

RUSTIC RHYMES

We translate these "poems" out of the original "Keswickian" for the benefit of those of our readers who are unacquainted with the dialect and orthography.—EDITOR.

In Search of Her Lover.

One rainy night I heard it said
He wore a sheep-skin on his head;
He went up there all night to stay,
But his Jersey Lily had gone away.

He says: "Brave boys I'll not be beat,
I'll find her in some snug retreat
I know I am welcome when I meet
Her beaming eye and smile so sweet."

The winds did howl, the rain did pour
He tracked her to a neighbor's door
He followed her in and down he sat—
He looked like some old drowned rat.

He turned around and saw her there
With rouged face and curly hair;
He says: "My dear, I am in despair,
Your love for me now do declare.

He says: "My darling, my heart will
break;

It's you I never can forsake
For time will prove my heart more
true:

I jilted Molly for the sake of you."

My suspicions then did first arise
He staid so late it did me surprise—
He staid so late I cannot deny
I saw the guilt within his eye.

Oh, he says: "My dear its getting late
I must for home my steps betake,
I'm afraid the rain will prove my fate
So I'll cover the sheep-skin over my
pate."

The Queen's Highway.

Last winter, as you all do know
The roads were filled with drifts and
snow:

He says, "I have orders I must obey
To open up the Queen's Highway."

She says—"I will not go around
Nor tread upon his cursed ground."
So, haste my orders to obey
And open up the Queen's Highway.

From that he flew into a rage;
To fight his neighbor he did engage
Saying—"I can whip you every day
And open up the Queen's Highway."

"Stand back, my man, and do not
boast,
And not venture up too close
I think you have rather much to say—
To h—l with you and the Queen's
Highway.

I've got this shovel in my hand
I can swing as well as any man—
So dry up now—no more, I say
Or I'll run you off The Queen's High-
way."

He trembled like an aspen leaf—
"I fear my time is very brief
I fear I've not got long to stay
To open up the Queen's Highway."

"Although it is against my rule
To strike a cripple or a fool,
I'll let nobody me gainsay
When opening up the Queen's High-
way."

To the woods in winter the boys do go
To brave the dangers of frost and snow
And very few at home do stay
To open up the Queen's Highway.

He mounted up on the bunk of his
sled
With his bandy legs so widely spread
Saying: "Attention now my boys I
pray

While I open up the Queen's Highway.

He led through the fields where the
snow blew off—

He stood like a cock on the top of a
loft

And just that moment the seat gave
way

And he sprawling fell on the Queen's
Highway.

He mounted again with a stiff upper
lip,

Hard in the ice his chains did grip
While his poor old nag devoid of hay

Went plodding on the Queen's high-
way.

It might be his men he wished to
amuse

That he adopted this clever ruse
To drive where the snow had blown

away—
I have't found out until this day.

But this I know, the road was worse
Since first he harnessed up his horse,

And started out with such display
To open up the Queen's Highway.

Howe'er it be tis just the same,
And no one it appears is to blame

If it takes him a year and a day
To open up the Queen's Highway.

Stone Ridge Lament.

Oh, the bulldog on the bank
The polli-wog in the pool,

"Come hurry up says Jed
You simple little fool.

Just hasten off to town
And go see Col. Marsh,

That man of great renown
Who speaks with voice so harsh.

Tell him John slapped your face,
While Henry broke your jaw,

Till you my little pug
Ran crying for the law.

'Tis law you both must have
The facts are plain to me,

You never shall be slaves
To the man they call John D.

Now a great man am I,
To me much power is given,

My breath it runs so high
It smells way up to heaven.

I have no friends on earth,
But what is that to me,

I have my little Pug,
Likewise my sweet Jud-ee.

So we'll fight and fight 'till death
And when our lives are o'er,

We'll plunge beneath the burning tide,
And never reach the shore.

We'll fight all whom we must,
This is our golden rule,

For the bull-dog's on the bank
And the polliwog's in the pool.

The Battle of Spurt.

I have travelled all over the country,
I have run myself nigh off my legs,

I call in to see if you'd give me
A few of your speckled duck eggs.

The last words we had I remember,
Distinctly remember quite well,

Was: before you'd have any more
dealings,

You'd live on sour milk and canelle.

Those words that you then said unto
me

Created the greatest surprise—
Whoever has told you that story,

Has told you the blackest of lies.

No more of that abusive language,
Of it I'll not take any more,

But I'll plank my foot square on
your—

And kick you right out of the door.

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