



Bittersweet memories

A widow sad and comfortless,
 Now destitute, forlorn,
 She stands there in the dusty road
 Grief-stricken and heartsore.
 And yet her trust in God remains
 Altho' the future's black.
 This stirs response in loving Ruth,
 But Orpah—she turns back.
 Together as they tread that path,
 I wonder what they say?
 It's ten long years, or maybe more,
 Since Naomi came this way.

When Moses cast the healing branch
 The people drank their fill
 From bitter waters turned to sweet.
 God loved His people still.
 So did the water of the well
 Reflect the face of Ruth,
 To show the sweet expression there
 Of courage and of truth?
 For she was chosen then, and so
 Another Branch came forth,
 And now, whoever will may drink
 The living waters pure.

At last they come to Bethlehem;
 They must approach the well.
 Was this the Naomi they knew?
 (Those women scarce can tell.)
 So as she takes a cooling draught,
 Sees mirrored in that drink
 Her own worn, lined, reflected face;
 Perchance it makes her think . . .
 Another Marah long ago,
 What bitterness was there!
 Those waters in the wilderness
 That threatened with despair.

But what of us? Are we prepared
 To give to those we meet
 A cup of water, cold and clear?
 And is *our* water sweet?

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