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**Rags and tatters from  
the verse of Herbert  
Crombie Howe**

**Howe Herbert Crombie**

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**Title: Rags and tatters from the verse of Herbert Crombie Howe**

**Author: Howe Herbert Crombie**

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RAGS AND TATTERS

*From the Verse*

of

HERBERT CROMBIE HOWE

1911



OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES—1894

America's loved Autocrat is dead ;  
Last lingering fruit upon the Autumn bough,  
Mellowed with age, his life is garnered  
Into the store of fame, the tree's bare, now ;  
The chill October blasts are piping loud,  
And fled are all the merry birds of Spring ;  
He, too, to Winter's stern decree hath bowed,  
His wonted wood no more shall hear him sing ;  
But in more genial clime beyond the shores  
And bounding seas o'er which we gaze in vain,  
In sunny bowers his gladdened heart he pours  
Among his mates, who meet with him again ;  
But our eyes follow him, who flyeth last,  
Bearing upon his wing the glorious past.

## THE HOMECOMING

The wet West wind soughs through the trees,  
The oak-leaves sodden lie,  
All overhead, before the breeze,  
Grey clouds go scudding by.

But blithely strides yon sailor-boy  
And hums a salt sea song,  
Then laughs aloud for very joy,  
He's been from home so long.

“My widowed mother now will greet  
Her sailor son again,  
Our supper by the hearth we'll eat  
And hear the dripping rain.

“I'll tell her all the tales I know  
Of far-off Eastern lands ;  
I'll see her eyes, still loving, glow  
And clasp her withered hands.”



So slyly slips he through the gate  
And tries his mother's door—  
She sits not by the blazing grate,  
She will sit there no more.

The wet West wind soughs through the trees,  
The oak-leaves sodden lie,  
All overhead, before the breeze,  
Grey clouds go scudding by.

## ON THE RIVER

Out on the river at twilight,  
While the oars dipped softly in,  
And the dear old songs were blended  
With the waterfall's distant din ;

While the rounded moon rose slowly  
Over the crested hill  
And silvered a thousand ripples,  
When mourned the whippoorwill ;

Then I lost my heart in the twilight,  
To the maiden with gleaming hair :  
Still, under the spell enchanted,  
In my dreams, I wander there.

## THE RAIN UPON THE ROOF

How one's heart grows mellow and ripe with love  
As one lies on one's pillow and hears above,  
Just above one's head, as one lies in bed,  
    'The rain upon the roof.'

It sounds like the patter of angel feet,  
And seems to scatter a perfume sweet ;  
It would wash one pure, could it only endure,  
    'This rain upon the roof.

One's heart grows tender and pure once more,  
In complete surrender to thoughts of yore,  
Of a child's soft dreams when the gutter streams  
    'With the rain upon the roof.

Croon on, sweet shower, and lull me light  
To the drowsy bower of Nod and Night,  
There I'll list me long to thy murmured song,  
    O rain upon the roof !

## THE LEPROUS SOUL

Within your gates, stupendous, grand,  
Ye myriad forms of angel, blest,  
Why soar ye happily while I stand  
Without the walls of heavenly rest ?

Why look ye glad, yea, glad as day,  
And sound your harps in endless bliss,  
While I in misery sink away,  
In sight of you, yet barred like this ?

You, who on brighter, lighter wing  
Than those about you, mount on high,  
Must endless ages to you bring  
But joy, while here I darkly fly ?

The time was when, on earth below,  
Your heart to mine was bound by ties  
As strong as mortal e'er can know,  
High as his creeping soul can rise.

E'en then, my dull, material sense  
Felt deep and piercing throbs of pain  
If, following our earthly bents  
We severed, though to meet again.