

The Ballad Of A Bachelor

By Ellis Parker Butler

Listen, ladies, while I sing
The ballad of John Henry King.

John Henry was a bachelor,
His age was thirty-three or four.

Two maids for his affection vied,
And each desired to be his bride,

And bravely did they strive to bring
Unto their feet John Henry King.

John Henry liked them both so well,
To save his life he could not tell

Which he most wished to be his bride,
Nor was he able to decide.

Fair Kate was jolly, bright, and gay,
And sunny as a summer day;

Marie was kind, sedate, and sweet,
With gentle ways and manners neat.

Each was so dear that John confessed
He could not tell which he liked best.

He studied them for quite a year,
And still found no solution near,

And might have studied two years more
Had he not, walking on the shore,

Conceived a very simple way
Of ending his prolonged delay--

A way in which he might decide
Which of the maids should be his bride.

He said, "I'll toss into the air
A dollar, and I'll toss it fair;

If heads come up, I'll wed Marie;
If tails, fair Kate my bride shall be."

Then from his leather pocket-book
A dollar bright and new he took;

He kissed one side for fair Marie,
The other side for Kate kissed he.

Then in a manner free and fair
He tossed the dollar in the air.

"Ye fates," he cried, "pray let this be
A lucky throw indeed for me!"

The dollar rose, the dollar fell;
He watched its whirling transit well,

And off some twenty yards or more
The dollar fell upon the shore.

John Henry ran to where it struck
To see which maiden was in luck.

But, oh, the irony of fate!
Upon its edge the coin stood straight!

And there, embedded in the sand,
John Henry let the dollar stand!

And he will tempt his fate no more,
But live and die a bachelor.

Thus, ladies, you have heard me sing
The ballad of John Henry King.

A Ballad Of The Trees And The Master

By Sidney Lanier

Into the woods my Master went,

Clean forspent, forspent.

Into the woods my Master came,

Forspent with love and shame.

But the olives they were not blind to Him,

The little gray leaves were kind to Him:

The thorn-tree had a mind to Him

When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master went,

And He was well content.

Out of the woods my Master came,

Content with death and shame.

When Death and Shame would woo Him last,

From under the trees they drew Him last:

'Twas on a tree they slew Him -- last

When out of the woods He came.
