Off the Beaten Track

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VERSES
by
Win Scott and Jo Labadie

A JAUNT ALONG THE RIVER ROUGE.

BACK TO NATURE.

"BACK to nature," we smiling said, we two
Who lazed and loitered all that autumn day

In full content along the river's edge,
Whose waters rippled silver 'neath the boughs,
With just the faintest murmur in their flow.

We plucked the purple lobes from wreathing vines,
In tangles wild the regal asters grew,
And o'er the marsh the mallows spilled their gold.

A calm, still day, with softest veiling haze,
The toilers busy midst the rustling corn,
That gleamed like wigwams along the rounded hills,
Where chirped the lazy crickets in the sun.

The silent leaf that left the crimson thorn,
The traces still of blooms we dearly loved,
With miles on miles in banks of yellowing ferns

In woodland glades, where soft sun harmonies
Made all that care-free day most beautiful.

So slipped the rosary of joyous hours
Till sunset spread a cloth of shining gold
Across the shoulders of the drowsy hills
And touched the placid stream with level rays.

Soft-purple shadows trod the heels of day;
Night settled down and showed the steadfast stars.

We then the drift-wood heaped and lit the flame,
And feasted then on maize and luscious fruits,
A frugal meal partaken of with zest.

Then laid us down upon the soft, warm earth;
The night made vocal with the insects' call;
And thru it all anon came tinkles faint
Of far-off bells to us at peace beneath the stars.

WINFIELD L. SCOTT.

October, 1906.

THE JAUNT.

THE mellow wail of the wildwood whim
For absent souls was tuned in our ears,
And the music lured like a siren's song.
Friend Scott and I, with anxious hearts
And ears like Indians', close to the sounding
ground,
To catch the mossy-cushioned tread of the
unrestrained,
Heard freedom's far-off hallooing,
And so one golden day in autum's glow
We left the dust and noise of the reckless town,
Where life and limb become the daily prey
Of modern Juggernauts, whose rubber wheels,
Silent as a panther's tread and hungry eyes
agleam,
Creep cruelly a-swift upon their unsuspecting
victims with honk and screech
And crunch their brittle bones and scatter sacred
flesh alongthe painful pave;
Where ignorant poverty bows its fawning face

To ignorant power; where business makes
believe that plunder-profit wisdom proves;
And toil, with aching, breaking back, loaded
With parasites, groans in the noisome shadows
Of its own foolish folly of living in piled-up
boxes, small and mean,
When the beckoning land cries full-throated for
fellowship,
Where helping hands may yield a worthy life,
Tho the law has usurious hands about its struggling neck.

Ere long we leave the scooting car,
With its clang and clatter, its roar and racket,
Its twang and tintinnabulations,
Like an orchestra of hell, and its fetid fumes
And noisome smells, we come into a peaceful
vale,
Its sides aslope with variegated reds and greens
and browns, nature's kaleidoscope,
Frank autumn hues put on with nature's stintless brush,
Where sylvan silence softly soothes contentment in embrace.
In a shady nook, close to the rippling water's
glint, we sit.

Within an ell a serpent slyly slides
Into the stream and sends a shuddering chill
Adown my spinal nerves, for never yet
Have I o'ercome the childish dread that Satan's
Form is serpentine, and mortal enmity to man
his never-ending mission;
And a sassy chipmunk spouts his brazen protest
At intrusion unintentional.

Along the Rouge's sinuous banks
Our faithful feet cross fallow fields,
And fields replete with foods for man and beast;
Lactiferous lowlands purveying munching cows;
Saintly-visaged ewes and lambs with lovely eyes
That look like candid moons in full,
So tender, good and free from guile,
Almost to prompt the kindly wish to plant anew
Their lusterous kindliness 'neath human brows
Swe wot well of;
And stern-eyed rams, whose threatening horns
And stamping hoofs give evidence of fight
potential;
And a gentle mother horse with generations
three,
Who follow close for friendship's sake;
And rugged ridges bristling with brambles thick,
Whose prickly points resent the ruthless ways
Of urbanites on idle pleasures bent,
If joy-producing things can useless be.
Ah! what relief from narrow walls
That hem within the city's heat and grime
And irk with work unnatural and vain,
And shut without the godly good of sun and air
and liberty!

Upon the Rouge's balmy banks,
Where once the red man, unsullied by the white
man's guile and civil plunderings,
Lit his wigwam fires and wooed his wildwood
bride,
We lay our listless lengths along,
Flat on our backs, and thru the leafy tracery
Against the lucid sky we gaze and dream.
We watch the wooly clouds move mopingly,
Like tired sheep upon a sultry day,
And when the jading journey's sweat runs

rivulets
Adown the heated spine we plunge
Into the tinted flood that gives the stream its
reddish name
And fresh the thews for further jaunt.
The while I lie upon my naked back in sunny
sand,
Like infant innocence on mother's breast,
My jocund friend in artless fun
Shoots shots of shadows of my Apollo form
Upon tell-tale films, from which to ornament his
wicked den,
As with grim trophies of the chase,
And shock the Grundys into feinting faints.

At Duboisville, a drowsy hamlet near the
streamlet's side,
We while a word with Farrington,
A rugged habitant of this hoary-headed town,
A cross-roads sage full of cornstalk filosofy,
Who smooths the way with unctious words.
And then we lounge upon a modern bridge
below the crooning mill
That sings its madrigals in plaintive tones,
As an aged bard of ancient days,
Bewailing the dizzyness of modern ways;
And village maidens pass with smiles and greetings filled with rural fellowship.
Tho new to us, no strangers they,
As strangers have no welcome in their souls
And pass one by as floating icebergs in northern seas.

The moistening mouth, nature's unerring
regulator,
Tells us 'tis time to break our hungry fast,
And so beneath a friendly willow's languid limbs
We sit upon the sod and jaw our frugal fare.
And then again we jog along, in God's own
freedom,
O'er bog and hummocked fields, thru brake,
Amid the crackling corn that wage the workers
well
And wave their yellow flags at us,
And in the dusty road that winds and weaves
Along the most inviting ways with serpent sinuosity,
And guides our feet to where a feeder of the
nation whiles his life in humble toil

And simple motherhood breeds a moilsome race.
We here enjoy the wheezy pump's refreshing tin,
And rural hospitality fills full our bags with fruit.
We leave a pleasing word for family and dog
And follow whimsey's random way.
Up the tiring hill we go, and down the pushing
summit's si de,
And in atween the wire fences' stabbing barbs,
And over fences green with age and weak with
weather-wasted stamina,
Whose builders long ago have paid in productive
mold, pound for pound,
The debt which nature laid upon their lives.

A lonely lane, as silently as Chimborazo's topmost peak,
Leads up to Boden's well-kept yard,
Where, in social nearness, chum abodes for
man and beastAn old brick home, cozy, low and rambling,
neatly care in every nook,
And bursting barns, and stables trim and clean.
Here kingly cocks aplume their sway,
And swine and kine commune in peaceful comradeship,
A lesson learning the human crowd,
Who grab and hoard in greediness, when
plenty's hands,
In drunken generosity, keep doling out with
never-ending stintlessness.

Across the rolling stubble field we gain the
wood.
With admiration nigh unto cupidity we gaze
With artist eyes at fairy landscapes toil and
nature wrought.
Low in the teeming vale winds like a wriggling
worm
The pregnant stream we left a meager while ago,
Where lazy kine knee deep into its limpid luxury
Demonstrate wisdom over man by Fletcherizeing long their noonday meal,
Busy hurry being stranger to their polity.
Dotting the hillside sward lie cozy cottages in
restful ease,
Like Easter lilies fair upon a leisure-billowed sea,
And round about big-bellied barns of red,
With forked rods to keep the lightning off,
Tell the story of willing work and skilful management.
The fleecy flocks with fearless feet here frisk,

Great orchards burdened joyously with succulent abundance,
Undulating fields full of golden promises,
And blotchy foliage of colors bold and masterful
Fringe the horizon along the purpling sky.

Awhile we swim entranced this sea of sensual
luxury,
And leave reluctantly these servants of our joy.
We stumble thru like drunken men
The jungle's undergrowth in sweet pursuit of
tales to tell the credulous in coming days.

Buttermilk is scarce in these suburban latitudes,
As unpoetic enterprise has robbed the milkmaid of her job,
And senseless wheels and cranks in urban factories
Now do the work she used to do and ape the
songs she used to sing.
The golden butter made within the sound of
bossy's moo
No longer spreads the noonday lunch.
But once along the joyous route do we appease
Our thirst with buttermilk, and then the drink
Is sweeter than the acrid face that serves our
wish so grudgingly.

And now the shadows towards the east fast
longer grow.
The reins upon our feet we gently draw
And cast about for where to mend our waning
strengthSome inviting stack of straw or fragrant hay,
A shock of yellow corn or mow anear an ample
roof, where pattering rain may sing our
eyes asleep,
Or mayhap a farmer's homespun hospitality.

But Fate is stingy of her weal, and so we
Ramble on, as eveningtide, mother of night,
Leads further from our hope. With golden
Snuffers the light of day's put out and we are
in a blackened maze.
My early woodman ways come handy to me now.
Soon a crackling fire blazes cheerily
And roasts the milky corn that Winfield L.
Had borrowed from a wavy field with firm intent
Of bringing back some rectifying day.
Experiences in early youth with Indian tribes,
When Potowattomies had simpler ways

Of satisfying simple needs than with utensil
Artfulness—ere Michigan was robbed of nature's
Ample store for nature's nearest relatives—
Help in emergencies like this, and so we fare
As guileless children of the wooded wilds,
Squatting on the sands beside the gabbling
brook.
Weariness soon lays us down upon the clean,
Warm bank, and sleep unwooed comes with
Its tools to deftly mend our elemental wastes.
No coverlets besides the spangled blue,
No mattresses besides the plastic sand,
No pillows save some flotsam blocks of maple soft
Make our welcome bed or soothe us to our
rest.
We early rise, in company of a manly day—

Red-haired, broad-shouldered, narrow-hipped,
Smiling-faced and supple-limbed-and make
our way
To Woodward Avenue, whence we swiftly homeward glide
In a modern car pulled and pushed by God's
electric hands,
BIaggaged with pleasant memories of a
Delightful jaunt along the River Rouge!

ENTRE NO US.

On Saturday evening, November 26, 1904, with Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Catlin and Mr. and Dr. Yarros, I attended a concert by the Theodore Thomas Orchestra, composed of 90 instruments, at the Auditorium, Chicano. The Alight of Music is a result. The proram is followed somewhat closely in its construction.

THE MIGHT OF MUSIC.

I SAT one welcome, well-remembered eve
With cherished friends where music makers
Molded sound to suit my woodman whims
And with harmonious glamor soothed my soul.
I sat entranced, my spell bound spirit steeped in mellow
moods,
While tears of joy were banked by fear
Lest fellow listeners might merry make
Were my welled emotions suffered flow
As my simple nature moved.

Theodore Thomas, mighty master of melodious tones,
Weird wizard of musical witcheries,
Sultan of Sound and Lord of Orchestra,
Charmed the muses with his wonderful wand
And levied lyric toll as they passed him by,
Disbursing its luxurious worth to willing ears.
They came in my reverie with fiddle and flagelot, flute
and fife;
With accordion and bugle and bagpipe;
With lyre, lute, viol, psaltery;
With clarion, cymbal, cornet, castinet, clarinet;
With mandolin, monochord, harmonicon, harp;
With trombone, tuning-fork, triangle, trumpet;
With pipe and drum and gong and bones and oboe;
With tomtom and trombone and tabor and timbrel;
With guitar and gittern and rebeck and banjo;
With whistle and rattle and piano and dulcimer and
hurdy-gurdy,
And the myriad tools with which sound makes music.

As close to the sky as we could climb
We sat and saw the starry silver of song and story,
And reveled in rhythm with jeweled joy.
M1y feelings ran the gamut of sensation,
From the base note of woe to the high C of bliss.
The roar of Niagara grandly swelled
And rippling rills so softly sang.
With sunken sound and deep old ocean's liquid sigh
The hearing sought with soothing strains;
And I heard wedding bells, and Christmas bells, and
fire bells, and funeral bells;
And sirens sang seductive songs and becked with fairy
fingers fondly crooked;
And happy Negro melodies floated in the air;
While birdlings twittered here and yon,
And sharp, shrill notes, with dulcet airs infused, were
wafted far and high.
Close to my heart shy, lovelorn doves amorously cooed
and wooed,
And discordantly the caw of crow gave stress to harmony.
I heard thd horses' neigh afield;
The long, low m-o-o of homeward winding herds;
The shepherd's horn across the evening hills,
The bark of his dog, the m-a-a-h of his fold.

The tuneful air brought to my ear the peaceful vesper

bell,
And with the incense came the choir's lulling chants
And the trembling organ's solemn symphony.
The cackle, bleat and grunt of farmyard in bucolic
rhythm came to me;
And the hoot of the horned owl;
And the grind of the hungry mill;
And the buzz of the brazen bee;
And the yelp of the wary wolf;
And the sigh of the sorrowing pine;
And the prattling babe with its clattering rattle;
And the loving mother's lullaby;
And the marching ranks of raiding troops,
With the rapid rattle of murderous musketry;
And the cannon's calamitous boom;
And the blighting sweep of cruel swords;
And the shocking curses of angry foes;
And the wail of the wounded warrior;
And above all this terrible tumult I heard the martial
music of murdering hordes,
And then I understood why the ruthless rulers of the
world
Mix heavenly melody with their wanton wars,
For I could then have fought to death for any cause,
good or bad,
As the mighty power of measured sound moved me at
its capricious will.
How it nerved my brawn to brutal blows;
How it crammed my conscience with cruel possibilities!
How gorged with rage at social wrongs the poor endure!
How fire and sword and revolution surged thru my soul
like angry seas!
How it filled my heart with amatory zeal—
How fervently my love I'd lay at my lady's dainty feet!
And then the woodland echoes soothed my harrowed
nerves,
And the crickets, and the treetoads, and the frogs, and
the cicadas
Sang their strident songs of social service to me
And made me feel the whole world one helpful household.
I saw fickle fairies flit from leaf to flower in terpsichorean
fancies, keeping time with tunes the zephyrs
hummed on silken webs.
I saw stolid Russian peasant folk reel in rhythm in rustic
dances.

I saw supple Arabs whirl in a wilderness of gyrations.
I saw stalwart redmen dance grotesquely and heard
their savage songs.
I saw Chinese men and maidens ebb and flow, curvet,
wabble, shake and swing.
I saw Parisian automatons wheel and waggle, bow and
bob, in concord with machine-made music.
I saw Vulcan and heard his anvil ring.
I saw Pan and listed to his pulsing pipe.
I saw Jupiter hurl the thunder along resounding skies,
And felt the lightning's thrill in every nerve.
Apollo passed before my grateful gaze and sang his song
of victory.
And the winds whistled.
And the caverns groaned.
And volcanoes cracked the air with sulphuric force.
And the earth itself rocked as a cradle with rhythmic
rhyme, luring to dreamland, where death is
dreadless.
And the songs of Confucius and of Buddha and of Christ
Of peace on earth to men of good will
Echoed over the undulating years and thru the vales of
my heart,
And the regretted finale awakened me
And made me mark the magic might of music.
December, 1904.

MUSIC MADNESS.

SWEET music's strains unbind the chains
  Of passions in my breast,
O'erpower me with ecstasy,
  From wildest zeal to rest.

They make me mad, they make me glad,
  They make me weep with woe,
Cry out aloud, with joy enshroud,
  And all my senses glow.

As a mating dove they make me love,
  My fond affections swell;
Now reverie posseses me,
  Then hate as hot as hell.

With amorous bliss the savage kiss
  Comes billowed to my lips;

I then could kill with demon will,
  Could flay my loves with whips.

They bring to me in memory
  My savage ancestors,
And like a flood my savage blood
  In savage torrent pours.

With languor deep they soothe to sleep
  Like liquors of a dream,—
An undertow of sunset glow,
  A joyousness supreme.

TO THOSE WHO'VE DONE ME HURT.

You mortal weakness who slighted me for
  spineless cause.
You who pretended friendship and hurt
  my heart with Insult;
You who loved me with a wealth of words
  and hated me in your heart;
You whose white words turned black as
  sloe in meaning;
You who smiled as a sunny morning into
  my friendly face and scowled like a
  stormy night at my 'fenseless back;
You who fondled me with silken hands and
  cut my honor with venomed claws;
  You who pleaded sweet forgiveness and
  aped vindictive Nemesis in vengeance;
You who were fanatical for freedom in
  fancy, but fierce for fetters in fact;
You who honeyed words for my ears and
  bittered them for listening ones;
You who promised me golden loyalty and
  gave me tarnished perfidy.
You who were brave as an ocean breeze
  in fondness for me in the calm of approval,
  and faint from fear in the
  storm of criticism;
You who counted me a Solomon to my face
  and addiepate to inclining ears;
You who vote me honest to my friends
  and damn with doubt to those who
  know me not,
Think you I love you less in the large

because of this?
Think you I clutter my heart with trashy
hate and gloat In it?
Think you the alchemy of your wretched
baseness turns my red heart black?
Think you I cannot see your wicked weakness weakens
yourself most?
Think you I do not know that more than
ever you need the good that I can do?
Think you I have on hand wherewith to
pay you back in kind?
The Fates forbid!
And so I wish with a whopping wish the
warmth of wisdom will warm your
heart.
I pray to prudence to prick your pride and
keep you safe in the path of peace.
I long for the light that leads to joy
to pierce the cloud that shades your
soul.
I yearn for the time the spirit of love
will lead you to ponder in candor's
spell.
The sails of malice ne'er reach my port,
nor resentment cargoes go from me.
Are the woes of the world not weighty
enough without weighing them down
with senseless spleen, and crook our
backs with the rheum of wrath?
No festering pride prevents me praying
forgiveness for fancied wrong or real
harm I've done to you,
And gladly I give the key to my heart
where seek you may for evil aim.
Who asks forgiveness absolves his guilt,
and the unforgiving condemn themselves.
Unload yourselves, beloved ones!
Throw off resentment, spleen, animosity,
revenge, bad thoughts, unkindness and
frown and fume
And see how light your heart will grow;
How buoyant then will be your step;
How smiles will lace your brightening face
and joyness lift your grounded eyes;
How stiff your back will soon become and

straight your shoulders set across;
How welcome hands will eagerly greet
your welcome hands;
How brighter the sun will surely shine,
How more beautiful the moon will be;
How more bracing the salubrious air;
How more glorious the witching world.
Resentment breeds tormenting bile, and
gloomy offspring curse their guilty
parentage.
I'm wistfully waiting word from you that
all is well.

BOB HENDRIE, TEAMSTER.

(Who was sunstruck to death while hauling water pipe for the Detroit Water Commission, Aug. 25, 1906.)

He never did no one no harm,
An' paid his debts as best lie could;
He done his work with simple charm,
Ez eny simple feller would.

He had small larnin out o' books,
An' wa'n't ez wise ez Solon, see!
He wa'n't Adonis ez ter looks,
But done his stunts in modesty.

He druv his team a-meny year,
Till George an' Jim were chums ter him,
An' none o' them didn't hev no fear
Ter tackle jobs with harty vim.

He cum an' went as did th' day—
Jes jogged along without no noise;
An' when he got his skinny pay
He guy it all fer fambly joys.

He tuck a lot o' needless wrongs
Without no very nasty kick;
An' suckumstances sharped the prongs
Thet kem his way so fast an thick.

But, goodness! he wuz like th rest
Thet thinks their wrongs is natural,
An' takes what cums ez thu 'twoz best,
No matter how unrashunal.

He didn't kno thet things on earth

Is very much ez mortals make—
Thet sense don't giv ter toilers derth
Uv homes an clothes an meat an cake.

Bob is gone! The slave is ded,
Ez slave iz him who tugs away
In face of soshul wrongs, insted
Uv joinin in the rightin fray!

We past th' hat fer Mrs. Bob
Ter git th' younguns things they need.
Ther wa'n't enuf in Hendrie's job:
Tho we purtend th' Christly creed!

But, eneyway, we kuverd him
With flowers alive he cudent have,
Ez in this way we tries ter trim
Fer givin sores insted uv salve!

—Sept., 1906

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