

# WHEN WE WERE LITTLE

*Children's Rhymes of Oyster Bay*

BY

MARY FANNY YOUNGS

With an Introduction by  
The late THEODORE ROOSEVELT



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## FOREWORD

MISS YOUNGS writes of the quaint, old-time Long Island life, of which not only her father and I, but she herself and my children, were part. It was not the life of the "summer resident." It was the life of those who lived winter and summer in the simple, pleasant houses, beside the shore or on the neighboring hills of the northern Long Island country. It is a lovely country. The coast line of the Sound is broken by cove and bay, and the salt marshes alternate with low tree-covered bluffs, and beach plums and bayberries and beach rosemary grow on the stretches of white sand. Back of the coast line come meadows and orchards, and in the rolling lands behind are pastures, and many ponds, and very rarely a brook.

The people who dwelt on these farms or who got their livelihood on the waters of bay and Sound, came from a stock which had been on the island for nearly three centuries. The life was what they had themselves developed. They had no traditions of any other. Their roots had been in the soil for generations.

It is with this life that Miss Youngs deals in her charming little poems, which tell of the work and the play of both grown-ups and children. Naturally they appeal very strongly to me; for I love the Long Island fields and woods, at all seasons; at the high tide of the year when the green foam of spring breaks into the deeper green of summer; and at the time of the glory of the sharp fall weather; and again when the bleak days are shortest and winter grips the land. And I love the old houses, from kitchen to garret, and the life that was once lived in them.

I hope these poems will also appeal to others; for our life was essentially the same as all the old-fashioned life lived elsewhere in the open country; and this was fundamentally a simple and a wholesome life.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

SAGAMORE HILL,  
August 15th, 1918.