

# "where the woodbine twineth"

## Fragments

Compiled by

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(This material was compiled from various unverified sources)

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### Introduction

In the 19th century, "*where the woodbine twineth*" appears to be an evocative phrase which in common use; however, it's actual origin and first usage remains unknown.

Following are some fragments to ponder upon.

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### Definition

**Woodbine** n. (Bot.)

- 1) A climbing plant having flowers of great fragrance (*Lonicera Periclymenum*); the honeysuckle.
- 2) The Virginia creeper. See Virginia creeper, under Virginia. (Local, U. S.) "*Beatrice, who even now is couched in the woodbine coverture.*" (William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing* - Act 3, Scene 1)

**Virginia creeper** n. (Bot.)

- 1) Common North American vine with compound leaves and bluish-black berrylike fruit. Synonyms: American ivy, *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*, woodbine.

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### William Shakespeare (c.1564 - 1616)

*"I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,  
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,  
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine."  
(A Midsummer Night's Dream - Act 2, Scene 1)*

*So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle  
Gently entwist; the female ivy so  
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.  
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!  
(A Midsummer Night's Dream - Act 4, Scene 1)*

*The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish  
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,  
And greedily devour the treacherous bait:  
So angle we for Beatrice; who even now  
Is couched in the woodbine coverture.*  
(*Much Ado About Nothing* - Act 3, Scene 1)

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### **Septimus Winner (1870)**

Septimus Winner (11 May 1827 - 22 Nov 1902) was a songwriter of the 19th century, who used his own name, as well as pseudonyms, including: Alice Hawthorne, Percy Guyer, Mark Mason, **Apsley Street**, and Paul Stenton. Winner was also a teacher, performer, and music publisher.

In 1870, Winner published the song, "*Gone Where the Woodbine Twineth*":

#### ***Gone Where the Woodbine Twineth***

by

**Apsley Street**

1870

#### **1st Verse**

*He is gone where the woodbine twineth,  
With the vine on the ivied wall,  
'Neath the shade of the weeping willow,  
Where its long drooping branches fall.  
Remember then the soldier,  
Once noble and so brave,  
And cast thy little token  
A flow'ret on his grave.*

#### **2nd Verse**

*He is gone where the woodbine twineth,  
Let him rest, for his sleep is sweet,  
No more on the field of battle,  
Shall he march to the drum's beat,  
His heart shall no more quicken,  
To the bugle's thrilling blow,  
For death has found a victim,  
And his head at last lies low,*

#### **Chorus (after each verse)**

*Then go where the woodbine twineth,  
When spring is bright and fair,  
And to the soldier's resting place  
Some little tribute bear.*

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Sheet Music

166 **Moderato** **Gone Where The Woodbine Twineth** **APSLEY STREET**

1. He is gone where the wood-bine twin-eth, With the vine on the i - vied wall, 'Neath the  
2. He is gone where the wood-bine twin-eth, Let him rest, for his sleep is sweet, No

shade of the weeping willow, Where its long drooping branches fall. Re-mem-ber then the soldier, Once  
more on the field of battle, Shall he march to the drum's low beat, His heart no more shall quicken, To

no - ble and so - brave, And cast thy lit - tle to-ken A - flow-ret on his grave. Then  
the bu-gle's thrilling blow, For death has found a victim, And his head at last lies low.

go where the woodbine twineth, When spring is bright and fair, And to the soldier's resting place Some little tribute bear

"Gone Where the Woodbine Twineth", Septimus Winner, (aka: Apsley Street), (1870)

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**W H Delehanty (1870)**

In 1870, W H Delehanty (1846-1880) published the song, "*Where the Woodbine Twineth*".

Note: The sheet music from which the following lyrics were compiled was in very poor condition and some areas were almost illegible.

***Where The Woodbine Twineth***

**by**

***W H Delehanty***

**1870**

**1st Verse**

*It was where the woodbine twineth  
Behind a floral screen*

*In a graceful pose reclineth  
A maid of sweet sixteen*

*So enchanting was the picture  
I could not pass it by*

*But I stood as if a statue  
For beauty charms the eye*

*Then I saw that she was reading  
To while away the time*

*And my anxious gaze unheeding  
Beneath the woodbine vine*

### **2nd Verse**

*There I stood like one bewilder'd  
What course could I pursue*

*With her loveliness enraptured  
I knew not what to do*

*As a balmy breeze then wafted  
Her fan fell on the ground*

*While in ecstasy I grasped it  
Fair maid your fan I've found*

*Then she smiled and thanked me kindly  
With blushes like carmine*

*And she sweetly said she'd meet me  
Beneath the woodbine vine*

### **3rd Verse**

*The appointed time for meeting  
Was sunday[sic] night at eight*

*And what happened on that evening  
To you I will relate*

*Now her Pa and Ma were absent  
And she was left alone*

*As her parents gave there[sic] consent  
That she might stay at home*

*So she played the grand piano  
I sang and danced in time*

*And we sat on the veranda  
Beneath the woodbine vine*

### **4th Verse**

*There we me, we loved, we parted  
My heart with joy doth swell*

*For to me she braathed<sup>d1</sup> a secret  
With darling don't you tell*

*But I soon became acquainted  
With her Pa-pa and Ma*

*She's in ev'ry vision painted  
My love my guiding star*

*Now my story's almost ended  
I've married Caroline*

*And we live where once we flirted  
Beneath the woodbine vine*

**Chorus (after each verse)**

*But I love her so as you all may know  
This pretty little creature on the portico*

*It was there we met... I will ne'er forget  
Down where the woodbine twineth.*

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**Notes**

[1] Braathed - an archaic or literary form of "breathed"

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**Pennsylvania, 1873-1874**

The following words were written anonymously as the Lockouts in the Tioga County coal mines (Pennsylvania, 1873-1874) resulted in the collapse of "*The Miners and Benevolent Association*".

*"Well, we've been beaten, beaten all to smash,  
and now sir, we begin to feel the lash,  
as wielded by a gigantic corporation  
which runs the commonwealth and ruins the nation,  
Our union lamp, friend John Siney<sup>[1]</sup>, no longer shineth,  
It's gone up where the gentle woodbine twineth."*

(Anon.)

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**Notes**

[1] John Siney (1831-1879) was a moderate trade unionist who believed in negotiation and forbade the use of violence. In 1868, Siney formed the *Workingmen's Benevolent Association* (WBA), in Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, with the objective of trying to improve pay and working conditions for the Pennsylvania miners. However the mine owners were very antagonistic to the WBA, and they eventually crushed it in 1874. John Siney died in 1879, at the age of 48, in poverty, and was buried in St. Clair, Pa.

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**The Winfield Courier (1885)**

The following is from *The Winfield Courier* and is dated Thursday, 07 May 1885:

*A DAILY COURIER reporter dropped on the camp of the followers of Couch at Arkansas City the other day, to find that the boomers have nearly all picked up their beds and walked--some of them to sorrowful homes, others to the west where there is "land for the landless and homes for the homeless," with no blue coats or Democratic President to molest or make*

*afraid. Their camping ground is a dilapidated vacuum--only here and there a forlorn looking tent and sad-eyed boomer. But Spartacus Couch is there. Oh, yes, and protests against the report that any of the boomers have disbanded in lasting disgust. They're ready to return at my beckon, says he. If they haven't gone, as indicated, where the woodbine twineth, the lion roareth, the whangdoodle mourneth, and boomers fail to boometh, then the fool-killer certainly should shoulder his meat-ax and stalk among them with a gory determination. This hankerin' after "Injin" land must be squelched--and the hanker is squelching itself.*  
(The Winfield Courier, Winfield, Cowley County, Kansas, Thursday, May 7, 1885)

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### **Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable (1898)**

Dictionary of Phrase and Fable. 1898

E Cobham Brewer (1810-1897)

*Woodbine. The honeysuckle or beewort; or perhaps the convolvulus.*

*"Where the bee*

*Strays-diligent, and with extracted balm*

*Of fragrant woodbine loads his little thigh."*

*Phillips.*

*Shakespeare [1564-1616] says--*

*"So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle*

*Gently entwist."*

*Midsummer Night's Dream, iv. 1.*

*Gone were the woodbine twineth. To the pawnbroker's, up the spout, where, in Quebec, "on cottage walls the woodbine may be seen twining." (A correspondent of Quebec supplied this.)*

(Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase & Fable, First Published 1870)

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### **Later Edition of Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable (1963)**

*Woodbine, A name given in different localities to many plants that bind or wind themselves around trees; especially the honeysuckle and the convolvulus. In the first quotation below probably the former is intended; in the second the latter.*

*Where the bee*

*Strays diligent, and with extracted balm*

*Of fragrant woodbine loads his little thigh.*

*PHILLIPS.*

*Shakespeare says --*

*So doth the woodbine, the sweet honeysuckle*

*Gently entwist. Midsummer Night's Dream, IV, i.*

(Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase & Fable, First Published 1870)

End

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