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FAGOTS OF FANCY

By SCOTTIE MCKENZIE FRASIER



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Fagots of Fancy

In Free Verse

By

SCOTTIE MCKENZIE FRASIER

With an Introduction by Helen S. Woodruff

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Dedicated
to
My Little Sister
Alleen
Who
Believes
in
Romance and Love

Foreword

Once an art critic said: "The Realist paints things as they are; the Impressionist paints as they seem to him; and the Futurist paints things not as they are nor as they seem but as the Artist feels—the reaction upon the Artist's heart." So these little verses are not according to the laws of Rhyme and Meter; they are not the product of labor but rather a spontaneous outburst—they were written in the same spirit as a child builds Golden Castles in Sunny Spain.

Scottie McKenzie Frasier.

Introduction

Do you remember how at the end of "Peter Pan" Maud Adams used to ask the children present if they believed in fairies? That is what this Introduction is going to ask you, "Grown-ups."

Once upon a time in the foothills of Alabama's Blue Ridge Mountains, in a dear old white pillared house surrounded by gigantic sentinel-trees, there was born a little girl whose eyes were dark and wide with wonder. The village near her home was called "Tal La De Ga", or to translate from the Indian tongue: "Bride-of-the-Mountains"; and all 'round about it, in woods and streams and fields, the fairies lived.

Now this little girl believed in fairies—she believed with her whole heart and soul before she knew anything whatever about the world, or people, or things—or sadness. She knew that in the flowers there dwelt always the Fairy Queen of Growing Things; that in the trees the Fairies-of-the-Dancing-Breezes clapped their hands. She understood full well—tho' no one had ever told her so—that in the Brook by the Rock the Spray Sprites spun their web of foamy, diamond-dusted lace. She had seen them do it! She knew, too, that Rainbow Fairies lived in the clouds and were the souls of earth's Flower-fairies, glorified. All these things, and more, she knew. And she used to think and dream about them when old Mr. Moon-man climbed slowly up into the sky to peep in through the vines where the mocking-bird sang. Such knowledge made her very happy; and she would go to sleep and bob down, down, down, down to the land of Nod where the Night Fairies loved her well.

But all this was before the day when she discovered those wonderful books in the library which had belonged to everyone she herself belonged to for generations and generations! When she discovered those books a new fairy came into her big little heart—the Fairy Who Loved to Learn. From that day on this Sprite perched

with her upon the arm of her Daddy's deep arm-chair where she sat and spelled out all the interesting rhymes. It accompanied her afield, opening her Make-believe eyes so that she could see all the fairies everywhere. It even cuddled nearby when she sat at her Mother's knee listening long hours to Shelly, Keats and Wordsworth. Tennyson, too, this learned fairy knew. And so now when the mocking-bird sang her his good-night song from the vine she would kneel each night and say:

"O Jesus, make me a really truly poet like Tennyson. One who can tell others about the secrets that fairies teach me."

And so it was that the years went by, and the little girl grew into a maiden whose glossy brown braids were twisted into a grown-up-lady's knot; she went to college. The Fairy Who Loved to Learn went with her. During her years of study at the Judson, and as student and writer of fiction at Columbia, this fairy was her friend. Later it taught her how to write successful interviews with the Big Folk of the Earth, who, like her, were big because they still had the heart of a child!

But during all these busy years there was one thing that both of them had somehow forgotten for a spell—the little girl's poet-prayer. Now it is written in words of golden promise upon that part of the fairy's Come-true Kingdom where God lives, that no prayer shall ever go unanswered—and so it was that when this grown-up little girl not many moons ago left the big city, New York, which she loved so dearly, to return to her beloved Alabama, she found herself again in a rambling old Southern home surrounded by trees and singing birds—then her childhood dream returned and filled her heart. She wrote this book of verse—a book sparkling with all the secrets that the fairies had taught her: Hope, Cheer, Belief, Forgiveness, Understanding, Truth and Love.

HELEN SMITH WOODRUFF.

September, 1920.

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Scottie McKenzie Frasier

The Gifts

Give me a book to read,
Give me health,
Give me joy in simple things.
Give me an eye for beauty,
A tongue for truth,
A hand for work,
A heart that loves,
A sympathy that understands.
Give me neither malice nor envy;
But a true kindness
And a noble common sense.
And at the close of each day
Give me work to do,
And a friend with whom
I can be silent.

(PUBLISHERS' NOTE: The above prayer-poem won the first prize in the contest conducted by the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs, November, 1920. Mr. W. T. Sheehan, editor of The Montgomery Advertiser, in conveying the decision to Mrs. J. Brevard Jones, President of the Federation, said: "I am giving the first place to the prayer-poem, 'The Gifts,' because of its originality, its simplicity and its native power."

Plea to Life

Life, break me if you will,
Test me to see if I be wanting;
Take from me what I hold dearest,
Strike me dumb with sorrow.
Give me love, then deny it me.
Let me drink of success and failure;
Smite me with agonizing pain,
Kill my ambitions,
Shatter my dreams and—again!
Life, though you demand your heaviest toll
O, Life, let not bitterness stain my soul.

Would I Know You?

Would I know you?
If years should pass,
And I should not hear
The sound of your voice,
Or feel the pulsing of
My blood like wine,
When I hold you to this heart of mine?
Would I know you
If miles separated you from me
And if rumor left unspoken no word
To poison my trust in you?
O, heart of my heart,
I would know
The perfume of your breath,
Were it wafted to me
From the distant stars;
I would know the music of your voice
Were it mingled with the strains
Of an angel's song;
And I would know your presence
Had I been asleep for ages
And awakened and you were near.
It is the soul of you
That fires my heart
That makes me kneel at your holy shrine;
For the Gods so fashioned you
That I might know
And single you out of the multitude
To be for all ages this mate of mine.

Let Me Be Kind

Not for riches or fame do I pray
But just this one thing
I ask for each day:
O, Lord, in thine infinite plan,
Let me be kind
To my fellow man.

A Wanderer's Regret

I come and go,
I can not stay
In any one place
For more than a day,
Before the wander-lust
Calls me away;
Yet to leave my new-made friends
Brings a pain to my heart,
And it makes me grieve
That it ever must be so—
New friends and old friends left behind
While I follow the trails that wind and wind.

Why?

Why do the depths of your eyes beguile?
Why do your red lips tempt as they smile?
Why do the roses fresh with the dew
Bring to me only a picture of you?

The Thought of You

You are the golden hills
On the sky of my heart,
And the soul of me
Can never be crushed;
Now shall I
Ever be slave
To any Fate;
For the thought of you
Will be a gleam
Of beauty, that will shine
In any sordid life of mine.

Regret

By a careless act,
A thoughtless word,
I wounded a human heart.
Darkness has settled o'er the world,
No stars come out to shine,
The blackness of the night oppresses me.
But the radiance of all the suns
Would seem a lesser light
To the joy that it would bring,
If on some fairy's wing
Could be brought back to me
The cruel words of mine
That so wounded thee.

Only One Hour

Not for heaven or mercy do I pray,
But grant me one hour
With the heart of my heart;
Only one hour,
Ere life and I do part,
Grant just one hour,
Only one hour.

The Butterfly

My love has no bounds of earth and sky,
No limitations of time and space;
It was born of ages past, when man
Was only a dream in God's heart;
Through all the eons I've loved you.
Once when you were a butterfly
And still in my silken cage was I,
You forsook the flowers
And stopped your merry dance in the yellow
 sun
To linger near me;
I was a butterfly ere the day was done.
Oh! the joy that was in your eye
When I came from my prison home to be
 your mate.
Centuries later I was taken a Grecian slave
To the court of the Roman Empire,
And the Emperor smiled as he ordered
My chains asunder
And leaning near me whispered:
"My little bride."

And we remembered together
The lives we had lived in Egypt, Persia and
Ancient India.
God's cycles move slowly.
But last night as we sat
Together in the park,
That little wooded plaza,
In the heart of the noisy city,
There came again the lighted spark ;
I knew you to be my mate down the ages.
I wondered if you too knew or did you
remember,
My Emperor? when you whispered:
"All these years I've waited for you,
I knew that neither deep nor high
Could keep me from my own original butter-
fly."

The Poet

The world has its beauty,
The bird has its song,
The flower its perfume
That gladdens the heart,
Though it lives not long.
The philosopher has his vision,
Which lifts man's burdens
And lessens his care.
The Poet has his cross
Else he could not stir men's souls so deep.
Not in repose nor quiet sleep
Comes to the poet this flash or spark,
Which quickens the brain and wrings one's
heart;
Some time, some where, the poet knelt beneath
the cross,
And like the One who died on the Tree,
He drank sorrow's cup for you and me;
That we might know without feeling
The cut of the thorn,
And enduring the blow,
How the soul can suffer
And how the heart can love.
He knows the gold from the shining dross,
For the poet has kissed the cross.

Thee and Me

If I had only an hour to live
I'd want to live it with thee.
If the world and all its beauty
Were given me
I'd cherish it only long enough
To give it all to thee.
If only a day to live
Was allotted me,
I would ask the Maker of days and years
To give this my only day, to thee.

I Can Forgive

I can forgive the harsh words you've spoken,
I can forgive your frowns and forget my tears,
I can forgive the lonely hours when you left
me;
But my illusion of love you've broken,—
This I can never, never, forgive.

Minnehaha Falls

In the wilds of Minnesota
Are the falls of Minnehaha.
Longfellow made you, Laughing Waters,
To ripple down the ages,
To bring joy to many children,
And a smile to the hearts of sages.
Artists have painted your sparkling hues,
They've immortalized your rocks,
Your flowers, bright with dews;
But once beside you
We stood—he and I—
Forgetful of the earth, the sky;
And now your gurgling laughter
Means not poet or artist to me,
Minnehaha, Laughing Waters,
Thou art love, thou art love,
Ever thus will it so be
Always, always love to me.

God's Plan

I sat near the sea :
The last rays of the sun
Were reflected to me
In scarlet and gold.
Two children came
Beneath my sheltering rock,
One caught up a handful of clean white sand
"You are a tell-tale-tattler," the older cried,
As the sand in the face of the younger
Curly-head she plied.

Two lovers came upon the view :
She upbraiding him, "You are untrue".
The sparkling jewel from her finger
She scornfully withdrew
And gave to him ;
Haughtily she turned and walked away,
The ring he madly threw into the bay.

Next came a couple of maturer years :
Quietly they sat looking out o'er the calm blue
sea ;
In silence each drank deep of the beauty
Of that twilight hour.

So unlike hot-headed youth were they,
I marvelled and wondered why
That neither the children nor the lovers,
Heeded not the grandeur of that perfect sky,
Their eyes beholding saw not

The loveliness of the day ;
In anger and with heart aches each had gone,
To nurse his grievance
In his own particular way.
The oldest couple having learned to overlook
Life's trifles, sat in peace
And enjoyed the quiet ending of the day.

In memory oft' have I lived again
Those moments by the sea ;
For there I learned,
A secret of Gods' plan :
Not childhood nor high spirited youth
Is the best part of the life of man,
But the sun-set time,
When life's lessons we've learned :
When we have dropped from our natures
Pettiness, ungoverned tempers, hasty and cruel
judgments,
And in their place keep only love
And tolerance for our fellow man ;
Surely this must be God's plan.

The Rainbow

The sun smiles and tints the flowers,
The clouds turn to April showers;
Through the heavens the sunbeams dance,
Flirting with the raindrop's glance.
But when the raindrop weds a sunbeam,
And the other beams dance by,
The sun announces their marriage
By painting a rainbow in the sky.

Poetry

Poetry? . . .

The smile on a baby's face,

The perfume of a rose,

The laugh of happy children,

The Autumn wind that blows,

The bright wings of the butterfly,

The crimson and gold of the evening sky.

The Laborer

O, Laborer!
Some hearts ache for you
As you stand with feet buried in mud,
Digging, lifting, forever toiling,
That the tall building may grow.
If once they look upon your smile
Their pity for you will be no more;
Nor will they wonder why
This joy is in your soul.
For they will know
By the radiance of your face
That you see not the mud,
But the building as it grows.
You look up and behold
The blue of the sky,
Your heart is in your work.
You are not a toiler
Who merely spades
Clod after clod,
You are a creator,
You are like God.

The Light of Love

I am glad I've loved you
For no sorrow now can come to me,
No blow cruel enough to crush my joy :
For always the vision of you
Will be to me,
Like a faithful light
Is to the sailor
On a storm-tossed sea.

A First Night

The play tonight was amusement for many ;
To the actors behind the curtain
I was professional success,
To some it was labor for bread.
As they shifted the scenery, few smiles, if any,
Lift up their hard and deep-lined faces,
As they converted drawing-rooms
Into country places.
The leading lady played well her part.
A rose she threw into the box
Where sat the playwright,
For she knew what that night meant to him :
In his life it was his triumphant day,
For his soul was expressed in the play.
The critics acclaimed it to be really art,
To him it was as a child is to the mother,
It was more than success, it was his heart.

Come Back

(A Love Song)

I miss you in the morning
 And at the close of day,
I miss you in the spring-time
 And along the moon-lit way.

I love you always, always,
 Forever and a year;
Come back, come back, to me,
 I am so lonely, dear.

Come back and let me rest
 In the sunshine of your smile,
Come back and make my life
 One perfect, golden while.

The Woman Who Cares

Miles away, yet waiting for me
Is the woman who cares;
For her sake I'll win and be free
To go to her with a clean, strong hand.
Her faith is ever my guiding star
And my destiny I will command;
For always I feel her presence filled with trust,
Whispering to me: "Win, you must; win, you
must".

The Queen

The lumber king came into our midst,
Married he was, we knew ;
Surely his wife is a veritable queen,
Tall and princess-like,
I fashioned her in my dream.
Oft did he quote the wisdom of his mate :
A learned woman, the men protested,
And together we dreaded her arrival.
A volume of poetry he produced one day,
Written by the wife we feared.
A queen, a philosopher, a poet,
How we hated her coming !
Why should he bring her to our crude little
town,
To make us feel our commonness ?
He took a cottage near the bay,
She came ;
This we knew, though none of the village-folk
had seen her.
“Close to her castle, the queen keeps”, laughed
the town wag.
Yet, every one had seen a girl who had ac-
companied her.
Not beautiful nor tall nor princess-like, was
she.
The children played with her upon the beach,
The older boys and girls swam races with her,
And revelled in her merry-making ;
All wondered who she was.
Finally, it was suggested by one of the women,
Who traveled sometimes to the cities :

“Probably the girl is hand-maid to the queen”,
“Are you the great man’s maid?” one
ventured.

Smiling sweetly, she nodded her little brown
head.

“Your name?” demanded Rhoden, the Beau
Brummel of the place:

“Call me Dare”, she begged.

From that day on, Dare became the favorite
of the village.

She gave books to the elderly ones,

And good things to the sick.

The fortunes of the youths she told;

Declaring to any heights ascend they could

If only study hard they would.

One day the most curious of us inquired:

“What kind of a person is this wife of our
great man?”

The little maid laughed and in the manner of
a child replied:

“A strange mixture is she,

For the life of me,

I can not her describe”.

The lumber king returned from a trip.

“We will see her now”, we thought.

To the train a number of us went.

Standing near the depot was

Our king’s big touring machine;

But to our regret therein was no queen.

“’Twould be beneath her dignity to meet a
train”, we decided.

The black engine came in sight,

And from the door of his private car

The lumber king strode forth,
To our horror,
Plain little Dare ran up the steps
And jumped into his arms!
He held her very close and laughed,
As she hugged him like a child.
The villagers rubbed their eyes and gasped.
Several braver than the rest,
Ventured near to welcome him home again.
“My wife you know, for she has written me
Of loving each and every one of you”.
Dare smiled and her eyes twinkled mischiev-
ously,
As she cried:
“Come to see him and his little maid!
Please come soon, do not wait,
For all of you owe me many visits”.

“Why she is just like a little child!”
Said the oldest citizen of the bay.
“She’ll never grow up”, declared Rhoden—
Whom later the king sent off to college.
But who would wish her different!
Dare she was when first we met,
And Dare, always she will be
To the village folk and me;
Better every day we love her
This child-woman, poet and philosopher.

My Friend

I long for thee to know
What thou art to me.
Though I have no words
To tell my love to thee,
I must whisper in thine ear :
I wish that I might be
Just such a friend to thee
As thou hast been to me.

I Would Trust You Still

If the whole world should doubt
I would trust you still,
If Fate should take me away from you
I would know in my heart
That you would always, always be true;
Even though I were gone away so far
As the earth is from the distant star.

The Things I Love

A butterfly dancing in the sunlight,
A bird singing to his mate
The whispering pines,
The restless sea,
The gigantic mountains,
A stately tree,
The rain upon the roof,
The sun at early dawn,
A boy with rod and hook,
The babble of a shady brook,
A woman with her smiling babe,
A man whose eyes are kind and wise,
Youth that is eager and unafraid.
When all is said I do love best
A little home where love abides,
And where there's kindness, peace and rest.

The Sinner

I have sinned in the eyes of man
I have broken his laws
And defied his ways,
Traveled my own road
And gambled my days.
I've played too much
Creating nothing worth while,
I've squandered my time
And wasted my worth,
Ignored man's wishes
Forgotten God's church.
But only one regret
Comes at the close of Life's day,
I broke a heart
When I went astray.

Since You Went Away

Since you went away
There is no sunshine in my day—
Everything seems to go wrong;
In my soul there is no song,
In my life no perfect while,
On my face no radiant smile,
I can only think of the happy yesterday—
There is no joy since you went away.

Glimpse of Heaven

Today a bird at my window sang,
Today a child into my face smiled,
Today wise words into my ears rang,
Today love came and my heart beguiled.
To some these are incidents, merely,
But to me they are so clearly
 Glimpses of Heaven.

Never Let Me Know

If in your heart ever dies this flame
And your love should wither as the rose,
Go away and leave me
But never let me know.

Too Late

Oh! why did you wait
So long to come into my life?
Was it a trick of Fate
To send you to me
Years too late, too late?

In my dreams I hear
You calling, ever calling me;
Then I waken and I fear,
Lest the memory of your smile
May beguile and I'll go to thee.

Was it the cruelty of Fate
That kept you from me,
Then sent you too late, too late?
Forever like this must it be—
I must not, must not
Go to thee.

Life

You came and I played,
Yet always there was a longing
I knew not why, nor for what
But ever unsatisfied was I.

Experience came with Poverty, Disappoint-
ment, Sorrow,
Ambition and Disillusion, Health and Sick-
ness.

A little dazed and stunned was I
By life's untangled mysteries,
Still I was unsatisfied.
Work came and interest too,
Wealth followed in close pursuit,
Fame brought honors and costly gifts;
Yet still there was that smoldering desire
For what? Yea, I knew not.

At last came Love, not Passion,
Love, clad in white robes of purity and truth;
I bowed my head, so unworthy did I feel.
But love was unselfish and kind,
At last the hunger of my soul was satisfied.

Had You Not Come

Had you not come into my life
Ignorant still I'd be of love,
And what the wild passion means;
This longing of my soul unsatisfied,
I'd never have known.
Though my heart aches tonight,
Yet would it be right
For me to say:
I wish you had never come
And the still depths of my nature
Had never been disturbed?
O, God, not that!

What I Want Most

No, I will not ask of Fate to give me beauty,
Nor to give me fame or character so strong,
That I will not fail of duty,
I will not pray for ease,
Or contentment with riches.
I will not beg for any of these precious things;
Yet I trust Fate will give
Me work to do
And I can't keep from wishing
For a home and you.

One Perfect Day

For one happy day I was yours,
We wandered o'er the hills
And gathered flowers;
We played as children.
The world was ours
So short a time and then—
Time has passed, still I can not pray;
Yet, the Maker of all joys must know
I am thankful for that perfect day.

The Rebel

I long to be a rebel
And do as I gaily please,
To live like a butterfly
Dancing in the summer breeze.
To sing as do the birds
When the song is in my throat,
To lie under the tall oak trees
To let my dreams unguided float ;
To dance on the green,
Caring not if I am seen
To throw conventions away,
To live my life every day
With freedom like the birds and honey-bees.

You

I look at the evening star
And think of the times when you and I
Wandered together beneath a summer sky.
I look at the new born moon
And remember the hour when you and I sat
 beneath a tree
And you whispered your soul's deepest long-
 ings to me.
And I think of the day when you and I
Climbed the hill-side
And sitting near an old moss covered stone
 rugged and gray,
You took me in your arms
And held me close, and we longed to stay
For ever and ever from the world away.
Time has passed; still,
I long to live again that day,
For the depths of the heavens blue,
The green of the hills
Speak to me only of you.

I Think of Thee

Alone I sit and think of thee,
Think of the hours you spent with me,
Think of the things we planned to do
Think of the days when my world was you.
The moon, the birds, the tall oak tree
All remind me of only thee
And though the world will never know
I love you, love you, love you so.

The Tramp

The woods, the road, the tall pine tree,
Are each in their way calling me,
I long to stay with you, I love;
But the moon, the sky and the stars above
Are saying to me: "Come away, come away".
Oh! dear heart,
I can not stay;
For the wilds of the forest
Call loudly today.
I long to linger a golden while
To drink of your beauty
And bask in your smile,
But go I must
I can not stay
The call to the tramp is too strong today.
It is the fault of the sky,
The mountain trail,
The tall pine tree;
For they keep on calling,
Calling me.

What You Have Meant to Me

If you should come tonight
Would you love to know:
That all these years through
I've been waiting for you?
I've kept my heart
As you left it;
No flattering phrase has tempted,
No love songs have lured,
No stranger has entered in.
That the vision of you has guided
Each faltering step of mine,
And the memory of your face
Has been to me like wine
That quickens the pulse
And stimulates the mind!
Oft in the dark I've trembled
At the noise of the wind,
Then the thought of you
Would make me brave—
For your sake I've prayed:
Let me be all he would have me be,
And when he comes
Let him find me beautiful,
In thought and deed
Too big for sect or creed;
And when he looks
Into my face
Let him see no ugly marks of care,
Of doubt or shattered dreams,
Let him find only love carved there.

I Love You

I love you in the morning,
When the flowers are bright with dew ;
I love you in the evening
When the sun in a triumph of gold
Bids farewell to the tired earth
Leaving her the darkness to enfold,
Then sinks behind the distant hill.
I love you in the night time
When the stars come out and flirt
With the moonbeams above the mill.

I loved you in the ages past
Where memory never dwells ;
I'll love you in eternity
For ever and a day.
Go, my love,
I can not bid you stay.
My love is not of fleeting time
So wander without fear ;
For I'll be waiting for you ;
Yes, waiting, waiting always,
For you, my dear.

When I'm With You

Now that you have gone away
There is so much I long to say.
When I am with you, dear,
When I feel that you are near
The joy of your presence
Makes me dumb.
When you are with me
Words seem too empty
To express what's in my breast.
And in the silence of those moments
When you hold me to your heart,
You must know what I long to tell,
You must feel the ecstasy of my being ;
And hear the music of the words unspoken,
The promise of my love unbroken ;
You must hear the song
That's in my throat,
And feel the music
Of each silent note
As your lips you press to mine.
And you must know that my love
For ever and ever will be thine.

Death

Death took away my Friend,
Sorrow reigned in his home;
His wife and children wept
And for the future saw no joy.
Those who came to do him honor
Spoke in whispers and were sad.
Beside the dead the watch I kept.
The very stillness of the house
Filled my heart with sinister dread;
Upon my hands I bowed my head.
Some moments later, when I looked up
My Friend was standing near.
He seemed the same
Save for a radiance
That shone upon his face.
The lines of worry and care
Were no longer written there.
He spoke in his old familiar way:
"For me let there be no sorrow—
Death is merely a birth,
With every birth goes pain.
Look on my body lying here
As you would upon my old garment;
Wear no black for me,
But know that this night
I was born again—
So weep not for me
Nor wish me back;
My life is full of joy and freedom".
He vanished as silently as he came.
I rose and looked

Upon his face of clay;
There was a smile so lovely
That I knew he had beheld a vision
As he entered the Dawn
Of his New Day.
No, I will not grieve for him, nor sorrow;
For on that night,
When I kept watch with the dead
I learned Death's secret:
For lo, Death is a Gate
Through which man must pass
To enter into a bigger, better life.
So when comes the final call
Proudly in I'll walk,
With spirit undaunted
And head held high—
I will not cringe or fear
When that Gate I near.



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