

The South.

THE OLD FAMILY CRADLE.

Laid in the garret where Jackeas and dust
Are stored when many a trust,
Silently standing amid its compeers,
Mother's mementoes of many score years,
Shapeless and homely, a cast aside thing,
Thus the old family cradle I sing:

One with vermilion its coating was gay,
Now all its brightness is faded away;
Worn is the pain from the sides and the head,
There no soft covered longer in sleep,
And the still watchful eye over the door
Lies in silent, dimm'd wear and sore.
Yet there are thoughts full of goodness and grace,
Brightening with beauty the homely face,
Speaking to us now of the years that are past,
Changed are the living and dead,
What are thy mementoes, joyful and glad,
Family histories, mirthful or sad?

Once a young mother bent over thy side,
Fair, as a maiden, and blithe, and full of delight;
There were words of love and of care,
And the old cradle rocked pleased at the sight,
While the old cradle rocked gently away,
Singing in musical murmur to say,
To and fro, to and fro, little ones sleep,
Ang is their water, and the milk shall keep
To and fro, to and fro, as we rock,
And the swift moments, while hurrying by,
Lullaby, lullaby, sing as they fly."

But the light moment, long years on their wings—
Summer and Autumn and Winter and Spring
Quickly succeeding, pass quickly away,
And the young parent are careworn and gray,
Children are gathered by table and fire,
Blessing and honor to mother and sire.

Still the old cradle rocks steadily there,
Still there are treasures to trust to its care,
It who's pillow in infancy prest,
Soothed by the song of a mother, to rest,
Now in her hands stand stately with pride,
Watching the sleepers with fatherly pride,
And the old cradle, having still,
Guardeth a basket its jewel from ill.

Gone are the aged ones now to rest,
In age it is commonest to service once more,
A mother's heart, how bittersweet, astray,
Would sleep in this bosom its troubles share,
Alas! for the ceaseless and wearisome care,
A guardian steamer is sought in thy room,
And the sleep of the cradle exchanged for the tomb.

Rest, then, old friend, in a quiet profound,
Stirred not by the touch by movement or sound,
Or if the wind, with its deep, mournful sigh,
Bring to the memory of home in old days,
Sitts alone who may return in old age,
Rock in thy dreams, and thy solitude keep.

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