



**Last of the
Knickerbockers**

or

The Last Leaf

**Philip P. Bliss
(1838-1876)**

Philip Paul Bliss (1838-1876) was born in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania, into a devout Methodist family. The family moved to Ohio and back to Pennsylvania during his younger years, and he was educated mostly by his mother from the Bible. His parents were musical and he developed a passion for singing. At age 11, he left home to make his own living, working in timber camps and sawmills, but he continued to attend local schools as much as he could. At age 18, started to teach at Hartsville, New York. He trained at music schools, conventions and normal schools under J. G. Towner, William B. Bradbury, T. E. Perkins, and T. J. Cook. They persuaded him to teach music. At 20, He taught at Rome Academy, Pennsylvania, and at 22, became an itinerant music teacher. At 26, he moved to Chicago and became known as a singer and teacher, working for Root and Cady Musical Publishers. He formed an association with Dwight L. Moody and frequently led the music at the revival meetings. After a time leading music at the First Congregational Church in Chicago, he was convinced to become a full-time singing evangelist. He travelled extensively in his ministry and Moody encouraged him to take his ministry overseas. He and his wife decided to visit their home in Pennsylvania before going to England, but, as they were riding the train approaching Ashtabula, Ohio, a trestle bridge collapsed. Bliss initially escaped from the wreck, but the carriages caught fire and he returned to try to save his wife. No trace of either body was discovered. He wrote many sacred songs, gospel songs, sheet music songs, and a number of song collections. Many of his pieces appear in the books of George F. Root, Horatio R. Palmer, and others. He occasionally used the pseudonym Pro Phundo Basso.

Last of the Knickerbockers

Pro Phundo Basso

S I saw him once be - fore, As he pass - ed by the door, And a -

A I saw him once be - fore, As he pass - ed by the door, As he

T I saw him once be - fore, As he pass - ed by the door, As he

B I saw him once be - fore, As he pass - ed by the door, And a -

S gain, And a - gain The — pave - ment stones re - sound, As he

A pass - ed by the door, And a - gain The — pave - ment stones re - sound, As he

T pass - ed by the door, And a - gain The — pave - ment stones re - sound, As he

B gain, And a - gain The — pave - ment stones re - sound, As he

Last of the Knickerbockers

Very Slow

S
6
tot - ters o'er the ground With his cane, With his cane.

A
tot - ters o'er the ground, As he tot - ters o'er the ground With his cane.

T
8
tot - ters o'er the ground, As he tot - ters o'er the ground With his cane.

B
tot - ters o'er the ground With his cane, With his cane.

a tempo

S
They say that in his prime, Ere the prun - ing - knife of Time Cut him

A
They say that in his prime, Ere the prun - ing - knife of Time, Ere the

T
8
They say that in his prime, Ere the prun - ing - knife of Time, Ere the

B
They say that in his prime, Ere the prun - ing - knife of Time Cut him

11

S
down, Cut him down, Not a bet - ter man was found By the

A
prun - ing - knife of Time Cut him down, Not a bet - ter man was found By the

T
8
prun - ing - knife of Time Cut him down, Not a bet - ter man was found By the

B
down, Cut him down, Not a bet - ter man was found By the

Last of the Knickerbockers

Very Slow

14

S Cri - er on his round Through the town, Through the town.

A Cri - er on his round, By the Cri - er on his round Through the town.

T 8 Cri - er on his round, By the Cri - er on his round Through the town.

B Cri - er on his round Through the town, Through the town.

a tempo

S But now he walks the streets, And looks at all he meets Sad and

A But now he walks the streets, And looks at all he meets, And—

T 8 But now he walks the streets, And looks at all he meets, And—

B But now he walks the streets, And looks at all he meets Sad and

19

S wan, Sad and wan, And he shakes his fee - ble head, That it

A looks at all he meets Sad and wan, And he shakes his fee - ble head, That it

T 8 looks at all he meets Sad and wan, And he shakes his fee - ble head, That it

B wan, Sad and wan, And he shakes his fee - ble head, That it

Last of the Knickerbockers

22 *Very Slow*

S seems as if he said, "They are gone." "They are gone."

A seems as if he said, That it seems as if he said, "They are gone."

T 8 seems as if he said, That it seems as if he said, "They are gone."

B seems as if he said, "They are gone." "They are gone."

a tempo

S The moss - y mar - bles rest On the lips that he has prest In their

A The moss - y mar - bles rest On the lips that he has prest, On the

T 8 The moss - y mar - bles rest On the lips that he has prest, On the

B The moss - y mar - bles rest On the lips that he has prest In their

27

S bloom, In their bloom, And the names he loved to hear Have been

A lips that he has prest In their bloom, And the names he loved to hear Have been

T 8 lips that he has prest In their bloom, And the names he loved to hear Have been

B bloom, In their bloom, And the names he loved to hear Have been

Last of the Knickerbockers

Very Slow

30

S carved for man - y_a year On the tomb, On the tomb.

A carved for man - y_a year, Have been carved for man - y_a year On the tomb.

T carved for man - y_a year, Have been carved for man - y_a year On the tomb.

B carved for man - y_a year On the tomb, On the tomb.

a tempo

S My grand - mam - ma has said— Poor old la - dy, she is dead Long a -

A My grand - mam - ma has said— Poor old la - dy, she is dead, Poor old

T My grand - mam - ma has said— Poor old la - dy, she is dead, Poor old

B My grand - mam - ma has said— Poor old la - dy, she is dead Long a -

35

S go, Long a - go— That he had a Ro - man nose, And his

A la - dy, she is dead Long a - go— That he had a Ro - man nose, And his

T la - dy, she is dead Long a - go— That he had a Ro - man nose, And his

B go, Long a - go— That he had a Ro - man nose, And his

Last of the Knickerbockers

38 *Very Slow*

S
cheek was like a rose In the snow; In the snow;

A
cheek was like a rose, And his cheek was like a rose In the snow;

T
cheek was like a rose, And his cheek was like a rose In the snow;

B
cheek was like a rose In the snow; In the snow;

a tempo

S
But now his nose is thin, And it rests up - on his chin Like a

A
But now his nose is thin, And it rests up - on his chin, And it

T
But now his nose is thin, And it rests up - on his chin, And it

B
But now his nose is thin, And it rests up - on his chin Like a

43

S
staff, Like a staff, And a crook is in his back, And a

A
rests up - on his chin Like a staff, And a crook is in his back, And a

T
rests up - on his chin Like a staff, And a crook is in his back, And a

B
staff, Like a staff, And a crook is in his back, And a

Last of the Knickerbockers

Very Slow

46

S mel - an - cho - ly crack In his laugh, In his laugh.

A mel - an - cho - ly crack, And a mel - an - cho - ly crack In his laugh.

T mel - an - cho - ly crack, And a mel - an - cho - ly crack In his laugh.

B mel - an - cho - ly crack In his laugh, In his laugh.

a tempo

S I know it is a sin For me to sit and grin At him

A I know it is a sin For me to sit and grin, For

T I know it is a sin For me to sit and grin, For

B I know it is a sin For me to sit and grin At him

51

S here, At him here; But the old three - corn - ered hat, And the

A me to sit and grin At him here; But the old three - corn - ered hat, And the

T me to sit and grin At him here; But the old three - corn - ered hat, And the

B here, At him here; But the old three - corn - ered hat, And the

Last of the Knickerbockers

54 *Very Slow*

S brech - es, and all that, Are so queer! Are — so queer!

A brech - es, and all that, And the brech - es, and all that, Are — so queer!

T brech - es, and all that, And the brech - es, and all that, Are — so queer!

B brech - es, and all that, Are so queer! Are so queer!

a tempo

S And if I should live to be The last leaf up - on the tree In the

A And if I should live to be The last leaf up - on the tree, The last

T And if I should live to be The last leaf up - on the tree, The last

B And if I should live to be The last leaf up - on the tree In the

59

S spring, In the spring, Let them smile, as I do now, At the

A leaf up - on the tree In the spring, Let them smile, as I do now, At the

T leaf up - on the tree In the spring, Let them smile, as I do now, At the

B spring, In the spring, Let them smile, as I do now, At the

Last of the Knickerbockers

Very Slow

S
old for - sak - en bough Where I cling, Where I cling.

A
old for - sak - en bough, At the old for - sak - en bough Where I cling.

T
old for - sak - en bough, At the old for - sak - en bough Where I cling.

B
old for - sak - en bough Where I cling, Where I cling.

Root & Cady
(1865)

I saw him once before,
As he passed by the door,
And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said—
Poor old lady, she is dead
Long ago—
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow;

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling.

Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894)

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