

Talented Woman Writer on Song Writing as a Profession

By _____

That song writing may be a profitable vocation for a woman has been clearly demonstrated by one gifted young Tennessee writer. Miss Beth Slater Whitson, who has the past few years, gained a widespread reputation and substantial earnings in this fashion.

It does not seem exactly analogous for songs about roses and clouds and love and such themes dear to lyricists the world over from time immemorial, to be converted into cold coin of the realm, but a number of popular song writers have gone even further financially and are acquiring a competency in their song royalties.

Miss Whitson is the author of approximately 200 songs, many of which have been exceedingly popular. The best known is "Meet Me To-Night In Dreamland," of which more than 2,500,000 copies have been sold some time ago. Had the author, who was then only a beginning song writer, known then the business secrets of the craft, so as to successfully safeguard her own interests, she would have acquired a very nice little fortune from this one essay into the realm of song. As it unfortunately turned out the novice writer had made no contracts with her publishers, so that the second musical firm who bought the song were not bound to pay her anything whatever for her work. However, they have showed their appreciation for the big success of the lyric by paying the author approximately \$1,800.

Miss Whitson formerly lived in Goodrich, but with her family she removed to this city, and they have just moved this fall into a picturesque old-time residence, with spacious grounds, on the McFerrin road, which will be their permanent home.

"LOOK AWAY"

This home Miss Whitson has christened "Look Away," words dear to all lovers of "Dixie," and making a name particularly appropriate for the house with its beautiful and extended view.

Miss Whitson's sister, Miss Alice Whitson, is also a talented writer, with juvenile stories as her chosen field.

Miss Beth Whitson returned a few days ago from a month's successful business trip to New York and Cleveland where she went to see her musical publishers and dispose of some of her late work. She placed five numbers with J. W. Stern of New York, one of which they will use as a specialty, "A Vision of Life Without You." She also placed two high class numbers with the Broadway Music House. Next month Miss Whitson goes to Chicago to conclude some contracts with her publishers in that city.

During her delightful stay in New York Miss Whitson met a number of leading editors, including Mr. James Henry Foreman of Collier's, the magazine in which appeared, a year or two ago, the masterly little story by Miss Whitson, entitled, "Poor Folks Shoes," full of human interest.

Miss Whitson also had the pleasure, while in New York, of having tea on afternoon with Mr. Edwin Markham, the beloved and venerable poet of human brotherhood, and Mrs. Markham at their home at West Brighton.

When interviewed about her work Miss Whitson said:

“A great many people do not realize that song writing may be a practical vocation. I cannot think of a nicer or easier profession. I can do my congenial work at home, and make as much as the average business woman.”

“Some other poets can market their verses more successfully than I, but I have never gotten more than \$15 or \$20 for my verses from a magazine while the earnings from a song are much larger, even one which is not a best selling song. Of course, I would like to devote myself entirely to purely literary work, but since I cannot, I am glad to have found so easy and lucrative a profession.”

SONG ROYALTIES

The royalty for a popular number, Miss Whitson states, is half a cent, and two cents royalty is paid for what is called a high class number.

The popular song writer develops a good sporting spirit, and will turn down an offer of \$100 apiece for some little lyrics dashed off in a few hours, splendid space rates, as it were, for the chance of big royalty earnings.

The author's royalties from one of Miss Whitson's songs, “Let Me Call You Sweetheart,” written in 1912 (misprint - should be 1910), have amounted to \$2,700 to date.

One of Miss Whitson's latest popular songs is “The Picture The World Loves Best” – a mother and her baby – and this poem, lovely in sentiment and graceful in versification, has been set to charming music. It has had a huge sale, over ? 35,000 copies having been sold in one big Western city alone.

Miss Whitson is under a two-year contract to deliver one song a month, twelve numbers each year, to one of her publishers, and in addition, she does much other work.

When asked as to her early literary career she said:

“When I was ten years old I began to write verses, and even earlier jingles. About ten years ago I came to Nashville and went one night to see a minstrel show. When I heard the songs, all of a sudden the thought came to me that I could write such songs. So when I went home I wrote a little number, ‘Down Among the Sun-Kissed Hills of Tennessee.’ I sent it to a musical company in New York; they accepted it and paid me \$25 for it. So I have been at it ever since.”

One reason for the musical success of Miss Whitson's lyrics is that while their author has had no musical training she has a good ear for music and a fine sense of rhythm. She has written the music for several of her songs, and one of those, “Just Close Your Eyes Big Moon,” was selected by the Victor people out of a group of fifty submitted for their consideration.

Miss Whitson's success, due entirely to her own efforts and without a "pull," is a gratifying exhibition of worthwhile accomplishment. She has borne her success with a very becoming modesty and _____ (the remainder of this line cannot be recognized in the copy we have on file).

From: _____
