

**A DOZEN  
NEW POEMS**

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A dozen new poems by Edgar A. Guest

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**EDGAR A. GUEST**

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NEW POEMS**



A DOZEN  
NEW POEMS

*by*

EDGAR A. GUEST

*With Pictures*

*by*

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## THE GRATE FIRE

I'M SORRY for a fellow if he cannot look and see  
In a grate fire's friendly flaming all the joys which  
used to be.

If in quiet contemplation of a cheerful ruddy blaze,  
He sees nothing there recalling all his happy yesterdays,  
Then his mind is dead to fancy and his life is bleak  
and bare,

And he's doomed to walk the highways that are  
always thick with care.

When the logs are dry as tinder and they crackle with  
the heat,

And the sparks, like merry children, come a-dancing  
round my feet,

In the cold, long nights of autumn I can sit before the  
blaze

And watch a panorama born of all my yesterdays.

I can leave the present burdens and that moment's bit  
of woe,

And claim once more the gladness of the bygone long-  
ago.

There are no absent faces in the grate-fire's merry  
throng;

No hands in death are folded, and no lips are stilled to  
song.

All the friends who were are living—like the sparks  
that fly about;

They come romping out to greet me with the same  
old merry shout,  
Till it seems to me I'm playing once again on boy-  
hood's stage,  
Where there's no such thing as sorrow and there's no  
such thing as age.

I can be the care-free schoolboy! I can play the lover,  
too!  
I can walk through Maytime orchards with the old  
sweetheart I knew,  
I can dream the glad dreams over, greet the old familiar  
friends  
In a land where there's no parting and the laughter  
never ends.  
All the gladness life has given from a grate fire I re-  
claim,  
And I'm sorry for the fellow who can only see the flame.



*From a drawing by W. T. BENDA*



## WHEN MOTHER'S SEWING BUTTONS ON

WHEN mother's sewing buttons on  
Their little garments, one by one,  
I settle down contented there  
And watch her in her rocking chair.  
She's at the task she likes the best—  
Each little waist and undervest  
She fondles in a mother's way,  
And notes each sign of sturdy play  
And shakes her head and says to me:  
"I wonder how this came to be?"

There's something in her patient eyes,  
As in and out her needle flies,  
Which seems to tell the joy she takes  
In every little stitch she makes.  
An hour of peace has settled down;  
Hushed is the clamor of the town;  
And even I am different then,  
For I forsake the ways of men  
And see about the garments there  
Bright visions of a happy pair.

Buttons are closely linked to joy.  
Each little girl and little boy  
Who dares to climb the garden fence  
Buys that delight at their expense;

Buttons are childhood's tattle tales—  
Swifter than telegrams or mails  
They fly to tell of moments glad  
That little boys and girls have had;  
And mother reads the stories there  
From every vacant space and tear.

She sweetly smiles and says to me:  
"How sturdy they have grown to be!  
It keeps me busy to repair  
The shirts and things they have to wear."  
I chuckle as I watch her sew,  
For joy has set the room aglow,  
And in the picture I can see  
The strength which means so much to me.  
The scene is good to look upon  
When mother's sewing buttons on.

## THE HOMELY MAN

LOOKS as though a cyclone hit him—  
Can't buy clothes that seem to fit him;  
An' his cheeks are rough like leather,  
Made for standin' any weather.  
Outwards he wuz fashioned plainly,  
Loose o' joint an' blamed ungainly,  
But I'd give a lot if I'd  
Been prepared so fine inside.

Best thing I can tell you of him  
Is the way the children love him.  
Now an' then I get to thinkin'  
He is much like old Abe Lincoln—  
Homely like a gargoye graven,  
An' looks worse when he's unshaven;  
But I'd take his ugly phiz  
Jes' to have a heart like his.

I ain't oversentimental,  
But old Blake is so blamed gentle  
An' so thoughtful-like of others  
He reminds us of our mothers.  
Rough roads he is always smoothin',  
An' his way is, oh, so soothin'  
That he takes away the sting  
When your heart is sorrowing.