



On the Heather

**George F. Root
(1820-1895)**

George Frederick Root (1820-1895) was born at Sheffield, Massachusetts, and grew up in North Reading. The son of amateur musicians, he was named after composer George Frideric Handel and showed a love for music from a very early age. At 18, he moved to Boston to work for Artemas N. Johnson, earning room and board and piano lessons. He began to teach piano, sang in the Bowdoin Street choir, was a church organist, studied with Geo. Jas. Webb, and became an associate of Lowell Mason. He taught in many music conventions and normal schools. He went to New York City as organist and choir director of the Mercer Street Church and teacher at taught at Rutgers' Female Institute, Haines' School for Young Ladies, Union Theological Seminary, and the New York Institute for the Blind. He met Fanny Crosby and together they eventually composed over fifty popular secular songs. He left his work in New York dedicating his career to teach music conventions and normal schools. He studied in Vienna, Paris, and London, eventually returning to teach in Boston with Lowell Mason, and later Bangor, Maine, where he was director of the Penobscot Musical Association. In 1860, he moved to Chicago and joined his brother Ebenezer T. Root and C. M. Cady in a music publishing company. The company was destroyed in the Chicago fire and he continued in his teaching throughout the Northern states. He died at his summer home in Bailey Island, Maine. He was one of the leading contributors to the development of 19th century American musical education. He also collected and edited volumes of choral music for singing schools, Sunday schools, church choirs and musical institutes. He was a prolific composer of cantatas, songs, Gospel songs, and choral pieces. He is recognized as one of the most significant composers of the Civil War era and was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1970. He also wrote under the pseudonym George Wurzel (German for Root) to capitalize on the popularity of German composers during the 1850s. He wrote the first published Civil War song, "The First Gun is Fired," two days after the bombardment of Fort Sumter. His other famous songs include "The Battle Cry of Freedom" and "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys are Marching" the tune of which was later used for "Jesus Loves the Little Children" and "God Save Ireland."

On the heather,
Where in the sunbeams
Wave the flowers to the breeze,
Naught is heard save, far in the distance,
Songs of wild birds from the trees,
Softly, gently,
In the fragrant summer breeze,
Softly, gently,
Songs of wild birds from the trees,
Naught is heard save, far in the distance,
Songs of wild birds from the trees.

On the heather I would be roaming,
When the summer days are bright,
With the birds that, far in the distance,
Wake their songs of bright delight,
Softly, gently,
In the fragrant summer breeze,
Softly, gently,
Songs of wild birds from the trees,
Naught is heard save, far in the distance,
Songs of wild birds from the trees.

On the Heather

Geo. F. Root

Allegretto

S On the heath - er, Where in the sun - beams Wave the flow - ers to the breeze,

A On the heath - er, Where in the sun - beams Wave the flow - ers to the breeze,

T On the heath - er, Where in the sun - beams Wave the flow - ers to the breeze,

B On the heath - er, Where in the sun - beams Wave the flow - ers to the breeze,

5
S Naught is heard save, far in the dis - tance, Songs of wild birds from the trees,

A Naught is heard save, far in the dis - tance, Songs of wild birds from the trees,

T Naught is heard save, far in the dis - tance, Songs of wild birds from the trees,

B Naught is heard save, far — in the dis - tance, Songs of wild birds from the trees,

On the Heather

9

S Soft - ly, soft - ly, In the fra - grant sum - mer breeze,

A Soft - ly, soft - ly, In the fra - grant sum - mer breeze,

T 8 gent - ly, gent - ly, In the fra - grant sum - mer breeze,

B gent - ly, gent - ly, In the fra - grant sum - mer breeze,

13

S Soft - ly, soft - ly, Songs of wild birds from the trees,

A Soft - ly, soft - ly, Songs of wild birds from the trees,

T 8 gent - ly, gent - ly, Songs of wild birds from the trees,

B gent - ly, gent - ly, Songs of wild birds from the trees,

17

S Naught is heard save, far in the dis - tance, Songs of wild birds from the trees.

A Naught is heard save, far in the dis - tance, Songs of wild birds from the trees.

T 8 Naught is heard save, far in the dis - tance, Songs of wild birds from the trees.

B Naught is heard save, far — in the dis - tance, Songs of wild birds from the trees.

On the Heather

21

S On the heath - er I would be roam - ing, When the sum - mer days are bright,

A On the heath - er I would be roam - ing, When the sum - mer days are bright,

T 8 On the heath - er I would be roam - ing, When the sum - mer days are bright,

B On the heath - er I would be roam - ing, When the sum - mer days are bright,

25

S With the birds that, far in the dis - tance, Wake their songs of bright de - light,

A With the birds that, far in the dis - tance, Wake their songs of bright de - light,

T 8 With the birds that, far in the dis - tance, Wake their songs of bright de - light,

B With the birds that, far in the dis - tance, Wake their songs of bright de - light,

29

S Soft - ly, soft - ly, In the fra - grant sum - mer breeze,

A Soft - ly, soft - ly, In the fra - grant sum - mer breeze,

T 8 gent - ly, gent - ly, In the fra - grant sum - mer breeze,

B gent - ly, gent - ly, In the fra - grant sum - mer breeze,

On the Heather

33

S Soft - ly, soft - ly, Songs of wild birds from the trees,

A Soft - ly, soft - ly, Songs of wild birds from the trees,

T gent - ly, gent - ly, Songs of wild birds from the trees,

B gent - ly, gent - ly, Songs of wild birds from the trees,

37

S Naught is heard save, far in the dis - tance, Songs of wild birds from the trees.

A Naught is heard save, far in the dis - tance, Songs of wild birds from the trees.

T Naught is heard save, far in the dis - tance, Songs of wild birds from the trees.

B Naught is heard save, far — in the dis - tance, Songs of wild birds from the trees.

John Church & Co.
(1872)

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