

WHISPERING HOPE

Septimus Winner, 1868

This beautiful hymn was written and composed by 19th century prolific songwriter, arranger, publisher, multi-instrumentalist, and teacher, Septimus Winner in 1868. *Whispering Hope* is sometimes accredited to his pen name, Alice Hawthorne, although all indications are that Winner used his real name for the original publication.

Winner's wife, Mary Ann, was a relative of Nathaniel Hawthorne, hence Septimus' use of the Hawthorne name. He used this pseudonym for his popular secular works known in American folk music history as "*Hawthorne's Ballads*". Of his well-known works is "*Listen to the Mocking Bird*" (1855), which he sold the rights to for \$5.00; in the next few years, it sold 20,000,000 copies. Another of his successes, and still familiar, is "*Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone*" (1864), which recorded massive sales during Winner's lifetime. He also wrote "*Ten Little Indians*" (1868).

Septimus Winner (1827-1902) was largely a self-taught musician. At the age of 20, he opened a music shop where he gave lessons on a variety of instruments, including the piano, violin, guitar, and banjo. He performed locally with the orchestras of the Musical Fund Society, the Cecilian Music Society, and the Philadelphia Brass Band. He began writing music and lyrics, and also became one of the first songwriters to form his own publishing company, Winner & Shuster. In addition to his credit of over 200 songs, he composed more than 3,500 arrangements for violin, piano, and a variety of other instruments.

The *Whispering Hope* hymn was published in 1868, and was the last popular song he wrote before he died. Winner was inducted into the Songwriters' Hall of Fame in 1970.

~ Full

