AUTobiography

III
Portrait
Commanded by my faithful friend the muse,
I here record what happened to a man,
With gifts divine and willingness to work,
But with no funds to help achieve his plan,
Yet made a real success.

The subject of my inspiration was
A little boy who stepped upon the stage,
The second month some eighty years ago
To make his choice and every foe engage,
Until he won his spurs.

He is not great as some folks measure fame,
But wide experience and much knowledge sought,
That he might have a full and useful life
Of things that must be earned, that can't be bought
With pull or common coin.

His birth was marked by Franco-Prussian peace,
And by the greatest outburst of the sun
Since Queen Victoria received the crown,
Two hundred spots they say, if there was one,
A solar pagentry.

And if you wish to test Astrology,
Just ask some men if they in truth possess
The gifts and graces of the second month,
And prove its silly, futile foolishness
Beyond the slightest doubt.

And there were men like keen Copernicus,
Like Lincoln, Raphael, and our Washington,
And Darwin, Edison and Longfellow,
Like Handel, Galileo, Mendelssohn,
All born in that same month.

'Twas then that Biela's comet should have blazed
Across the sky as it had done before,
But now instead of one bright stream of light,
There came a hundred meteors or more
Each minute by the clock.

One day with open eyes he clearly saw
Two little boys who romped about the place,
They were his older brothers, Fred and Chas.
And aged just five and four.
At five his first portrait in rocking chair, Was placed within the family picture book; And he remembers well the baby girl He had to please, and in her cradle rock Until she went to sleep.

At four he made mud pies beneath a bridge, With plan and skill and exercise of mind; And built fine castles by the winding brook, With moulded bricks he'd carefully designed And baked in blazing sun.

Like most good boys he always went to church And to an log-built Sunday-School, near by, And later to the larger Wellington With older boys to learn the Golden Rule And how to practice it.

At five he went to school where opened wide The doors to man's achievements of all time; And with his Dad on many a hike he learned The fauna and the flora in their prime, In woods and fields and streams.

His interest claimed the arachnids as friends, And soon he had some boxes on a fence, Each with a spider family keeping house, Some spinning gossamer, some weaving tents, And all fine architects.

Then down beside a favorite apple tree, A leaky tub was sunk for little fish; And by its side a tiny glen was made, Where sprites and fairies might obtain their wish For darksome hiding place.

Close by the barn, three feet above the ground, Two spacious rabbit hutchies stood with stairs To second storied runways full of straw, And cozy nests for rest from bunny cares And fear of cats and dogs.
At six the charm of music filled his soul,
Because a neighbor lad played like a band
On two bright polished midribs from a roast,
And with a jews-harp in his mouth and hand,
To his supreme delight.

That week his mother listened to his wish,
And took him to a teacher, thinking he
Would doubtless be a virtuoso soon,
If but a chance could now afforded be
To let the muses in.

He often met Art.Stringer over there,
But did not know what universal fame
Awaited him, as poet, novelist,
And lecturer that budding writers claim
At University.

Alas, one day when he was coming home,
He saw a fuzzy cat leap from a fence:
And, thinking it a wild one after him,
Ran crying to his home with nerves all tense,
To tell the awful news.

At seven years he claimed to have the strength,
To wash the windows, out as well as in,
But venturing beyond his reach he fell
Down where a giant cactus tore his shin,
And stained his sock with blood.

And when he gained his feet he also found
His little finger twisted out of shape,
He quickly jerked it into place again,
And rushed inside to have some binding tape
Wrapped round his bleeding wounds.

His world was now expanding very fast,
Street lights reached the city's greater span,
In he recalls the old lamp lighter on his beat,
Is little ladder and his large oil can
And chimney polisher.
One afternoon at three there came a storm,
Dark thunder clouds with fire swept the sky;
Churned by the swirling wind the sand arose,
And fled before it howling, leaping high,
Until we could not see.

His mother called her children to her side,
And in the dreadful darkness prayed to God
That He would stop the storm with, "Peace be still",
And knowing how we feared would spare the rod
And save us everyone.

Then in a frightful moment lightning flashed,
The tempest growled and grappled with the barn,
And tearing screaming timbers all apart,
Laid them upon the house with little harm,
And we were safe inside.

Once on a summer eve while running fast,
He dashed pell-mell into a water pump,
Whose arm in rhythmic motion up and down,
Struck him across the brow a stunning bump
And threw him to the ground.

His father, standing near, went to his aid
And found him badly dazed and smeared with red;
He washed the wound and bandaged it with care,
Then took him to the house and into bed
For a much needed rest.

One early dawn before the sun was up,
Two thunder storm battalions fought on high
Throughout the day, nor ever ceased their fire,
Until at six both vanished from the sky,
But left a flood behind.

When he was eight he helped his father plant
Some tiny spruces near the broad roadside,
That bears the name of Wellington the great,
And some still stand as tall in feet and pride
As he has added years.
One pitch-dark night he went alone to fetch
A pail of water from the nearby well,
When, from behind a bush, in thoughtless fun
His brother leaped upon him with a yell
And nearly finished him.

He shuddered there from head to foot and wept,
And could not stop, nor hold his trembling frame
The brother slyly slipped away to bed,
While mother sought to share the culprit's blame
For she sent Willie out.

One day a family moved into a house
Across the road and fronting Colgrove Place,
And every Saturday the man came home
So drenched with drink he was a foul disgrace,
Because he lost control.

Soon he would damn his wife and children too,
And slam the doors, and then with brutal force
Throw all the furniture upon the lawn,
And shouting loudly with an awful curse
Jump in a flower bed.

Amazed our lad observed the scene with fear,
And felt within his soul revulsion strong,
So that in later years he fought strong drink
With all his might, backed by a faithful throng
Of sober citizens.

And when he preached in Massachusetts state
He was elected leader of the Drys,
And hunted those who flouted liquor laws;
Some were so bold he had them dragged to court
Which quickly banished them.

Now father bought a farm quite near Hyde Park
Where Early Joes in great abundance grow
And bright red clover swarmed with busy bees
And silver fishes darted to and fro
In hurried search for food.
One day while coming home from school some girls were taunting him because he had red hair, and when he could not hold his temper more, he threw a stone into the group and there it smote one on her head.

Inside an hour two officers arrived and asked to see the boy who threw the stone, they told him he had almost killed the girl, that this offense his parents would atone, and he must keep the peace.

That was not all, a bully picked on him, and often sunk his knuckles in his cheek, to show how easily he'd lay him out, if he should raise a cry or make a peep against him at the school.

One morning on the way to school he met the craven bully on the street and said, "Don't touch me any more, or by the gods I'll crack in smithereens your empty head, and all the boys will laugh!"

That speech was so dynamic and intense, the big lad gave a second thought and then offered his hand, in friendship to the brave who called his bluff, and told him where and when he'd settle their accounts.

At home the place was growing more complete with many kinds of peaches, plums and pears, and luscious cherries all around the lot, as well as apples fit to show at fairs and grapes of varied hues.

Now these fine fruits set up a strong desire in scores of boys and girls who knew no fear, at whom my father shot a watery blast by means of a large syringe hidden near, and drenched them to the skin.
Glass

Beside the home there stood no less than five
green-houses with exotic plants and roots;
And full of perfumes from the orange trees,
Where blossoms by the hundreds and the fruits
Hung ripe and green festooned.

Among them there were fig trees too in bloom,
And curious cacti from some distant land,
And palms with spreading fronds beneath whose shade
We lounged to read or reached an eager hand
To pluck an orchid rare.

Across the crystal front and glassy roof
Of one transparent house a rose bush grew,
With scores of fragrant blossoms called LaFran
And buds galore all decked with shining dew,
As mirrors of the sun.

In summertime this was the rendezvous
Of many humming-birds and honey-bees,
And gorgeous moths and pretty butterflies,
All seeking nectar with their flower keys,
And dropping pollen there.

'Twas here our growing lad learned how to catch
The busy bees and moths and butterflies,
But best of all the humming-birds whose breasts
Are so resplendent, and whose plaintive cries
Are made when held in hand.

Here too he learned to call the plants by name,
And how to change them by cross-blending, and
By grafting added three or four to one,
Or made them multiply in dampened sand
From tender healthy slips.

When comes the New Year back again with Spring,
Within hot—houses where the flowers blow,
We light tobacco fires to destroy
The Aphids, menace of the things that grow,
And reproduce their kind.
When he was nine, he can't forget the night,
An awful Indian rapped upon the door
And shouted, "Hungry Ingin me", then sunk
His tomahawk deep in the wood and swore
He'd eat and sleep all night.

The frightened lad turned quickly to one side,
Just as his father came to meet the man
And said there was no room, but thus refused
He raised his tomahawk on high, and then
Began to force his way.

The father now stepped slowly back and grasped
A long horse-whip with which to fight, and when
He struck the fellow's hands, he had to drop
His axe, and ran, and ne'er was seen again;
But no one slept that night.

One afternoon at half past four o'clock
The sky grew dark in haste, the wind arose,
And in a trice a second hurricane
Descended on the town with sudden blows
And ruin in its wake.

This time it burst upon the green-houses
And swept whole sashes high into the air,
Then dropped them in a thousand bits;
Or tossed them hurtling out of sight to where
We found them the next day.

It struck again some distance up the road,
And seeing two large willow trees ahead
Surrounded them and in its strong vortex
Snapped both their giant trunks midway and fled,
But left their stumps intact.

We can recall the brilliant little man
Whose name was Dearness, still so widely known,
Who, as inspector, used to visit us
To get his meagre stipend for the Moon
From Dad the treasurer.
One fine Spring day when shinny was in vogue,  
There was a match held at the Grand Ave. school;  
Our subject was so fast, the other side  
Schemed hard to bar him from the field by rule,  
But failed to make their point.

So, early in the game they changed the man  
Opposed to him, and put a stranger there,  
Whose job it was to cause him injury  
Upon the shins, and so he struck him square,  
And put him out of play.

Bent over with the pain and bleeding too,  
Our lad limped slowly to the school for aid,  
When, suddenly a block was shot toward him,  
And, strange to say, it struck him on the head  
And nearly laid him out.
And now I must relate a stranger tale,
Not of a fish, but of this old world's end,
For it was said that at the stroke of three
The earth would be consumed, the oceans burned
And human life destroyed.

The hours dragged along and recess came;
The boys climbed trees and like so many crows,
Swung on the branches to relieve the shock
That did not come, for no one really knows
The time of that event.

One evening just at dusk when Will was with
Some boys, a husky drunken man called Joe,
Gave seeking him by name and quickly seized
That was the time when steamers plied the Thames, The side-wheel type so picturesque and trim; But since that fateful holiday in May, No one has put a pleasure boat like them Upon the winding stream.

It was the Queen's birthday around the world: Two hundred happy souls and more aboard, When the beautiful Victoria steamed away, But suddenly she overturned and roared Like some leviathan.

That evening on the river bank there lay Two hundred dead who, but an hour before, Were planning picnics at the Springbank Park With parents, children, friend and visitor, A happy holiday.

Like many more, our lad was deeply moved, When he saw school-mates in untimely death, And his own cousin lying with the rest, While weeping people sought their loved ones'neath The submerged pleasure craft.

That year as well death visited our home, And snatched away the baby from the fold, Because there was no help for whooping-cough: So when it got beyond the doctor's hold The patient had to die.

And then a fundamental change was made, Our father bought a larger home and farm, Beyond West London, then named Petersville, Where now the Brecia Hall adorns with charm The place called Sunnyside.

Now it was time for sugaring off again And we prepared, as every year, to drive To Lobo Village and to Uncle Dan's, Where we should all enjoy, oh lucky five, Our Easter sugar treat.
One winter day a group of boys at school
Sent Will a challenge to a snow-ball fight;
He chose six lads to make a lot of balls,
Then, as the group came on, pretended flight
To draw their hurried fire.

He turned, and followed by his eager men,
Withheld their shots until the foe was spent,
Then charged, and charged again with right and left,
Till with a steady blitz their ranks were rent
And they had to retire.

This was a time of trouble in the world,
And great men rose to match it with their works;
Among them Gladstone, with the golden tongue
That lashed the guilty Sultan of the Turks
For his inhuman deeds.

He was so great a man that all the earth
Stopped at their toil to listen when he spoke,
For with his power of faultless eloquence
He felled his foes with fulminating stroke,
Like mighty Jove of old.

Then one day, after he had shaken Rome,
Our father said he thought it would be grand,
If Will would henceforth bear the magic name
Of Gladstone, now proclaimed on every hand
The fearless British lion.

That night at suppertime his brothers brought
A gift prophetic of what was to be,
A telescope, no less, of shining brass,
So he could watch the Moon and stars and see
The plumage of the birds.

That was an hour ne'er to be forgot,
When this young Gladstone proud as father's choice
Began to speak like some great orator,
With haughty gestures and resounding voice
Against imagined foes.
One day in school the teacher saw a boy,  
With fingers fastened in a ball of tar.  
And shouted, "Henry you come here at once,  
I'll make you smarter than you think you are,  
With this fine hickory stick!"  

The teacher held within his hand a book,  
One metal-bound, which he let fly at Hen.  
Because he stalled, and everyone looked round;  
The book, however, missed its mark, and then  
Struck Willie on the cheek.  

The lad now felt his face and found the blood  
Was trickling down his coat, and left the room;  
The teacher followed close and said, "Go home,  
I'll see your father and explain to him  
The reason for your cut wound."  

Within a month another boy was caught  
Right in the act of talking much too loud,  
Again the order, "Jimmy Cake come here!"  
Resounded in the room, but Jimmy bowed  
And sat down in his seat.  

Enraged, the teacher stamped and rushed at him,  
And grabbed him by his tawny tuft of hair,  
But Jimmy would not budge, and in a trice  
The teacher got the hair, but left him there,  
And then resumed his place.  

About this time our budding naturalist,  
With several other boys one winter day  
Treked to the dam at lovely Springbank Park,  
And crawling far beneath, observed the way  
The ice formations grow.  

And from there to Jim Foster's open slide,  
Or down the hill from Springbank's reservoir  
For Moon-light dash and snowy, icye climb,  
And down again, a healthy winter chore,  
To build one's skill and strength,
I was the year of eighty-three when came
The devastating flood to Petersville,
Where buildings were destroyed, and people drowned
In submerged home or grocery-store or mill;
There was no breakwater.

At suppertime the news arrived to say
The dam had burst, and people ran to where
They saw a wall of water coming fast,
And one man said, "We'd better climb the stair,
Or perish in the flood."

Another shouted, "No, one might as well
Crawl in an egg shell, No, I'll climb a tree."
So up he went just in the nick of time
To save his threatened life, and then to see
His cottage swept away.

Our lad now entered school at Petersville,
And being new and small was picked upon
By boys who did not know his lion-leap,
Nor yet his flying toss, which sprawled them on
Their faces in the dust.

He said he'd rather fight than study books,
And mischief every day with feet and fists
Called for a trouncing with the teacher's stick,
Which raised round welts across his tender wrists,
But he would never cry.

One day a visitor appeared and asked
For apples, and Will threw up a decayed pear
So high and swift into the apple tree,
That its rot-spot flew straight into the ear
Of that poor visitor.

This was so ludicrous and unforeseen
That Will, while digging out the pulp, fell down
With fits of laughter he could not suppress,
Which caused the man to swear and with a frown
He soon forsook the place.
In early Fall the Western Fair was held;  
Balloonists came attired in fancy suits,  
And soaring high in air with swinging stunts.  
They quick released a silken parachute  
And floated down to earth.

It was a thrilling sight we all beheld,  
And Will decided he could do the same,  
So with a large umbrella, off the barn  
He leaped, but suddenly it split in twain  
And dropped him on the ground.

When Will was ten we moved  
That fall we moved away to Sunnyside,  
A London banker's former residence,  
With giant spruces standing by the house;  
An orchard broad and fields of wide expanse,  
And many kinds of flowers.

One autumn evening ere the sun was set,  
A comet stretched its tail across the sky,  
And as the darkness deepened brighter grew,  
As if in splendor it would like to vie  
With planets, moon and stars.

It stayed for months a misty band of light,  
A hundred million miles in greatest length:  
Then sped around the sun and into space,  
Three hundred miles a second in its strength,  
The greatest one of all.

One day we boys went to enjoy a swim,  
Though Will had really never learned before,  
His brothers took him out into mid stream,  
Then tipped the boat and said, "Now make for shore!"  
He did, and learned the art.

The swimming hole was pretty deep and wide  
And diving was a common exercise,  
So Will became an expert very soon  
And carried off the honors and the prize,  
With little competition.
At Sunnyside the birds were numerous, 
Will thought he would begin collecting eggs, 
And in that year secured a nice display 
Of many kinds, all marked with proper tags, 
And in a glass-topped case.

He now sought unique nests to be preserved, 
And scaled a chimney with a pole and scoop, 
That he might filch the house of Chimney Swift; 
And crept out three slim branches with a rope 
To reach a Blue Jay's nest.

One afternoon he climbed a sapling tall, 
Because a humming-bird had nested there, 
And as he grasped the nest all lichen bound, 
The sapling bent, and swaying through the air, 
Dropped him upon the earth.

Then came the picnic of the Sunday School, 
With races where our hero always shone; 
But the committee, this time, called a race 
Between a fine young Indian alone 
And unsuspecting Will.

They stood in line and waited for the shot, 
Our runner's foolish eyes upon the man; 
Then suddenly the pistol barked, and with 
A mighty leap the Indian was gone, 
And Will was left behind.

That year the English sparrows were so thick, 
We thought we ought to thin them out a bit, 
So William jammed the muzzle loader full 
Then sneaking near a group, obtained a hit, 
And gathered just sixteen.

And now our subject tried to smoke cigars 
But he got deathly sick - the foolish kid, 
Then crawled beneath the barn and took a drink 
Of lager beer the hired man had hid, 
But it just made him worse.
1885 -- 1886

At Sunnyside we built a large hot-house,
With gaping furnace and a chimney tall,
And in the furnace pit we boys reclined,
To talk about the sweetest girl of all
And bake apples on the coals.

One Saturday while working in the place,
Will heard a quiet, smothered, gurgling sound,
’Twas his little sister drowning in a barrel
Where she had dropped her doll, and trying found
She could not rescue it.

The water was not very deep at all,
But she was head-first in, and would have died
Had no one happened in the place just then,
To hear the noise, and to have stoutly tried
To pull her up and out.

One Sunday afternoon when with a group
Of boys returning home from Sunday School,
He climbed a picket fence for russets rare,
And turning to descend, the little fool
Was caught by his coat-tail.

That was a sight to make the fellows laugh,
As each one tried to free him from the fence
To no avail, until he gave a jerk
And ripped his Sunday meeting coat, and thence
Fell headlong in the grass.

This was his hobby age, and like a boy
He gathered cancelled postage stamps galore,
And shells, and pictures of the nations flags,
And butterflies and bird’s eggs ever more,
And read geology.

One afternoon his sister had some friends
As visitors upon the lawn for tea,
But Will was shy and he would not attend,
So all the girls decided they would see
And kiss the bashful boy.
1887-1888

One glorious summer day at four o'clock,
A brilliant ball of fire cut the air
And burst with blinding light and thunder clap,
And then continued westward with a flare,
But it was never found.

That year the circus came to town and Will
Was there to see the clowns cavort and leap
High over elephants, and while in air
Turn summersaults, and falling in a heap
Pounce to their feet again.

This was another challenge for our lad,
Who thought that he could do as well as they,
So built a spring-board in the barn at home
On which to practice many times a day,
And land upon the straw.

After a month or so of steady work,
And careful timing of the summersaults,
He called the boys to see what he could do;
And dazzled them with several double vaults
And claimed he could do more.

They shouted their applause and clapped aloud;
He climbed aboard the spring and made a leap,
And summersaulted twice, but failed to make
The third, and landed in a crumpled heap,
And almost broke his neck.

One autumn evening in the harvest time,
While bringing in the last remaining crop,
A clap of thunder scared the horses and
They ran away and smashed the wagon top:
But Will held bravely on.

That evening as the sun went slowly down,
The boys returned the horses to the field
And Will forgot the clothes-line on the way,
Which caught him at the neck so he was reeled
And toppled to the ground.
1889 - 1890

In eighteen eighty six our lad was in
The entrance class, and yet he could not share
That coveted award, for circumstance
Decreed that he should stay at home each year,
To help about the place.

For four long years he had to go to school
In the same class, then stop and work at home,
So that he could not try, but then at last
He was allowed to go, and safely passed,
But could not enter High.

That Fall he went to learn the Graphic arts,
With Knowles and Co. for he had special skill,
And in five years apprenticeship attained
The mastery of form, and could at will
Sketch anything he wished.

To reach this printing plant he had to walk
From Sunnyside right into town, and back
Again at night, and many nights it was
So dark he could not see the beaten track
More than a foot ahead.

The second year they moved to London South,
Four miles from home, yet William kept right on,
Through mud and rain, through heat and cold and snow,
Sometimes he would reach home so weak and wan
He didn't care to eat.

About this time our subject sought to learn
how dynamos and motors made and used
The strange electric energy to make
The light and heat and power it produced,
To lighten all our loads.

He soon learned how to build a battery,
And then a belt and an induction coil,
And did not stop until he made as well
A large glass-wheel machine, with foil
And crank and brush and comb.
In eighteen ninety, he can ne'er forget
Those strange momentous moments, when he faced
The question of his soul's eternal peace,
And what to do with Christ, and how he paced
The floor and fought it through.

And then he felt the call to go and preach
The Gospel of the gracious Son of God;
But education always needed funds,
And fifty cents a week was all he made:
And so he had to wait.

But he had waited four years to a day.
To try his entrance, and forget suspense,
So now he dressed for a much higher wage,
And it became a solid hundred cents
Each week he walked and worked.

He saved and went without and borrowed too,
Until he bought himself a safety wheel:
And then one morning as he passed his girl,
His cycle slipped and toppled down the hill,
While he sprawled at her feet.

One moonlit night he tried to pass a man,
Whose humpback swayed right then into his path,
The wheel stuck tight between his bandy legs,
And William climbed the old man's hump and both
Plunged headlong in the ditch.

About this time the art school tests were held,
And 'though he never could attend a class,
They wanted him to go and try his skill
And were amazed to find he made a pass
And won the prizes too.

That self—same year the county bowed again,
Beneath another hurricane so wild
That many barns were wrecked, and William saw
Our barn roof torn off and quickly piled
Upon our only cutter.
This new success marked him as worthy of
Official place, and so without ado
Was secretary of the Artist's Club,
Forerunner more than sixty years ago
Of the Western Art League.

Port Stanley was a favorite picnic ground,
And swimming there was practiced more and more,
So youth of every size and shape and age
Splashed in the lake or lay upon the shore,
Beneath the summer sun.

One evening when the Moon was shining full,
And spread a golden carpet to the beach,
We boys and girls together waded in,
And Maisie went so far she could not reach
The bottom with her feet.

She sank from sight and then put up her hands,
And waved them as she held her fleeting breath;
Will saw her plight and plunging underneath,
Brought her to shore, back from the jaws of death,
But never got reward.

It was the year that the Chicago Fair
Surprised mankind with wonders old and new;
And Will decided with his meagre funds,
That he would go and see Chicago too
And meet his brother Fred.

While there he made a book of sketches too,
And wrote descriptions of each wondrous thing
That stirred his soul with unrestrained delight,
And made his eager mind attempt to wring
The secret out of it.

In Chicago Will observed a giant throng
All crowding in a spacious theatre,
Where bill-boards said a great evangelist
Was to preach about the Apostle Peter,
He was D.L. Moody.
1894-1895

When he returned he daily filled our ears,
With stranger stories than in fiction books,
Till father got the notion he should go,
And in the Autumn he spruced up his looks
To have a holiday.

We bade him fond goodbye, but little thought
That in the dawn a double wreck would slay
Some twenty-eight of those who rode with him,
And maimed a hundred more in such a way
Some wished that they would die.

At Battle Creek the trains had met head-on,
And father although dead was burned as well;
We hastened to the scene and hunted long,
Before we could decide or even tell
Which charred remains were his.

At last we thought about his crooked toe,
And on examination found it there,
So we were soon allowed to take him home,
Not having visited the famous Fair
Nor yet his waiting son.

That very Fall we sold dear Sunnyside,
Then packed a thousand things and moved to town,
Where now the children had a better chance
To go to school, or go together down
To the West London Church.

At twenty-three Will made a trip down East,
To see old Boston where they dumped the tea,
And Bunker Hill, and out to Crescent Beach
To swim his first time in the briny sea,
Surprised that it was salt.

While there one day he took a walk for miles
And lost himself amid the crooked streets,
Then asked a stalwart cop if he could tell
Just where he'd find the Parker House retreat,
He pointed, there it is.
When he returned he found his brother Fred
had come to London for a holiday,
To build and test some gliders in the air;
So they worked in a barn upon the hay,
Behind their cottage home.

At four o'clock each morn they took the thing,
North of the city where the breeze would waft
Them up and down, but it was mostly down,
While Wrights attached a motor to their craft
And quickly zoomed away.

The end of his apprenticeship was near,
And he must seek employment anywhere;
From Rochester, New York, a letter came
Announcing a position open there
That he should come and see.

He did, and then became the foreman too,
And later tried a water-color test
For a Paris Perfume Company of France;
The artists of the city did their best,
But Colgrove won the prize.

This made the others so chagrined that they
Sought to get rid of him without a trace,
By threats and pressures of their Union chief,
And by a Union visit to his place,
But all to no avail.

Meanwhile he studied illustration in
The famous Athenaeum School of Art,
And did so well in sketching (pen and ink)
That he received a drawing of Saint Mark's,
The ornate church of Venice.

'Twas there as well that he conceived the plan
Of having paper faces quickly made,
Of both the presidential candidates,
A party sign that each man on parade
Should wear with special pride.
The orders came requesting thousands more,
Alas, the firms who work in paper mash
Could not supply them in required time,
And so the million fortune went to smash,
And never was revived.

One summer eve while writing in his room,
Two parsons called to see him, they had heard
That he was reading every night alone,
And felt the call to preach the sacred word,
But had no high-school grade.

To make the story short, the upshot was
That they then promised him some work to do,
If he would go to their church boarding-school
At Lima, where he'd find the teachers who
Would plan his future path.

At stroke of twelve one February night,
The shout of fire rang throughout the halls,
And all the boys were trying to escape
Through broken glass and down four-storied walls
Mid choking smoke and flame.

Our student felt the floor becoming warm,
And gathered his belongings in his trunk,
Then threw it out the window by main strength
And leaping, fell upon his hand caplunk,
And dragged his trunk away.

In two short years he covered all the course,
Been artist, poet, speaker of his class,
Had built the Leghorn rooster six feet tall,
And graduated with an honor pass
And Webster's Unabridged.

Before he left, the board requested him
To stay and make his college Middletown,
That they would loan him without interest,
The needed funds, and this they would put down
In legal black and white.
1900-1901

But Will refused and once again came home,
And soon was foreman of Ontario Lith.
But just at Christmas time it was burned down
And he began his course in Western with
Three months already gone.

'Twas lack of funds again that bothered him,
And then his brother Charles found him a job
In Montreal, but soon the owner failed,
And Will was out of work, and this played hob
With his supply of cash.

But he at once designed a new lamp shade
For factory workers, and he made more dough
Than at his trade, yet sought a better place,
And found it at the Montreal Litho.
Where he remained two years.

Three times that year the reaping spectre Death
Stalked him, once on the mountain's granite brow,
For as he climbed his foot-hold gave away,
And he would have fallen on the rocks below,
Had he not grasped a twig.

Another day while crossing old Craig Street,
A runaway approached him very fast;
The people yelled, he rushed with all his might,
The horses touched his coat tail as they passed,
And Death was foiled once more.

And yet again the spectre followed him,
Like Nemesis as classic stories tell,
This time it was a shipping case that slipped,
From someone on a higher floor and fell
In pieces at his side.

When first he went to Montreal to work,
He grew a Vandyke beard and moustache too,
And tossed his auburn hair back on his head
To show he was an artist like the few
Who dared to do the same.
1902-1903

Then back to Western for a second year,
And in the Summer sold a doctor’s books,
And preached all year at High Street Mission church,
And in the Fall returned to Litho. works
In grand old Montreal.

At the Royal Canadian Academy
He sketched the human models every way;
At National Monument of Design
He studied modeling with a sculptor’s clay,
And won an annual prize.

When classes closed the teacher said to him,
"Don’t waste your time in wearing cap and gown,
But stay with me, and you will teach this art
And still design for any firm in town,
And be a sculptor too!"

But Will refused, and with his brother Mark
Went through the West and saw the prairie crop,
And climbed the Sulphur Mountain close to Banff,
Above eight thousand feet, and took its top
And brought it proudly home.

While coming down the Mount they heard a noise,
As though a stag or bear were on their track,
But soon they saw it was a loosened rock,
Which hurtled headlong just behind their back,
And down a deep ravine.

When they had landed safe below, and still
Above the town, Will found he’d overdone
And had to take the train to Vancouver,
Where he could soon be operated on
For painful hemorrhoids.

At Revelstoke while waiting for the train
He chanced to meet Will Saunders, London man,
And early the next morn was wakened by the
Crows that fought for refuse from the cans,
And left them worse than dogs.
When this was done and he was well again, ne visited the famous Stanley Park; Swam in the ocean at a pleasure beach, And brought some water as a sure mark That he had seen the sea.

At that year's close the busy litho firm Appointed him as foreman, and quite dumb, Suggested he should quit his college course And stay with them, and in a year become A member of the firm.

Put he refused again, and in Mc.Gill Won highest grade that Composition has, And special marks in microscopic work, And the Board of Governor's annual prize In two philosophies.

His holiday was spent in visiting The Adirondack Mountains, on the trail To Exposition Pan American At Buffalo, where he saw the mitred rail He fashioned years before.

From there he went to see the Falls again, And thence to London for a little spell; And a reunion, then to Lindsay town To see his college friend who had been ill, But he was not at home.

Upon inquiry he learned from one near by That Wes. was fishing somewhere on the lake, So jumping in a boat Will rowed a mile, And found him sitting pretty, wide awake With his own fiancee.

That Fall saw Wes and Will return to school For their last year of B.A. concentration, And for a careful estimate of yearly costs Of food and fares and college education, And chime of wedding bells.
When he arrived in Montreal that day
He met the girl he thought might be his wife,
But when she said she crawled beneath the bed
When e'er it thundered hard, he felt that life
With her would not be sweet.

While at his studies he was president
Of young folks in St. James United Church,
And led a band of youth, The Solid Ten,
And when he was about to leave was urged
To be assistant pastor.

But he refused, theology was next,
And he would later go to Boston U:
Meanwhile he met the girl that captured him
And promised to be his, when he was through
Three years theology.

And now he preached in many little towns,
And led a male quartette of college chums,
And went on field-trips in geology,
And helped at Brewery Mission in the slums,
And saw the Devil's Garden.

One day he got a note to see a prof.
Was told that he had failed Zoology,
And answered that he did not care to learn
How much a man is like a Chimpanzee
Or any other beast.

The teacher then looked very cross and said,
"You'll have to learn it if you want to pass;"
Of course he would not lose his Arts degree,
And in the end stood highest in his class,
For he had learned it well.

This was a time of struggle to the last,
A happy struggle since great things were planned
And we had health and laudable desire
Since we sought ends alone divinely grand,
Within the will of God.
Then came his graduation at Mc.Gill,
And as he took his parchment was acclaimed
Amid the throng in Convocation Hall;
He lowly bowed his head, and then was named
A Prize Man of Mc.Gill.

This signal honor filled him with delight,
And his professor in philosophy
Said he was proud of him, and hoped he would
Take lots of time to read philosophy,
As well as preaching truth.

One gorgeous summer evening after work,
He and his sweetheart sought the Mountain side,
And though the darkness came they still remained,
But soon a mounted ranger them espied
And they must go to jail.

But Will stood up and said, "Now wait a bit,
You don't put folks in jail when they are wed,"
To which the cop replied, "It's past the time",
And with his lantern sized them up and said,
"Get out of here or else!"

At length our student's plans were made,
And in the Fall he went to Boston U.
With Sammy Irwin, who had been with him
Some years before in Lima boarding school,
As happy rooming mates.

When they were settled in their new abode,
Will got a job in a large restaurant,
He served ice-water to the guests and thus
Earned all his meals, and then without restraint
Grew fatter every week.

In Boston there was much to see of course,
The Library, Museums and the sea,
The Sculptor's workshops and their taste in art,
The Lincoln statue, Harvard's Varsity
And the State House Golden Dome.
1906-1907

While busy with his theologic course,
He was assistant in the Boston Club
Which held its meetings in an unused hall,
For slum-bred boys of Massachusetts Hub,
Almost a thousand strong.

One torrid summer day a monster tank
Of black molasses burst and worse than mud,
Flowed down the street and into homes and stores,
Entrapping dogs and people in its flood,
And causing endless fun.

The years soon passed and it was time to wed,
So he returned to By-Town for his bride,
And then right back to Boston the same night
Of San Francisco's terrible rock slide,
Close by the Golden Gate.

In early Spring they went to their first charge,
The church at Ayer in Massachusetts state;
But he continued work at Boston U.
Until another year had met its fate
And he was nearly through.

The day of ordination then arrived,
And he was made a minister complete,
And sent to serve a church down by the sea,
With fisher folk and millionaires replete,
At Swampscott on the rocks.

Through all these months he was preparing still,
His thesis on the Fact of Moral Law,
And then received his Master Arts degree,
From Western U. in London where he saw
His first of college days.

At Ayer they found a fine large room with made
And went each mom to gather services out,
And well trained into Boston every day.
To complete his theologic course as dear.
To Indians, Swampscott means, the ruddy rocks
Which stud the beach of Boston's swank north shore;
When they arrived they found no parsonage,
And had to raise the funds, and what is more
They bought one very soon.

Will begged the money from the millionaires,
And then from merchants in the city Lynn
Obtained the furnishings of every kind,
All freely given, so when they moved in,
They lived in luxury.

Their neighbor was a noted scientist,
Professor Thompson of electric fame;
Their friend, a millionaire, supplied the funds,
That on Cape God they might together claim
A happy holiday.

At last the graduation day arrived,
And Will received the coveted B. D.
And then was urged to stay and to complete
Some further studies in philosophy,
But he desired to preach.

One very early morn at ten to two,
When wild geese chattered on their chartless way;
Or were they stories that left behind a babe?
For very soon one heard the nursemaid say,
"Thank heaven, it's a boy".

They hoped and prayed the first might be a boy,
And here he was a living paragon;
They thanked the Lord and pledged new loyalty,
As they began the task they'd taken on-
To rear a soul from God.

In August nineteen nine the treasure came
And straightway found his place in every heart,
And for his gentle mien was called a prince,
Because he always sought the better part.
And merited the name.
1910—1911

In 1910 they moved to Holliston,
And Annie took the boy to Ottawa,
Instead of sleeping he cried all the night,
Although she carried him, like any Ma
All up and down the coach.

In that same year they saw the glowing form
Of Halley's Comet, in the month of May
Go round the solar sphere and into space,
From earth some fifteen million miles away,
Yet we passed through its tail.

One glorious summer day the Boston press
Announced Claude Graham White, in airoplane,
Would land at Quincy Field, and so Will went
To see him flying swiftly o'er the main,
And gliding to the beach.

It was a thrilling sight for one to see;
Vast throngs had come to see him make the grade,
Ten thousand eyes were strained to glimpse the plane
And then to cheer the man, who first had made
A flight from ship to shore.

This moved our preacher to invent a toy
He called The Red Bird with its spool and string;
He made a basket-full and in a Boston store
Showed how they'd fly, and quickly sold the thing
To a small toy concern.

While there they feasted on dame nature's wealth,
Because not far from town there was a field
Of low blackberries on a sandy slope,
Ten acres broad and with a splendid yield
From which to fill the pails.

One night while coming from the village store
They saw four screaming children locked at home
By thoughtless parents who had gone to lodge
Supposing they would play while they were gone,
But fear crept in apace.
1912--1913

And now they moved to lovely Worcester, Mass.
A college town a quarter million strong,
With great industrial plants and many parks,
Where Grover talked with Burbank till the gong
Said it was twelve o'clock.

The parsonage was spacious to a fault,
And there it was that Ada saw the light,
And her Aunt Ada played nurse for a month,
And washed and baked and made the beds just right,
And served delicious meals.

'Twas there Will sold his church to wealthy Jews,
And bought a new location farther East,
Where soon a brand new parsonage and church
Were built, and it became, to say the least,
Third largest in the place.

And then he made advances to a church,
And joined its group of members to his own,
While all the city wondered at their speed,
But that was largely due to Deacon Stone
Who led the other board.

When Conference convened one April day,
The bishop wished to hear about the cause,
And when the Superintendent did report,
The preachers gave tumultuous applause
No fewer than five times.

Young Rogers now was nearly four years old,
And needed much more boyish exercise;
His dad designed for him the Victor car,
And sold the rights to a large enterprise,
The largest in the world.

And for his Sister Ada, Dad designed
A curious set of blocks called Funny Face
With which she built a woman and a man,
And little boy with hat and gun and case
Just like a Rover Scout.
This was the year the German war began,  
And caused the death of millions by its wounds;  
Starvation stalked the land, and dread disease  
Ran rampant o'er the world, until the Huns  
Were made to lick the dust.

Our subject's work so highly praised, brought him  
Two calls to churches; one in Chelsea, Mass.—  
A Boston city suburb by the sea;  
And Springfield's second church of higher class,  
But he refused them both.

He then was sent to preach at Monson, Mass.,  
The richest town in all that wealthy state,  
Where hats were bleached by thousands in the fields,  
And little Ada roamed far down the street,  
She said, "To get some frogs."

That fall fond parents saw their growing boy,  
Young Rogers, start to school with stripped pants;  
While dad at home had carpenters at work  
Upon some alterations in the manse,  
And a veranda too.

One Sunday Will announced that he would preach  
The next Lord's Day, upon the curious creed  
The Unitarians held across the street;  
That morning dawned to find them all agreed  
To hear what he would say.

On Monday morning the owner of the mill,  
Called Will's chief layman early out of bed,  
Demanding that he be dismissed, or he would close  
His mill and thus rob thousands of their bread.  
A Unitarian.

October came, and with the turning leaves  
Arrived the faithful store, all laden down  
With Gord., the second boy, a little chap  
Who, with his large blue eyes and woolly crown  
Was captor of us all.
That year they had to move to Southampton,  
A tiny town of residential scope;  
A beautiful new church where brother Fred  
Appeared one Sunday night amid the group,  
To hear his brother preach.

'Twas there that Gordon had the Chicken-pox,  
And R. with all his class and many more  
Was photographed; and Will was asked to be  
July the Fourth's guest orator  
By all the veterans.

From there we all could see the famed Mount Tom,  
Where by an inclined rail folks reached the tops,  
To see the vast expanse of rolling hills,  
And other mounts and nearby towns and many crops  
Through several telescopes.

In town the favorite sport was soft baseball.  
And Will devised a plan so everyone  
Could play it in the school when darkness came,  
A baseball game so well and nicely done  
That it required skill.

In seventeen they moved to Orange, Mass.,  
Where Grover had the church all overhauled;  
Where Gordon strayed away and soon was lost,  
While Rogers sighed and little Ada bawled,  
But soon the lad was found.

That Fall the firm that bought the patent rights  
Of Rogers' Victor handcar, wrote to Will,  
Inviting him to be the head of their great works,  
At triple pay and generous royalties  
On his invented toys.

Within another month a smaller firm  
Asked him to do the same for them, that they  
Would buy his set of curious building blocks  
Called "Funny Face", then gave a check to pay,  
But he refused both jobs.
1918

That year the U.S. joined the German war; The pastor of another church entrained, And Will was given charge of both because He had a family and of course remained To carry on the work.

When Rogers got diphtheria at school, His mother was close quarantined with him; The other three went to a neighbor's home, And thus escaped, although their chance was slim, Because the case was mild.

Meanwhile the war was raging over there, And Will was asked to be the chairman of War-speakers board and censor of the shows, As well as leader of the anti-liquor move, Along with his two kirks.

It was a time of much illicit trade In every kind of beer and wine and scotch; And Will haled several men before the judge, And put detectives in hotels to watch The wicked bootleg game.

One night he called police to go with him To search a building on the edge of town, And found no less than fifty-three full barrels Of whiskey in the place, and dumped it down The nearby county drain.

And now another business offer came, To take full charge of a new toy concern, Completed by the richest man in town; But Will would not accept although he'd earn Three times his salary.

That year December was a fateful month, Since scarlet fever visited their home And put young Rogers once again in bed, While the two smaller ones were forced to room Across the busy street.
1919

The old year passed into oblivion,
One child was sick, the other two away,
And then the hand of influenzic death
Snatched from their midst on that eventful day
Their model mother dear.

Within a week Will had to go to bed,
But could not stay because his little son
Required his attention and his skill
As acting cook and nursemaid all in one;
No nurses could be found.

The doctors say that it would never do,
To let this plan continue for a week,
And finally they got a nurse so Will
Could stay in bed and rest, he was so weak
From many coughing spells.

Meanwhile Aunt Mabel came from Ottawa,
And took the children to her parent's home,
And learned how Ada had crept down the stairs,
And at the bottom slept there all alone
Until the morning dawned.

The funeral was held but father could not go,
Nor could his son, whose fever lingered on;
But as the weary weeks went slowly by
They gained in strength, and 'fore the snow was gone,
Were packed for Ottawa.

While all three children stayed at Ottawa
Their father went to London, where he found
A suite of rooms in his own mother's house,
And then returned and brought them homeward bound
To start their life anew.

The end of June saw him again in Mass.,
To pack and ship his household goods and books,
And gather their small bank accounts at last,
And bid the folks adieu, whose sorry looks
Made him appear quite sad.

End of Stage I.
STAGE II.
- 1920 and 1921 -

That year Will bought his mother's city lots and with his brother built cottages but soon was asked to become superintendent of a craft school for returned disabled men and continued there a year designing original toys and playthings. These were made by the men for Eaton Co. Toronto. During his evenings he continued clay-modeling and produced several interesting pieces including a group of two Viators three feet high, a copy of a fine Parian bust of Gladstone and a small bust of himself. During his stay in London he was guest cher in most of the city's churches and gave many colored chalks in their Sunday schools.

He was now urged to join the London Conference and, on account of mother's continued illness, decided to do so. This meant, of course, he should have a wife to go along with him and the children, but finding a suitable companion was no small task. Nevertheless, with the sister's help, he was successful in securing the hand of Miss Mary A. Ns., a graduate civic nurse whose unusual talents have made her an efficient and loving mother and wife. They were married on June 1921 and at the ensuing Annual Conference were appointed to Wallace Listowel, Ontario. Here they purchased a T Ford car and went right work and during that year baptized 75 persons and received over 50 the church. This was the first time the children had lived in the city and they will never forget their varied experiences.

In the Fall of 1921 the family drove in to the Western Fair and their return trip were speeding along in the twilight and singing suddenly they came to a very sharp turn which the driver could take and had to plunge straight into the ditch to keep from rolling. This quick decision, however, threw Mrs Colgrove against the now windshield and caused a painful scalp wound which delayed us all night but in the morning we were off again for home.

- 1922 and 1923 -

The next summer they were appointed to Brigden which is noted for mud, but the church was quite modern and could boast of a very good organ and much good music. In his spare time the minister produced a silent radio set with which he received 140 stations on head-sets. Later he drew a large map of the sky which won him a place in the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada to which he belongs. In the Spring of 1925 Will packed his suitcase and went to London for another serious operation for hemorrhoids which was very successful and apparently permanent.

During the second year on this charge he made three church unions when the Presbytery met his superintendent reported that he had put himself out of a job and there was no place for him. This so shocked the meeting that protests came from various ministers and the man was forced to secure him a place.
One evening while we were listening to the radio a very unusual phenomenon occurred in the form of a slight earth tremor which seemed to act like a roller passing beneath the house. It rattled the dishes but did no damage. Another evening we motored to Courtright where an excellent four-inch telescope was set up for the public to view Mars which was then in opposition. It was a thrilling sight.

At the following Conference we were sent to Cedar Springs on Lake Erie where we were surrounded by tobacco farms, and before we got settled some members wanted to know when the new minister would preach on tobacco. They had just got rid of Will's predecessor because he was against it, so Will replied that he would not preach on a subject until he had studied it carefully. As time passed several members asked when he intended to preach that sermon but they were assured that it was under preparation and would be preached when it was ready. Some became impatient and began to suggest that the minister was stalling but they found out later when he presented to the board the material for twelve sermons. After twenty months of intensive study and travel along the lake the broadside was ready but the board was so taken back that they asked the minister to preach only one sermon. Will would not agree and said he would compromise and preach only three, to which they consented, but those three had all the thunder of the whole twelve but they were unaware of the storm until it struck, then they wanted to cancel the other two but agreed to let the people decide. This they did by large majority votes. Needless to say that the following Sundays saw all the churches crowded with chattering people from as far as Chatham, and the local paper in Blenheim undertook to print the whole twelve sermons, but as the eighth went to press the publisher called the minister and said he was losing subscribers and wished to drop the series. Will motored over to see him and after much talk, handed him a ten dollar bill, for which the printer agreed to complete the job. How nice of him???

When the series was concluded some mothers desired to have the twelve in booklet form and a small fund was gathered to finance the project but it was hard to find a printer who would undertake the job. Finally it was done to the great satisfaction of scores of families on the lake front and inland and strange to say, the church board did not kick the minister out, but raised his salary instead.

At the next Conference the Colgroves were called to the North St. Charge away from the tobacco area, but whether this was engineered by those interested in tobacco or not may never be known, but one thing is certain, that charge will not soon forget that minister. At Cedar Springs Will had built his first mechanical planetarium, had bought an excellent three-inch telescope and had traded the Ford car in on a new Chandler sedan and was ready for his new charge.
North Street church had just been built and was up to date in every way. Its two attached appointments were also in good condition so that everything seemed ready for a fine start. The congregations grew rapidly so that the leading members talked of an enlargement; at Littlewood a union was made with a small Presbyterian church and their buildings sold, while at White Oak all was harmony. During the year, as was his custom, the minister held evangelistic services. At North St. they were very successful but when he announced that he would extend them to Littlewood church some of the members refused to attend and took their children to a barn dance instead. When asked about it they began a whispering campaign to refuse the minister's salary and force him out of the charge. This divided the charge so that at the next Conference Will chose to go to the Cairngorm Charge where they would live in Strathroy and have high school accommodation.

This charge had been greatly neglected so that much work was necessary to bring it back to normal. Another union was made and all three appointments were trebled and each property was repaired and redecorated.

- 1930 to 1933 -

In 1930 the family made a 1600 mile motor trip to Boston and Providence to visit their old charges and in his spare time father built a four-inch refractor telescope and a manual planetarium and lectured on astronomy in many places free of charge. The Chandler car was now traded in for a new Dodge which the children used for a trip to Ottawa. Will now assembled his notes on astronomy for a series of articles on the members of the Solar System for the Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. In 1933 father attended the convention of the American Astronomical Society in Ottawa and that Fall published his book "The Solar System". During this same period we bought our home at 2 Christie Street and moved in.

- 1934 to 1936 -

At Christmas we returned from Cairngorm concert through a heavy downpour of sleet and Will had to keep his head out to see the road, which resulted in a bad attack of sinus trouble for which he had to have an operation. The family now bought a special Dodge car and felt rather big about it. Father was asked to join the University Extension Dept. and lectured in many places at two dollars per night. In the Fall Will set up his own astronomical exhibit at the Western Fair and thereafter was appointed to set up the University exhibits at the fair.

In 1936 he was given charge of Pilgrim United church and did his part toward a union with Dundas Street Centre church but they refused to complete the agreement and in 1937 at 65 he retired and joined the Botanical department at the university where he deposited his collection of over 700 mounted specimens of wild flowers.

Thus the second stage of his activities closed.
STAGE III.
1937 to 1939

This was the year of the worst flood in London's history. Published "Divine Healing".
Burglars ransacked our house for jewelry and money.
Made Galaxy model and Helical paths of the planets.
Elected president of the London centre of R.A.S.C.
Invented the Sotellunium.
Observed the opposition of Mars.
Observed and obtained the Dresden meteorite.
Built the motorized planetarium.
The King and Queen visited London.
Built the arbor in backyard.

1940 to 1941

Built the Stellar Radiant.
Attended the Astronomical meeting in Toronto.
Took airplane trip home.
Hume Cronyn Memorial Observatory opened and
W.G.O. appointed in charge and public lecturer.
Took trip west with wife to see her brother and the roses.
Botanized Stanley Park and Observatory Hill at Victoria.
Observed the opposition of Mars with telescope at U.W.O.

1942 to 1943

Made large planets and two designers.
Visited Sudbury and botanized Copper Cliff.
Won the Chant Medal of the R.A.S.C.
Made small planets and Planeto-zodiacc.
Photographed the Whipple comet.
Wrote many poems (so called)

1944 to 1945

Designed and published the New-Way Star Map.
Also the Student cardboard Solar System.
Published the booklet, "Some Solar System Data".
Built the Leaping Rabbit and the Rocking Doll Carriage.
Attended the O.E.A. at Toronto with instruments.
Published, "Tom, Dick and Harry," on tobacco.

1946 to 1948

Wrote critical survey of "Some Sects".
Made suggestions for over 400 changes in the Hymnary.
Built six Sotelluniums and several Planeto-zodiaccs.
Made large roller star map and more poetry.
Wrote 12 monthly star-map articles for Free Press.
Finished the first two stages of his autobiography.
Invented the Rainbow Piano (The Prismatic Piano)
Instructor in clay modeling class under U.W.O.
Made a bust of Dr. Fox.
- 1949 -- 1950 -

Wrote mid-month astronomical articles for the Free Press.
Continued as Clay-modeling instructor.
Continued in charge of the Observatory.
Built a 1/40 model of the great 200 inch Hale Telescope.
Planned and published a booklet, "Know Your Stars".
Viewed meteors and lectured about them three hours.
Fainted the next morning at the front door.
Finished some Planeto-zodiacs.
Fainted again on Richmond Street.
Completed the Tellazodiac, a new instrument.
In November of 1950 was asked to send six instruments to the Franklin Science Institute of Philadelphia, U.S.A.
Planned a new three-year course for the London Sculptors' Guild.
Set up a demonstration and display of clay-modeling in Simpsons.
Wrote several new poems and arranged them in book form of 100 pages ready for the printer.

- 1951 -- 1952 -

Published my book of poems entitled, "Spare Time Poems".
Resigned from the Department of Mathematics and Astronomy.
Resigned from the London Sculptors' Guild.
Reclassified the specimens of the U.W.O. botanical herbarium.
This is a composite of seventeen collections, in all 14,000.
Suffered two weeks with flu and three weeks with penicillin.
Wrote a booklet on, "Modern Answers to Modern Questions" about several biblical problems and published it for Presbytery.
Was called to the office of President Hall to receive a silver tray which is the symbol of retirement from U.W.O.
Moved the Observatory shop to my basement.
Was allowed a bedroom for a den which is now a museum of my work.
On February 26 enjoyed a most delightful surprise arranged by my wife and family. It was my eightieth birthday anniversary and called forth the attached poem, "Eighty Years".
Summary Of Chief Events

Twice he was born -- Physically -- Spiritually.

Four times attacked by disease -- Measles,Grippe,Influ,Sinus.

Six times operated on -- 3 Haemorrhoids, 2 Boils, 1 Sinus.

Three times forced to stop school -- Entrance, College twice.

Six times escaped death -- Pump,drowning, choking, Mt.Royal,
races, runaway team, shipping case.

Three naked-eye Comets observed -- 1882 - 1910 - 1937.

Three large meteors observed -- 1890 - 1928 - 1939.

Three times observed Mars in opposition -- 1924 - 1939 - 1941.

Seven times engaged a publisher -- Divine Healing, Tobacco Leaves,
The Solar System, Tom, Dick and Harry, S.S.Data, Know Your Stars.

Three times witnessed hurricanes -- Sand storm, willows, barn roof.

Four times visited large observatories -- Harvard, Ottawa, Toronto, Victoria.

Three times burned out -- Knowles Co. G.W.Seminary, Ontario Litho.

Twice built gliders -- 2 in north London, 1 in Holliston, Mass.

Won several prizes in art -- In London, Ont. Rochester, N.Y. Montreal, PQ.

Three University degrees received -- Mc.Gill, Western, Boston.

A variety of college honors were bestowed in each institution.

Eight times offered big business positions -- Toronto, Montreal, Can.

Winchendon, Athol and Orange Mass.

Three times offered large churches -- Asst. St. James, Montreal and Chelsea and Springfield, Mass.

Twice they welcomed the stork -- Rogers, Ada and Gordon.

Twice they went to the Pacific coast -- Vancouver, Denver, Victoria.

Four times to the Atlantic coast -- Boston, Providence, Martha's Vineyard and Cape Cod.

Three times climbed mountains -- Montreal, Banff and Vancouver (car).


Twice up in airplanes -- London with stunts, Toronto to London.

Twice married -- Lucky Guy - Annie and Mary.

In one year during the first war he was pastor of two churches,

Censor of movies, Chair of Drys, and Chair of War Speakers Forum.

Has designed a dozen original toys and playthings.

Has invented and constructed 30 astronomical instruments.

Has published several booklets and many papers on various subjects.

Was superintendent of the school for returned men after first war.

Has served several appointments as pastor in and around London.

Has made four church unions and built churches and parsonages.

Has collected over 700 botanical specimens and gave them to U.W.O.

Reorganized the University herbarium of over 14,000 specimens.

Has been in charge of the Hume Cronyn Memorial Observatory 10 yrs.


Scores of other semi-important matters may be are recorded in his very unusual and interesting poetic autobiography above.
1. When I had lived on borrowed time
A dizzy decade more than most,
Who fade at three score years and ten,
And seldom have a chance to boast
Of what they've thought or said or done
To gain a place within the sun.

2. My pretty, scheming, better-half,
Unknown to anyone in town,
Planned how she'd fix a glad surprise
For her dear husband, as a crown
For many years of hectic life,
Endeavouring to please his wife.

3. So when the anniversary
Of my grand, natal day arrived,
I saw the gorgeous plan unfold
As it had been so well contrived;
And then I knew that I would be
The centre of a talking bee.

4. The first to come that happy morn
To join the fun for father's sake,
Were Pete and Sis and Robin Hay
From fair Toronto by the Lake;
They brought a score of daffodils
To garnish all the window sills.

5. And placed a large Azalea
Fullblown upon my trembling lap,
And in my hand a well-filled sock
Which made my wondering eyelids flap;
I looked around and grinning said,
"Will someone quickly hold my head".

6. But ere I could get off my chair
There came a telegram from Gord,
Together with a rose bouquet
To glorify our festive board;
I gasped, "That's from our second son,
And Doris, Barry, Marilyn".

7. And then 'twas time for lunch you see,
So Mom and I and Sis and Pete
And hungry Robin Colgrove Kay
Looked round for something good to eat;
And then we had an hour's rest
Before we donned our Sunday best.

8. When suddenly the doorbell rang
To usher in a troubadour,
Who sang the "Happy Birthday" song
Like Harry Lauder, as of yore;
His name is Wallace, famous Scot,
But with no kilties we could spot.

9. By three o'clock some folks had come,
With gifts of several different kinds,
Of food and fruit and flowers rare,
And books from literary minds;
All afternoon and all night as well
They came to ring our front doorbell.

10. The second group was ministers
From modest domiciles around,
Each with his wife upon his arm,
No better neighbors could be found
Whose years entitled them to be
True knights of this fine chivalry.

11. And after them the doctors came
To shake my hand and wish me well,
And comment on my youthful form
And envy me a wife so swell;
They talked and ate and drank some tea
And then departed praising me.

12. It was a great surprise, 'tis true,
And one that ne'er can be forgot,
Because its happy fellowship
From truly Christian love was wrought;
They made nice speeches, full of cheer
And wished I'd reach my hundredth year.

So thank you chilens for the way
You helped observe my big birthday;
When you are eighty I'll be there
To put you in your old armchair.

D A D.