

## THE OLD MILL

I would vision a mill of the olden days,  
A mill with its open door,  
Of the big old wheel that splashes sprays  
Of passing water sun-lit o'er  
The moss-grown pit where turns the wheel  
Deliberate. 'Tis size not speed  
That lendeth force and harnessed zeal  
Unto the monster for man's need.

The miller stands in the open door,  
His ear attuned to every sound  
Of clip-a-clap and gentle roar  
As spin the mill-stones 'round and 'round,  
As turn the mill-stones grinding fine  
The grains of gold the hopper yields,  
The grains of gold that glow and shine—  
A largess of the neighbor fields.

The miller is young and straight and fair  
As in the door he dreaming stands  
With mill-dust in his wayward hair,  
On coat and face and hands.  
Now a maiden up to the old mill rides—  
The miller's dream come true—  
In all her form sweet youth abides,  
And loving lights her eyes of blue.  
Full strong his arm to lift and swing  
Her off her dainty saddle seat—  
Love's toll he taketh on the wing—  
The mill-stones humming grind their wheat!

Thus true love runneth on and on  
The same sweet way forevermore;  
But they inside the mill have gone  
And we're outside the door.  
Next rides a farmer customer  
And thrice must loudly call "Hello!"  
Before the miller makes a stir  
To answer him or go.  
The while these talk she brushes dust,  
Then smiles at both and rides,—alack!  
Unconscious that she carries just  
Her miller's hand-mark on her back!

The farmer bargains for his needed grist,  
Dismounting from his faithful nag,  
The miller scoops with turn of wrist,  
The paying farmer holds the bag.

The big wheel turneth in the sun,  
The water falls and foams below,  
The little stream of grain must run  
Between the mill-stones as they go.

The clip-a-clap sounds on inside  
The mill's wide open door,  
The miller stoopeth down beside  
Her foot-prints on the floor.

He hears the canter of her horse,  
Her call, o'er noise of cog and wheel:  
"Come here, you miller man, of course,  
I quite forgot to take my meal!"

Long years have passed and maids and men,  
And lives like grain been ground  
Between the stones relentless when  
The Fates have whirled them 'round.  
No longer though my visioned mill  
Doth grind,—old times aweary lag,  
But with his ingrown patience still  
The farmer holds the bag!

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