



FLUFFY RUFFLES

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Verses by Charles Battell Loomis



TRADDLES ATTEMPTS TO PROPOSE.

One day when summer's heat was spent and nights were cool and sweet
They gave an arbor dinner at the Devens' country seat.
Now at an arbor dinner all the guests are up in trees
And waiters hand the food aloft (a thing not done with ease).
Wise Fluffy thought it foolish, but 'twould serve to pass the day;
So when she was invited she accepted right away.
Aunt Mary sought Joe Traddles, who was going to the frolic,
And found him looking very blue—in fact, quite melancholic.



2—She said, "Now, if it happens that the honor comes to you
To take Miss Fluffy 'up' to dinner you know what to do;
As side by side the branch you sit you readily can ask
If she'll consent to be your wife, a truly pleasant task."
The seventh of September came; at breakfast Fluffy sat
And much amused her maiden aunt with pleasant chitter-chat.
"They've labor troubles at the Devens'; some Italians there
With big black hands and thumb marks red have worked up
quite a scare.



3—Who knows but they may saw the limbs and give us all a fall?
Let's hope it rains and then they'll have it in the dining hall."
But all that day the autumn sun in cloudless heavens sailed,
And if sweet Fluffy prayed for rain her prayers had not availed.
They climb the trees, a merry crowd; the branches sway and rise
And little birds with piteous pipes give voice to their surprise.
The soup is served, the guests "fall to" and almost leave
their perches
Retaining equilibrium with many sudden lurches.



5—"Miss Fluffy, I would like a chance to say—to say a word,
I do not think"—(Oh, say it quick)—"it's like from me
you've heard."
He looks below, he sees the man, he fathoms at a glance
His diabolical design (she sees him look askance).
He drops upon the fellow's neck and chokes his windpipe dark.
And pinches with his fingers strong the fuse's wicked spark.
The guests all praise him; but beyond he prizes Fluffy's glance,
Yet realizes he has lost another precious chance.

4—Joe Traddles, to his great delight, was by dear Fluffy's side,
And as he gazed upon her face he wished the knot was tied.
"Miss Fluffy, this is jolly. Don't you feel just like a bird?"
"No, feeling that I'm quite grown up, I think it is absurd."
(Now, who is that who softly steals behind that hawthorn
hedge?
A swarthy man whose eyes of guile would set one's teeth on
edge.
A smoking sphere is in his hand, his errand is most foul,
He seeks to kill the diners there, all sitting cheek by jowl.)