

MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME, GOOD-NIGHT

1853

Certainly one of the classics of American songwriting, "My Old Kentucky Home, Good-Night" was written when Pennsylvanian Stephen Foster was a young man of 25. He had an unusual gift for music and was largely self-taught. He published his first song at the age of 18 and went to work as a book-keeper at age 20. Shortly thereafter he gave a group of his songs to a music publisher who published them very profitably but gave Foster little recognition and less money. At this point Foster decided he was a good enough songwriter to devote his life to composing. He was not a good businessman, however, and throughout his life he was taken advantage of by others. He died, practically penniless, in the charity ward of a New York hospital. He was 37 years old—a tragic end for one of America's greatest songwriters.

"My Old Kentucky Home, Good-Night" is not a product of Tin Pan Alley. It is more in the nature of a folk song. But it is representative of the songs composed in the years just before and after the Civil War and illustrates quite well the style and trend in American songwriting. In its own way it is a classic for all time.

By **STEPHEN FOSTER**
(1826-1864)

VERSE:

1. The sun shines bright in the old Ken-tuck-y home, 'Tis
2. young folks roll on the lit-tle cab-in floor, All

sum-mer, the old folks are gay; The corn-top's ripe and the
mer-ry, all hap-py and bright; By'n by hard times comes a -

The score consists of two systems of music. The first system includes the first two lines of the verse, with two vocal parts (soprano and bass) and piano accompaniment. The second system includes the remaining lines of the verse, also with two vocal parts and piano accompaniment. Measure numbers 1-17, 2-18, 3-19, 4-20, and 5-21 are indicated above the staves.

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6-22 7 8 all day.

mead - ow's in the bloom, While the birds make mu - sic all the day. all day.

knock - in' at the door, Then my

2. 23 24 9-25

old Ken - tuck - y home, good - night. Weep no more, my

good - night.

CHORUS:

10-26 11-27 12-28

la - dy, Oh, weep no more to - day. We will

13-29 14-30 15

1. sing one song for the old Ken-tuck - y home, for the old Ken-tuck - y home, far a -

16 31 mel. 32

2. way. The old Ken - tuck - y home, far a - way.