

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers* 2, 1886 – 1887 June 5, '86 to May 21, '87)

Budget, Herron Editor  
June 26, 1886

### Hold Fast All I Give You

Mollie and Maggie and Alice,  
Three little maids in a row,  
At play in Ann Arbor Palace  
Where the honeysuckles grow.

Six dimpled palms pressed together,  
Even and firm; two by two;  
Three little up-turned faces,  
Bonny Brown eyes and blue.

Which shall it be O' you charmers.  
Alas, I am sorely tried!  
I, a hard-hearted old hermit,  
Who the question am set to decide.

Molly, the sprite, the darling,  
Shaking her shower of curls,  
Whose laugh is the brook's own ripple;  
Gayest and gladdest of girls.

Maggie, the wild, little brownie,  
Everyone's plaything and pet;  
Who leads me a chase through the garden,  
For a kiss, –the wicked coquette.

Or Alice, ah, shy-eyed Alice!  
Looking so softly down  
Under her long, dark lashes,  
And her hair, so golden brown.

Alice, who talks with the flowers,  
And says there are none so wise;  
Who knows there are elves and fairies,  
For hasn't she seen their bright eyes?

There, there at last I am ready  
To go down the bright, eager row:  
Go up with your hands my Graces!  
Close – nobody else must know.

Hold fast what I give you, Molly;  
(Poor little empty palms:)  
Hold fast what I give you Maggie;  
(A frown steals over her charms.)

Hold fast what I give you Alice!  
You smile, – do you so much care?  
Unclasp your little, pink fingers;  
Aha! the button is there.

But do you know, sweet Alice,  
All that I give you to keep?  
For into my heart you've stolen,  
As sunbeams to shadows creep.

You, a glad little maiden,  
How old are you? “Only mine”–  
With your bright brown hair all shining–  
And the gray is coming to mine.

No matter: you'll be my true love,  
And come to my old arms, so:  
And hold fast what I give you, Alice,  
For nobody else must know.

Simeon M Johnson

[editor's note: Molly/Mollie spelled variously, as above]