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April

Ted Robinson

So here we are in April, in showy, blowy April,
In frowsy, blowsy April, the rowdy, dowdy time;
In sippy, sloppy April, in wheezy, breezy April,
In ringing, stringing April, with a singing, swinging rhyme!

The smiling sun of April on the violets is focal,
The sudden showers of April seek the dandelions out;
The tender airs of April make local yokel vocal,
And he raises rustic ditties with a most melodious shout.

So here we are in April, in tipsy, gypsy April,
In showert, flowery April, the twinkly, sprinkly days;
In tingly, jingly April, in highly willy April,
In mighty, flighty April with its highty-tighty ways!

The duck is fond of April, and the clucking chickabiddy
And other barnyard creatures have a try at caroling;
There's something in the air to turn a stiddy kiddy giddy,
And even I am forced to raise my croaking voice and sing.

Degree of Difficulty: 2

The Brook

Alfred Tennyson

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river;
For me may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeams dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses.

And out again I curve and low
To join the brimming river;
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

Degree of Difficulty: 2

Classical Christian Speech Meet

A Child's Hymn

Charles Dickens

Hear my prayer, O heavenly Father,
Ere I lay me down to sleep;
Bid Thy angels, pure and holy,
Round my bed their vigil keep.

My sins are heavy, but Thy mercy
Far outweighs them, every one;
Down before Thy cross I cast them,
Trusting in Thy help alone.

Keep me through this night of peril
Underneath its boundless shade;
Take me to Thy rest, I pray Thee,
When my pilgrimage is made.

None shall measure out Thy patience
By the span of human thought;
None shall bound the tender mercies
Which Thy Holy Son has bought.

Pardon all my past transgressions,
Give me strength for days to come;
Guide and guard me with Thy blessing
Till Thy angels bid me home.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Daniel Boone

Arthur Guiterman

Daniel Boone at twenty-one
Came with his tomahawk, knife, and gun
Home from the French and Indian War
To North Carolina and Yadkin shore
He married his maid with a golden band,
Built his house and cleared his land;
But the deep woods claimed their son again
And he turned his face from the homes of men.
Over the Blue Ridge, dark and lone,
The Mountains of Iron, the Hills of Stone,
Braving the Shawnee's jealous wrath,
He made his way on the Warrior's Path.
Alone he trod the shadowed trails;
But he was lord of a thousand vales.
As he roved Kentucky, far and near,
Hunting the buffalo, elk, and deer.
What joy to see, what joy to win
Such fair a land for his kith and kin,
Of streams unstained and woods unhewn!
"Elbow room!" laughed Daniel Boone.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Evening (In Words of One Syllable)*Thomas Miller*

The day is past, the sun is set,
And the white stars are in the sky;
While the long grass with dew is wet,
And through the air the bats now fly.
The lambs have now lain down to sleep,
The birds have long since sought their nests;
The air is still; and dark, and deep
On the hill side the old wood rests.
Yet of the dark I have no fear,
But feel as safe as when 'tis light;
For I know God is with me through the night.
For God is by me when I pray,
And when I close mine eyes to sleep,
I know that He will with me stay,
And will all night watch by me keep.
For he who rules the stars and sea,
Who makes the grass and trees to grow.
Will look on a poor child like me,
When on my knees I to Him bow.
He holds all things in His right hand,
The rich, the poor, the great, the small;
When we sleep, or sit, or stand,
He is with us, for He loves us all.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Classical Christian Speech Meet

The Flag Goes By

Henry H. Bennett

Hats off! Along the street there comes
Blares of bugles, a ruffle of drums,
Flash of color beneath the sky:
Hats off! The flag is passing by!

Blue and crimson and white it shines
Over the steel-tipped, ordered lines.
Hats off! The colors before us fly;
But more than the flag is passing by.

Sea fights and land fights, grim and great,
Fought to make and to save the State;
Weary marches and sinking ships
Cheers of victory on dying lips;

Days of plenty and years of peace;
March of a strong land's swift increase;
Equal justice, right and law,
Stately honor and reverend awe:

Sign of a nation, great and strong
To ward her people from foreign wrong:
Pride and glory and honor-all
Live in the colors to stand or fall.

Hats off! Along the street there comes
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums;
And loyal hearts are beating high;
Hats off! The flag is passing by!

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Gentle Jesus, Meek and Mild

Charles Wesley

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child;
Pity my simplicity,
Suffer me to come to Thee.

Fain I would to Thee be brought,
Dearest God, forbid it not;
Give me, dearest God, a place
In the Kingdom of Thy grace.

Put Thy hands upon my head,
Let me in Thine arms be stayed,
Let me lean upon Thy breast,
Lull me, lull me, Lord to rest.

Hold me fast in Thine embrace,
Let me see Thy smiling face,
Give me, Lord. Thy blessings give,
Pray for me, and I shall live.

Lamb of God, I look to Thee,
Thou shalt my example be;
Thou art gentle, meek, and mild,
Thou wast once a little child.

Fain I would be as Thou art,
Give me Thy obedient heart;
Thou art pitiful and kind,
Let me have Thy loving mind.

Let me, above all, fulfill
God my heavenly Father's will,
Never His good Spirit grieve;
Only to His glory live.

Thou didst live to God alone,
Thou didst never seek Thine own,
Thou Thyself didst never please:
God was all Thy happiness.

Gentle Jesus, Meek and Mild (Continued)

Loving Jesus, gentle Lamb,
In Thy gracious hands I am;
Make me, Saviour, what Thou art,
Live Thyself within my heart.

I shall then show forth Thy praise,
Serve Thee all my happy days;
Then the world shall always see
Christ, the Hold Child, in me.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Good Night and Good Morning

Richard Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton

A fair little girl sat under a tree,
Sewing as long as her eyes could see;
Then smoothed her work, and folded it right,
And said, "Dear work, good night! Good night!"

Such a number of rooks came over her head,
Crying, "Caw! Caw!" on their way to bed;
She said, as she watched their curious flight,
"Little black things, good night! Good night!"

The horses neighed, and the oxen lowed,
The sheep's "Bleat! Bleat!" came over the road;
All seeming to say, with a quiet delight,
"Good little girl, good night! Good night!"

She did not say to the sun, "Good night!"
Though she saw him there like a ball of light,
For she knew he had God's time to keep
All over the world, and never could sleep.

The tall pink foxglove bowed his head,
The violets curtsied and went to bed;
And good little Lucy tied up her hair,
And said on her knees her favourite prayer.

And while on her pillow she softly lay,
She knew nothing more till again it was day;
And all things said to the beautiful sun,
"Good morning! Good morning! Our work is begun!"

Degree of Difficulty: 2

Classical Christian Speech Meet

If I Were a Pilgrim Child

Rowena Bennett

If I were a Pilgrim child,
Dressed in white or gray.
I should catch my turkey wild
For Thanksgiving Day.
I should pick my cranberries
Fresh from out a bag,
And make a table of a stump
And sit upon a log.
An Indian would be my guest
And wear a crimson feather,
And we should clasp our hands and say
Thanksgiving grace together.
But I was born in modern times
And shall not have this joy.
My cranberries will be delivered
By the grocery boy.
My turkey will be served upon
A shining silver platter.
It will not taste as wild game tastes
Though it will be much fatter;
And, oh, of all the guests that come
Not one of them will wear
Moccasins upon his feet
Or feathers in his hair!

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Classical Christian Speech Meet

In Desert Places

Sister Mary Madeleva

God has a way of making flowers grow.
He is both daring and direct about it.
If you know half the flowers that I know.
You do not doubt it.

He chooses some gray rock, austere and high,
For garden-plot, trafficks with sun and weather;
Then lifts an Indian paintbrush to the sky,
Half flame, half feather.

In desert places it is quite the same;
He delves at petal-plans, divinely, surely.
Until a bud too shy to have a name
Blossoms demurely.

He dares to sow the waster, to plow the rock.
Though Eden knew His beauty and His power,
He could not plant it in a yucca stalk,
A cactus flower.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

In Flanders Fields

John McCrae

In Flander fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row.
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Degree of Difficulty: 2

Classical Christian Speech Meet

I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud*William Wordsworth*

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd
A host of golden daffodils
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in a never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I, at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed--and gazed--but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood;
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Classical Christian Speech Meet

The Kitten and the Falling Leaves*William Wordsworth*

See the kitten on the wall,
Sporting with the leaves that fall!
Withered leaves, one, two, and three,
From the lofty elder-tree.
Through the calm and frosty air
Of this morning bright and fair,
Eddying round and round they sink
Softly, slowly. One might think,
From the motions that are made,
Every little leaf conveyed
Some small fairy, hither tending,
To this lower world descending.

--But the kitten, how she starts!
Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts!
First at one, and then its fellow.
Just as light, and just as yellow.
There are many now--now--one--
Now they stop and there are none,
What intentness of desire
In her upturned eye of fire!
With a tiger leap halfway,
Now she meets the coming prey.
Lets it go at last, and then
Has it in her power again.

Degree of Difficulty: 2

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Little Boy Blue*Eugene Field*

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and staunch he stands;
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket molds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new
And the soldier was passing fair,
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

“Now, don’t you go till I come,” he said
“And don’t you make any noise!”
So toddling off to his trundle-bed
He dreamed of the pretty toys.
And as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue
Oh, the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true.

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face.
And they wonder, as waiting these long years through
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue
Since he kissed them and put them there.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

The Lizard*Lydia Pender*

There on the sun-hot stone
Why do you wait, alone
And still, so still?
Neck arched, head high, tense and alert, but still,
Still as the stone?

Still is your delicate head,
Like the head of an arrow;
Still is your delicate throat,
Rounded and narrow;
Still is your delicate back,
Patterned in silver and black,
And bright with the burnished sheen that the gum-tips share.
Even your delicate feet
Are still, still as the heat,
With a stillness alive, and awake, and intensely aware.

Why do I catch my breath,
Held by your spell?
Listening, waiting-for what?
Will you not tell?
More alive in your quiet than ever the locust can be,
Shrilling his clamorous song from shimmering tree;
More alive in your motionless grace, as the slow minutes die,
Then the scurrying ants that go hurrying busily by.
I know, if my shadow but fall by your feet on the stone,
In the wink of an eye.
Let me try--
Ah!
He's gone!

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Mary*Mary O'Neill*

When Jesus was a boy did he
Swing on the gates of Galilee,
Bring home foundling pups and kittens,
Scuff his sandals, lose his mittens,
Weight his pockets with a treasure
Adults eyes can never measure,
Scratch his hands and stub his toes
On rocky hills where cactus grows,
Set stones and quills and bits of thread
On the windowsill beside his bed
So that on waking he could see
All yesterday's bright prophecy?
Did he play tag with the boys next door,
Tease for sweets in the grocery store,
Whittle and smooth a spinning top
In his father's carpenter shop,
Run like wind to sail his kite,
Smile and sigh in his sleep at night,
Laugh with you in long-lost springs
About a thousand small, endearing things?
Is he the one that said that you
Should always dye your dresses blue?
With eyes bright as cinnamon silk,
Red lips ringed with a mist of milk
Did he...lifting his earthen cup
Say: "Just wait until I grow up?"

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Classical Christian Speech Meet

My Cat Geoffrey*Christopher Smart*

For I will consider my Cat Geoffrey.
For he is the servant of the Living God duly and daily serving him.
For at the first glance of the glory of God in the East he worships in his way.
For this is done by wreathing his body seven times round with elegant quickness.
For then he leaps up to catch the musk, which is the blessing of God upon his prayer.
For he rolls upon prank to work it in.
For having done duty and received blessing he begins to consider himself.
For this he performs in ten degrees.
For first he looks upon his forepaws to see if they are clean.
For secondly he kicks up behind to clear the way there.
For thirdly he works it upon stretch with the forepaws extended.
For fourthly he sharpens his paws by wood.
For fifthly he washes himself.
For sixthly he rolls upon wash.
For seventhly he fleas himself, that he may not be interrupted upon the beat.
For eighthly he rubs himself against a post.
For ninthly he looks up for his instructions.
For tenthly he goes in quest of food.
For having considered God and himself he will consider his neighbor.
For if he meets another cat he will kiss her in kindness.
For when he takes his prey he plays with it to give it a chance.
For one mouse in seven escapes by his dallying
For when his day's work is done his business more properly begins.
For he keeps the Lord's watch in the night against the adversary.
For he counteracts the powers of darkness by his electrical skin and glaring eyes.
For he counteracts the Devil, who is death, by brisking about the life.
For in his morning orisons he loves the sun and the sun loves him.
For he is of the tribe of Tiger.
For the Cherub Cat is a term of the Angel Tiger.
For he has the subtlety and hissing of a serpent, which in goodness he suppresses.
For he will not do destruction, if he is well-fed, neither will he spit without provocation.
For he purrs in thankfulness, when God tells him he's a good Cat.

Degree of Difficulty: 5

My Heart's in the Highlands

Robert Burns

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.

Farewell to the Highlands, Farewell to the North,
The birthplace of valor, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove.
The hills of the Highlands forever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;
Farewell to the straths* and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer,
Chasing the wild deer and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

*low grasslands along a river valley (a Scottish word)

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Classical Christian Speech Meet

My Wise Old Grandpapa

Wilbur G. Howcroft

When I was but a little chap
My grandpapa said to me,
“You’ll need to know your manners, son,
When you go out to tea.

“Remove the shells from hard-boiled eggs,
Make sure your hat’s on straight,
Pour lots of honey on your peas
To keep them on the plate.

“Blow daintily upon your tea
To cool it to your taste,
And always pick bones thoroughly,
With due regard for waste.

“Be heedful of your partners’ needs,
Attend their every wish;
When passing jelly, cream or jam,
Make sure they’re in the dish.

“When eating figs or coconuts,
To show you are refined,
Genteely gnaw the centers out
And throw away the rind.

“If you should accidentally gulp
Some coffee while it’s hot,
Just raise the lid politely and
Replace it in the pot.”

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Classical Christian Speech Meet

A Night With a Wolf*Bayard Taylor*

High on the lonely mountain
Where the wild men watched and waited;
Wolves in the forest, and bears in the bush,
And I on my path belated.

The rain and the nigh together
Came down, and the wind came after,
Bending the props of the pine tree roof
And snapping many a rafter.

I crept along in the darkness,
Stunned and bruised and blinded;
Crept to a fir with thick-set boughs,
And a sheltering rock behind it.

There, from the blowing and raining,
Crouching I sought to hide me:
Something rustled, two green eyes shone,
And a wolf lay down beside me.

His wet fur pressed gainst me;
Each of us warmed the other;
Each of us felt in the stormy dark
That beast and man were brother.

And when the falling forest
No longer crashed in warning,
Each of us went from our hiding place
Forth in the wild wet morning.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Old Ironsides*Oliver Wendell Holmes*

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see that banner in the sky;
Beneath it rung the battle shout,
And burst the cannon's roar;--
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood
And waves were white below.
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
Or know the conquered knee;
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
The eagle of the sea!

O, better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
And there should be her grave;
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale!

Degree of Difficulty: 5

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Once by the Pacific

Robert Frost

The shattered water made a mighty din.
Great waves looked over others coming in,
And thought of doing something to the shore
The water never did to land before.

The clouds were low and hairy in the skies,
Like locks blown forward in the gleam of eyes.
You could not tell, and yet it looked as if
The shore was lucky in being backed by cliff,

The cliff i being backed by continent;
It looked as it a night of dark intent
Was coming ,and not only a night, an age.
Someone had better be prepared for rage.

There would be more than ocean-water broken
Before God's last put out the light was spoken.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Ozymandias

Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: 'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.
And on the pedestal these words appear--
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Classical Christian Speech Meet

The Prayer of Cyrus Brown

Sam Walter Foss

“The proper way for a man to pray,”
Said Deacon Lemuel Keyes,
“And the only proper attitude
Is down upon his knees.”

“Nay, I should say the way to pray,”
Said Reverend Doctor Wise
“Is standing straight with outstretched arms
And rapt and upturned eyes.”

“Oh, no, no, no,” said Elder Snow,
“Such posture is too proud.
A man should pray with eyes fast closed
And head contritely bowed.”

“It seems to me his hands should be
Austerely clasped in front.
With both thumbs pointing toward the ground,”
Said Reverend Doctor Blunt.

“Las Year I fell in Hodgkin’s well
Head first,” said cyrus Brown,

“With both my heels a-stickin’ up,
My head a-p-inting down,”

“An’ I make a prayer right then and’ there
Best prayer I ever said,
The prayingest prayer I ever prayed,
A-standing on my head.”

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Classical Christian Speech Meet

The Secret of Happiness

Helen Steiner Rice

Everybody, everywhere, seeks happiness
--it's true
But finding it and keeping it
Seems difficult to do,
Difficult because we think that happiness is found
Only in the places where wealth and fame abound,
And so we go on searching
In "palaces of pleasure"
Seeking recognition
And monetary treasure,
Unaware that happiness
Is just a state of mind
Within the reach of everyone
Who takes time to be kind--
For in making others happy,
We will be happy, too,
For the happiness you give away
Returns to shine on you.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Classical Christian Speech Meet

The Sheep

Ann and Jane Taylor

“Lazy sheep, pray tell me why
In the pleasant fields you lie,
Eating grass, and daisies white,
From the morning till the night?

Everything can something do,
But what kind of use are you?

“Nay, my little master, nay,
Do not serve me so, I pray;
Don’t you see the wool that grows
On my back, to make you clothes?
Cold, and very cold, you’d be
If you had not wool from me.

True, it seems a pleasant thing,
To nip the dailies in the spring;
But many chilly nights I pass
On the cold and dewy grass,

Or pick a scanty dinner, where
All the commons brown and bare.
Then the farmer comes at last,
When the merry spring is past,

And cuts my woolly coat away,
To warm you in the winter’s day:
Little master, this is why
In the pleasant fields I lie.

Degree of Difficulty: 2

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Sneezles*A.A. Milne*

Christopher Robin
Had wheezles
And sneezles,
They bundled him
Into
His bed.
They gave him what goes
With a cold in the nose,
And some more for a cold
In the head.
They wondered
If wheezles
Could turn
Into measles,
If sneezele
Would turn
Into mumps;
They examined his chest
For a rash
And the rest
Of his body for swelling and lumps

They sent for some doctors
In sneezles
And wheezele
To tell them what ought
To be done.
All sorts and conditions
Of famous physicians
Came hurrying round
At a run.
They all made a note
Of the state of his throat,
They asked if he suffered from thirst;
They asked if the sneezles
Came after the wheezles,
Or if the first sneezele
Came first.
The said, "if you teazle

Sneezies (Continued)

A sneeze
Or wheeze,
A measle
May easily grow.
But humor of pleazle
The wheeze
Or sneeze,
The measle
Will certainly go.

The expounded the reazles
For sneezles
And wheezles.
The manner of measles
When new.
They said, "if he freezles
In draughts and in breezles
The PHTEEZLES

May even ensue.
Christopher Robin
Got up in the morning,
The sneezles had vanished away.
And the look in his eye
Seemed to say to the sky,
"Now, how to amuse them today?"

Degree of Difficulty: 5

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Somebody's Mother*Mary Dow Brine*

The woman was old and ragged and gray
And bent with the chill of the winter's day.

The street was wet with a recent snow
And the woman's feet were aged and slow.

She stood at the crossing and waited long
Alone, uncared for, amid the throng

Of human beings who passed her by
Nor heeded the glance of her anxious eye.

Down the street, with laughter and shout,
Glad in the freedom of "school let out,"

Came the boys like a flock of sheep,
Hailing the snow piled white and deep.

Past the woman so old and gray
Hastening the children on their way.

Nor offered a helping hand to her--
So meek, so timid, afraid to stir

Lest the carriage wheels or the horses feet
Should crowd her down in the slippery street.

At last came the merry troop,
The happiest laddie of all the group;

He paused beside her and whispered low,
"I'll help you cross, if you wish to go."

Her aged hand on his strong arm
She placed, and so, without hurt or harm,

He guided the trembling feet along,
Proud that his own were firm and strong.

Somebody's Mother (Continued)

Then back again to his friends he went,
His young heart happy and well content.

“She's somebody's mother, boys, you know,
For all she's aged and poor and slow,

“And I hope some fellow will lend a hand
To help my mother you understand,

“If ever she's poor and old and gray,
When her own dear boy is far away.”

And “somebody's mother” bowed low her head
In her home that night, and the prayer she said

Was “God be kind to the noble boy,
Who is somebody's son, and pride and joy!”

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Song of Life*Charles Mackay*

A traveller on a dusty road
Strewed acorns on the lea;
And one took root and sprouted up,
And grew into a tree.
Love sought its shade at evening-time,
To breathe its early vows;
And Age was pleased, in heights of noon,
To bask beneath its boughs.
The dormouse loved its dangling twigs,
The birds sweet music bore--
It stood a glory in its place,
A blessing evermore.

A little spring had lost its way
Amid the grass and fern;
A passing stranger scooped a well
Where weary men might turn.
He walled it in, and hung with care
A ladle on the brink;
He thought not of the deed he did,
But judged that Toil might drink.
He passed again; and lo! The well,
By summer never dried,
Had cooled ten thousand parched tongues,
And saved a life beside.

A nameless man, amid the crowd
That thronged the daily mart,
Let fall a word of hope and love,
Unstudied from the heart,
A whisper on the tumult thrown,
A transitory breath,
It raised a brother from the dust,
It saved a soul from death.
O germ! O fount! O word of love!
O thought at random cast!
Ye were but little at the first,
But mighty at the last.

Degree of Difficulty: 5

The Snow

Emily Dickenson

It sifts from leaden sieves,
It powders all the wood,
It fills with alabaster wool
The wrinkles of the road.

It makes an even face
Of mountain and of plain, --
Unbroken forehead from the east
Unto the east again.

It reaches to the fence,
It wraps it, rail by rail,
Till it is lost in fleeces;
It flings a crystal veil

On stump and stack and stem, --
The summer's empty room,
Acres of seams where harvests were,
Recordless, but for them.

It ruffles wrists of posts,
As ankles of a queen, --
Then stills its artisans like ghosts,
Denying they have been.

Degree of Difficulty: 5

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Sunrise

Charles Erskine Scott Wood

The lean coyote, prowler of the night,
Slips to his rocky fastnesses,
Jack-rabbits noiselessly shuttle among the sage-brush,
And from the castellated cliffs,
Rock-ravens launch their proud black sails upon the day,
The wild horses troop back to their pastures.

The poplar-trees watch beside the irrigation--ditches.
Orioles, whose nests sway in the cotton-wood trees by the ditch-side, begin to twitter.
All shy things, breathless, watch
The thin white skirts of dawn,
The dancer of the sky,
Who trips daintily down the mountain-side
Emptying her crystal chalice...
And a red-bird, dipped in sunrise, cracks from a poplar's top
His exultant whip above a silver world.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Sweet and Low

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SWEET and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while
My pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Trees

Grace Oakes Burton

To me trees are the loveliest things,
Their friendly arms always outspread;
Sometimes in them I see bright wings,
A nest, and then a young bird's head.

I love the trees when morning dew
Like prisms hang, or diamonds rare;
I love them in the noontide too;
They shield me from the sun's warm glare.

I love them in the autumn when
They deck themselves in gay attire;
They flaunt their colors proudly then,
And blaze as with a living fire.

I love them when the breezes blow
The dancing, trembling, painted leaves;
I love them when the fleecy snow
Among their branches magic weaves.

When in the mellow moonlight glow,
As sentinels I see them stand,
I hear their voices soft and low;
They tell me tales of fairyland.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

The Violet

Jane Taylor

Down in a green and shady bed,
A modest violet grew;
Its stalk was bent, it hung its head
As if to hide from view.

And yet it was a lovely flower,
Its color bright and fair;
It might have graced a rosy bower,
Instead of hiding there.

Yet thus it was content to bloom,
In modest tint arrayed;
And there diffused a sweet perfume,
Within the silent shade.

Then let me to the valley go
This pretty flower to see;
That I may also learn to grow
In sweet humility.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Classical Christian Speech Meet

When Grandpa Was a Boy

Dorothy Walters

So many things were different
When Grandpa was a boy.
He never saw a movie
And he seldom had a toy.

He never soared aloft in planes;
No radio had he;
An auto was unusual,
A downright novelty.

He walked three miles to school each day,
And wrote upon a slate.
And lots of things I daily eat,
Young Grandpa never ate.

Yet he is always telling me
About the "good old days,"
And how he'd not exchange his youth
For all our modern ways.

He's sure he fished with greater luck
Along his special streams;
And hazelnuts were bigger
In Grandpa's day, it seems.

I wonder, when I'm Grandpa's age,
If I will then enjoy
The thought that things were better,
When I was just a boy.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Who Knows a Mountain?

Ethel Romig Fuller

Who knows a mountain?
One who has gone
To worship its beauty
In the dawn;
One who has slept
On its breast at night;
One who has measured
His strength to its height;
One who has followed
Its longest trail.
And laughed in the face
Of its fiercest gale;
One who has scaled its peaks,
And had trod
Its cloud-swept summits
Alone with God.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

The Wind*E. Rendall*

Why does the wind so want to be
Here in my little room with me?
He's all the world to blow about,
But just because I keep him out
He cannot be a moment still,
But frets upon my window-sill.
And sometimes brings a noisy rain
To help him batter at the pane.
He rattles, rattles at the lock
And lifts the latch and stirs the key--
Then waits a moment breathlessly,
And soon, more fiercely than before,
He shakes my little trembling door,
And though "Come in, come in! I say,
He neither comes nor goes away.

Barefoot across the chilly floor
I run and open wide the door;
He rushes in and back again
He goes to batter door and pane,
Pleased to have blown my candle out.
He's all the world to blow about,
Why does he want so much to be
Here in my little room with me?

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Winter Fun

Edna Jaques

Over the hills we go coasting down,
Then across the lake like a mirror round;
On the smooth white slope we start, from above,
Then down we go as swift as a dove.

Out in the yard right by our gate
The big, white snowman we like to make.
We shape it with snow, white and clean;
With fir moss for a beard
It's just the thing.
A carrot for a nose and apples for eyes,
It makes him look so very wise.
Down on the pond there is everyone
Skating together; oh, what fun!
A figure eight, a tug of war,
There's a bonfire blazing on the shore.

We'll warm our hands before we run;
There's hot chocolate waiting for everyone
We'll sing together for good cheer;
It's the merriest, happiest time of the year.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Classical Christian Speech Meet

Woodman, Spare That Tree!*George Pope Morris*

Woodman, spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough!
In youth it sheltered me,
And I'll protect it now.
'Twas my forefather's hand
That placed it near his cot;
There, woodman, let it stand,
Thy ax shall harm it not.

That old familiar tree,
Whose glory and renown
Are spread o'er land and sea--
And wouldst thou hew it down?
Woodman, forbear thy stroke!
Cut not its earth-bound ties;
Oh spare that aged oak
Now towering to the skies!

When but an idle boy,
I sought its grateful shade;
In all their gushing joy
Here, too, my sisters played.
My mother kissed me here;
My father pressed my hand--
Forgive this foolish tear,
But let that old oak stand.

My heart-strings round thee cling,
Close as thy bark, old friend!
Here shall the wild-bird sing,
And still thy branches bend.
Old tree! The storm still brave!
And, woodman, leave the spot;
While I've a hand to save,
Thy ax shall harm it not.

Degree of Difficulty: 4