

05 BI-CENTENNIAL ODE

From the door of the homestead the mother looks forth,
With a glance half of hope, half of fear,
For the clock in the corner now points to the hour
When the children she love should appear.
For have they not promised, whatever betide,
On this their dear mother's birthday,
To gather once more round the family board,
Their dutiful service to pay?

From the East and the West, from the North and the South,
In communion and intercourse sweet,
Her children have come, on this festival day,
To sit, as of old, at her feet.
And our mother, -- God bless her benevolent face! --
How her heart thrills with motherly joys,
As she stands at the portal, with arms opened wide,
To welcome her girls and her boys!

And yet, when the first joyful greetings are o'er,
When the words of her welcome are said,
A shadow creeps over her motherly face,
As she silently thinks of the dead, --
Of the children whose voices once rang through her fields,
Who shared all her hopes and alarms,
Till, tired with the burden and heat of the day,
They have fallen asleep in her arms.

They have gone from our midst, but their labors abide
On the fields where they prayerfully wrought;
They scattered the seed, but the harvest is ours,
By their toil and self-sacrifice bought.
As we scan the fair scene that once greeted their eyes,
As we tread the same paths which they trod,
Let us tenderly think of our elders by birth,
Who have gone to their rest, and their God.

God bless the old homestead! some linger there still,
In the haunts which their childhood has known,
While others have wandered to places remote,
And planted new homes of their own;
But Time cannot weaken the ties Love creates,
No absence, nor distance, impede
The filial devotion which thrills all our hearts,
As we bid our old mother God-speed.

Sources:

Marlborough Bi-Centennial Celebration Pamphlet, June 13, 1860.

Charles Hudson's History of Marlborough, 1862.

Grand'ther Baldwin's Thanksgiving, 1875.

Alger Street, 1964.