

THE SONG FISHERMEN'S SONG SHEET.

Issued Ever So Often. Halifax, N.S., November 21, 1928. Number 5.

If I could write the way I feel,
I'd pen a lyric about an eel.
If I could do it, beyond a doubt,
I'd write a sonnet upon a trout.
If only my periods were rounder,
I'd make couplet about a flounder.
Or, were my pen less stiff and stark,
A panegyric about a shark.
Why, why should my lost spirit quail
At a simple epic upon a whale?
If but the Muse would ope her portal,
I'd make a salmon or two immortal,
Or some neat page with ink besmirch
To catch in verse the elusive perch.

But, failing that, if it could be,
I'd make a stanza about the sea --
About the ships that never take
Me on their decks, when I'm awake,
But sometimes in my dreams set sail
With me on board, and, rain or hail,
Fog, wind or shine, deliver me
On shores where I have wished to be --
Not any shores that I have seen,
Or can be sure of -- but I mean
Shores that we dream of, shores that shine
With strange, lost light, where those of mine,
Who once were here, come out to see
Which homing ship is bringing me.

But this is futile. If I could
I'd write for you -- indeed I would,
And, judging from the way I feel,
I'd be my steadiest on an eel,
But, since not one of them will bite,
I bid them all a vexed goodnight,
And wish
A fish
And a ready pen
To all the other fishermen.

Annie Campbell Huestis.

NIGHT BIRCH.

From a young tree's white
In the night's black,
I will not take flight,
I will not turn back;

Nor cry in God's house,
With high grief girt.
I will hold the scar close;
I will shelter the hurt;

Stay a long breath, to mark
In the spring gloom,
Lost arms in the dark
Of a dim room.

Charles Bruce.

SOUTH WIND AT CRESCENT BEACH, N.S.

A silver Cavalier rides up the strand,
A silver gull floats high above the shore
Where crashing silver waves meet silver sand.
Meadows of twinkling beach-grass bend before
The plunging silver hoofs. And then the day
Hurries over the hill. The gull pipes high
And faint and far - all silver shrinks to gray,
The silver moment of the Cavalier goes by.

Ellen Hemmeon.

THE IMPATIENT LOVER

Oh, will you take the high road,
That stretches, long, and wide?
No, I shall take the low road,
And chance the speeding tide!
For there my Love is waiting
My humble hearth beside.

I'll dare the breath of danger;
I'll dare the rushing foam!
The high road's for the stranger,
And hearts that wish to roam;
But I shall take the low road,
That brings me quickly home.

Ethel H. Butler.

ABSENCE.

Yours was the word I kept with me
As o'er the seas I sped;
I saw your face in every place
Where strange skies were o'er-head.

No juice of eastern vintage was
Half as sweet as your lips;
I felt no lures as strong as yours
In all the ways of ships.

Through all my wanderings up and down
You were my faithful star;
And your's will be the light I'll see
When near the harbour bar.

With you I often pace the deck,
As in the old green lane;
As I will do, my sweet, with you
When I come home again!

A. L. Fraser.

Stuart McCawley writes:

Among the lays of ancient Newfoundland the prime favorites are "Lukies Boat" and "My Son Jarge". They are both set to music and both have several dozen verses. I have heard them sung very often at gatherings of the fisher folk from the ancient colony; and they are interesting, popular and very, very witty. Some of the verses tell of wrecks, and loves, and scandals. The few stanzas quoted will give your Fisher Song Folk an idea of these gems.

LUKIE'S BOAT.

Lukie's boat was painted green;
An on her stern "God Save the Queen."
Ha! Ha! Diddle I dee!

Now says Lukie "I'll build her bigger
And load her hold with a one cod jigger."
Ha! Ha! Diddle I dee!

Lukie's boat got a brand new cuddy,
And every seam was stuffed with puddy.
Ha! Ha! Diddle I dee!

Lukie's boat got a brand new jib
And a nice little rudder hung to her skig.
Ha! Ha! Diddle I dee!

Now says Lukie we'll take aboard the grub,
A barrel, and a bag, and a forty-pound tub.
Ha! Ha! Diddle I dee!

MY SON JARGE.

My son Jarge went down to the bay
 To buy I a frock of cotton.
 And I hope, if he don't bring I the flowery stuff,
 He don't bring I nothing.

I love to sit by the blazing fire
 And watch the kittle biling.
 For the baby will get a brand new frock
 When Daddy comes home from swiling.

Harbor Grace was a pretty place,
 And I like Placentia better,
 And I'll go down in the fall of the year
 And bide I there for the winter.

My son Jarge was a gay young sport
 And he went down the Bay in his green whale boat
 And now the wind shes blowing strong
 And I wonder whats keeping my son Jarge so long.

OH DULSE!

Wilder then wine
 Your iodine
 Bitterer than beer
 Your potash, dear!

One delicate chew
 Fills all the sluices
 Wherein you woo
 My gastric juices.

But most I adore
 The slime of thee
 And thy spotted sore
 Salt leprosy!

Of all dark cults
 That quick my pulse
 My soul exults
 In Thee, dear Dulse!

Wexford

LET THE MOLLIES DEFEND THEMSELVES.

Dear Fisherman :

Here's my compliments!
 Your luck is great and rare.
 Your song-sheets are filling,
 Your Catches take the air,
 Your ship is new and handy,
 And the breeze sets fair.

But I've had a look to leeward,
 And the sight made me stare.
 With way the tide is running,
 It has given me a scare.
 With breakers close aboard,
 Just as well to have a care.

I am neither mate nor look-out,
 Its a family affair.
 When a skilful navigator
 Is needed, you are there!
 But your list of able seamen
 Nearly raised me from my chair,
 And I felt the wind of danger
 Creeping through my hair.

Three Mollies to one mariner -
 It isn't hardly fair.
 I cannot help suspicion
 There is something in the air,
 And me, your faithful brother,
 In a state I can't compare.

Yours ever,

William M.

(With lovingness to spare)

News from Jerry Murphy, the Saint John sandwich man, by way of King Hazen. "Jerry Murphy happened in just after I opened the song sheet and seized upon the dulse enclosed. After par-taking of it he became filled with a deep emotion and exclaimed: 'Are the fruits of Paradise sweeter than those tender strips of silken sheen?' Then he told me he had had a very good week of it having been employed by the Womens Aid of the Central Baptist Church to carry about a notice of their Thanksgiving Supper and asked me to send you the enclosed stamps to defray some of the postage on the song sheet.".....Stamps to the value of three dollars have been added to the postage account.....Many thanks Jerry.....C. G. D. R. writes: "Many, and many more thanks for 'The Song Fishermen's Song Sheet'. An immense idea and most robustly carried out. What rare treasures these Song Sheets will be for the collectors! I shall send a screed as soon as possible.".....Joe Wallace writes: "Your enterprise has already justified itself in the presentation of Molly Beresford's first poem".....And Annie Campbell Huestis: "That ever I should have had in the same world with me a sister (Ethel Butler) who can write better than I can! She can. Her poem on Shadows is most lovely.....Bliss Carman writes: "Number four of the Song Sheet is here and the first three of the Catches. They look very well and I have high hopes. Glad to see Ken's 'Roads' but don't care for 'Moan' as well as 'home', the reading in the version I saw in N. Y. (Entirely the fault of the miserable being who edits this sheet).But I do like E.B's 'Shadows' and M.B's 'Pirate' is delicious".....We are in need of more songs. Address A. D. Merkel, 80 Granville Street, Halifax.

This copy of the Song Sheet is being mailed to the following:

Laura Carten, H.A.W., Molly McCarthy, Leo Murphy, Molly Beresford, Charles T. Bruce, Florence Merkel, Elizabeth Nutt, Ifan Williams, Donald MacKay, E. J. Vickery, John Hanlon, J.P.D. Llwyd, Ralph Hopkins, Joe Wallace, Molly Fletcher, Jim Uniacke, Florence Stewart, A.L. Fraser, H.P. Bernasconi, all of Halifax.

Kenneth Leslie, Robert Norwood, Seumas O'Brien, all of New York City.

Noel Wilcox, Dartmouth; Gostwick Roberts, Fredericton; James D. Gillis, Melrose Hill, Victoria County, N.S.; Evelyn Tufts, Wolfville; Stuart McCawley, Glace Bay; Bliss Carman, New Canaan; King Hazen, Saint John; Robert Leslie, Woodville, N.S.; Charles G. D. Roberts, Toronto; John Logan, Milwaukee, Wis.; Ethel Butler, Armdale, N.S.; Annie Campbell Huestis, Brooklyn; Ellen Hemmeon, Sackville, N.B.; Henry Harley, Windsor, N.S.; William Ross, North Gut, Victoria County, N.S.; R.B. Bannon, Antigonish, N.S.; Lloyd Roberts, Ottawa; W.J. Carew, St. John's, Newfoundland.

At the request of C. G. D. R. The Song Sheets complete edition are being mailed to Robie C. Reid, Vancouver, A.M. Pound, Vancouver, R. H. Hatheway, Toronto, Dr. Lorne Pierce, Toronto.
