NANNIE, A SONG OF THE HEART

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Nannie, a song of the heart by Louis M. Eilshemius

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LOUIS M. EILSHEMIUS

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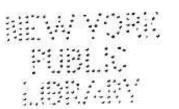
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FOREWORD

The following Rhapsody was written in the year 1888, at Delaware Water Gap, Pa. The author then was only twenty-four years old. He informs his readers that he thinks it will enhance the interest of the song if they know the origin of a work. The author's enjoyment of many a work of his "confrères" was marred by the lack of any hint of the genesis of their longer poems. He takes the liberty to suggest to them to follow his initiative — for his benefit, and that of others.

PROLOGUE

Morning-Birds

This morning early, in the gleaming dawn, From dreams I woke: Autora's minstrels listen!

All sing a glorious song — while sun-glints glisten —

The mavis gurgles; the robin on the lawn Flutes madcap-madrigals, so clear and sweet. But hush! last eve a lovely maiden was mine. O are those songs prelude for love divine? Will she with love-lilts make my bliss complete?

Like darkest marjoram her locks are; brown
As hazel-nuts her sparkling eyes; soft hands
And sinuous shape, like Najads in those lands
Of goddess, and of shepherd. Oh! her gown
Doth flutter in the wind. Bright youth is hers.
She scolds not, when this love-gone near demurs!

10

Bird-Oracle True

The symphonies of that lone dawn were true. For now she lays her dreamy eyes on me; Listens to all I say; and gives a few Long sighs, born of her Dido-bosom free. O birdlings! gushing forth your minstrelsy That morn, two morns ago! — so short — imbue

Me with her laughter-soul and brown, bright eye,

For she has kept my flower of rosy hue!

'Tis true; 'tis true! her sparkling eyes are mine; From them purl thought-floods of a wild-fire fair!

She smiles and pouts when I am smiling there. And now she seems to be a sacred shrine Which, wound around with lilies, roses, glows, For me, when she her sweeter spirit shows! She is walking with sister —
Down the lane of the broad high oaks;
I have never yet kissed her —
For I saw her today, at first —
Romping with Jack through the grasses tall and sleek,
Laughing in maidhood, enraptured with her

Now and then halting anear with me to speak; Running o'er fields like a fair Apollo-boy!

> With her sister she's walking — Has a banjo adangling down; — We are seated — and talking Of the days that have gone to rest.

Picking the strings, we are seeing pictures drear. Brown are her eyes, they have many a thought within.

Young is she - sweet her dear shape - and not a tear

Rolls down her cheek - she is innocent of sin.

Her dear name is Nannie. Nannie strums so sweetly clear, That the oak-tree birdies Sing voluptuously dear.

In the arbor, while sunrays glinted jasper From her locks hanging down her maidenshoulder;

A firm string came aloose — but my lovely Nannie,

She is provident — hath Minerva's thinking — For she keeps many strings to last her three days, So began to repair the banjo — grown a treasure In mine eyes. Then she asked me for a sharp knife —

Ohl the beech by the hillside grew more golden Than the hilt of high Kandy's sword, when flashing

Its broad side in the flames of burning diamonds.
Oh, the grasses and bushes smelt of incense;
And the bower pervaded all the envious breezes
With the fragrance that rose from Nannie's
banjo.

With a dexterous hand I cut the bad string; While so doing, her finger-tip was kissing My brown hand; - was a-kissing, as a rain-drop Softly lies on the leaf, then glides in grasses -As the wind hath the marjoram kissed in pass-

ing ---

As the rivers kiss tufts of tallest reed-plants! So demurely pendent, near my sweetened finger, That a pulse of exhilaration's being Grew to life - dead'ning all woe, and sorrow lifting

(80)

Me to bowers so rosy, where angels of joyance Their gold bow-strings were quivering for Israfel. It was done - and she picked at the strings that breathed

A sad tune; sung by men on plains; by rivers, Whose reverberant falls loudly emulated The grim thunder that rolls when grim Leo angers; -

Of the wepts of sad savages where Columbia Passes by shade-pines in far haunts of Oregon. It was done - and she passed away - a vision-A sweet moment's glad life - a fairest moment