Literary Lane

THE OLD HOME TOWN

I like to close my eyes and see
The old home town as it used to be
When Main Street boasted virgin sod
And the Avenues were yet untrod.

The wooden pump, so far remote
Poured cooling draughts from its iron throat
For man and beast; while its moss grown tank
Was scene for many a childish prank.

Here and there was a porch for shade
And wobbly walks where oft' was played
Games of marbles, or pegs, or jacks,
And coppers were lost in the yawning cracks.

The hitching posts with their iron rings
The village urchins used for swings
Regarding not the beast or steed,
That calmly munched its noon day feed.

Who could forget the corner store
With its curious boxes and barrels galore!
There many a penny went astray
For pep' mint sticks on a wintry day.

There Jim and John and Will and Joe
Sold yards of ribbon and calico;
And shy Big Ole and Little Nels
Handled everything from prunes to pelts.

On bitter nights at Walters's store
A busy spot was the cuspidor
There yarns were swapped and laughter rang
Ah, few are left of that hardy gang.

The school and hall together built
Offered romance to gallant Milt
While other swains bereft of dates
Voiced their sent' ments in hot debates.

There jolly Smart, the auctioneer,
Made the Big Bazaar a thrill each year
While grandpa Kelly between each chaw
Called Old Dan Tucker or Turkey in the Straw.

The churches with their various creeds
Answered the call of human needs;
And in their grassy plots were laid
The first dead of those pioneers staid.

The rude North Bridge, a luring goal,
A trysting place where lovers stole
When the prairie moon hung round and merrie
Sparkling the waters of old Lake Carrie.

Gone are the old familiar haunts
Scenes of all my childhood jaunts;
And kindly neighbors I have known
Leave memories dear, in cold gray stone.

For all the wealth of the Seven Seas,
For the House of Knowledge and its keys,
For the highest pinnacle of Renown,
I wouldn't trade the Old Home Town.
-Anne o' the West

Annie Milligan-Harned was born (1886) and raised in Michigan, ND, graduating from MHS. Annie contributed to the N. C. Arena for decades with poems and letters to the Arena Mailbag on a variety of interesting topics.

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