

**DOWN THE BAYOU,
THE CAPTAIN'S STORY,
AND OTHER POEMS**

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Down the bayou, The captain's story, and other poems by Mary Ashley Townsend

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TO
OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

*To thee, whose home is in a nation's heart,
This book of songs that I have dared to sing,
With tender love and reverence I bring,
As one a flower might proffer and depart
Whence Praise, Affection, Honor, Truth, and Art
Have proudly lavished many a greater thing,
Due him who acts, with noble rendering,
In life's great drama, his allotted part.
Would what I bring were many times more rare,
More worthy of thy genius and thy fame,
Thy sweet, brave nature—thy attemper'd wit;
The clustering honors it is thine to wear,
And worthier far of thy illustrious name,
Which doth illumine the page whereon 'tis writ!*

1882.

623909

Boston Feb. 14th 1874

Dear Mr. Fournesud,

I write to you as a married
lady, feeling as if none but
a mother could have so gently
and tenderly expressed the
joys of maternity as you
have done in "The Captain's Story".
I began reading this poem with
the feeling that I should
have another *Stowelles* club
to discharge of a kind to which
I am but too much accustomed,
namely, to speak kindly of
what I could not sincerely
praise, and to thank a writer
for having given me a profitable
task in reading what it was

little better than a waste of
time to write. - As I read, however,
I became, interested, excited, absorbed,
overcome with the emotions the
story excited. I saw faults here
and there, but I could not stop
for them, any more than I could
have troubled myself for chips
and shavings that were swept
along with me on a deep and
rapid stream. And when I
had finished the poem I said
to myself that I could hardly
remember any tale which had
so completely carried me away
by its tragic interest. The incidents
are in themselves worthy of being