblest sentiments of the human heart with scarce a thought of him who first with magic touch struck the chord of the soul's sweet harmonies.

Whence came the lullabies of childhood? Who first called forth the familiar strains of the flute and the violin? What was the origin of the repertoire of the sable knight of the banjo? What soldier soul launched the battle hymn? What saintly spirit framed the simple words and music that on the lips of rural choir and cathedral chorus raise the mortal into the visible presence of the Infinite? The throngs that are moved, uplifted and inspired know not, reckon not. The singer is lost in his song.

*Darling Nelly Gray* was copyrighted and issued by one of the largest musical publishing houses in America. The author purchased his first printed copy from a dealer in Columbus, Ohio. He wrote to the publisher and asked why he had not been notified of the acceptance of the manuscript. The reply was to the effect that the address had been lost. One dozen copies of the song were sent to the composer and this was the only compensation that he ever received. The credit of authorship, however, was not taken from him, and this the publisher seemed to consider ample reward. In reply to a request for the usual royalty, Hanby received the following:

"Dear Sir: Your favor received. *Nelly Gray* is sung on both sides of the Atlantic. We have made the money and you the fame—that balances the account."

The song had a phenomenal sale. It was published in many forms and the tune arranged for band music. The publisher must have made a small fortune out of it; Hanby had the obscure notice accorded to the song writer,—and what to a man of his taste and sensibility must have been far greater—the satisfaction of knowing that he had reached the popular heart and conscience in the support of a worthy cause. This consolation was left to him to transmit to his for all time.

Of the many songs that were written to advance the anti-slavery cause, *Darling Nelly Gray* alone retains a measure of its old time popularity. The melody and words survive because of their intrinsic beauty. And if the words of the poet are true, the song shall live on, for

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever."



LITTLE TILLIE'S GRAVE.

After honorable graduation at Otterbein, in 1858, Hanby traveled in Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland as agent for the institution. He married Miss Kate Winter, a cultured young lady whom he met in college and who as a member of the first graduating class had completed her course one year in advance of her husband.

In 1860 he published *Little Tillie's Grave*, a composition that was well received.<sup>1</sup> It did not rise to the level of *Darling Nelly Gray*, though intended to be somewhat similar to it in character. Following are the verses as they originally appeared:

'Tis midnight gliding on her deep, dark wings,  
And the wind o'er my gentle Tillie sighs.  
And my poor heart trembles like the banjo strings  
That I'm thrumming near the hillock where she lies.

CHORUS.

Weep, zephyrs, weep in the midnight deep,  
Where the cypress and the vine sadly wave;  
I have taken down my banjo for I could not sleep,  
And I'm singing by my little Tillie's grave.

When they tore my Jennie from her sweet, sweet child,  
And her heart was withering with mine,  
In my arms I bore thee to this island wild,  
Lest the fate of thy mother should be thine.

How sweet have the seasons glided by since then,  
How happy each moment of the year,  
Save a sigh that the lov'd one might come back again  
We have known not a sorrow nor a tear.

But the swamp fever lighted on thy dark brown cheek,  
And I knew death was knocking at the door;

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<sup>1</sup> A correspondent to a Hamilton, O., paper says: "The Rev. Hanby subsequently wrote and set to music a 'catchy' song along the same lines of his first production, entitled *Little Tillie's Grave*. This he dedicated to an old-time friend, Jacob A. Zellar, of Oxford, Butler County, O. *Little Tillie's Grave* was received with great favor, and had an immense sale."

*Benjamin Russel Hanby,*

How my full soul trembled with its bursting grief  
When I saw that my Tillie was no more.

Now the wildcat is wailing and the night-hawk screams  
And the copperhead is hissing in the shade;  
They shall come not hither to disturb thy dreams,  
For I'll watch where thy sleeping dust is laid.

## CHORUS.

Sleep, Tillie, sleep, in the midnight deep,  
Where the cypress and the vine sadly wave;  
Let my fingers keep thrumming and my fond heart weep  
Till I die by my little Tillie's grave.



OLE SHADY.

Hanby again entered upon the work of teaching. He was chosen principal at the academy at Sevenmile, Butler County, O., a position that he held for two years. While traveling in the South he had opportunity to study more fully the character of the colored people. *Darling Nelly Gray* and *Little Tillie's Grave* represented their serious, sentimental characteristics. He now portrayed their exuberant jollity in the familiar dialect song, *Ole Shady*. There is humor and pathos in the liberated soul bent on breaking for "ole Uncle Aby," "an' the wife an' baby in Lower Canady."

Oh! yah! yah! darkies laugh wid me,  
For de white folks say Ole Shady's free,  
So don't you see dat de jubilee  
Is a coming, coming,  
Hail mighty Day?

CHORUS.

Den away, away, for I can't wait any longer.  
Hooray, hooray, I'm going home.  
Den away, away, for I can't wait any longer.  
Hooray, hooray, I'm going home.

Oh, Mass' got scared and so did his lady,  
Dis chile breaks for Ole Uncle Aby,  
"Open de gates, out here's Ole Shady  
A coming, coming."  
Hail mighty day.

Good-bye, Mass' Jeff., good-bye Mis'r Stephens,  
'Scuse dis niggah for takin' his leavins'.  
'Spect pretty soon you'll hear Uncle Abram's  
A coming, coming,  
Hail mighty day.

Good-bye hard work wid never any pay,  
Ise a gwine up North where the good folks say  
Dat white wheat bread and a dollar a day  
Are coming, coming,  
Hail mighty day.

Oh, I've got a wife, and I've got a baby,  
 Living up yonder in Lower Canady,  
 Won't dey laugh when dey see Ole Shady  
     A coming, coming,  
     Hail mighty day.

The title in full of this song as originally published in 1861, was *Ole Shady, the Song of the Contraband*. It antedated the emancipation proclamation and anticipated the freedom of the slave, "de jubilee," and "white wheat bread an' a dollar a day." It was introduced by the Lombards and soon attained great popularity with the negro minstrel troupes.

That it was a great favorite in the northern armies is attested by the reminiscences of many who wore the blue. The soldier's appreciation finds generous expression in an article<sup>1</sup> by General Sherman, published in the *North American Review*. In describing an incident connected with the siege of Vicksburg, he says:

"A great many negroes, slaves, had escaped within the Union lines. Some were employed as servants by the officers, who paid them regular wages, some were employed by the quartermaster, and the larger number went North, free, in the Government chartered steamboats.

"Among the first class named was a fine, hearty 'darkey,' known as 'Old Shady,' who was employed by General McPherson as steward and cook at his headquarters in Mrs. Edward's house, in Vicksburg. Hundreds still living, among whom I may safely name General W. E. Strong, of Chicago, General Hickenlooper, of Cincinnati, Mrs. General Grant, Fred Grant, Mrs. Sherman and myself, well remember 'Old Shady.' After supper he used to assemble his chorus of 'darkies' and sing for our pleasure the songs of the period, among them one personal to himself, and, as I then understood, composed by himself. It was then entitled the *Day of Jubilee*, but is now recorded as simply *Old Shady*; and I do believe that since the Prophet Jeremiah bade the Jews 'to sing with gladness for Jacob and shout among the chief of the nations,' because of their deliverance from the house of bondage, that no truer or purer thought ever ascended from the lips of man than did at Vicksburg in the summer of 1863, when 'Old Shady' sang for us in a voice of pure melody his own song of deliverance from the bonds of slavery.

"After the war I met 'Old Shady' on a steamboat on the upper Mississippi, when he sang for us on the hurricane deck that good old song, which brought tears to the eyes of the passengers; and more recently I heard of him far up in Dakota, near 'Lower Canady,' toward which he

<sup>1</sup>"Old Shady, with a Moral," October, 1888.



seemed to lean as the coigne of safety, where his wife and baby had sought and obtained refuge. I believe him now to be dead, but living or dead, he has the love and respect of the old army of the Tennessee which gave him freedom. 'Good-bye, Mass' Jeff., good-bye Mis'r Stephens,' was a beautiful expression of the faithful family servant who yearned for freedom and a 'dollar a day.'"

After paying a glowing tribute to the colored people in the article quoted, General Sherman adds

"What more beautiful sentiment than that of my acquaintance, 'Old Shady': 'Good-bye, Mass' Jeff., good-bye, Mis'r Stephens.' 'Scuse dis niggah for takin' his leavins'—polite and gentle to the end. Burns never said anything better."

Old Shady seems to have derived his name from the song. He was not the author of either the words or the music, as General Sherman learned and freely admitted soon after the publication of his article. When Mrs. Hanby read it, she wrote to the General, sending him a copy of the song which was duly credited by the publisher to her husband. She received promptly the following courteous reply:

"Mrs. Kate Hanby: Dear Madam—I have received yours, with enclosure, and note the exception you take regarding an article from my pen in the October (1888) number of the *N. A. Review*. Shortly after the publication of that article I received a long letter from the subject of your husband's song, 'Old Shady,' then living, I believe, at Grand Forks, Dak., in which he disowned the authorship of the song but claimed the distinction of the title. Should I ever have occasion to refer to the subject in a future article, I shall certainly correct the misstatement. The expression, 'Good-bye, Mass' Jeff.; good-bye, Mis'r Stephens,' was surely most appropriate for a run-away slave, and led me to the conclusion that such a one was the author, but you are perfectly right in claiming it for your husband. With best wishes to you and yours, I am,

"Very truly yours,"

"W T. SHERMAN,"

The real name of "Old Shady," as he was called, was D. Blakely Durant. After the war he worked on the upper Mississippi. The letter to Mrs. Hanby explains that he was not dead in 1888, as the General had supposed. He moved to Grand Forks, Dakota, where he acquired a comfortable home and where one of his children afterwards was a student in the North Dakota State University. He died in 1895.

## NOW DEN! NOW DEN!

*Darling Nelly Gray* aroused sympathy for the slave; *Ole Shady* portrayed his practical ideal of home and freedom, and inspired him to seek both in the North; another song entitled *Now den! Now den!*,<sup>1</sup> for years after the war heard in many a cabin of the South, and still a favorite in some sections, held up to the vision of the freedman an ideal of joyful labor and its sure reward in the land of corn and cotton, which in the dawn of the new era of liberty was to be to him indeed the "Land ob Canaan." A recent writer,<sup>2</sup> as he glides down the Chesapeake and cruises along the shore where verdant and fruitful undulations of valley and hill put him into a reminiscent and poetic mood, recalls other days when the freedman, in the first joy of his release, poured forth his soul in these words, and listens with delight, for the colored laborers on deck are still singing:

De darkies say dis many a day,  
 We's far from the land ob Canaan.  
 Oh, whar shall we go from de white-faced foe,  
 Oh! whar shall we find our Canaan?

## CHORUS.

Now den! Now den! into de cotton, darkies.  
 Plow in de cane till ye reach the bery bottom, darkies.  
 Ho! we go for de rice swamp low,  
 Hurrah for de land ob Canaan.

---

<sup>1</sup> On the second page of this song occurs the following note: "The object of OLE SHADY was to encourage the contrabands to escape from their masters to the Union lines, and was suggested by the correspondence between General Butler and the authorities at Washington, with regard to the status of escaped slaves. The song in a very short time became known all over the South as the 'Contraband Song,' and was sung by the slaves everywhere, though very few at the North had as yet heard it. In like manner it is hoped that this song, while furnishing amusement to the social circle, may subserve the further and more important purpose of inducing the freedmen to return to their homes and labor."

<sup>2</sup> In "By the Waters of Chesapeake," *The Century Magazine*, December, 1893.



Oh happy day de darkies say,  
For at last we've found our Canaan.  
Old Jordan's flood rolled red with blood,  
But we march'd right ober into Canaan.

No driver's horn calls de slave at morn.  
Jordan swamp'd him crossing into Canaan.  
But at break ob day we're away, we're away,  
For to till the fertile fields ob Canaan.

Come, ye runaways back, dat underground track  
Couldn't neber, neber lead you into Canaan.  
Here your fathers sleep, here your loved ones weep;  
O come home to de happy land ob Canaan.

*(To be sung after chorus to last stanza.)*

Oh! Canaan, sweet Canaan,  
We's been hunting for the land ob Canaan.  
Canaan is now our happy home.  
Hurrah for de land ob Canaan.

## THE NAMELESS HEROINE.

This song was written in honor of the young lady who aided fleeing Union prisoners to escape from the South.<sup>1</sup> One of these afterward related the incident upon which it was based substantially as follows:

"She led us for seven miles. Then, while we remained in the wood, she rode forward over the long bridge which spanned the Nolechucky River, to see if there were any guards upon it; went to the first Union house beyond, to learn whether the roads were picketted; came back, and told us the coast was clear. Then she rode by toward her home. Had it been safe to cheer, we should certainly have given three times three for the nameless heroine, who did us such vital kindness. 'Benisons upon her dear head forever!'"

As will be noticed, the words and measure are modeled after Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade*:

Out of the jaws of death,  
 Out of the mouth of hell,  
     Weary and hungry, and fainting and sore,  
 Fiends on the track of them,  
 Fiends at the back of them,  
     Fiends all around but an angel before.

## CHORUS.

Fiends all around, but an angel before,  
 Blessings be thine, loyal maid, evermore!

Out by the mountain path,  
 Down through the darksome glen,  
     Heedless of foes, nor at danger dismayed,  
 Sharing their doubtful fate,  
 Daring the tyrant's hate,  
     Heart of a lion, though form of a maid.

---

<sup>1</sup>In January, 1865. The "nameless heroine" was Miss Melvina Stevens



CHORUS.

Hail to the angel who goes on before,  
Blessings be thine, loyal maid, evermore!

"Nameless," for foes may hear,  
But by our love for thee,  
Soon our bright sabers shall blush with their gore,  
Then shall our banner free,  
Wave, maiden, over thee:  
Then, noble girl, thou'lt be nameless no more.

CHORUS.

Then we shall hail thee from mountain to shore,  
Bless thy brave heart, loyal maid, evermore!

It was quite natural that he should manifest an appreciative interest in the best literature of the day. He was much impressed with Holland's "Bitter Sweet." A congratulatory letter to the author called forth the following response:

"SPRINGFIELD, MASS., September 3, 1860.

"B. R. HANBY, DEAR SIR: If my book has done you and yours any measure of good, I am glad, for I should not like to be indebted to you for the whole of the deep satisfaction your letter has given me. I thank you for your thoughtfulness, and I thank you for spending so much time in its demonstration. Such letters pay better than money. I was glad when Mr. Scribner paid me a generous copyright, but I didn't cry; and, next to laughing, I think crying is the most satisfactory exercise of a man's lungs. May God bless you and your wife, and all whom you hold dear.

"Yours truly,

"J. G. HOLLAND."

## THE MINISTRY.

Endowed with a deeply religious nature, which was developed and confirmed by home environment and education, Hanby had looked forward to the time when he should enter upon the realization of his life's work in the ministry. His eldest sister, still a zealous worker in the church, bears loving testimony to his conversion, his disinterested service in bringing others to the Master, and the fidelity with which he responded to the call to preach the Gospel of Christ.

"The foremost business of his life, from conversion to the end," says she, "was the salvation of souls. . . . One day in church he rose and with pallid face, which none who saw it can ever forget, calmly said, 'Brethren, God is preparing me either for the charnel house or for greater service to Him.' After that all knew without further words that God had set his seal upon him." He had heard the call, and only awaited the opportunity to enter fully upon the great work of man's redemption. At the close of his second year at the head of the academy, he realized his fondly cherished hope and donned the clerical robes.

He entered upon his labors in the village of Lewisburg, O. Young, scholarly and eloquent; kind, genial and optimistic; direct, ingenuous and sincere; blest with a refined and intelligent face and a poetic soul that found expression in song, it is needless to say that he became the idol of the little flock that gathered and grew around the pulpit under the spell of his personality and power.

As a minister, according to the testimony of an old time friend and companion, he had many excellent qualities. He was enthusiastic without being pedantic, full of emotion but calm and earnest. He never read his sermons, nor did he permit himself to write them. It must not be presumed, however, that he entered the pulpit without thorough preparation. The theme of his text was thoroughly thought out, and even the sentences, as he once remarked to this friend, were carefully formed before delivery. While at college he often served as critic in his literary society, where the ability, just discrimination and kindly spirit evident in the discharge of the delicate duties of that post made



him a general favorite. His analytic and well worded report at the conclusion of the evening's exercises, was awaited with pleasure alike by performers and audience. He thought out his sermons with critical exactitude, after weighing with great care synonymous expressions to determine which most nearly expressed his idea. If from a doctrinal point these sermons were not profound, they were never dogmatical, always natural, sweet in spirit, messages from the Master.

His chief interest was in the young people of his congregation and the community. He mingled freely with them socially, and entered with zest into their innocent recreations and amusements. The sleigh rides of winter — usually taken in a large sled — the outing in quest of the first wild flowers of spring, and the harvest home picnic with all its simple but delightful and elevating attractions were dear to the young clerical friend of the children. He taught them drawing and music, and delivered special sermons and lectures for them. No wonder that they were affectionately fond of him and referred to him with fervor as "our preacher."

It followed, as a matter of course, that his church was the center of attraction to the young and that many should find their way to the Christian life under his inspiration and guidance. Of that number, one relates how after she and many others had united with the church, the good minister planned a pleasant surprise. He and the parents quietly contributed to a fund with which there was purchased for each new member a neat and substantially bound copy of the Bible, with the name of the recipient stamped on the back in gold. In many families these precious gifts are still fondly treasured in loving memory of the long ago and the dear teacher who was a beneficent part of it all.

His love of children, of course, antedated his entrance into the ministry. Mrs. Hanby, speaking of this characteristic, recently said:

"If 'to be a good story teller is to be a king among children,' he certainly deserved the title. His ideal life was the child life. He loved it for its unconscious sweetness. All the children who knew him were his friends, and would hasten to greet him when they met him on the street.

Nothing was too difficult if it was for the little ones. He would go miles to entertain them. While he was with the John Church Company, the Friends of Richmond, Ind., collected into a school several hundred of the poorest children of the city. Although no singers themselves, they fully realized the sweetening and refining influence of music, and invited Mr. Hanby to come and sing for them whenever he could. He was glad of the opportunity, and frequently gave up other things for the sake of pleasing those poor little children. He taught them many little songs, and among others was *Chick-a-dee-dee*, which they particularly liked. By and by those good Friends rented the largest hall in the city and gave these children and their friends a banquet. It was in the evening, and the hall was beautifully lighted and decorated. Mr. Hanby was invited to sing. I accompanied him to the hall, and never shall I forget the greeting given him by the children. Their faces lighted up, they clapped their little hands and exclaimed: 'Oh, here comes Chick-a-dee-dee!' He sang to them, told them stories, and was a child with them all evening."

His advent was a distinct stimulus to the æsthetic development of the little village. The local schoolmaster found him companionable and helpful. There was a new interest in public entertainments, in which of course music was given a prominent place. Pianos and organs began to appear in the homes of the well-to-do, and much was added to the sum of happiness in the community.

To a careful observer it is scarcely necessary to say, however, that Rev. Benjamin Hanby was treading dangerous ground. The church of the middle west forty years ago was not the church of to-day. The austere element of the Puritan spirit was then still dominant. This was not in any measure, be it said, due to the peculiar doctrines of the United Brethren Church. For its day it was progressive, even liberal. It early took advanced ground against the institution of slavery, and within comparatively broad limits it gave conscience free range.

The barrier that loomed up in Hanby's way was not so much the spirit of his church as it was the spirit of the times. There was among the religious folk of almost every community a somewhat clearly defined opinion as to the minister's place and proper attitude toward the people. They had little faith in the conversion of those who joined church "because they liked the preacher." An impression prevailed that the minister should hold himself somewhat aloof from his people; as a pious



soul once expressed it, they should feel, when they approached him, that they were "in the presence of a superior being." Public entertainments, with attendant features that even remotely suggested the stage, were objects of suspicion and alarm. And as for music — well, there were many among the devout and righteous who thoroughly believed that it was one of the insinuating devices of Satan himself. These good people would naturally assume the interrogatory attitude toward the innovations of Rev. Hanby. That his affable manner and the genial sunshine of his smile melted away much of this incipient opposition there can be no doubt; it perhaps would be too much to expect that it should wholly silence criticism.

The leaders of the conservative element, however, had misgivings of a more serious character. They noticed that the vicarious atonement and the resurrection had been somewhat slighted and that the doctrine of eternal punishment had been wholly eliminated from his sermons. Worse than all, the report gained currency that he had privately declared that he did not believe in the last of these. Matters moved quietly but promptly to a crisis. There was no dramatic scene. No outward struggle marked his progress at the parting of the ways. Without a word of complaint or a plea to shake the faith of any mortal, with a heart full of tenderness and love and hope, without an intimation of the new light that was leading to the broader way, he left the pulpit and soon afterward severed his connection with the conference.<sup>1</sup>

That the change of his views did not shake the foundations of his religious faith is attested by his subsequent life and the large number of sacred songs he composed and published after he left the ministry. He did not formally sever his connection with the church, to which he was bound by many happy associations. His experience, like that of Emerson, seems to have prepared him for larger service in a sphere for which he was peculiarly fitted.

<sup>1</sup> In the proceedings of the conference of 1866 occurs the following minute:

"On motion, the credentials of B. R. Hanby were received back by the conference at his request, and his connection with the conference severed."

\*

## MUSICAL COMPOSER.

He entered at once the employ of the John Church Music Company of Cincinnati, O., and remained with the firm about two years. He continued to compose occasionally, but the demands of the business in which he was employed did not leave him much leisure for other work.

He was a temperance advocate and wrote some songs dedicated to the cause, among which were *Revelers' Chorus* and *Crowding Awfully*. He contributed to Ohio political literature at least one effusion, with the refrain

Oh, Governor Brough,  
It's terrible tough.

He was next transferred to the well known music house of Root & Cady, of Chicago, Ill. He regarded this change as in every way most fortunate. Here at last he seemed to have found the work for which he was especially equipped. He was employed to write Sunday and day school songs. This brought him again into contact with children. The echo of his soul might have found expression in the words of Dickinson:

Oh, there's nothing on earth half so holy  
As the innocent heart of a child.

Of his work here, Mrs. Hanby says:

"He loved to write children's songs because he loved children. Teaching them, singing with them, and writing songs for them, was, I think, his real work. He was happier in it than in anything else that he ever did. His relations with George F. Root were of the most pleasant character. Mr. Root regarded him almost as a son, and their intercourse was that of very dear friends rather than that of employer and employed."

The two edited *Our Song Birds*, in which a number of Mr. Hanby's songs appear. These were days of joyful labor. He composed over sixty tunes and wrote the words for about half of them. At the same time he was preparing for publication a work in which he developed his system of teaching music. It included most of his songs and numerous selections from other



composers. He was enthusiastic over the book and confidently expected it to yield him an ample return for his labor. The manuscript was almost ready for the printer when business called him to St. Paul in the summer of 1866. He took the work with him in order that he might employ the leisure hours of travel in putting on the finishing touches. Soon after reaching his destination, he was taken seriously ill and returned home at once. He checked and shipped the trunk containing his manuscript, but it never reached its destination. All efforts to locate it were unavailing. No trace of it was ever found.

He reached his home with a hectic flush on his cheek. His lungs were seriously affected. But hope, so native to his buoyant nature and characteristic of his malady, bore him on, his former self in everything but waning strength. Though confined to his home most of the time, mind and pen were still active. *Our Song Birds* claimed his especial interest. Following are the words of a few of his contributions:

## DEVOTIONAL SONGS.

THE HOLY HOUR.<sup>1</sup>

How sweet the holy hour,  
When at the throne of grace;  
The friends of Jesus bend the knee,  
And angels fill the place.

Oh, haste, my willing feet,  
To join the happy throng;  
Confess thy sins, my trembling lips,  
Or raise the grateful song.

The gentle Shepherd flies,  
(Oh, wealth of love untold!)  
To hear, and help, and heal and bless  
The humblest of His fold.

Oh, Shepherd, Savior, King,  
Come, make this heart Thy throne;  
Drive out Thy foes, Thou Mighty One,  
And make me all Thine own.

GONDOLA.<sup>1</sup>

We come in childhood's joyfulness,  
We come as children, free!  
We offer up, O God! our hearts,  
In trusting love to Thee.  
Well may we bend in solemn joy,  
At Thy bright courts above.  
Well may the grateful child rejoice,  
In such a Father's love.

We come not as the mighty come;  
Not as the proud we bow.  
But as the pure in heart should bend,  
Seek we Thine altars now.  
"Forbid them not," the Savior said;  
But let them come to Me;  
Oh, Savior dear, we hear Thy call,  
We come, we come, to Thee.

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<sup>1</sup> Copyrighted 1894 by The John Church Company. Used by permission.



To Thee, Thou Lord of life and light,  
Amid the angel throng,  
We bend the knee, we lift the heart,  
And swell the holy song.  
How blest the children of the Lord,  
Who wait around His throne,  
How sweet to tread the path that leads  
To yonder heavenly home.

COME FROM THE HILL-TOP.<sup>1</sup>

Come from the hill-top, the vale, and the glen;  
Lights now the Sabbath the landscape again;  
Little feet patter like rain o'er the sod,  
On in the path to the temple of God.

CHORUS.

On to the temple, on to the temple,  
On to the temple, on to the temple.  
Little feet patter like rain o'er the sod,  
On in the path to the temple of God.

Who to the fields or the forests would stray,  
Seeking their pleasure at work or at play?  
Who, when that banner of love is unfurl'd,  
Turn to the bubble-like joys of the world?

We from the service of Sin would depart,  
Heeding Thy mandate of "Give me Thine heart;"  
Suffer the children to "come unto me."  
Savior, behold at Thy feet here are we.

Thus when our Sabbaths on earth are no more,  
We shall be with Thee, and love and adore;  
Singing in heaven, that bright world of bliss,  
Songs that we learned on the Sabbaths of this.

NOW TO THE LORD.<sup>1</sup>

Now to the Lord on high,  
Ye saints your voices raise.  
Let little children throng His court,  
And sing the Savior's praise.

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<sup>1</sup> Copyrighted 1894 by The John Church Company. Used by permission.

Here on this holy day,  
Ye multitudes, repair,  
And pour your swelling souls in song,  
Or lift the humble prayer.

Rejoicing, or in grief,  
Come, sit and hear His Word;  
And thro' your smiles, or thro' your tears,  
Look up and see your Lord.

His ear is quick to hear,  
His hand is open wide;  
Each trusting soul shall surely find  
His ev'ry want supplied.



OCCASIONAL SONGS.

ROBIN SONG.<sup>1</sup>

We are coming, sang the robins,  
For the woods and groves are gay;  
Will you give us kindly greeting,  
Little Jessie, little May?  
We will join your matin carols,  
We will chant your vesper lay,  
While we wait your sweeter echoes,  
Little Jessie, Little May.

CHORUS.

We are coming, sang the robins,  
For the woods and groves are gay;  
Will you give us kindly greeting,  
Little Jessie, little May?

There's a tree beneath your window,  
With a paradise of leaves,  
We will build our robin homestead  
In the branches 'neath the eaves;  
There will be the sweetest chirping,  
In the garden by and by,  
When our pleasant toil is ended,  
And the nestlings learn to fly.

You will scatter crumbs, it may be,  
On your friendly window sill,  
For each darling robin baby,  
Has an empty, gaping bill.  
We will give our farewell concert,  
When the flowers pass away,  
But will come again as they will,  
Little Jessie, little May.

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EXCURSION SONG.<sup>1</sup>

Ho! ho! ho!  
 Out to the beautiful groves we go;  
 This is our holiday now, you know.  
 Sweet shall our melodies float and flow,  
     Out on the balmy air:  
 Bear them, ye breezes that gently blow,  
     Scatter them everywhere.

Sing! sing! sing!  
 Heaven shall smile at the praises we bring.  
 Forest and meadow with music ring,  
 Echo the cadences gracefully fling,  
     Out on the balmy air:  
 Bear them aloft on her silv'ry wing,  
     Scatter them everywhere.

Play! play! play!  
 Run, oh, ye happy ones while ye may;  
 Roam thro' the forests at will to-day,  
 Pouring your shouts and your laughter gay,  
     Out on the balmy air:  
 Sylvia beckons, oh, speed away,  
     Scatter them everywhere.

BOAT SONG.<sup>1</sup>

Row! row! row!  
 Over the beautiful blue we go!  
 Row! row! row! row!  
 Over the waters we go.  
     Lightly every heart is bounding,  
     Gay the voice of song is sounding,  
     Sweet the light guitar resounding.  
 Thus we gaily row.

Row! row! row!  
 Over the beautiful blue we go!  
 Row! row! row! row!  
 Over the waters we go.  
     Starry vaults above us beaming,  
     Starry depths below us seeming,  
     Silver wavelets 'round us gleaming,  
 Thus we gaily row.

<sup>1</sup> Copyrighted 1894 by The John Church Company. Used by permission.



Row! row! row!  
Over the beautiful blue we go!  
Row! row! row! row!  
Over the waters we go.  
    Heart to heart we'll sail together,  
    Hand in hand for aye and ever,  
    Naught shall change us, naught shall sever,  
Thus we gaily row.

WEAVER JOHN.<sup>1</sup>

Down in that cottage lives Weaver John,  
    And a happy old John is he;  
Maud is the name of his dear old dame,  
    And a blessed old dame is she.

CHORUS.

Whickity, whackity, click and clack,  
    How the shuttles do glance and ring!  
Here they go, there they go, forth and back,  
    A staccato song they sing.

Close by his side is his gentle wife,  
    And she's twirling the flaxen thread;  
Sweet to his ear is the low wheel's hum,  
    It was purchased when they were wed.

Pussy is frisking about the room,  
    With her kittens, one, two, three, four;  
Towser is taking his wonted nap  
    On the settle behind the door.

Soft as the hum of the dame's low wheel,  
    Does the music of time roll on;  
Morning and noon of a useful life  
    Bring a peacefully setting sun.

*Our Song Birds* was a musical periodical, each number named after some bird whose picture appeared on the cover. The last issue to which Hanby contributed was, by a touching coincidence, called "The Dove." Among the selections from this number are *Come from the Hill-top* and *Weaver John*, with the beautifully suggestive closing stanzas:

<sup>1</sup> Copyrighted 1894 by The John Church Company. Used by permission.

Thus when our Sabbaths on earth are no more,  
We shall be with Thee, and love and adore.  
Singing in heaven, that bright world of bliss,  
Songs that we learned on the Sabbaths of this.

Soft as the hum of the dame's low wheel,  
Does the music of time roll on.  
Morning and noon of a useful life  
Bring a peacefully setting sun.

His life had not reached the zenith of the allotted three score years and ten when it swiftly but silently declined, and the twilight shadows began to gather. One day in March, Mr. Cady, one of his employers, visited him and found him weak but cheerful and sanguine as of old. He said little about his condition; his conversation was all in the hopeful vein; his mind was full of plans for the future. His illness by subtle, painless stages bore him through waning strength, while the evening star to his raptured eye was radiant with the promise of the years stretching peacefully before. Behind were the snows of winter. From the frozen streets and blackened air of the great city, he turned in thought to the glories of reviving nature, as with enfeebled hand he had drawn them in his latest verse:

The morning is beaming, the morning is beaming;  
Oh, hasten the sight to behold!  
The mountains are gleaming, the mountains are gleaming,  
With tints of purple and gold.

The brooklets are dashing, the brooklets are dashing  
O'er pebbles of crimson and white;  
The rivers are flashing, the rivers are flashing,  
Their arrows of silvery light.

Gone were the wintry blasts. He looked forward with eager anticipation to the coming of spring. While balmy south winds were whispering of her approach, he fell asleep and woke not with the coming day.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> He died March 16, 1867.





BENJAMIN RUSSEL HANBY—PORTRAIT AND MONUMENT.

"He was just beginning to make a name for himself in the musical world," declares a writer, "when he was stricken down in the prime of young manhood."

"He was educated for the ministry," says Mr. Root, in his autobiography, "but was so strongly inclined to music that he decided to try to make that his life's work. But he died almost at the commencement of his career."

Backward to the old home in the college town were borne the mortal remains of this dear interpreter of the melodies of the human heart. On the campus, at the corners of the streets and in the study room, there was the pall of sadness that only the *alma mater* of that day could feel at the obsequies of such a son. Professors, students and citizens moved in silent procession to the little cemetery by the winding stream, and in the quiet southwest corner, where sunshine and shadow weave changing figures on the sward the whole year round, the bard was gently laid to rest.

He yearned for the return of the season dear to poetic souls. With warmth and fragrance and music, spring came to open buds and spread the living green above his grave.

Nor poet, nor minstrel in all this middle west has found in place more fitting his lowly mansion of dreamless repose. Among the little mounds, the dark cedar and the arching elm stand guard, while at the edge of the sharp declivity beyond the grave and shading it from the declining sun, rises a sturdy oak, that has stood through calm and storm while generations have passed away. Not far distant and seen distinctly through the intervening branches, the stream with circling sweep moves onward as of old. Around is the music of nature, pleasantly broken at intervals by the college bell as it calls the students to the lessons of the day.

Fair Otterbein! Blest are thy classic shades and hallowed thy memories. From these walls high-minded sons have gone forth to win laurels in the fields of honorable endeavor. Ministers and educators and jurists have acquired more than local fame, and one sweet singer found his way to the universal heart. The great world, in its mad rush for gain, may care but little who and what he was. But a better day will dawn — is dawning.



When vulgar wealth yields to intellectual culture; when to sway thousands through the magic power of song to the support of a righteous cause is as great as to move men by eloquent appeal or to lead them forth to battle; when to add to the world's happiness is to be the world's benefactor; when to touch and refine the heart is to be a savior of mankind; when greed shall not outweigh the things of the spirit; when self is less and love is more, the fame of this son of song shall have a wider range, and for his memory there shall be a resurrection in the land he loved so well.



