

### The Invisible Playmate

seemed to have been brought about in an instant—literally in the twinkling of an eye. One glimpse of the Unseen (as he called it) and the embittered recollections of bereavement, the resentment, the distrust, the spirit of revolt were all swept into oblivion. Even the new bereavement had no sting. There was no anguish; there were no words of desolation. The man simply stood at gaze, stunned with amazement.

### RHYMES ABOUT A LITTLE WOMAN

*She is my pride ; my plague : my rest ; my  
rack : my bliss ; my bane :  
She brings me sunshine of the heart ; and  
soft'ning of the brain.*

I.

SHE'S very, very beautiful ; but—  
alas!—

Isn't it a pity that her eyes are glass?  
And her face is only wax, coloured  
up, you know ;  
And her hair is just a fluff of very  
fine tow !

No!—she's *not* a doll. That will  
never do—

Never, never, never, for it is not  
true!

Did they call you a doll? Did they  
say that to *you*?

Oh, your eyes are little heavens of  
an earth made new ;

About a Little Woman

Your face, it is the blossom of mortal  
things ;  
Your hair might be the down from  
an angel's wings !

Oh, yes ; she's beauti-beautiful !  
What else could she be ?  
God meant her for Himself first,  
then gave her to me.

About a Little Woman

II

SHE was a treasure ; she was a sweet ;  
She was the darling of the Army and  
the Fleet !

When—she—smiled—  
The crews of the line-of-battle ships  
went wild !

When—she—cried—  
Whole regiments reversed their arms  
and sighed !

When she was sick, for her sake  
The Queen took off her crown and  
sobbed as if her heart would  
break.

About a Little Woman

III

LOOK at her shoulders now they are  
bare ;  
Are there any signs of feathers grow-  
ing there ?

No, not a trace ; she cannot fly  
away ;  
This wingless little angel has been  
sent to stay.

About a Little Woman

IV

WHAT shall we do to be rid of care ?  
Pack up her best clothes and pay her  
fare ;

Pay her fare and let her go  
By an early train to Jer-I-Cho.

There in Judea she will be  
Slumbering under a green palm-tree ;

And the Arabs of the Desert will  
come round

When they see her lying on the  
ground,

And some will say " Did you ever see  
Such a remark-a-bil babee ? "

And others, in the language the  
Arabs use,

*" Nous n'avons jamais vu une telle  
pappoose ! "*

About a Little Woman

And she will grow and grow ; and  
then

She will marry a chief of the Desert  
men ;

And he will keep her from heat and  
cold,

And deck her in silk and satin and  
gold—

With bangles for her feet and jewels  
for her hair,  
And other articles that ladies wear !

So pack up her best clothes, and let  
her go  
By an early train to Jer-I-Cho !

Pack up her best clothes, and pay  
her fare ;  
So *we* shall be rid of trouble and  
care !

About a Little Woman

v

**TAKE** the idol to her shrine ;

In her cradle lay her !

Worship her—she is divine ;

Offer up your prayer !

She will bless you, bed and board,  
If befittingly adored.

About a Little Woman

VI

ON a summer morning, Babsie up a  
tree;  
In came a Blackbird, sat on Babsie's  
knee.

Babsie to Blackbird—"Blackbird,  
how you do?"  
Blackbird to Babsie—"Babsie, how  
was you?"

"How was *you* in this commodious  
tree—  
"How was *you* and all your famu—  
ilu—ee?"

About a Little Woman

VII

THIS is the way the ladies ride—  
Saddle-a-side, saddle-a-side!

This is the way the gentlemen ride—  
Sitting astride, sitting astride!

This is the way the grandmothers  
ride—  
Bundled and tied, bundled and tied!

This is the way the babbykins ride—  
Snuggled inside, snuggled inside!

This is the way when they are late,  
They *all* fly over a five-barred gate!

About a Little Woman

VIII

WE are not wealthy ; but, you see,  
Others are far worse off than we.

Here's a gaberlunzie begging at the  
door—

*If we gave him Babs*, he'd need no  
more!

Oh, she'll fill your cup, and she'll fill  
your can ;  
She'll make you happy, happy ! Take  
her, beggar man !

Give a beggar Babsie? Give this  
child away?  
That would leave *us* poor, and poor,  
for ever and a day !

About a Little Woman

*After-thought—*

THE gaberlunzie man is sad ;  
The Babe is far from glee ;  
He with his poverty is plagued—  
And with her poor-teeth \* she !

\* As who should say "poortith."

About a Little Woman

IX

OH, where have you been, and how  
do you do,  
And what did you beg, or bor-  
row, or buy  
For this little girl with the sash of  
blue?

Why,  
A cushie-coo; and a cockatoo;  
And a cariboo; and a kangaroo;  
And a croodlin' doo; and a quag  
from the Zoo—  
And *all* for the girl with the sash of  
blue!

About a Little Woman

X

WHEN she's very thirsty, what does  
she do?  
She croons to us in Doric; she mur-  
murs "A-coo!"  
Oh, the little Scotch girl, who would  
ever think  
She'd want a coo—a whole coo—  
needing but a drink!

Moo, moo!—a coo!

Mammie's gone to market; Mam-  
mie'll soon be here;  
Mammie's bought a brindled coo!  
Patience, woman dear!



About a Little Woman

Don't you hear your Crummie lowing  
in the lane?

She's going up to pasture; we'll  
bring her home again!

Moo, moo!—a coo!

Grow sweet, you little wild flowers,  
about our Crummie's feet;  
Be glad, you green and patient grass,  
to have our Crummie eat;  
And hasten, Crummie, hasten, or  
what shall I do?  
For here's a waesome lassie skirlin'  
for a coo!

Moo, moo!—a coo!

A moment yet! The sun is set, and  
all the lanes are red;  
And here is Crummie coming to the  
milking shed!

About a Little Woman

Why, mother, mother, don't you hear  
this terrible to-do

*Dépêchez-vous!* A coo—a coo—a  
kingdom for a coo!

Moo, moo!—a coo!

About a Little Woman

XI

WHEN she laughs and waves about  
Her pink small fingers, who can  
doubt  
She's catching at the glittering  
plumes  
Of angels flying round the rooms?

About a Little Woman

XII

POOR Babbles is dead with sleep ;  
Poor Babbles is dead with sleep !  
Eyes she hardly can open keep ;  
Lower the gas to a glimmering peep.  
All good angels, hover and keep  
Watch above her—poor Babbles —  
asleep.