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SELECT POETRY.

From the N. Y. Journal of Commerce.

BABIE BELL.

The Poem of a Little Life that was but Three

April Long.

BY T. B. ALDRICH.

Have you not heard the Post tell

How came the dainty babe Bell

Into this world of ours?

The Gates of Heaven were left ajar

With folded hands and dreamy eyes

She wandered out of Paradise!

She saw this planet, like a star,

Hung in the depths of purple even—

Its bridges, running to and fro,

O'er which the white-winged Seraphs go,

Beating the holy Dead to Heaven!

She touched a bridge of flowers—those feet

So light they did not bend the bells

Of the celestial asphodels!

They fell like dew upon the flowers!

And all the air grew strangely sweet!

And thus came dainty babe Bell

Into this world of ours!

She came and brought delicious May!

The swallows built beneath the eaves;

Like sunbeams in and out the leaves,

The robin went, the lily-long day!

The lily swung its noiseless bell,

And o'er the porch the trembling vine

Seemed bursting with its veins of wine!

O, earth was full of pleasant smell

When came the dainty babe Bell

Into this world of ours!

O babe, dainty babe Bell!

How fit she grew from day to day!

What woman nature filled her eyes,

What poetry within her lay!

Those deep and tender twilight eyes,

So full of meaning, pure and bright

As if she yet stood in the light

Of those open gates of Paradise!

And we loved her more and more:

O never in our hearts before

Such holy love was born;

We felt we had a link between

This real world and that un-
seen—
The land of deathless men!

And for the love of those dear eyes,

For love of her whom God led forth—

The mother's being ceased on earth

When babe came from Paradise!

For love of him who smote our lives,

And woke the chords of joy and pain;

We said, Sweet Christ!—our hearts bent down

Like violets after rain!

And now the orchards which were once

All white and rosy in their bloom—

Filling the crystal heart of air

With gentle pulses of perfume,—

Were thick with yellow juicy fruit;

The plums were glistening of honey rare,

And soft-checked peaches blue and red

The grapes were purpling in the grange;

And Time wrought just as rich a change

In little babe Bell!

Her petti form more perfect grew,

And in her features we could trace,

In softened curves, her mother's face.

Her angel nature ripened too.

We thought her lovely when she came,

But she was holy, saintly now—

Around her pale and lofty brow

We thought we saw a ring of flame!

Sometimes she said a few strange words

Whose meanings lay beyond our reach:

God's hand had taken away the seal

Which held the portals of her speech!

She never was a child to us—

We never held her being's key!

We could not teach her holy things;

Was Christ's self in purity!

It came upon us by degrees—

We saw its shadow ere it fell.

The knowledge that our God had sent

His messenger for babe Bell!

We shuddered with unalloyed pain,

And all our thoughts ran into tears!

And all our hopes were changed to fears—

The sun-shine into di-
mal rain!

Around we cried in our belief—

O, omit us gently, God!

Teach us to bend and kiss the rod,

And perfect grow thro' grief!

Ah, how we loved her, God can tell;

Her little heart was eased in ours—

They're broken caskets—labe Bell!

At last he came, the messenger—

The messenger from unseen lands;

And what did dainty babe Bell

She only crossed her little hands!

We only looked more meek and fair!

We gazed back her silken hair—

We said some buds upon her brow—

Death's bride arrayed in flowers!

And thus went dainty babe Bell

Out of this world of ours!

SELECTED ARTICLES.

From Grace Greenwood's "Little Pilgrim."

ANGEL-CHILDREN.

BY ANNA CORA RITCHIE.

To whom is the hour of twilight so sweet as

to children! Too tired to play, and yet un-
concoiled to the nightly trial of being put to bed,

children half the world over, have some-
times raised their tender voices, and consecrated

this hour to story telling.

At twilight, not many evenings ago, five sis-
ters were cozily gathered around the dear par-
ental hearth. "Sister, tell me a story," said

little Virginia, climbing on my knee and circling

my waist with her tiny arms until the dimpled

hands met, then nestling her curly head upon my

shoulder, "Tell me a pretty story."

There is no refusing our pretty Jenny.

"What shall the story be about, Jenny?"

"Oh, about fairies and good children."

"Shall I tell you about three little sisters

whom I know—who are all angels now—and

shall I tell you of a heavenly dream I once had

about them?"

"Yes—about angels—angels will do as well

as fairies."

Well, then, listen. One Christmas morning,

I was sitting in church amongst a number of

cherished friends—the church was gaily de-
corated with evergreens—the Star of Bethlehem

shone on the eastern wall—the Sunday school

children had sung an exquisite hymn, written

for the occasion—our beloved pastor, in his hol-
iest mood, had spoken words of promise and en-
couragement, had been heard upon his "soft rebuke

in blessings ended," around him were hope-
fully happy faces, but amongst the cheerful

crowd I missed one dear, familiar countenance.

A father sat surrounded by his children, but

their mother was absent. She was at home

waiting over a little daughter who was very

ill.

The family lived a short distance from the

city, and after service I drove out to see the sick

child. Among my Christmas presents was a

basket made of moss, and filled with every de-
scription of green house flowers—camellias, heli-
otropes, orange blossoms, jonquilles, &c. The

handle, too, was woven of flowers, embel-
lished in moss. I thought the refreshing sight of

the flowers might do little Clara good, so I stopped

on the way for this lovely floral gift. At the

door of Clara's home I was greeted by a host of

little ones, and first they took me into the parlor,

where stood a Christmas tree so tall that it nearly

reached from the floor to the ceiling. The

spreading branches were loaded with gifts, and

waxen lights were scattered about amongst the

smaller boughs.

The children delightfully exhibited their abun-
dant Christmas presents, and then led me to my

stars to their mother's room. As they entered

there, every one told softly, and the gay voices

were hushed to whispers. On a small couch, at

the foot of her mother's bed, lay little Clara—a

patient, gentle child, about seven or eight years

old. She was lying so motionless that you

might have thought her some beautiful statue;

her thin tiny hands were as white as the sheet

on which they were extended—her countenance

had an alabaster hue, and her large, dark eyes

were looking fixedly upwards towards the ceiling,

as though they could see more than we saw.

The mother sat near the bed, her face beam-
ing with apprehension, and around her eyes were

red circles that showed she had been weeping

perhaps the whole of that Christmas night. Little

Clara did not notice us when we entered, nor

did she answer when I spoke to her; but when

I brought the mossy basket to the bedside, she

feebly lifted up her shadowy hand and laid it in

the flower woven handle, and looked in my face

and smiled one long smile of thanks.

The next morning the Christmas tree still

stood in the parlor, but in the chamber above

stood a little coffin; within reposed the earthly

form of a lovely child, bestrewn with flowers—

but the angels had borne away little Clara to

her eternal home.

Lizzy was the name of one of Clara's youngest

sisters. She was called after the most beloved

friend of her parents. Lizzy was the pet name by

which she always went. Lizzy was her father's

special darling—the sunlight of his home and

his heart. The moment he entered the house

she flew into his arms; wherever he went she

was at his side, her baby-hand seldom out of his;

if he were sad, she comprehended it in a mo-
ment, and would cheer away his gloom with her

merry prattle, her arch infantile guesses; if he

was weary, she was full of wildest sport. When

he was out of the house, Lizzy seemed a different

being, all was seldom well with her until he re-
turned; at night she slept in his arms, and in

the morning; though the world called him a

grave, wise man, they fructified together like

children. If such a thing could be, Lizzy was

almost too dear to her father, and he to her.

Nor long after Clara was summoned away, little

Lizzy fell sick. Father and mother watched her

night and day with beaming hearts, but her

Heavenly Father had called her, and she

messenger to gather this fair flower also, and as

she lay on the bosom of her earthly father, the

beauteous blossom was plucked.

The young child of all, the baby, the sweetest,

brightest little creature, was called Anna. She,

too, was named after a dear friend. Before

Christmas came again, little Anna sickened, as

did her sisters. How her mother clasped her to

her yearning breast, and prayed the Lord to

spare this one, her baby, her latest born, whose

joyous presence had enabled her to bear the

parting from her other little ones! The Lord

knew best what was good for little Anna; His

Heaven needed this bright infant also, and he

called her to be one of His angels.

I had taken a far-off journey after the Christ-
mas morning when I saw Clara, and the next

time I beheld my dear friends, the traces of

great suffering, the agonies of that trouble were

visible in their countenances. The mother's face,

in particular, was full of deep and settled sorrow.

She talked much of her darlings. She took me

to the room where I had last seen little Clara

on that Christmas morning, to the nursery where

I had played with Lily and Anna, and showed

me three white brackets on the walls, supported

by cherub heads. One stood in the mother's

room, and held the toys of little Clara—those

she had loved best, had played with last—the

other stood in the father's study, and held the

silver cup of little Lily, her toys, and the objects

she had touched—the third stood in the nursery,

and held Anna's silver cup and baby remem-
brances.

Each bracket had been decked by the fond

mother with a wreath of white flowers. As she

took up the toys one by one, and told me little

anecdotes concerning them, the tears ran

down her cheeks and choked her utterance.

The remaining children looked up daily to these

toy-covered brackets, and felt that such por-
tion of the room was still devoted to their de-
parted little ones. Among these sacred treasures were

three daguerreotypes. One represented Clara,

lying upon the bed where I last saw her, with

white flowers scattered over her pillow—it was

taken after her spirit had fled. Lily's daguer-
reotype showed a handsome, arch-looking little

girl, with a tiny basket in her hand, and a pair

of dark eyes fixed on something very earnestly

and lovingly—I should think it must have been

her father's face.

Baby Anna's eyes were closed; she lay

amongst flowers, with a few buds clasped in her

round chubby hands. She seemed in a blessed

sleep, but when that picture was taken little

Anna had awakened in "a brighter than mortal

light."

I thought very often of those three little sis-
ters, all summoned away between Christmas and

Christmas, and one day I had a dream in which

I saw them all—and this was the dream.

A DREAM OF HEAVEN.

I saw a garden so luxuriant with flowers and

foliage that it seemed as though

"The very rainbow showers

Had rained to blossoms where they fell,

And sown the ground with flowers!"

Branches, covered with a loon, leaned towards

each other, and twined themselves together in

natural beauty. From the trees hung crimson

and purple and amber-colored fruit—pomegran-
ates, figs, pines and many others, such as I had

never seen, and their names I did not know.

These bright-lit fruits appeared in-
stantly, and through the clear air sparkled the polished

seeds and stones, like precious gems.

In the centre of the garden rose two trees

with widely-spreading branches, covered with

snow-white blossoms. Grapes-vines climbed up

the trunks of each tree and wound them-
selves in graceful festoons through the boughs.

The soft air wafted the floating tendrils of one

vine to the opposite branches of the opposite

tree, until they formed a leafy bower. From its

arch hung clusters of golden grapes, glistening

through wreaths of pearl-like bloom. Within

the bower I saw a mossy