



I GO A-FISHING.

A CLOUDY sky, no zephyr nigh,
With heart elate
I take my way, sure of my prey,
With "worms for bait."

Now we're afloat, I and my boat,
Upon the brine;
A fish darts past—I anchor cast,
And then my line.

What time I wait I antedate
The rapture sweet
With which I'll lay my shining prey
Low at her feet!

"O, fairest one!" thus sings my heart,
"Sparkling and bright
From the salt depths I bring to thee"—
Aha! a bite!

Only a bite! Lightly my line
Answers the test;
Off goes my fish, thinking himself
Merely my guest.

Wearily now past an hour;
"Ah! I must look;"
Inspection soon brings to my sight
A baitless hook.

"Courage, my soul!" laughing, I say—
"In the sea wait
Fish of the best; mercilessly
I'll flute the bait!"

"Oh, joy! My luck surely has turned,"
Gaily I cry,
As on the boat's bottom I see
A flounder die!

Lonely in death! Language is weak
To picture how
Hope and despair in my poor heart
Alternate now.

The turning tide favors me not;
All hope I lose,
And through my tired finger ends feel
My patience ooze.

No! What is this whose restless weight
Drags the line thus?
Quick throbs my heart—sure 'tis the draught
Miraculous!

My trembling joy dies at its birth;
One frantic look
Shows me a vile sculpin that has
Swallowed the hook!

Finished my task—a few faint strokes
Bring me to shore,
Laden, but light: sadly I seek
My darling's door.

"Come in!" Her eyes lighten the depths
Of evening's shade;
Yes and I see a fire of coals,
Fish on them laid!

Then on my sad stammering breaks
Her silvery tone—
"Hush, dear! I know—I've been to-day
Fishing alone!"

Clasped in my arms, I murmur low,
"Angel, no less,
You supplement my failures with
Your own success!"

Blushing, I lay my paltry two
On the door mat,
Then, by the light of winking stars,
I—feed the cat!

SARAH I. BURKE.