

## The Scoffer

If I had lived in Franklin's time I'm most afraid that I,  
Beholding him out in the rain, a kite about to fly,  
And noticing upon its tail the barn door's rusty key,  
Would, with the scoffers on the street, have chortled in my glee;  
And with a sneer upon my lips I would have said of Ben,  
'His belfry must be full of bats. He's raving, boys, again!'

I'm glad I didn't live on earth when Fulton had his dream,  
And told his neighbors marvelous tales of what he'd do with steam,  
For I'm not sure I'd not have been a member of the throng  
That couldn't see how paddle-wheels could shove a boat along.  
At 'Fulton's Folly' I'd have sneered, as thousands did back then,  
And called the Clermont's architect the craziest of men.

Yet Franklin gave us wonders great and Fulton did the same,  
And many 'boobs' have left behind an everlasting fame.  
And dead are all their scoffers now and all their sneers forgot  
And scarce a nickel's worth of good was brought here by the lot.  
I shudder when I stop to think, had I been living then,  
I might have been a scoffer, too, and jeered at Bob and Ben.

I am afraid to-day to sneer at any fellow's dream.  
Time was I thought men couldn't fly or sail beneath the stream.  
I never call a man a boob who toils throughout the night  
On visions that I cannot see, because he may be right.  
I always think of Franklin's trick, which brought the jeers of men.  
And to myself I say, 'Who knows but here's another Ben?'

Edgar Albert Guest