

HOMES OF OUR FATHERS

PRELUDE.

What I am about to read you will be to tell and show what a community of honest and intelligent people can do, and what the First Settlers of Lancaster county did within the first half-century of their possession of the county.

Although being made up of six different nationalities, speaking five different languages, and belonging to nine different religious denominations, yet, by their industrious habits, peaceful and neighborly dispositions towards each other, while enjoying their civil and religious liberty and freedom to worship, each according to their own faith and custom, they changed a forest, inhabited only by savages and wild beasts, to a peaceful, civilized, lovely "Garden Spot" of rich farms and happy homes, without any strife among themselves or disturbances or hindrances to the government and rules of Penn, the proprietor under whom they lived.

S. P. E.

In seventeen hundred and fifty-four,
May be a few years less or more,
In bluestone house with oaken floor,
Projecting eaves and divided door,
Deep set windows, through which the
light
Falls on a maiden fair and bright,
A brown-eyed maid, who sits and sings,
Thus to her tuneful zither's strings.

FAIREST LAND OF LANCASTER.

Fairest land of Lancaster,
With milk and honey blest,
Within thy peaceful borders
The troubled soul finds rest.
Here all the Church's children
Can gather undismayed,
And sing their songs of Zion,
With none to make afraid.

Oh, bright and blooming garden!
Fit home for exiled men,
A refuge for the sorely pressed,
Thou happy Land of Penn.
Thy swords are turned to plowshares,
To pruning hooks, thy spears,
And smiles of peaceful industry
For bonds and stripes and tears.

Rich forest land of Tannawa!
By green hills girded round,
No war-whoop frights thy feeding
flocks,
No drum, no martial sound,
No warder guards thy outer pass,
The word of trust once spoken,
By Quaker Friend to Forest King,
Keeps friendship's chain unbroken.

Where down to Susquehanna
Conestoga rolls its tide,
Where Indian wigwam lingers
By winding Pequea's side,
Is heard the whetting of the scythes,
The songs of youth and maiden,
Home returning harvesters,
With wagons heavy laden.

The soldiers and the fighting men
Have gone beyond the mountain,
The emigrant has built his home
Beside the flowing fountain,
The Lark pipes in the meadow,
The Quail calls from the hill,
And down below the rushes grow,
The ever restless waters flow,
And turn the busy mill.

The charcoal furnaces light up,
At night, the hills and gorges,
And wooded valleys echo with
The hammering of the forges.
Forest and stream still yield such game
As hunters might call fine,
Some game is left for rifle shots,
Some fish for rod and line.

High in the elm the Orioles hang,
Their nest far out of reach,

Rocked by the winds, it sways and swings,

An airy cradle, woven of strings,
Stolen from the houseyard bleach.
The red Thrush chants his morning song

From top of neighboring tree,
The Swallow rears beneath the thatch
Her young from danger free.

The Phoebe birds build in the wall,
The kitchen door above,
And from the quiet orchard comes
The cooing of the Dove.
The Robin carols cheerfully
Of cherries getting ripe,
The Blackbird flutes his single note,
Mellow as a chestnut pipe.

The housewife airs her linens in
The pleasant days of June,
And calls from field the laborers
With dinner horn at noon.
The dinner horn! The dinner horn!
No sound so sweet as when
Its echoing notes come floating to
The ears of hungry men.

Oh, Land where thrift and plenty
Reward our homely toil,
Thy fields are plowed by freemen,
No bond men till thy soil,
The woodman freely swings his axe
Till forest trees lie low,
The weaver flings through busy loom
His shuttle to and fro.

The blacksmith shapes the glowing iron,
To the anvil's ringing sound,
The cooper plays a brisk tat-too,
As he hoops the barrels round,
The farmer's barn is filled with grain,
His cribs with corn run o'er,
His flails beat time in measur'd rhyme,
Upon the threshing floor.

Near close of day—in milkmaid's hour—
Is heard the farm boy's call,
And lowing cows come trooping home,
Each to her accustomed stall.
And thus from early morning light,
Until the set of sun,
Through each succeeding labor day,
The busy work goes on.
When all can earn enough to live,
Besides some thing to keep,
Add dignity to honest toil,
And sound repose to sleep.

When twilight deepens into night,
And darkness veils the earth,
When members of the household are
All gathered 'round the hearth,
Then father, in a voice subdued,
With grave and reverent look,
How God has dealt with men of old
Reads from the sacred book.

Reads how the Lord smote Egypt,
And passed the Hebrew by,
How Esther saved her people,
And Haman was hanged high,
How princes were put from their
thrones,
The lowly given high stations,
And that the path of history,
Is strewn with wrecks of nations.

While, like the fabled Sisters,
His daughters sit and spin,
Mingled threads of flax and love,
And think it is no sin.
'Twas thus our frugal mothers spun,
To clothe their sons, whom fate
Has destin'd both to speed the plow
And rule the infant State.

Close by the fire's flickering light,
The boys, who worked out late,
With problems in arithmetic
Now wrestle on the slate.
The chapter read, the boys report
Their work being done as told,
The horses bedded, cows tied up,
And lambs all safe in fold.

The youngest born, with scarcely yet
Four summers on her head,
Climbs drowsily to mother's arms,
To be carried off to bed.
The mother stays for parting word
Before she doth retire,
Instructs the girls for next day's work,
And to carefully cover the fire.

"Fire," she says, "will serve us best
When safely kept and bound,
Like passions in the human breast
Unchained becomes a fearful guest,
And spreads red ruin 'round."
The father rules the household well,
In his wise, but sterner, way,
The mother with a gentler hand
Doth teach them to obey.

Oh, Mother Love, thou sacred flame,
That from Heaven's high altar came,
To cheer us here below.

Thou sanctify both house and home,
From cradle's side to mouth of tomb,
In thought with us where'er we roam,
'Mid joy or sorrow, grief and pain,
Unchang'd, unchanging, still the same,
No scaffold high, no deed of shame,
Can quench thy constant glow,
When hope is lost and life has fled,
Stays Rizpah like to guard thy dead.

Where love and kindness govern
The fireside's cheerful blaze,
The tired, homeless wanderer,
Will also find a place.
Receive his bowl of supper warm,
With mug of home-made cider,
That cheers the heart, unties the
tongue,
And makes his face look brighter.
Then as his limbs begin to feel
The fire's enlivening glow,
He entertains his listeners
With tales of the long ago.

Of brave deeds done among the Alps,
Where snowy summits shine,
Old stories brought from Swabia land,
And legends of the Rhine.
Of Eyllen Spiegel—sage and fool—
Who laughed away dull cares.
Of Faust, leagued with the Evil One,
And men turned into bears.
Of children lost in forests deep,
Brave knights to rescue riding.
Of Red-beard King, fast bound in sleep,
His waking hours abiding,
Of treasures in enchanted mines,
By gnomes and goblins guarded,
And castles haunted by footsteps,
Of those long since departed;
He tells of cruel huntsman,
Who rode with all his train,
O'er the gardens of the poor
And farmer's fields of grain,
Who, punished for his wickedness,
Now hunts through midnight sky,
When, with clamor of hound and horn,
His chase is heard going by.
And now the tale is pitiful,
And then with laughter gay,
'Till one by one the spin wheels stop,
And the slates are laid away.
And now his voice is low and sad,
And now 'tis full of scorn,
Then, with his hands held trumpet-like,
He sounds the hunting horn.

Ye Mothers, call your children
Around your evening fires,
Relate to them the story of
The sufferings of your sires.
Tell of their weary wanderings,
With bruised and bleeding feet,
Through countries wasted, cities sacked,
And desolated street.
Remind them how, for conscience sake,
They bore oppression dire,
In Zurich's gloomy dungeons,
By Antwerp's stakes of fire,
And how from bloody scaffolds,
And prisons dark and lone,
Their cry went for deliverance,
Up to the Great White Throne.
And how the good Lord answered,
Not in the rushing blast,
Not in the earthquake's thunder,
That by the Prophet passed,
Nor in the all-consuming flame
That fell from Heaven above,
But only in the still, small voice
That spoke of peace and love.
The voice that spoke to erring men,
'Gainst warring with each other,
Who in the name of the Prince of
Peace,
Were slaying one another.
The voice that called your fathers,
To set their people free,
And guide them safe o'er ocean wave,
To homes beyond the sea.

Ye children of the martyr band,
Who driven from their fatherland,
To escape the tyrant's ire,
Come Huguenot and Palatine,
Come, Switzers, from your mountains
fled,
Come, ye who by the Rhine have met,
And where brave Holland's dikes are
set,
Whose fathers stood on Lutzen's field,
Nor Sempach's bloody heights would
yield,
Where Latimer and Ridley died,
Come Covenanters, sorely tried,
All join the tuneful choir.
Your hymns of praise and anthems
sing,
Now let the glad hosannas ring,
From all your sons and daughters,
Your Ruths among the harvest fields,
Your Miriams by your waters,
All glory to our Heavenly King.
From whom all glories are,

And blessings on our Quaker Friend,
The Spirit's chosen instrument,
To bring our troubles to an end

And sheath the sword of war;
The friend who gave that priceless
thing

Intended for mankind.
Witheld by priest and early king,
The Freedom of the Mind.

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