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The Home Book of Verse, Volume 4

by Burton Egbert Stevenson

Contents of Volume I of the two volume set are in our Volume 1
This includes contents of Volumes 1 through 4 of our Etext editions.

PART IV

FAMILIAR VERSE, AND POEMS

HUMOROUS AND SATIRIC

BALLADE OF THE PRIMITIVE JEST

"What did the dark-haired Iberian laugh at before the tall blonde
Aryan drove him into the corners of Europe?" - Brander Matthews

I am an ancient Jest!
Palaeolithic man
In his arboreal nest
The sparks of fun would fan;
My outline did he plan,
And laughed like one possessed,
'Twas thus my course began,
I am a Merry Jest!

I am an early Jest!
Man delved, and built, and span;
Then wandered South and West
The peoples Aryan,
I journeyed in their van;
The Semites, too, confessed, -
From Beersheba to Dan, -
I am a Merry Jest!

I am an ancient Jest!
Through all the human clan,
Red, black, white, free, oppressed,
Hilarious I ran!
I'm found in Lucian,
In Poggio, and the rest,
I'm dear to Moll and Nan!
I am a Merry Jest!

ENVOY

Prince, you may storm and ban -
Joe Millers are a pest,
Suppress me if you can!
I am a Merry Jest!

Andrew Lang [1844-1912]

THE KINDLY MUSE

TIME TO BE WISE

Yes; I write verses now and then,
But blunt and flaccid is my pen,
No longer talked of by young men
As rather clever:
In the last quarter are my eyes,
You see it by their form and size;
Is it not time then to be wise?
Or now or never.

Fairest that ever sprang from Eve!
While Time allows the short reprieve,
Just look at me! would you believe
'Twas once a lover?
I cannot clear the five-bar gate;
But, trying first its timber's state,
Climb stiffly up, take breath, and wait
To trundle over.

Through gallopade I cannot swing
The entangling blooms of Beauty's spring:
I cannot say the tender thing,
Be't true or false,
And am beginning to opine
Those girls are only half-divine
Whose waists yon wicked boys entwine
In giddy waltz.

I fear that arm above that shoulder;
I wish them wiser, graver, older,
Sedater, and no harm if colder,
And panting less.
Ah! people were not half so wild
In former days, when, starchly mild,
Upon her high-heeled Essex smiled
The brave Queen Bess.

Walter Savage Landor [1775-1864]

UNDER THE LINDENS

Under the lindens lately sat
A couple, and no more, in chat;
I wondered what they would be at
Under the lindens.

I saw four eyes and four lips meet,
I heard the words, "How sweet! how sweet!"

Had then the Fairies given a treat
Under the lindens?

I pondered long and could not tell
What dainty pleased them both so well:
Bees! bees! was it your hydromel
Under the lindens?

Walter Savage Landor [1775-1864]

ADVICE

To write as your sweet mother does
Is all you wish to do.
Play, sing, and smile for others, Rose!
Let others write for you.

Or mount again your Dartmoor gray,
And I will walk beside,
Until we reach that quiet bay
Which only hears the tide.

Then wave at me your pencil, then
At distance bid me stand,
Before the caverned cliff, again
The creature of your hand.

And bid me then go past the nook
To sketch me less in size;
There are but few content to look
So little in your eyes.

Delight us with the gifts you have,
And wish for none beyond:
To some be gay, to some be grave,
To one (blest youth!) be fond.

Pleasures there are how close to Pain
And better unpossessed!
Let poetry's too throbbing vein
Lie quiet in your breast.

Walter Savage Landor [1775-1864]

TO FANNY

Never mind how the pedagogue prosed,
You want not antiquity's stamp;
The lip, that such fragrance discloses,
Oh! never should smell of the lamp.

Old Chloe, whose withering kisses
Have long set the Loves at defiance,
Now, done with the science of blisses,
May fly to the blisses of science!

Young Sappho, for want of employments,
Alone o'er her Ovid may melt,
Condemned but to read of enjoyments,
Which wiser Corinna had felt.

But for you to be buried in books -
Oh, Fanny! they're pitiful sages;
Who could not in one of your looks
Read more than in millions of pages!

Astronomy finds in your eyes
Better light than she studies above,
And Music must borrow your sighs
As the melody fittest for Love.

In Ethics - 'tis you that can check,
In a minute, their doubts and their quarrels;
Oh! show but that mole on your neck,
And 'twill soon put an end to their morals.

Your Arithmetic only can trip
When to kiss and to count you endeavor;
But eloquence glows on your lip
When you swear that you'll love me for ever.

Thus you see what a brilliant alliance
Of arts is assembled in you, -
A course of more exquisite science
Man never need wish to pursue.

And, oh! - if a Fellow like me
May confer a diploma of hearts,
With my lip thus I seal your degree,
My divine little Mistress of Arts!

Thomas Moore [1779-1852]

"I'D BE A BUTTERFLY"

I'd be a Butterfly born in a bower,
Where roses and lilies and violets meet;
Roving for ever from flower to flower,
And kissing all buds that are pretty and sweet!
I'd never languish for wealth, or for power,
I'd never sigh to see slaves at my feet:
I'd be a Butterfly born in a bower,
Kissing all buds that are pretty and sweet.

O could I pilfer the wand of a fairy,
I'd have a pair of those beautiful wings;
Their summer days' ramble is sportive and airy,
They sleep in a rose when the nightingale sings.
Those who have wealth must be watchful and wary;
Power, alas! naught but misery brings!
I'd be a Butterfly, sportive and airy,
Rocked in a rose when the nightingale sings!

What, though you tell me each gay little rover
Shrinks from the breath of the first autumn day:
Surely 'tis better when summer is over
To die when all fair things are fading away.
Some in life's winter may toil to discover
Means of procuring a weary delay -
I'd be a butterfly; living, a rover,
Dying when fair things are fading away!

Thomas Haynes Bayly [1797-1839]

"I'M NOT A SINGLE MAN"

Lines Written In A Young Lady's Album

A pretty task, Miss S---, to ask
A Benedictine pen,
That cannot quite at freedom write
Like those of other men.

No lover's plaint my Muse must paint
To fill this page's span,
But be correct and recollect
I'm not a single man.

Pray only think, for pen and ink
How hard to get along,
That may not turn on words that burn,
Or Love, the life of song!
Nine Muses, if I chooses, I
May woo all in a clan;
But one Miss S--- I daren't address -
I'm not a single man.

Scribblers unwed, with little head,
May eke it out with heart
And in their lays it often plays
A rare first-fiddle part.
They make a kiss to rhyme with bliss,
But if I so began,
I have my fears about my ears -
I'm not a single man.

Upon your cheek I may not speak,
Nor on your lip be warm,
I must be wise about your eyes,
And formal with your form;
Of all that sort of thing, in short,
On T. H. Bayly's plan,
I must not twine a single line -
I'm not a single man.

A watchman's part compels my heart
To keep you off its beat,
And I might dare as soon to swear
At you, as at your feet.
I can't expire in passion's fire
As other poets can -
My life (she's by) won't let me die -
I'm not a single man.

Shut out from love, denied a dove,
Forbidden bow and dart;
Without a groan to call my own,
With neither hand nor heart;
To Hymen vowed, and not allowed
To flirt e'en with your fan,
Here end, as just a friend, I must -
I'm not a single man.

Thomas Hood [1799-1845]

TO ---

We met but in one giddy dance,
Good-night joined hands with greeting;
And twenty thousand things may chance
Before our second meeting;
For oh! I have been often told
That all the world grows older,
And hearts and hopes to-day so cold,
To-morrow must be colder.

If I have never touched the string
Beneath your chamber, dear one,
And never said one civil thing
When you were by to hear one, -
If I have made no rhymes about
Those looks which conquer Stoics,
And heard those angel tones, without
One fit of fair heroics, -

Yet do not, though the world's cold school
Some bitter truths has taught me,
Oh, do not deem me quite the fool

Which wiser friends have thought me!
There is one charm I still could feel,
If no one laughed at feeling;
One dream my lute could still reveal, -
If it were worth revealing.

But Folly little cares what name
Of friend or foe she handles,
When merriment directs the game,
And midnight dims the candles;
I know that Folly's breath is weak
And would not stir a feather;
But yet I would not have her speak
Your name and mine together.

Oh no! this life is dark and bright,
Half rapture and half sorrow;
My heart is very full to-night,
My cup shall be to-morrow!
But they shall never know from me,
On any one condition,
Whose health made bright my Burgundy,
Whose beauty was my vision!

Winthrop Mackworth Praed [1802-1839]

THE VICAR

Some years ago, ere Time and Taste
Had turned our parish topsy-turvy,
When Darnel Park was Darnel Waste,
And roads as little known as scurvy,
The man who lost his way between
St. Mary's Hill and Sandy Thicket,
Was always shown across the Green,
And guided to the Parson's wicket.

Back flew the bolt of lissom lath;
Fair Margaret, in her tidy kirtle,
Led the lorn traveller up the path
Through clean-clipt rows of box and myrtle;
And Don and Sancho, Tramp and Tray,
Upon the parlor steps collected,
Wagged all their tails, and seemed to say,
"Our master knows you; you're expected!"

Up rose the Reverend Doctor Brown,
Up rose the Doctor's "winsome marrow";
The lady laid her knitting down,
Her husband clasped his ponderous Barrow;
Whate'er the stranger's caste or creed,
Pundit or papist, saint or sinner,

He found a stable for his steed,
And welcome for himself, and dinner.

If, when he reached his journey's end,
And warmed himself in court or college,
He had not gained an honest friend,
And twenty curious scraps of knowledge; -
If he departed as he came,
With no new light on love or liquor, -
Good sooth, the traveller was to blame,
And not the Vicarage, nor the Vicar.

His talk was like a stream which runs
With rapid change from rocks to roses;
It slipped from politics to puns;
It passed from Mahomet to Moses;
Beginning with the laws which keep
The planets in their radiant courses,
And ending with some precept deep
For dressing eels or shoeing horses.

He was a shrewd and sound divine,
Of loud Dissent the mortal terror;
And when, by dint of page and line,
He 'stablished Truth, or startled Error,
The Baptist found him far too deep,
The Deist sighed with saving sorrow,
And the lean Levite went to sleep
And dreamed of tasting pork to-morrow.

His sermon never said or showed
That Earth is foul, that Heaven is gracious,
Without refreshment on the road
From Jerome, or from Athanasius;
And sure a righteous zeal inspired
The hand and head that penned and planned them,
For all who understood, admired,
And some who did not understand them.

He wrote, too, in a quiet way,
Small treatises, and smaller verses,
And sage remarks on chalk and clay,
And hints to noble lords and nurses;
True histories of last year's ghost;
Lines to a ringlet or a turban;
And trifles to the Morning Post,
And nothings for Sylvanus Urban.

He did not think all mischief fair,
Although he had a knack of joking;
He did not make himself a bear,
Although he had a taste for smoking;
And when religious sects ran mad,

He held, in spite of all his learning,
That if a man's belief is bad,
It will not be improved by burning.

And he was kind, and loved to sit
In the low hut or garnished cottage,
And praise the farmer's homely wit,
And share the widow's homelier pottage.
At his approach complaint grew mild,
And when his hand unbarred the shutter,
The clammy lips of Fever smiled
The welcome which they could not utter.

He always had a tale for me
Of Julius Caesar or of Venus;
From him I learned the rule of three,
Cat's-cradle, leap-frog, and Quae genus.
I used to singe his powdered wig,
To steal the staff he put such trust in,
And make the puppy dance a jig
When he began to quote Augustine.

Alack, the change! In vain I look
For haunts in which my boyhood trifled;
The level lawn, the trickling brook,
The trees I climbed, the beds I rifled.
The church is larger than before,
You reach it by a carriage entry:
It holds three hundred people more,
And pews are fitted up for gentry.

Sit in the Vicar's seat; you'll hear
The doctrine of a gentle Johnian,
Whose hand is white, whose voice is clear,
Whose phrase is very Ciceronian.
Where is the old man laid? Look down,
And construe on the slab before you:
"Hic jacet Gulielmus Brown,
Vir nulla non donandus lauru."

Winthrop Mackworth Praed [1802-1839]

THE BELLE OF THE BALL-ROOM

Years, years ago, ere yet my dreams
Had been of being wise or witty;
Ere I had done with writing themes,
Or yawned o'er this infernal Chitty; -
Years, years ago, while all my joy
Were in my fowling-piece and filly;
In short, while I was yet a boy,
I fell in love with Laura Lilly.

I saw her at the County Ball;
There, when the sounds of flute and fiddle
Gave signal sweet in that old hall
Of hands across and down the middle,
Hers was the subtlest spell by far
Of all that sets young hearts romancing:
She was our queen, our rose, our star;
And then she danced, - oh, heaven, her dancing!

Dark was her hair, her hand was white;
Her voice was exquisitely tender;
Her eyes were full of liquid light;
I never saw a waist so slender;
Her every look, her every smile,
Shot right and left a score of arrows;
I thought 'twas Venus from her isle,
And wondered where she'd left her sparrows.

She talked of politics or prayers, -
Of Southey's prose, or Wordsworth's sonnets,
Of dangles or of dancing bears,
Of battles, or the last new bonnets;
By candle-light, at twelve o'clock,
To me it mattered not a tittle,
If those bright lips had quoted Locke,
I might have thought they murmured Little.

Through sunny May, through sultry June,
I loved her with a love eternal;
I spoke her praises to the moon,
I wrote them to the Sunday Journal.
My mother laughed; I soon found out
That ancient ladies have no feeling:
My father frowned; but how should gout
See any happiness in kneeling?

She was the daughter of a dean,
Rich, fat, and rather apoplectic;
She had one brother just thirteen,
Whose color was extremely hectic;
Her grandmother, for many a year,
Had fed the parish with her bounty;
Her second cousin was a peer,
And lord-lieutenant of the county.

But titles and the three-per-cents,
And mortgages, and great relations,
And India bonds, and tithes and rents,
Oh, what are they to love's sensations?
Black eyes, fair forehead, clustering locks, -
Such wealth, such honors, Cupid chooses;
He cares as little for the stocks,

As Baron Rothschild for the Muses.

She sketched; the vale, the wood, the beach,
Grew lovelier from her pencil's shading;
She botanized; I envied each
Young blossom in her boudoir fading:
She warbled Handel; it was grand, -
She made the Catilina jealous;
She touched the organ; I could stand
For hours and hours to blow the bellows.

She kept an album, too, at home,
Well filled with all an album's glories;
Paintings of butterflies and Rome,
Patterns for trimmings, Persian stories,
Soft songs to Julia's cockatoo,
Fierce odes to famine and to slaughter,
And autographs of Prince Leboo,
And recipes for elder-water.

And she was flattered, worshipped, bored;
Her steps were watched, her dress was noted;
Her poodle-dog was quite adored;
Her sayings were extremely quoted.
She laughed, and every heart was glad,
As if the taxes were abolished;
She frowned, and every took was sad,
As if the opera were demolished.

She smiled on many just for fun, -
I knew that there was nothing in it;
I was the first, the only one
Her heart had thought of for a minute.
I knew it, for she told me so,
In phrase which was divinely moulded;
She wrote a charming hand, and oh,
How sweetly all her notes were folded!

Our love was like most other loves, -
A little glow, a little shiver,
A rosebud and a pair of gloves,
And "Fly Not Yet," upon the river;
Some jealousy of some one's heir,
Some hopes of dying broken-hearted;
A miniature, a lock of hair,
The usual vows, - and then we parted.

We parted: months and years rolled by;
We met again four summers after.
Our parting was all sob and sigh, -
Our meeting was all mirth and laughter;
For, in my heart's most secret cell,
There had been many other lodgers;

And she was not the ball-room's belle,
But only Mrs. - Something - Rogers.

Winthrop Mackworth Praed [1802-1839]

THE FINE OLD ENGLISH GENTLEMAN

I'll sing you a good old song,
Made by a good old pate,
Of a fine old English gentleman
Who had an old estate,
And who kept up his old mansion
At a bountiful old rate;
With a good old porter to relieve
The old poor at his gate,
Like a fine old English gentleman
All of the olden time.

His hall so old was hung around
With pikes and guns and bows,
And swords, and good old bucklers,
That had stood some tough old blows;
'Twas there "his worship" held his state
In doublet and trunk hose,
And quaffed his cup of good old sack,
To warm his good old nose,
Like a fine old English gentleman
All of the olden time.

When winter's cold brought frost and snow,
He opened house to all;
And though threescore and ten his years,
He featly led the ball;
Nor was the houseless wanderer
E'er driven from his hall;
For while he feasted all the great,
He ne'er forgot the small;
Like a fine old English gentleman
All of the olden time.

But time, though old, is strong in flight,
And years rolled swiftly by;
And Autumn's falling leaves proclaimed
This good old man must die!
He laid him down right tranquilly,
Gave up life's latest sigh;
And mournful stillness reigned around,
And tears bedewed each eye,
For this fine old English gentleman
All of the olden time.

Now surely this is better far

Than all the new parade
Of theaters and fancy balls,
"At home" and masquerade:
And much more economical,
For all his bills were paid,
Then leave your new vagaries quite,
And take up the old trade
Of a fine old English gentleman,
All of the olden time.

Unknown

A TERNARIE OF LITTLES, UPON A PIPKIN OF JELLY SENT TO A LADY

A Little Saint best fits a little Shrine,
A little Prop best fits a little Vine,
As my small Cruse best fits my little Wine.

A little Seed best fits a little Soil,
A little Trade best fits a little Toil,
As my small Jar best fits my little Oil.

A little Bin best fits a little Bread,
A little Garland fits a little Head,
As my small Stuff best fits my little Shed.

A little Hearth best fits a little Fire,
A little Chapel fits a little Quire,
As my small Bell best fits my little Spire.

A little Stream best fits a little Boat,
A little Lead best fits a little Float,
As my small Pipe best fits my little Note.

A little Meat best fits a little Belly,
As sweetly, lady, give me leave to tell ye,
This little Pipkin fits this little Jelly.

Robert Herrick [1591-1674]

CHIVALRY AT A DISCOUNT

Fair cousin mine! the golden days
Of old romance are over;
And minstrels now care naught for bays,
Nor damsels for a lover;
And hearts are cold, and lips are mute
That kindled once with passion,
And now we've neither lance nor lute,
And tilting's out of fashion.

Yet weeping Beauty mourns the time
When Love found words in flowers;
When softest test sighs were breathed in rhyme,
And sweetest songs in bowers;
Now wedlock is a sober thing -
No more of chains or forges! -
A plain young man - a plain gold ring -
The curate - and St. George's.

Then every cross-bow had a string,
And every heart a fetter;
And making love was quite the thing,
And making verses better;
And maiden-aunts were never seen,
And gallant beaux were plenty;
And lasses married at sixteen,
And died at one-and-twenty.

Then hawking was a noble sport,
And chess a pretty science;
And huntsmen learned to blow a morte,
And heralds a defiance;
And knights and spearmen showed their might,
And timid hinds took warning;
And hypocras was warmed at night,
And coursers in the morning.

Then plumes and pennons were prepared,
And patron-saints were lauded;
And noble deeds were bravely dared,
And noble dames applauded;
And Beauty played the leech's part,
And wounds were healed with syrup;
And warriors sometimes lost a heart,
But never lost a stirrup.

Then there was no such thing as Fear,
And no such word as Reason;
And Faith was like a pointed spear,
And Fickleness was treason;
And hearts were soft, though blows were hard;
But when the fight was over,
A brimming goblet cheered the board,
His Lady's smile the lover.

Ay, those were golden days! The moon
Had then her true adorers;
And there were lyres and lutes in tune,
And no such thing as snorers;
And lovers swam, and held at naught
Streams broader than the Mersey;
And fifty thousand would have fought
For a smile from Lady Jersey.

Then people wore an iron vest,
And bad no use for tailors;
And the artizans who lived the best
Were armorers and nailers;
And steel was measured by the ell
And trousers lined with leather;
And jesters wore a cap and bell,
And knights a cap and feather.

Then single folks might live at ease,
And married ones might sever;
Uncommon doctors had their fees,
But Doctor's Commons never;
O! had we in those times been bred,
Fair cousin, for thy glances,
Instead of breaking Priscian's head,
I had been breaking lances!

Edward Fitzgerald [1809-1883]

THE BALLAD OF BOUILLABAISSE

A street there is in Paris famous,
For which no rhyme our language yields,
Rue Neuve des Petits Champs its name is -
The New Street of the Little Fields;
And there's an inn, not rich and splendid,
But still in comfortable case -
The which in youth I oft attended,
To eat a bowl of Bouillabaisse.

This Bouillabaisse a noble dish is -
A sort of soup, or broth, or brew,
Or hotchpotch of all sorts of fishes,
That Greenwich never could outdo;
Green herbs, red peppers, mussels, saffern,
Soles, onions, garlic, roach, and dace:
All these you eat at Terre's tavern,
In that one dish of Bouillabaisse.

Indeed, a rich and savory stew 'tis;
And true philosophers, methinks,
Who love all sorts of natural beauties,
Should love good victuals and good drinks.
And Cordelier or Benedictine
Might gladly, sure, his lot embrace,
Nor find a fast-day too afflicting,
Which served him up a Bouillabaisse.

I wonder if the house still there is?
Yes, here the lamp is as before;

The smiling, red-cheeked ecaillere is
Still opening oysters at the door.
Is Terre still alive and able?
I recollect his droll grimace;
He'd come and smile before your table
And hope you liked your Bouillabaisse.

We enter; nothing's changed or older.
"How's Monsieur Terre, waiter, pray?"
The waiter stares and shrugs his shoulder; -
"Monsieur is dead this many a day."
"It is the lot of saint and sinner.
So honest Terre's run his race!"
"What will Monsieur require for dinner?"
"Say, do you still cook Bouillabaisse?"

"Oh, oui, Monsieur," 's the waiter's answer;
"Quel vin Monsieur desire-t-il?"
"Tell me a good one." "That I can, Sir;
The Chambertin with yellow seal."
"So Terre's gone," I say, and sink in
My old accustomed corner-place;
"He's done with feasting and with drinking,
With Burgundy and Bouillabaisse."

My old accustomed corner here is, -
The table still is in the nook;
Ah! vanished many a busy year is,
This well-known chair since last I took,
When first I saw ye, cari luoghi,
I'd scarce a beard upon my face,
And now a grizzled, grim old foggy,
I sit and wait for Bouillabaisse.

Where are you, old companions trusty
Of early days here met to dine?
Come, waiter! quick, a flagon crusty -
I'll pledge them in the good old wine.
The kind old voices and old faces
My memory can quick retrace;
Around the board they take their places,
And share the wine and Bouillabaisse.

There's Jack has made a wondrous marriage;
There's laughing Tom is laughing yet;
There's brave Augustus drives his carriage;
There's poor old Fred in the Gazette;
On James's head the grass is growing:
Good Lord! the world has wagged apace
Since here we set the Claret flowing,
And drank, and ate the Bouillabaisse.

Ah me! how quick the days are flitting!

I mind me of a time that's gone,
When here I'd sit, as now I'm sitting,
In this same place - but not alone.
A fair young form was nestled near me,
A dear, dear face looked fondly up,
And sweetly spoke and smiled to cheer me.
- There's no one now to share my cup. . . .

I drink it as the Fates ordain it.
Come, fill it, and have done with rhymes;
Fill up the lonely glass, and drain it
In memory of dear old times.
Welcome the wine, whate'er the seal is;
And sit you down and say your grace
With thankful heart, whate'er the meal is.
- Here comes the smoking Bouillabaisse!

William Makepeace Thackeray [1811-1863]

TO MY GRANDMOTHER

Suggested By A Picture By Mr. Romney

Under the elm a rustic seat
Was merriest Susan's pet retreat
To merry-make

This Relative of mine
Was she seventy-and-nine
When she died?
By the canvas may be seen
How she looked at seventeen,
As a Bride.

Beneath a summer tree
Her maiden reverie
Has a charm;
Her ringlets are in taste;
What an arm! and what a waist
For an arm!

With her bridal-wreath, bouquet,
Lace farthingale, and gay
Falbala, -
If Romney's touch be true,
What a lucky dog were you,
Grandpapa!

Her lips are sweet as love;
They are parting! Do they move?
Are they dumb?
Her eyes are blue, and beam
Beseechingly, and seem

To say, "Come!"

What funny fancy slips
From atween these cherry lips?
Whisper me,
Fair Sorceress in paint,
What canon says I mayn't
Marry thee?

That good-for-nothing Time
Has a confidence sublime!
When I first
Saw this Lady, in my youth,
Her winters had, forsooth,
Done their worst.

Her locks, as white as snow,
Once shamed the swarthy crow;
By-and-by
That fowl's avenging sprite
Set his cruel foot for spite
Near her eye.

Her rounded form was lean,
And her silk was bombazine:
Well I wot
With her needles would she sit,
And for hours would she knit. -
Would she not?

Ah perishable clay!
Her charms had dropped away
One by one:
But if she heaved a sigh
With a burden, it was, "Thy
Will be done."

In travail, as in tears,
With the fardel of her years
Overpressed,
In mercy she was borne
Where the weary and the worn
Are at rest.

Oh, if you now are there,
And sweet as once you were,
Grandmamma,
This nether world agrees
You'll all the better please
Grandpapa.

Frederick Locker-Lampson [1821-1895]

MY MISTRESS'S BOOTS

She has dancing eyes and ruby lips,
Delightful boots - and away she skips

They nearly strike me dumb, -
I tremble when they come
Pit-a-pat:
This palpitation means
These Boots are Geraldine's -
Think of that!

O, where did hunter win
So delicate a skin
For her feet?
You lucky little kid,
You perished, so you did,
For my Sweet.

The fairy stitching gleams
On the sides, and in the seams,
And reveals
That the Pixies were the wags
Who tipped these funny tags,
And these heels.

What soles to charm an elf! -
Had Crusoe, sick of self,
Chanced to view
One printed near the tide,
O, how hard he would have tried
For the two!

For Gerry's debonair,
And innocent and fair
As a rose;
She's an Angel in a frock, -
She's an Angel with a clock
To her hose!

The simpletons who squeeze
Their pretty toes to please
Mandarins,
Would positively flinch
From venturing to pinch
Geraldine's.

Cinderella's lefts and rights
To Geraldine's were frights:
And I trow
The Damsel, deftly shod,
Has dutifully trod

Until now.

Come, Gerry, since it suits
Such a pretty Puss (in Boots)
These to don,
Set your dainty hand awhile
On my shoulder, Dear, and I'll
Put them on.

Frederick Locker-Lampson [1821-1895]

A GARDEN LYRIC

Geraldine And I

Dite, Damasippe, deaeque
Verum ob consilium donent tonsore.

We have loitered and laughed in the flowery croft,
We have met under wintry skies;
Her voice is the dearest voice, and soft
Is the light in her wistful eyes;
It is bliss in the silent woods, among
Gay crowds, or in any place,
To mould her mind, to gaze in her young
Confiding face.

For ever may roses divinely blow,
And wine-dark pansies charm
By that prim box path where I felt the glow
Of her dimpled, trusting arm,
And the sweep of her silk as she turned and smiled
A smile as pure as her pearls;
The breeze was in love with the darling Child,
And coaxed her curls.

She showed me her ferns and woodbine sprays,
Foxglove and jasmine stars,
A mist of blue in the beds, a blaze
Of red in the celadon jars:
And velvety bees in convolvulus bells,
And roses of bountiful Spring.
But I said - "Though roses and bees have spells,
They have thorn, and sting."

She showed me ripe peaches behind a net
As fine as her veil, and fat
Goldfish a-gape, who lazily met
For her crumbs - I grudged them that!
A squirrel, some rabbits with long lop ears,
And guinea-pigs, tortoise-shell - wee;
And I told her that eloquent truth inheres
In all we see.

I lifted her doe by its lops, quoth I,
"Even here deep meaning lies, -
Why have squirrels these ample tails, and why
Have rabbits these prominent eyes?"
She smiled and said, as she twirled her veil,
"For some nice little cause, no doubt -
If you lift a guinea-pig up by the tail
His eyes drop out!"

Frederick Locker Lampson [1821-1895]

MRS. SMITH

Heigh-ho! they're wed. The cards are dealt,
Our frolic games are o'er;
I've laughed, and fooled, and loved. I've felt -
As I shall feel no more!
Yon little thatch is where she lives,
Yon spire is where she met me; -
I think that if she quite forgives,
She cannot quite forget me.

Last year I trod these fields with Di, -
Fields fresh with clover and with rye;
They now seem arid:
Then Di was fair and single; how
Unfair it seems on me, for now
Di's fair, - and married!

A blissful swain, - I scorned the song
Which tells us though young Love is strong,
The Fates are stronger:
Then breezes blew a boon to men,
Then buttercups were bright, and then
The grass was longer.

That day I saw, and much esteemed,
Di's ankles, that the clover seemed
Inclined to smother:
It twitched, and soon untied (for fun)
The ribbons of her shoes, first one,
And then the other.

I'm told that virgins augur some
Misfortune if their shoe-strings come
To grief on Friday:
And so did Di, - and then her pride
Decreed that shoe-strings so untied,
Are "so untidy!"

Of course I knelt; with fingers deft

I tied the right, and tied the left:
Says Di, "This stubble
Is very stupid! - as I live
I'm quite ashamed! - I'm shocked to give
You so much trouble!"

For answer I was fain to sink
To what we all would say and think
Were Beauty present:
"Don't mention such a simple act -
A trouble? not the least! In fact
It's rather pleasant!"

I trust that Love will never tease
Poor little Di, or prove that he's
A graceless rover.
She's happy now as Mrs. Smith -
But less polite when walking with
Her chosen lover!

Heigh-ho! Although no moral clings
To Di's blue eyes, and sandal strings,
We had our quarrels.
I think that Smith is thought an ass, -
I know that when they walk in grass
She wears balmorals.

Frederick Locker-Lampson [1821-1895]

THE SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD

The characters of great and small
Come ready made, we can't bespeak one;
Their sides are many, too, and all
(Except ourselves) have got a weak one.
Some sanguine people love for life,
Some love their hobby till it flings them.
How many love a pretty wife
For love of the eclat she brings them! . . .

A little to relieve my mind
I've thrown off this disjointed chatter,
But more because I'm disinclined
To enter on a painful matter:
Once I was bashful; I'll allow
I've blushed for words untimely spoken;
I still am rather shy, and now . . .
And now the ice is fairly broken.

We all have secrets: you have one
Which may n't be quite your charming spouse's;
We all lock up a Skeleton

In some grim chamber of our houses;
Familiars who exhaust their days
And nights in probing where our smart is,
And who, for all their spiteful ways,
Are "silent, unassuming Parties."

We hug this Phantom we detest,
Rarely we let it cross our portals:
It is a most exacting guest,
And we are much afflicted mortals.
Your neighbor Gay, that jovial wight,
As Dives rich, and brave as Hector,
Poor Gay steals twenty times a night,
On shaking knees, to see his Specter.

Old Dives fears a pauper fate,
So hoarding is his ruling passion: -
Some gloomy souls anticipate
A waistcoat, straiter than the fashion!
She childless pines, that lonely wife,
And secret tears are bitter shedding;
Hector may tremble all his life,
And die, - but not of that he's dreading. . . .

Ah me, the World! How fast it spins!
The beldams dance, the caldron bubbles;
They shriek, they stir it for our sins,
And we must drain it for our troubles.
We toil, we groan; the cry for love
Mounts up from this poor seething city,
And yet I know we have above
A Father, infinite in pity.

When Beauty smiles, when Sorrow weeps,
Where sunbeams play, where shadows darken,
One inmate of our dwelling keeps
Its ghastly carnival; but hearken!
How dry the rattle of the bones!
That sound was not to make you start meant:
Stand by! Your humble servant owns
The Tenant of this Dark Apartment.

Frederick Locker-Lampson [1821-1895]

A TERRIBLE INFANT

I recollect a nurse called Ann,
Who carried me about the grass,
And one fine day a fine young man
Came up, and kissed the pretty lass:
She did not make the least objection!
Thinks I, "Aha!

When I can talk I'll tell Mamma"
- And that's my earliest recollection.

Frederick Locker-Lampson [1821-1895]

COMPANIONS

A Tale Of A Grandfather

I know not of what we pondered
Or made pretty pretence to talk,
As, her hand within mine, we wandered.
Toward the pool by the lime-tree walk,
While the dew fell in showers from the passion flowers
And the blush-rose bent on her stalk.

I cannot recall her figure:
Was it regal as Juno's own?
Or only a trifle bigger
Than the elves who surround the throne
Of the Fairy Queen, and are seen, I ween,
By mortals in dreams alone?

What her eyes were like I know not:
Perhaps they were blurred with tears;
And perhaps in yon skies there glow not
(On the contrary) clearer spheres.
No! as to her eyes I am just as wise
As you or the cat, my dears.

Her teeth, I presume, were "pearly":
But which was she, brunette or blonde?
Her hair, was it quaintly curly,
Or as straight as a beadle's wand?
That I failed to remark: it was rather dark
And shadowy round the pond.

Then the hand that reposed so snugly
In mine, - was it plump or spare?
Was the countenance fair or ugly?
Nay, children, you have me there!
My eyes were p'haps blurred; and besides I'd heard
That it's horribly rude to stare.

And I, - was I brusque and surly?
Or oppressively bland and fond?
Was I partial to rising early?
Or why did we twain abscond,
When nobody knew, from the public view
To prow! by a misty pond?

What passed, what was felt or spoken, -
Whether anything passed at all, -

And whether the heart was broken
That beat under that sheltering shawl, -
(If shawl she had on, which I doubt), - has gone,
Yes, gone from me past recall.

Was I haply the lady's suitor?
Or her uncle? I can't make out;
Ask your governess, dears, or tutor.
For myself, I'm in hopeless doubt
As to why we were there, who on earth we were,
And what this is all about.

Charles Stuart Calverley [1831-1884]

DOROTHY Q

A Family Portrait

Grandmother's mother: her age, I guess,
Thirteen summers, or something less:
Girlish bust, but womanly air;
Smooth, square forehead with uprolled hair;
Lips that lover has never kissed;
Taper fingers and slender wrist;
Hanging sleeves of stiff brocade;
So they painted the little maid.

On her hand a parrot green
Sits unmoving and broods serene.
Hold up the canvas full in view, -
Look! there's a rent the light shines through,
Dark with a century's fringe of dust, -
That was a Red-Coat's rapier-thrust!
Such is the tale the lady old,
Dorothy's daughter's daughter, told.

Who the painter was none may tell, -
One whose best was not over well;
Hard and dry, it must be confessed,
Flat as a rose that has long been pressed;
Yet in her cheek the hues are bright,
Dainty colors of red and white,
And in her slender shape are seen
Hint and promise of stately mien.

Look not on her with eyes of scorn, -
Dorothy Q. was a lady born!
Ay! since the galloping Normans came,
England's annals have known her name;
And still to the three-hilled rebel town
Dear is that ancient name's renown,
For many a civic wreath they won,
The youthful sire and the gray-haired son.

O Damsel Dorothy! Dorothy Q!
Strange is the gift that I owe to you;
Such a gift as never a king
Save to daughter or son might bring, -
All my tenure of heart and hand,
All my title to house and land;
Mother and sister and child and wife
And joy and sorrow and death and life!

What if a hundred years ago
Those close-shut lips had answered No,
When forth the tremulous question came
That cost the maiden her Norman name,
And under the folds that look so still
The bodice swelled with the bosom's thrill?
Should I be I, or would it be
One tenth another, to nine tenths me?

Soft is the breath of a maiden's YES:
Not the light gossamer stirs with less;
But never a cable that holds so fast
Through all the battles of wave and blast,
And never an echo of speech or song
That lives in the babbling air so long!
There were tones in the voice that whispered then
You may hear to-day in a hundred men.

O lady and lover, how faint and far
Your images hover, - and here we are
Solid and stirring in flesh and bone, -
Edward's and Dorothy's - all their own, -
A goodly record for Time to show
Of a syllable spoken so long ago! -
Shall I bless you, Dorothy, or forgive
For the tender whisper that bade me live?

It shall be a blessing, my little maid!
I will heal the stab of the Red-Coat's blade,
And freshen the gold of the tarnished frame,
And gild with a rhyme your household name;
So you shall smile on us brave and bright
As first you greeted the morning's light,
And live untroubled by woes and fears
Through a second youth of a hundred years.

Oliver Wendell Holmes [1809-1894]

MY AUNT

My aunt! my dear unmarried aunt!
Long years have o'er her flown;

Yet still she strains the aching clasp
That binds her virgin zone;
I know it hurts her, - though she looks
As cheerful as she can;
Her waist is ampler than her life,
For life is but a span.

My aunt! my poor deluded aunt!
Her hair is almost gray;
Why will she train that winter curl
In such a spring-like way?
How can she lay her glasses down,
And say she reads as well,
When, through a double convex lens,
She just makes out to spell?

Her father, - grandpapa! forgive
This erring lip its smiles, -
Vowed she should make the finest girl
Within a hundred miles;
He sent her to a stylish school;
'Twas in her thirteenth June;
And with her, as the rules required,
"Two towels and a spoon."

They braced my aunt against a board,
To make her straight and tall;
They laced her up, they starved her down,
To make her light and small;
They pinched her feet, they singed her hair,
They screwed it up with pins; -
Oh, never mortal suffered more
In penance for her sins.

So, when my precious aunt was done,
My grandsire brought her back;
(By daylight, lest some rabid youth
Might follow on the track;)
"Ah!" said my grandsire, as he shook
Some powder in his pan,
"What could this lovely creature do
Against a desperate man!"

Alas! nor chariot, nor barouche,
Nor bandit cavalcade,
Tore from the trembling father's arms
His all-accomplished maid.
For her how happy had it been!
And Heaven had spared to me
To see one sad, ungathered rose
On my ancestral tree.

Oliver Wendell Holmes [1809-1894]

THE LAST LEAF

I saw him once before,
As he passed by the door,
And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has pressed
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said, -
Poor old lady, she is dead
Long ago, -
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow:

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling.

Oliver Wendell Holmes [1809-1894]

CONTENTMENT

"Man wants but little here below"

Little I ask; my wants are few;
I only wish a hut of stone,
(A very plain brown stone will do,) -
That I may call my own; -
And close at hand is such a one,
In yonder street that fronts the sun.

Plain food is quite enough for me;
Three courses are as good as ten; -
If Nature can subsist on three,
Thank Heaven for three. Amen!
I always thought cold victual nice; -
My choice would be vanilla-ice.

I care not much for gold or land; -
Give me a mortgage here and there, -
Some good bank-stock, some note of hand,
Or trifling railroad share, -
I only ask that Fortune send
A little more than I shall spend.

Honors are silly toys, I know,
And titles are but empty names;
I would, perhaps, be Plenipo, -
But only near St. James;
I'm very sure I should not care
To fill our Gubernator's chair.

Jewels are baubles; 'tis a sin
To care for such unfruitful things; -
One good-sized diamond in a pin, -
Some, not so large, in rings, -
A ruby, and a pearl, or so,
Will do for me; - I laugh at show.

My dame should dress in cheap attire;
(Good heavy silks are never dear;) -
I own perhaps I might desire
Some shawls of true Cashmere, -
Some marrowy crapes of China silk,

Like wrinkled skins on scalded milk.

I would not have the horse I drive
So fast that folks must stop and stare;
An easy gait - two forty-five -
Suits me; I do not care; -
Perhaps, far just a single spurt,
Some seconds less would do no hurt.

Of pictures, I should like to own
Titians and Raphaels three or four, -
I love so much their style and tone, -
One Turner, and no more,
(A landscape, - foreground golden dirt, -
The sunshine painted with a squirt.)

Of books but few, - some fifty score
For daily use, and bound for wear;
The rest upon an upper floor; -
Some little luxury there
Of red morocco's gilded gleam,
And vellum rich as country cream.

Busts, cameos, gems, - such things as these,
Which others often show for pride,
I value for their power to please,
And selfish churls deride; -
One Stradivarius, I confess,
Two meerschaums, I would fain possess.

Wealth's wasteful tricks I will not learn,
Nor ape the glittering upstart fool; -
Shall not carved tables serve my turn,
But all must be of buhl?
Give grasping pomp its double share, -
I ask but one recumbent chair.

Thus humble let me live and die,
Nor long for Midas' golden touch;
If Heaven more generous gifts deny,
I shall not miss them much, -
Too grateful for the blessing lent
Of simple tastes and mind content!

Oliver Wendell Holmes [1809-1894]

THE BOYS

Has there any old fellow got mixed with the boys?
If there has, take him out, without making a noise.
Hang the Almanac's cheat and the Catalogue's spite!
Old Time is a liar! We're twenty to-night!

We're twenty! We're twenty! Who, says we are more?
He's tipsy, - young jackanapes! - show him the door!
"Gray temples at twenty?" - Yes! white if we please!
Where the snow-flakes fall thickest there's nothing can freeze!

Was it snowing I spoke of? Excuse the mistake!
Look close, - you will not see a sign of a flake!
We want some new garlands for those we have shed, -
And these are white roses in place of the red.

We've a trick, we young fellows, you may have been told,
Of talking (in public) as if we were old: -
That boy we call "Doctor," and this we call "Judge;"
It's a neat little fiction, - of course it's all fudge.

That fellow's the "Speaker," - the one on the right;
"Mr. Mayor," my young one, how are you to-night?
That's our "Member of Congress," we say when we chaff;
There's the "Reverend" What's his name? - don't make me laugh.

That boy with the grave mathematical look
Made believe he had written a wonderful book,
And the ROYAL SOCIETY thought it was true!
So they chose him right in; a good joke it was, too!

There's a boy, we pretend, with a three-decker brain,
That could harness a team with a logical chain;
When he spoke for our manhood in syllabled fire,
We called him "The Justice," but now he's "The Squire."

And there's a nice youngster of excellent pith, -
Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith;
But he shouted a song for the brave and the free, -
Just read on his medal, "My country," "of thee!"

You hear that boy laughing? - You think he's all fun;
But the angels laugh, too, at the good he has done;
The children laugh loud as they troop to his call,
And the poor man that knows him laughs loudest of all!

Yes, we're boys, - always playing with tongue or with pen, -
And I sometimes have asked, - Shall we ever be men?
Shall we always be youthful, and laughing, and gay,
Till the last dear companion drops smiling away?

Then here's to our boyhood, its gold and its gray!
The stars of its winter, the dews of its May!
And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,
Dear Father, take care of thy children, The Boys!

Oliver Wendell Holmes [1809-1894]

THE JOLLY OLD PEDAGOGUE

'Twas a jolly old pedagogue, long ago,
Tall and slender, and sallow and dry;
His form was bent, and his gait was slow,
His long, thin hair was as white as snow,
But a wonderful twinkle shone in his eye;
And he sang every night as he went to bed,
"Let us be happy down here below:
The living should live, though the dead be dead,"
Said the jolly old pedagogue, long ago.

He taught his scholars the rule of three,
Writing, and reading, and history, too;
He took the little ones up on his knee,
For a kind old heart in his breast had he,
And the wants of the littlest child he knew:
"Learn while you're young," he often said,
"There is much to enjoy, down here below;
Life for the living, and rest for the dead!"
Said the jolly old pedagogue, long ago.

With the stupidest boys he was kind and cool,
Speaking only in gentlest tones;
The rod was hardly known in his school . . .
Whipping, to him, was a barbarous rule,
And too hard work for his poor old bones;
Besides, it was painful, he sometimes said:
"We should make life pleasant, down here below,
The living need charity more than the dead,"
Said the jolly old pedagogue, long ago.

He lived in the house by the hawthorn lane,
With roses and woodbine over the door;
His rooms were quiet, and neat, and plain,
But a spirit of comfort there held reign,
And made him forget he was old and poor;
"I need so little," he often said;
"And my friends and relatives here below
Won't litigate over me when I am dead,"
Said the jolly old pedagogue, long ago.

But the pleasantest times that he had, of all,
Were the sociable hours he used to pass,
With his chair tipped back to a neighbor's wall,
Making an unceremonious call,
Over a pipe and a friendly glass:
This was the finest picture, he said,
Of the many he tasted, here below;
"Who has no cronies, had better be dead!"
Said the jolly old pedagogue, long ago.

Then the jolly old pedagogue's wrinkled face
Melted all over in sunshiny smiles;
He stirred his glass with an old-school grace,
Chuckled, and sipped, and prattled apace,
Till the house grew merry, from cellar to tiles:
"I'm a pretty old man," he gently said,
"I've lingered a long while, here below;
But my heart is fresh, if my youth is fled!"
Said the jolly old pedagogue, long ago.

He smoked his pipe in the balmy air,
Every night when the sun went down,
While the soft wind played in his silvery hair,
Leaving its tenderest kisses there,
On the jolly old pedagogue's jolly old crown:
And, feeling the kisses, he smiled and said,
'Twas a glorious world, down here below;
"Why wait for happiness till we are dead?"
Said the jolly old pedagogue, long ago.

He sat at his door, one midsummer night,
After the sun had sunk in the west,
And the lingering beams of golden light
Made his kindly old face look warm and bright,
While the odorous night-wind whispered "Rest!"
Gently, gently, he bowed his head. . . .
There were angels waiting for him, I know;
He was sure of happiness, living or dead,
This jolly old pedagogue, long ago!

George Arnold [1834-1865]

ON AN INTAGLIO HEAD OF MINERVA

Beneath the warrior's helm, behold
The flowing tresses of the woman!
Minerva, Pallas, what you will -
A winsome creature, Greek or Roman.

Minerva? No! 'tis some sly minx
In cousin's helmet masquerading;
If not - then Wisdom was a dame
For sonnets and for serenading!

I thought the goddess cold, austere,
Not made for love's despairs and blisses:
Did Pallas wear her hair like that?
Was Wisdom's mouth so shaped for kisses?

The Nightingale should be her bird,
And not the Owl, big-eyed and solemn:
How very fresh she looks, and yet

She's older far than Trajan's Column!

The magic hand that carved this face,
And set this vine-work round it running,
Perhaps ere mighty Phidias wrought,
Had lost its subtle skill and cunning.

Who was he? Was he glad or sad,
Who knew to carve in such a fashion?
Perchance he graved the dainty head
For some brown girl that scorned his passion.

Perchance, in some still garden-place,
Where neither fount nor tree to-day is,
He flung the jewel at the feet
Of Phryne, or perhaps 'twas Lais.

But he is dust; we may not know
His happy or unhappy story:
Nameless, and dead these centuries,
His work outlives him, - there's his glory!

Both man and jewel lay in earth
Beneath a lava-buried city;
The countless summers came and went,
With neither haste, nor hate, nor pity.

Years blotted out the man, but left
The jewel fresh as any blossom,
Till some Visconti dug it up, -
To rise and fall on Mabel's bosom!

O nameless brother! see how Time
Your gracious handiwork has guarded:
See how your loving, patient art
Has come, at last, to be rewarded.

Who would not suffer slights of men,
And pangs of hopeless passion also,
To have his carven agate-stone
On such a bosom rise and fall so!

Thomas Bailey Aldrich [1837-1907]

THALIA

A Middle-aged Lyrical Poet Is supposed To Be Taking
Final Leave Of The Muse Of Comedy. She Has Brought
Him His Hat And Gloves, And Is Abstractedly Picking
A Thread Of Gold Hair From His Coat Sleeve As He
Begins To Speak:

I say it under the rose -

oh, thanks! - yes, under the laurel,
We part lovers, not foes;
we are not going to quarrel.

We have too long been friends
on foot and in gilded coaches,
Now that the whole thing ends,
to spoil our kiss with reproaches.

I leave you; my soul is wrung;
I pause, look back from the portal -
Ah, I no more am young,
and you, child, you are immortal!

Mine is the glacier's way,
yours is the blossom's weather -
When were December and May
known to be happy together?

Before my kisses grow tame,
before my moodiness grieve you,
While yet my heart is flame,
and I all lover, I leave you.

So, in the coming time,
when you count the rich years over,
Think of me in my prime,
and not as a white-haired lover,

Fretful, pierced with regret,
the wraith of a dead Desire
Thrumming a cracked spinet
by a slowly dying fire.

When, at last, I am cold -
years hence, if the gods so will it -
Say, "He was true as gold,"
and wear a rose in your fillet!

Others, tender as I,
will come and sue for caresses,
Woo you, win you, and die -
mind you, a rose in your tresses!

Some Melpomene woo,
some hold Clio the nearest;
You, sweet Comedy - you
were ever sweetest and dearest!

Nay, it is time to go.
When writing your tragic sister
Say to that child of woe
how sorry I was I missed her.

Really, I cannot stay,
though "parting is such sweet sorrow" . . .
Perhaps I will, on my way
down-town, look in to-morrow!

Thomas Bailey Aldrich [1837-1907]

PAN IN WALL STREET

A. D. 1867

Just where the Treasury's marble front
Looks over Wall Street's mingled nations;
Where Jews and Gentiles most are wont
To throng for trade and last quotations;
Where, hour by hour, the rates of gold
Ostrival, in the ears of people,
The quarter-chimes, serenely tolled
From Trinity's undaunted steeple, -

Even there I heard a strange, wild strain
Sound high above the modern clamor,
Above the cries of greed and gain,
The curbstone war, the auction's hammer;
And swift, on Music's misty ways,
It led, from all this strife for millions,
To ancient, sweet-to-nothing days
Among the kirtle-robed Sicilians.

And as it stilled the multitude,
And yet more joyous rose, and shriller,
I saw the minstrel, where he stood
At ease against a Doric pillar:
One hand a droning organ played,
The other held a Pan's-pipe (fashioned
Like those of old) to lips that made
The reeds give out that strain impassioned.

'Twas Pan himself had wandered here
A-strolling through this sordid city,
And piping to the civic ear
The prelude of some pastoral ditty!
The demigod had crossed the seas, -
From haunts of shepherd, nymph, and satyr,
And Syracusan times, - to these
Far shores and twenty centuries later.

A ragged cap was on his head;
But - hidden thus - there was no doubting
That, all with crispy locks o'erspread,
His gnarled horns were somewhere sprouting;
His club-feet, cased in rusty shoes,

Were crossed, as on some frieze you see them,
And trousers, patched of divers hues,
Concealed his crooked shanks beneath them.

He filled the quivering reeds with sound,
And o'er his mouth their changes shifted,
And with his goat's-eyes looked around
Where'er the passing current drifted;
And soon, as on Trinacrian hills
The nymphs and herdsmen ran to hear him,
Even now the tradesmen from their tills,
With clerks and porters, crowded near him.

The bulls and bears together drew
From Jauncey Court and New Street Alley,
As erst, if pastorals be true,
Came beasts from every wooded valley;
The random passers stayed to list, -
A boxer Aegon, rough and merry,
A Broadway Daphnis, on his tryst
With Nais at the Brooklyn Ferry.

A one-eyed Cyclops halted long
In tattered cloak of army pattern,
And Galatea joined the throng, -
A blowsy, apple-vending slattern;
While old Silenus staggered out
From some new-fangled lunch-house handy,
And bade the piper, with a shout,
To strike up Yankee Doodle Dandy!

A newsboy and a peanut-girl
Like little Fauns began to caper:
His hair was all in tangled curl,
Her tawny legs were bare and taper;
And still the gathering larger grew,
And gave its pence and crowded nigher,
While aye the shepherd-minstrel blew
His pipe, and struck the gamut higher.

O heart of Nature, beating still
With throbs her vernal passion taught her, -
Even here, as on the vine-clad hill,
Or by the Arethusan water!
New forms may fold the speech, new lands
Arise within these ocean-portals,
But Music waves eternal wands, -
Enchantress of the souls of mortals!

So thought I, - but among us trod
A man in blue, with legal baton,
And scoffed the vagrant demigod,
And pushed him from the step I sat on.

Doubting I mused upon the cry,
"Great Pan is dead!" - and all the people
Went on their ways: - and clear and high
The quarter sounded from the steeple.

Edmund Clarence Stedman [1833-1908]

UPON LESBIA - ARGUING

My Lesbia, I will not deny,
Bewitches me completely;
She has the usual beaming eye,
And smiles upon me sweetly:
But she has an unseemly way
Of contradicting what I say.

And, though I am her closest friend,
And find her fascinating,
I cannot cordially commend
Her method of debating:
Her logic, though she is divine,
Is singularly feminine.

Her reasoning is full of tricks,
And butterfly suggestions,
I know no point to which she sticks,
She begs the simplest questions;
And, when her premises are strong,
She always draws her inference wrong.

Broad, liberal views on men and things
She will not hear a word of;
To prove herself correct she brings
Some instance she has heard of;
The argument ad hominem
Appears her favorite strategem.

Old Socrates, with sage replies
To questions put to suit him,
Would not, I think, have looked so wise
With Lesbia to confute him;
He would more probably have bade
Xantippe hasten to his aid.

Ah! well, my fair philosopher,
With clear brown eyes that glisten
So sweetly, that I much prefer
To look at them than listen,
Preach me your sermon: have your way,
The voice is yours, whate'er you say.

Alfred Cochrane [1865-

TO ANTHEA, WHO MAY COMMAND HIM ANYTHING
(New Style)

Am I sincere? I say I dote
On everything that Browning wrote;
I know some bits by heart to quote:
But then She reads him.
I say - and is it strictly true? -
How I admire her cockatoo;
Well! in a way of course I do:
But then She feeds him.

And I become, at her command,
The sternest Tory in the land;
The Grand Old Man is far from grand;
But then She states it.
Nay! worse than that, I am so tame,
I once admitted - to my shame -
That football was a brutal game:
Because She hates it.

My taste in Art she hailed with groans,
And I, once charmed with bolder tones,
Now love the yellows of Burne-Jones:
But then She likes them.
My tuneful soul no longer hoards
Stray jewels from the Empire boards;
I revel now in Dvorak's chords:
But then She strikes them.

Our age distinctly cramps a knight;
Yet, though debarred from tilt and fight,
I can admit that black is white,
If She asserts it.
Heroes of old were luckier men
Than I - I venture now and then
To hint - retracting meekly when
She controverts it.

Alfred Cochrane [1865-

THE EIGHT-DAY CLOCK

The days of Bute and Grafton's fame,
Of Chatham's waning prime,
First heard your sounding gong proclaim
Its chronicle of Time;
Old days when Dodd confessed his guilt,
When Goldsmith drave his quill,
And genial gossip Horace built

His house on Strawberry Hill.

Now with a grave unmeaning face
You still repeat the tale,
High-towering in your somber case,
Designed by Chippendale;
Without regret for what is gone,
You bid old customs change,
As year by year you travel on
To scenes and voices strange.

We might have mingled with the crowd
Of courtiers in this hall,
The fans that swayed, the wigs that bowed,
But you have spoiled it all;
We might have lingered in the train
Of nymphs that Reynolds drew,
Or stared spell-bound in Drury Lane
At Garrick - but for you.

We might in Leicester Fields have swelled
The throng of beaux and cits,
Or listened to the concourse held
Among the Kitcat wits;
Have strolled with Selwyn in Pall Mall,
Arrayed in gorgeous silks,
Or in Great George Street raised a yell
For Liberty and Wilkes.

This is the life which you have known,
Which you have ticked away,
In one unmoved unfaltering tone
That ceased not day by day,
While ever round your dial moved
Your hands from span to span,
Through drowsy hours and hours that proved
Big with the fate of man.

A steady tick for fatal creeds,
For youth on folly bent,
A steady tick for worthy deeds,
And moments wisely spent;
No warning note of emphasis,
No whisper of advice,
To ruined rake or flippant miss,
For coquetry or dice.

You might, I think, have hammered out
With meaning doubly dear,
The midnight of a Vauxhall rout
In Evelina's ear;
Or when the night was almost gone,
You might, the deals between,

Have startled those who looked upon
The cloth when it was green.

But no, in all the vanished years
Down which your wheels have run,
Your message borne to heedless ears
Is one and only one -
No wit of men, no power of kings,
Can stem the overthrow
Wrought by this pendulum that swings
Sedately to and fro.

Alfred Cochrane [1865-

A PORTRAIT

In sunny girlhood's vernal life
She caused no small sensation,
But now the modest English wife
To others leaves flirtation.
She's young still, lovely, debonair,
Although sometimes her features
Are clouded by a thought of care
For those two tiny creatures.

Each tiny, toddling, mottled mite
Asserts with voice emphatic,
In lisping accents, "Mite is right,"
Their rule is autocratic:
The song becomes, that charmed mankind,
Their musical narcotic,
And baby lips than Love, she'll find,
Are even more despotic.

Soft lullaby when singing there,
And castles ever building,
Their destiny she'll carve in air,
Bright with maternal gilding:
Young Guy, a clever advocate,
So eloquent and able!
A powdered wig upon his pate,
A coronet for Mabel!

Joseph Ashby-Sterry [1838-1917]

"OLD BOOKS ARE BEST"

Old Books are best! With what delight
Does "Faithorne fecit" greet our sight
On frontispiece or title-page
Of that old time, when on the stage

"Sweet Nell" set "Rowley's" heart alight!

And you, O Friend, to whom I write,
Must not deny, e'en though you might,
Through fear of modern pirates' rage,
Old Books are best.

What though the print be not so bright,
The paper dark, the binding slight?
Our author, be he dull or sage,
Returning from that distant age
So lives again, we say of right:
Old Books are best.

Beverly Chew [1850-1924]

IMPRESSION

In these restrained and careful times
Our knowledge petrifies our rhymes;
Ah! for that reckless fire men had
When it was witty to be mad;

When wild conceits were piled in scores,
And lit by flaming metaphors,
When all was crazed and out of tune, -
Yet throbbbed with music of the moon.

If we could dare to write as ill
As some whose voices haunt us still,
Even we, perchance, might call our own
Their deep enchanting undertone.

We are too diffident and nice,
Too learned and too over-wise,
Too much afraid of faults to be
The flutes of bold sincerity.

For, as this sweet life passes by,
We blink and nod with critic eye;
We've no words rude enough to give
Its charm so frank and fugitive.

The green and scarlet of the Park,
The undulating streets at dark,
The brown smoke blown across the blue,
This colored city we walk through; -

The pallid faces full of pain,
The field-smell of the passing wain,
The laughter, longing, perfume, strife,
The daily spectacle of life; -

Ah! how shall this be given to rhyme,
By rhymesters of a knowing time?
Ah! for the age when verse was clad,
Being godlike, to be bad and mad.

Edmund Gosse [1849-1928]

"WITH STRAWBERRIES"

With strawberries we filled a tray,
And then we drove away, away
Along the links beside the sea,
Where wave and wind were light and free,
And August felt as fresh as May,

And where the springy turf was gay
With thyme and balm and many a spray
Of wild roses, you tempted me
With strawberries!

A shadowy sail, silent and gray,
Stole like a ghost across the bay;
But none could hear me ask my fee,
And none could know what came to be.
Can sweethearts all their thirst allay
With strawberries?

William Ernest Henley [1849-1903]

BALLADE OF LADIES' NAMES

Brown's for Lalage, Jones for Lelia,
Robinson's bosom for Beatrice glows,
Smith is a Hamlet before Ophelia.
The glamor stays if the reason goes!
Every lover the years disclose
Is of a beautiful name made free.
One befriends, and all others are foes.
Anna's the name of names for me.

Sentiment hallows the vowels of Delia;
Sweet simplicity breathes from Rose;
Courtly memories glitter in Celia;
Rosalind savors of quips and hose,
Araminta of wits and beaux,
Prue of puddings, and Coralie
All of sawdust and spangled shows;
Anna's the name of names for me.

Fie upon Caroline, Madge, Amelia -

These I reckon the essence of prose! -
Cavalier Katherine, cold Cornelia,
Portia's masterful Roman nose,
Maud's magnificence, Totty's toes,
Poll and Bet with their twang of the sea,
Nell's impertinence, Pamela's woes!
Anna's the name of names for me.

ENVOY

Ruth like a gillyflower smells and blows,
Sylvia prattles of Arcadee,
Sybil mystifies, Connie crows,
Anna's the name of names for me!

William Ernest Henley [1849-1903]

TO A PAIR OF EGYPTIAN SLIPPERS

Tiny slippers of gold and green,
Tied with a mouldering golden cord!
What pretty feet they must have been
When Caesar Augustus was Egypt's lord!
Somebody graceful and fair you were!
Not many girls could dance in these!
When did your shoemaker make you, dear,
Such a nice pair of Egyptian "threes"?

Where were you measured? In Sais, or On,
Memphis, or Thebes, or Pelusium?
Fitting them neatly your brown toes upon,
Lacing them deftly with finger and thumb,
I seem to see you! - so long ago,
Twenty-one centuries, less or more!
And here are your sandals: yet none of us know
What name, or fortune, or face you bore.

Your lips would have laughed, with a rosy scorn,
If the merchant, or slave-girl, had mockingly said,
"The feet will pass, but the shoes they have worn
Two thousand years onward Time's road shall tread,
And still be footgear as good as new!"
To think that calf-skin, gilded and stitched,
Should Rome and the Pharaohs outlive - and you
Be gone, like a dream, from the world you bewitched!

Not that we mourn you! 'Twere too absurd!
You have been such a very long while away!
Your dry spiced dust would not value one word
Of the soft regrets that my verse could say.
Sorrow and Pleasure, and Love and Hate,
If you ever felt them, have vaporized hence
To this odor - so subtle and delicate -

Of myrrh, and cassia, and frankincense.

Of course they embalmed you! Yet not so sweet
Were aloes and nard, as the youthful glow
Which Amenti stole when the small dark feet
Wearied of treading our world below.
Look! it was flood-time in valley of Nile,
Or a very wet day in the Delta, dear!
When your slippers tripped lightly their latest mile -
The mud on the soles renders that fact clear.

You knew Cleopatra, no doubt! You saw
Antony's galleys from Actium come.
But there! if questions could answers draw
From lips so many a long age dumb,
I would not tease you with history,
Nor vex your heart for the men that were;
The one point to learn that would fascinate me
Is, where and what are you to-day, my dear!

You died, believing in Horus and Pasht,
Isis, Osiris, and priestly lore;
And found, of course, such theories smashed
By actual fact on the heavenly shore.
What next did you do? Did you transmigrate?
Have we seen you since, all modern and fresh?
Your charming soul - so I calculate -
Mislaid its mummy, and sought new flesh.

Were you she whom I met at dinner last week,
With eyes and hair of the Ptolemy black,
Who still of this find in Fayoum would speak,
And to Pharaohs and scarabs still carry us back?
A scent of lotus about her hung,
And she had such a far-away wistful air
As of somebody born when the Earth was young;
And she wore of gilt slippers a lovely pair.

Perchance you were married? These might have been
Part of your trousseau - the wedding shoes;
And you laid them aside with the garments green,
And painted clay Gods which a bride would use;
And, may be, to-day, by Nile's bright waters
Damsels of Egypt in gowns of blue -
Great-great-great - very great - grand-daughters
Owe their shapely insteps to you!

But vainly I beat at the bars of the Past,
Little green slippers with golden strings!
For all you can tell is that leather will last
When loves, and delightings, and beautiful things
Have vanished; forgotten - No! not quite that!
I catch some gleam of the grace you wore

When you finished with Life's daily pit-a-pat,
And left your shoes at Death's bedroom door.

You were born in the Egypt which did not doubt;
You were never sad with our new-fashioned sorrows:
You were sure, when your play-days on Earth ran out,
Of play-times to come, as we of our morrows!
Oh, wise little Maid of the Delta! I lay
Your shoes in your mummy-chest back again,
And wish that one game we might merrily play
At "Hunt the Slippers" - to see it all plain.

Edwin Arnold [1832-1904]

WITHOUT AND WITHIN

My coachman, in the moonlight there,
Looks through the side-light of the door;
I hear him with his brethren swear,
As I could do, - but only more.

Flattening his nose against the pane,
He envies me my brilliant lot,
Breathes on his aching fists in vain,
And dooms me to a place more hot.

He sees me in to supper go,
A silken wonder by my side,
Bare arms, bare shoulders, and a row
Of flounces, for the door too wide.

He thinks how happy is my arm
'Neath its white-gloved and jewelled load;
And wishes me some dreadful harm,
Hearing the merry corks explode.

Meanwhile I inly curse the bore
Of hunting still the same old coon,
And envy him, outside the door,
In golden quiets of the moon.

The winter wind is not so cold
As the bright smile he sees me win
Nor the host's oldest wine so old
As our poor gabble sour and thin.

I envy him the ungyved prance
With which his freezing feet he warms,
And drag my lady's-chains and dance
The galley-slave of dreary forms.

Oh, could, he have my share of din,

And I his quiet! - past a doubt
'Twould still be one man bored within,
And just another bored without.

Nay, when, once paid my mortal fee,
Some idler on my headstone grim
Traces the moss-blurred name, will he
Think me the happier, or I him?

James Russell Lowell [1819-1891]

"SHE WAS A BEAUTY"

She was a beauty in the days
When Madison was President,
And quite coquettish in her ways, -
On conquests of the heart intent.

Grandpapa, on his right knee bent,
Wooed her in stiff, old-fashioned phrase, -
She was a beauty in the days
When Madison was President.

And when your roses where hers went
Shall go, my Rose, who date from Hayes,
I hope you'll wear her sweet content
Of whom tradition lightly says:
She was a beauty in the days
When Madison was President.

Henry Cuyler Bunner [1855-1896]

NELL GWYNNE'S LOOKING-GLASS

Glass antique, 'twixt thee and Nell
Draw we here a parallel.
She, like thee, was forced to bear
All reflections, foul or fair.
Thou art deep and bright within,
Depths as bright belonged to Gwynne;
Thou art very frail as well,
Frail as flesh is, - so was Nell.

Thou, her glass, art silver-lined,
She too, had a silver mind:
Thine is fresh till this far day,
Hers till death ne'er wore away:
Thou dost to thy surface win
Wandering glances, so did Gwynne;
Eyes on thee love long to dwell,
So men's eyes would do on Nell.

Life-like forms in thee are sought,
Such the forms the actress wrought;
Truth unfailing rests in you,
Nell, whate'er she was, was true.
Clear as virtue, dull as sin,
Thou art oft, as oft was Gwynne;
Breathe on thee, and drops will swell:
Bright tears dimmed the eyes of Nell.

Thine's a frame to charm the sight,
Framed was she to give delight;
Waxen forms here truly show
Charles above and Nell below;
But between them, chin with chin,
Stuart stands as low as Gwynne, -
Paired, yet parted, - meant to tell
Charles was opposite to Nell.

Round the glass wherein her face
Smiled so soft, her "arms" we trace;
Thou, her mirror, hast the pair,
Lion here, and leopard there.
She had part in these, - akin
To the lion-heart was Gwynne;
And the leopard's beauty fell
With its spots to bounding Nell.

Oft inspected, ne'er seen through,
Thou art firm, if brittle too;
So her will, on good intent,
Might be broken, never bent.
What the glass was, when therein
Beamed the face of glad Nell Gwynne,
Was that face by beauty's spell
To the honest soul of Nell.

Laman Blanchard [1804-1845]

MIMNERMUS IN CHURCH

You promise heavens free from strife,
Pure truth, and perfect change of will;
But sweet, sweet is this human life,
So sweet, I fain would breathe it still:
Your chilly stars I can forego,
This warm kind world is all I know.

You say there is no substance here,
One great reality above:
Back from that void I shrink in fear,
And child-like hide myself in love:

Show me what angels feel. Till then
I cling, a mere weak man, to men.

You bid me lift my mean desires
From faltering lips and fitful veins
To sexless souls, ideal choirs,
Unwearied voices, wordless strains:
My mind with fonder welcome owns
One dear dead friend's remembered tones.

Forsooth the present we must give
To that which cannot pass away;
All beauteous things for which we live
By laws of time and space decay.
But oh, the very reason why
I clasp them, is because they die.

William Johnson-Cory [1823-1892]

CLAY

"We are but clay," the preacher saith;
"The heart is clay, and clay the brain,
And soon or late there cometh death
To mingle us with earth again."

Well, let the preacher have it so,
And clay we are, and clay shall be; -
Why iterate? - for this I know,
That clay does very well for me.

When clay has such red mouths to kiss,
Firm hands to grasp, it is enough:
How can I take it aught amiss
We are not made of rarer stuff?

And if one tempt you to believe
His choice would be immortal gold,
Question him, Can you then conceive
A warmer heart than clay can hold?

Or richer joys than clay can feel?
And when perforce he falters nay,
Bid him renounce his wish and kneel
In thanks for this same kindly clay.

Edward Verrall Lucas [1868-

AUCASSIN AND NICOLETE

What magic halo rings thy head,

Dream-maiden of a minstrel dead?
What charm of faerie round thee hovers,
That all who listen are thy lovers?

What power yet makes our pulses thrill
To see thee at thy window-sill,
And by that dangerous cord down-sliding,
And through the moonlit garden gliding?

True maiden art thou in thy dread;
True maiden in thy hardihead;
True maiden when, thy fears half-over,
Thou lingerest to try thy lover.

And ah! what heart of stone or steel
But doth some stir unwonted feel,
When to the day new brightness bringing
Thou standest at the stair-foot singing!

Thy slender limbs in boyish dress,
Thy tones half glee, half tenderness,
Thou singest, 'neath the light tale's cover,
Of thy true love to thy true lover.

O happy lover, happy maid,
Together in sweet story laid;
Forgive the hand that here is baring
Your old loves for new lovers' staring!

Yet, Nicolette, why fear'st thou fame?
No slander now can touch thy name,
Nor Scandal's self a fault discovers,
Though each new year thou hast new lovers.

Nor, Aucassin, need'st thou to fear
These lovers of too late a year,
Nor dread one jealous pang's revival;
No lover now can be thy rival.

What flower considers if its blooms
Light, haunts of men, or forest glooms?
What care ye though the world discovers
Your flowers of love, O flower of lovers!

Francis William Bourdillon [1852-1921]

PROVENÇAL LOVERS Aucassin And Nicolette

Within the garden of Beaucaire
He met her by a secret stair, -
The night was centuries ago.

Said Aucassin, "My love, my pet,
These old confessors vex me so!
They threaten all the pains of hell
Unless I give you up, ma belle"; -
Said Aucassin to Nicolette.

"Now who should there in Heaven be
To fill your place, ma tres-douce mie?
To reach that spot I little care!
There all the droning priests are met;
All the old cripples, too, are there
That unto shrines and altars cling
To filch the Peter-pence we bring"; -
Said Aucassin to Nicolette.

"There are the barefoot monks and friars
With gowns well tattered by the briars,
The saints who lift their eyes and whine:
I like them not - a starveling set!
Who'd care with folk like these to dine?
The other road 'twere just as well
That you and I should take, ma belle!" -
Said Aucassin to Nicolette.

"To purgatory I would go
With pleasant comrades whom we know,
Fair scholars, minstrels, lusty knights
Whose deeds the land will not forget,
The captains of a hundred fights,
The men of valor and degree:
We'll join that gallant company," -
Said Aucassin to Nicolette.

"There, too, are jousts and joyance rare,
And beauteous ladies debonair,
The pretty dames, the merry brides,
Who with their wedded lords coquette
And have a friend or two besides, -
And all in gold and trappings gay,
With furs, and crests in vair and gray," -
Said Aucassin to Nicolette.

"Sweet players on the cithern strings,
And they who roam the world like kings,
Are gathered there, so blithe and free!
Pardie! I'd join them now, my pet,
If you went also, ma douce mie!
The joys of Heaven I'd forego
To have you with me there below," -
Said Aucassin to Nicolette.

ON THE HURRY OF THIS TIME

With slower pen men used to write,
Of old, when "letters" were "polite";
In Anna's or in George's days,
They could afford to turn a phrase,
Or trim a struggling theme aright.

They knew not steam; electric light
Not yet had dazed their calmer sight; -
They meted out both blame and praise
With slower pen.

Too swiftly now the Hours take flight!
What's read at morn is dead at night:
Scant space have we for Art's delays,
Whose breathless thought so briefly stays,
We may not work - ah! would we might! -
With slower pen.

Austin Dobson [1840-1921]

"GOOD-NIGHT, BABETTE!"

Si vieillesse pouvait! -

Scene. - A small neat Room. In a high Voltaire Chair
sits a white-haired old Gentleman.

Monsieur Vieuxbois Babette

M. Vieuxbois (turning querulously)
Day of my life! Where can she get!
Babette! I say! Babette! - Babette!

Babette (entering hurriedly)
Coming, M'sieu'! If M'sieu' speaks
So loud, he won't be well for weeks!

M. Vieuxbois
Where have you been?

Babette
Why M'sieu' knows: -
April! . . . Ville d'Avray! . . . Ma'am'selle Rose!

M. Vieuxbois
Ah! I am old, - and I forget.
Was the place growing green, Babette?

Babette
But of a greenness! - yes, M'sieu'!

And then the sky so blue! - so blue!
And when I dropped my immortelle,
How the birds sang!
(Lifting her apron to her eyes)
This poor Ma'am'selle!

M. Vieuxbois
You're a good girl, Babette, but she, -
She was an Angel, verily.
Sometimes I think I see her yet
Stand smiling by the cabinet;
And once, I know, she peeped and laughed
Betwixt the curtains . . .
Where's the draught?
(She gives him a cup)
Now I shall sleep, I think, Babette; -
Sing me your Norman chansonnette.

Babette (sings)
"Once at the Angelus,
(Ere I was dead),
Angels all glorious
Came to my bed;
Angels in blue and white
Crowned on the Head."

M. Vieuxbois (drowsily)
"She was an Angel" . . . "Once she laughed" . . .
What, was I dreaming?
Where's the draught?

Babette (showing the empty cup)
The draught, M'sieu'?

M. Vieuxbois
How I forget!
I am so old! But sing, Babette!

Babette (sings)
"One was the Friend I left
Stark in the Snow;
One was the Wife that died
Long, - long ago;
One was the Love I lost . . .
How could she know?"

M. Vieuxbois (murmuring)
Ah, Paul! . . . old Paul! . . . Eulalie too!
And Rose . . . And O! "the sky so blue!"

Babette (sings)
"One had my Mother's eyes,
Wistful and mild;

One had my Father's face;
One was a Child:
All of them bent to me, -
Bent down and smiled!"
(He is asleep!)

M. Vieuxbois (almost inaudibly)
"How I forget!"
"I am so old!" . . . "Good-night, Babette!"

Austin Dobson [1840-1921]

A DIALOGUE FROM PLATO

Le tempo le mieux employe est celui qu'on perd. - Claude Tillier

I'd "read" three hours. Both notes and text
Were fast a mist becoming;
In bounced a vagrant bee, perplexed,
And filled the room with humming,

Then out. The casement's leafage sways,
And, parted light, discloses
Miss Di., with hat and book, - a maze
Of muslin mixed with roses.

"You're reading Greek?" "I am - and you?"
"O, mine's a mere romancer!"
"So Plato is." "Then read him - do;
And I'll read mine for answer."

I read: "My Plato (Plato, too -
That wisdom thus should harden!)
Declares 'blue eyes look doubly blue
Beneath a Dolly Varden.'"

She smiled. "My book in turn avers
(No author's name is stated)
That sometimes those Philosophers
Are sadly mistranslated."

"But hear, - the next's in stronger style:
The Cynic School asserted
That two red lips which part and smile
May not be controverted!"

She smiled once more. "My book, I find,
Observes some modern doctors
Would make the Cynics out a kind
Of album-verse concoctors."

Then I: "Why not? 'Ephesian law,
No less than time's tradition,

Enjoined fair speech on all who saw
Diana's apparition."

She blushed, - this time. "If Plato's page
No wiser precept teaches,
Then I'd renounce that doubtful sage,
And walk to Burnham Beeches."

"Agreed," I said. "For Socrates
(I find he too is talking)
Thinks Learning can't remain at ease
When Beauty goes a-walking."

She read no more. I leapt the sill:
The sequel's scarce essential -
Nay, more than this, I hold it still
Profoundly confidential.

Austin Dobson [1840-1921]

THE LADIES OF ST. JAMES'S A Proper New Ballad Of The Country And The Town

Phyllida amo ante alias. - Virgil

The ladies of St. James's
Go swinging to the play;
Their footmen run before them,
With a "Stand by! Clear the way!"
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
She takes her buckled shoon,
When we go out a-courting
Beneath the harvest moon.

The ladies of St. James's
Wear satin on their backs;
They sit all night at Ombre,
With candles all of wax:
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
She dons her russet gown,
And runs to gather May dew
Before the world is down.

The ladies of St. James's!
They are so fine and fair,
You'd think a box of essences
Was broken in the air:
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
The breath of heath and furze
When breezes blow at morning,
Is not so fresh as hers.

The ladies of St. James's!
They're painted to the eyes;
Their white it stays for ever,
Their red it never dies:
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
Her color comes and goes;
It trembles to a lily, -
It wavers to a rose.

The ladies of St. James's!
You scarce can understand
The half of all their speeches,
Their phrases are so grand:
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
Her shy and simple words
Are clear as after rain-drops
The music of the birds.

The ladies of St. James's!
They have their fits and freaks;
They smile on you - for seconds,
They frown on you - for weeks:
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
Come either storm or shine,
From Shrove-tide unto Shrove-tide,
Is always true - and mine.

My Phyllida! my Phyllida!
I care not though they heap
The hearts of all St. James's,
And give me all to keep;
I care not whose the beauties
Of all the world may be,
For Phyllida - for Phyllida
Is all the world to me!

Austin Dobson [1840-1921]

THE CURE'S PROGRESS

Monsieur the Cure down the street
Comes with his kind old face, -
With his coat worn bare, and his straggling hair,
And his green umbrella-case.

You may see him pass by the little "Grande Place",
And the tiny "Hotel-de-Ville";
He smiles, as he goes, to the fleuriste Rose,
And the pompier Theophile.

He turns, as a rule, through the "Marche" cool,
Where the noisy fish-wives call;

And his compliment pays to the "Belle Therese",
As she knits in her dusky stall.

There's a letter to drop at the locksmith's shop,
And Toto, the locksmith's niece,
Has jubilant hopes, for the Cure gropes
In his tails for a pain d'epice.

There's a little dispute with a merchant of fruit,
Who is said to be heterodox,
That will ended be with a "Ma foi, oui!"
And a pinch from the Cure's box.

There is also a word that no one heard
To the furrier's daughter Lou. ;
And a pale cheek fed with a flickering red,
And a "Ben Dieu garde M'sieu'!"

But a grander way for the Sous-Prefet,
And a bow for Ma'am'selle Anne;
And a mock "off-hat" to the Notary's cat,
And a nod to the Sacristan: -

For ever through life the Cure goes
With a smile on his kind old face -
With his coat worn bare, and his straggling hair,
And his green umbrella-case.

Austin Dobson [1840-1921]

A GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL

He lived in that past Georgian day,
When men were less inclined to say
That "Time is Gold," and overlay
With toil their pleasure;
He held some land, and dwelt thereon, -
Where, I forget, - the house is gone;
His Christian name, I think, was John, -
His surname, Leisure.

Reynolds has painted him, - a face
Filled with a fine, old-fashioned grace,
Fresh-colored, frank, with ne'er a trace
Of trouble shaded;
The eyes are blue, the hair is dressed
In plainest way, - one hand is pressed
Deep in a flapped canary vest,
With buds brocaded.

He wears a brown old Brunswick coat,
With silver buttons, - round his throat,

A soft cravat; - in all you note
An elder fashion, -
A strangeness, which, to us who shine
In shapely hats, - whose coats combine
All harmonies of hue and line,
Inspires compassion.

He lived so long ago, you see!
Men were untravelled then, but we,
Like Ariel, post o'er land and sea
With careless parting;
He found it quite enough for him
To smoke his pipe in "garden trim,"
And watch, about the fish tank's brim,
The swallows darting.

He liked the well-wheel's creaking tongue, -
He liked the thrush that fed her young, -
He liked the drone of flies among
His netted peaches;
He liked to watch the sunlight fall
Athwart his ivied orchard wall;
Or pause to catch the cuckoo's call
Beyond the beeches.

His were the times of Paint and Patch,
And yet no Ranelagh could match
The sober doves that round his thatch
Spread tails and sidled;
He liked their ruffling, puffed content;
For him their drowsy wheelings meant
More than a Mall of Beaux that bent,
Or Belles that bridled.

Not that, in truth, when life began
He shunned the flutter of the fan;
He too had maybe "pinked his man"
In Beauty's quarrel;
But now his "fervent youth" had flown
Where lost things go; and he was grown
As staid and slow-paced as his own
Old hunter, Sorrel.

Yet still he loved the chase, and held
That no composer's score excelled
The merry horn, when Sweetlip swelled
Its jovial riot;
But most his measured words of praise
Caressed the angler's easy ways, -
His idly meditative days, -
His rustic diet.

Not that his "meditating" rose

Beyond a sunny summer doze;
He never troubled his repose
With fruitless prying;
But held, as law for high and low,
What God withholds no man can know,
And smiled away enquiry so,
Without replying.

We read - alas, how much we read! -
The jumbled strifes of creed and creed
With endless controversies feed
Our groaning tables;
His books - and they sufficed him - were
Cotton's Montaigne, The Grave of Blair,
A "Walton" - much the worse for wear,
And Aesop's Fables.

One more - The Bible. Not that he
Had searched its page as deep as we;
No sophistries could make him see
Its slender credit;
It may be that he could not count
The sires and sons to Jesse's fount, -
He liked the "Sermon on the Mount," -
And more, he read it.

Once he had loved, but failed to wed,
A red-cheeked lass who long was dead;
His ways were far too slow, he said,
To quite forget her;
And still when time had turned him gray,
The earliest hawthorn buds in May
Would find his lingering feet astray,
Where first he met her.

"In Coelo Quies" heads the stone
On Leisure's grave, - now little known,
A tangle of wild-rose has grown
So thick across it;
The "Benefactions" still declare
He left the clerk an elbow-chair,
And "12 Pence Yearly to Prepare
A Christmas Posset."

Lie softly, Leisure! Doubtless you,
With too serene a conscience drew
Your easy breath, and slumbered through
The gravest issue;
But we, to whom our age allows
Scarce space to wipe our weary brows,
Look down upon your narrow house,
Old friend, and miss you!

Austin Dobson [1840-1921]

ON A FAN

That Belonged To The Marquise De Pompadour

Chicken-skin, delicate, white,
Painted by Carlo Vanloo,
Loves in a riot of light,
Roses and vaporous blue;
Hark to the dainty frou-frou!
Picture above, if you can,
Eyes that could melt as the dew, -
This was the Pompadour's fan!

See how they rise at the sight,
Thronging the Ceil de Boeuf through,
Courtiers as butterflies bright,
Beauties that Fragonard drew,
Talon-rouge, falbala, queue,
Cardinal, Duke, - to a man,
Eager to sigh or to sue, -
This was the Pompadour's fan!

Ah, but things more than polite
Hung on this toy, voyez-vous!
Matters of state and of might,
Things that great ministers do;
Things that, maybe, overthrew
Those in whose brains they began;
Here was the sign and the cue, -
This was the Pompadour's fan!

ENVOY

Where are the secrets it knew?
Weavings of plot and of plan?
- But where is the Pompadour, too?
This was the Pompadour's Fan!

Austin Dobson [1840-1921]

"WHEN I SAW YOU LAST, ROSE"

When I saw you last, Rose,
You were only so high; -
How fast the time goes!

Like a bud ere it blows,
You just peeped at the sky,
When I saw you last, Rose!

Now your petals unclose,

Now your May-time is nigh; -
How fast the time goes!

And a life, - how it grows!
You were scarcely so shy,
When I saw you last, Rose!

In your bosom it shows
There's a guest on the sly;
(How fast the time goes!)

Is it Cupid? Who knows!
Yet you used not to sigh,
When I saw you last, Rose; -
How fast the time goes!

Austin Dobson [1840-1921]

URCEUS EXIT

I intended an Ode,
And it turned to a Sonnet.
It began a la mode,
I intended an Ode;
But Rose crossed the road
In her latest new bonnet;
I intended an Ode;
And it turned to a Sonnet.

Austin Dobson [1840-1921]

A CORSAGE BOUQUET

Myrtilla, to-night,
Wears Jacqueminot roses.
She's the loveliest sight!
Myrtilla to-night: -
Correspondingly light
My pocket-book closes.
Myrtilla, to-night
Wears Jacqueminot roses.

Charles Henry Luders [1858-1891]

TWO TRIOLETS

What he said: -
This kiss upon your fan I press -
Ah! Sainte Nitouche, you don't refuse it!
And may it from its soft recess -

This kiss upon your fan I press -
Be blown to you, a shy caress,
By this white down, whene'er you use it.
This kiss upon your fan I press, -
Ah, Sainte Nitouche, you don't refuse it!

What she thought: -
To kiss a fan!
What a poky poet!
The stupid man
To kiss a fan
When he knows - that - he - can -
Or ought to know it -
To kiss a fan!
What a poky poet!

Harrison Robertson [1856-

THE BALLAD OF DEAD LADIES From The French Of Francois Villon 1450

Tell me now in what hidden way is
Lady Flora the lovely Roman?
Where's Hipparchia, and where is Thais,
Neither of them the fairer woman?
Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
Only heard on river and mere, -
She whose beauty was more than human? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Where's Heloise, the learned nun,
For whose sake Abeilard, I ween,
Lost manhood and put priesthood on?
(From Love he won such dule and teen!)
And where, I pray you, is the Queen
Who willed that Buridan should steer
Sewed in a sack's mouth down the Seine? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

White Queen Blanche, like a queen of lilies,
With a voice like any mermaid, -
Bertha Broadfoot, Beatrice, Alice,
And Ermengarde the lady of Maine, -
And that good Joan whom Englishmen
At Rouen doomed and burned her there, -
Mother of God, where are they then? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,
Where they are gone, nor yet this year,
Except with this for an overword, -
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Dante Gabriel Rossetti [1828-1882]

BALLADE OF DEAD LADIES

After Villon

Nay, tell me now in what strange air
The Roman Flora dwells to-day,
Where Archippiada hides, and where
Beautiful Thais has passed away?
Whence answers Echo, afield, astray,
By mere or stream, - around, below?
Lovelier she than a woman of clay;
Nay, but where is the last year's snow?

Where is wise Heloise, that care
Brought on Abeilard, and dismay?
All for her love he found a snare,
A maimed poor monk in orders gray;
And where's the Queen who willed to slay
Buridan, that in a sack must go
Afloat down Seine, - a perilous way -
Nay, but where is the last year's snow?

Where's that White Queen, a lily rare,
With her sweet song, the Siren's lay?
Where's Bertha Broad-foot, Beatrice fair?
Alys and Ermengarde, where are they?
Good Joan, whom English did betray
In Rouen town, and burned her? No,
Maiden and Queen, no man may say;
Nay, but where is the last year's snow?

ENVOY

Prince, all this week thou needst not pray,
Nor yet this year the thing to know.
One burden answers, ever and aye,
"Nay, but where is the last year's snow?"

Andrew Lang [1844-1912]

A BALLAD OF DEAD LADIES

After Villon

From "If I Were King"

I wonder in what Isle of Bliss
Apollo's music fills the air;
In what green valley Artemis
For young Endymion spreads the snare:
Where Venus lingers debonair:
The Wind has blown them all away -

And Pan lies piping in his lair -
Where are the Gods of Yesterday?

Say where the great Semiramis
Sleeps in a rose-red tomb; and where
The precious dust of Caesar is,
Or Cleopatra's yellow hair:
Where Alexander Do-and-Dare;
The Wind has blown them all away -
And Redbeard of the Iron Chair;
Where are the Dreams of Yesterday?

Where is the Queen of Herod's kiss,
And Phryne in her beauty bare;
By what strange sea does Tomyris
With Dido and Cassandra share
Divine Proserpina's despair;
The Wind has blown them all away -
For what poor ghost does Helen care?
Where are the Girls of Yesterday?

ENVOY

Alas for lovers! Pair by pair
The Wind has blown them all away:
The young and yare, the fond and fair:
Where are the Snows of Yesterday?

Justin Huntly McCarthy [1860-1936]

IF I WERE KING

After Villon
From "If I Were King"

All French folk, whereso'er ye be,
Who love your country, sail and sand,
From Paris to the Breton sea,
And back again to Norman strand,
Forsooth ye seem a silly band,
Sheep without shepherd, left to chance -
Far otherwise our Fatherland,
If Villon were the King of France!

The figure on the throne you see
Is nothing but a puppet, planned
To wear the regal bravery
Of silken coat and gilded wand.
Not so we Frenchmen understand
The Lord of lion's heart and glance,
And such a one would take command
If Villon were the King of France!

His counsellors are rogues, Perdie!

While men of honest mind are banned
To creak upon the Gallows Tree,
Or squeal in prisons over-manned
We want a chief to bear the brand,
And bid the damned Burgundians dance.
God! Where the Oriflamme should stand
If Villon were the King of France!

ENVOY

Louis the Little, play the grand;
Buffet the foe with sword and lance;
'Tis what would happen, by this hand,
If Villon were the King of France!

Justin Huntly McCarthy [1860-1936]

A BALLADE OF SUICIDE

The gallows in my garden, people say,
Is new and neat and adequately tall.
I tie the noose on in a knowing way
As one that knots his necktie for a ball;
But just as all the neighbors - on the wall -
Are drawing a long breath to shout "Hurray!"
The strangest whim has seized me . . . After all
I think I will not hang myself to-day.

To-morrow is the time I get my pay -
My uncle's sword is hanging in the hall -
I see a little cloud all pink and gray -
Perhaps the rector's mother will not call -
I fancy that I heard from Mr. Gall
That mushrooms could be cooked another way -
I never read the works of Juvenal -
I think I will not hang myself to-day.

The world will have another washing day;
The decadents decay; the pedants pall;
And H. G. Wells has found that children play,
And Bernard Shaw discovered that they squall;
Rationalists are growing rational -
And through thick woods one finds a stream astray,
So secret that the very sky seems small -
I think I will not hang myself to-day.

ENVOI

Prince, I can hear the trumpet of Germinal,
The tumbrils toiling up the terrible way;
Even to-day your royal head may fall -
I think I will not hang myself to-day.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton [1874-1936]

CHIFFONS!

Through this our city of delight,
This Paris of our joy and play,
This Paris perfumed, jeweled, bright,
Rouged, powdered, amorous, - ennuye:
Across our gilded Quartier,
So fair to see, so frail au fond,
Echoes - mon Dieu! - the Ragman's bray:
"Mar - chand d'ha - bits! Chif - fons!"

Foul, hunched, a plague to dainty sight,
He limps infect by park and quai,
Voicing (for those that hear aright)
His hunger-world, the dark Marais.
Sexton of all we waste and fray,
He bags at last pour tout de bon
Our trappings rare, our braveries gay,
"Mar - chand d'ha - bits! Chif - fons!"

Their lot is ours! A grislier wight,
The Ragman Time, takes day by day
Our beauty's bloom, our manly might,
Our joie de vivre, our gods of clay;
Till torn and worn and soiled and gray
Hot life rejects us - nom de nom! -
Rags! and our only requiem lay,
"Mar - chand d'ha - bits! Chif - fons!"

ENVOY

Princes take heed! - for where are they,
Valois, Navarre and Orleans? . . .
Death drones the answer, far away,
"Mar - chand d'ha - bits! Chif - fons!"

William Samuel Johnson [1859-

THE COURT HISTORIAN

Lower Empire. Circa A. D. 700

The Monk Arnulphus uncorked his ink
That shone with a blood-red light
Just now as the sun began to sink;
His vellum was pumiced a silvery white;
"The Basileus" - for so he began -
"Is a royal sagacious Mars of a man,
Than the very lion bolder;
He has married the stately widow of Thrace -"
"Hush!" cried a voice at his shoulder.

His palette gleamed with a burnished green,
Bright as a dragon-fly's skin:
His gold-leaf shone like the robe of a queen,
His azure glowed as a cloud worn thin,
Deep as the blue of the king-whale's lair:
"The Porphyrogenita Zoe the fair
Is about to wed with a Prince much older,
Of an unpropitious mien and look -"
"Hush!" cried a voice at his shoulder.

The red flowers trellised the parchment page,
The birds leaped up on the spray,
The yellow fruit swayed and drooped and swung,
It was Autumn mixed up with May.
(O, but his cheek was shrivelled and shrunk!)
"The child of the Basileus," wrote the Monk,
"Is golden-haired - tender the Queen's arms fold her.
Her step-mother Zoe doth love her so -"
"Hush!" cried a voice at his shoulder.

The Kings and Martyrs and Saints and Priests
All gathered to guard the text:
There was Daniel snug in the lions' den
Singing no whit perplexed -
Brazen Samson with spear and helm -
"The Queen," wrote the Monk, "rules firm this realm,
For the King gets older and older.
The Norseman Thorkill is brave and fair -"
"Hush!" cried a voice at his shoulder.

Walter Thornbury [1828-1876]

MISS LOU

When thin-strewn memory I look through,
I see most clearly poor Miss Loo,
Her tabby cat, her cage of birds,
Her nose, her hair - her muffled words,
And how she would open her green eyes,
As if in some immense surprise,
Whenever as we sat at tea,
She made some small remark to me.

'Tis always drowsy summer when
From out the past she comes again;
The westering sunshine in a pool
Floats in her parlor still and cool;
While the slim bird its lean wires shakes,
As into piercing song it breaks;
Till Peter's pale-green eyes ajar
Dream, wake; wake, dream, in one brief bar;

And I am sitting, dull and shy,
And she with gaze of vacancy,

And large hands folded on the tray,
Musing the afternoon away;
Her satin bosom heaving slow
With sighs that softly ebb and flow,
And her plain face in such dismay,
It seems unkind to look her way;
Until all cheerful back will come
Her gentle gleaming spirit home:
And one would think that poor Miss Loo
Asked nothing else, if she had you.

Walter De la Mare [1873-

THE POET AND THE WOOD-LOUSE

A portly Wood-louse, full of cares,
Transacted eminent affairs
Along a parapet where pears
Unripened fell
And vines embellished the sweet airs
With muscatel.

Day after day beheld him run
His scales a-twinkle in the sun
About his business never done;
Night's slender span he
Spent in the home his wealth had won -
A red-brick cranny.

Thus, as his Sense of Right directed,
He lived both honored and respected,
Cherished his children and protected
His duteous wife,
And naught of diffidence deflected
His useful life.

One mid-day, hastening to his Club,
He spied beside a water-tub
The owner of each plant and shrub
A humble Bard -
Who turned upon the conscious grub
A mild regard.

"Eh?" quoth the Wood-louse, "Can it be
A Higher Power looks down to see
My praiseworthy activity
And notes me plying
My Daily Task? - Nor strange, dear me,
But gratifying!"

To whom the Bard: I still divest
My orchard of the Insect Pest,
That you are such is manifest,
Prepare to die. -
And yet, how sweetly does your crest
Reflect the sky!

"Go then forgiven, (for what ails
Your naughty life this fact avails
Tu pardon) mirror in your scales
Celestial blue,
Till the sun sets and the light fails
The skies and you."

.

May all we proud and bustling parties
Whose lot in forum, street and mart is
Stand in conspectu Deitatis
And save our face,
Reflecting where our scaly heart is
Some skyey grace.

Helen Parry Eden [18

STUDENTS

John Brown and Jeanne at Fontainebleau -
'Twas Toussaint, just a year ago;
Crimson and copper was the glow
Of all the woods at Fontainebleau.
They peered into that ancient well,
And watched the slow torch as it fell.
John gave the keeper two whole sous,
And Jeanne that smile with which she woos
John Brown to folly. So they lose
The Paris train. But never mind! -
All-Saints are rustling in the wind,
And there's an inn, a crackling fire -
It's deux-cinquante, but Jeanne's desire);
There's dinner, candles, country wine,
Jeanne's lips - philosophy divine!
There was a bosquet at Saint Cloud
Wherein John's picture of her grew
To be a Salon masterpiece -
Till the rain fell that would not cease.
Through one long alley how they raced! -
'Twas gold and brown, and all a waste
Of matted leaves, moss-interlaced.
Shades of mad queens and hunter-kings
And thorn-sharp feet of dryad-things

Were company to their wanderings;
Then rain and darkness on them drew.
The rich folks' motors honked and flew.
They hailed an old cab, heaven for two;
The bright Champs-Elysees at last -
Though the cab crawled it sped too fast.

Paris, upspringing white and gold:
Flamboyant arch and high-enscrolled
War-sculpture, big, Napoleonic -
Fierce chargers, angels histrionic;
The royal sweep of gardened spaces,
The pomp and whirl of columned Places;
The Rive Gauche, age-old, gay and gray;
The impasse and the loved cafe;
The tempting tidy little shops;
The convent walls, the glimpsed tree-tops;
Book-stalls, old men like dwarfs in plays;
Talk, work, and Latin Quarter ways.

May - Robinson's, the chestnut trees -
Were ever crowds as gay as these?
The quick pale waiters on a run,
The round green tables, one by one,
Hidden away in amorous bowers -
Lilac, laburnum's golden showers.
Kiss, clink of glasses, laughter heard,
And nightingales quite undeterred.
And then that last extravagance -
O Jeanne, a single amber glance
Will pay him! - "Let's play millionaire
For just two hours - on princely fare,
At some hotel where lovers dine
A deux and pledge across the wine."
They find a damask breakfast-room,
Where stiff silk roses range their bloom.
The garcon has a splendid way
Of bearing in grand dejeuner.
Then to be left alone, alone,
High up above Rue Castiglione;
Curtained away from all the rude
Rumors, in silken solitude;
And, John, her head upon your knees -
Time waits for moments such as these.

Florence Wilkinson [18

"ONE, TWO, THREE!"

It was an old, old, old, old lady,
And a boy that was half-past three;
And the way that they played together

Was beautiful to see.

She couldn't go running and jumping,
And the boy, no more could he;
For he was a thin little fellow,
With a thin little twisted knee.

They sat in the yellow sunlight,
Out under the maple tree;
And the game that they played I'll tell you,
Just as it was told to me.

It was Hide-and-Go-Seek they were playing,
Though you'd never have known it to be -
With an old, old, old, old lady,
And a boy with a twisted knee.

The boy would bend his face down
On his one little sound right knee,
And he'd guess where she was hiding,
In guesses One, Two, Three!

"You are in the china-closet!"
He would cry, and laugh with glee -
It wasn't the china closet,
But he still had Two and Three.

"You are up in papa's big bedroom,
In the chest with the queer old key!"
And she said: "You are warm and warmer;
But you're not quite right," said she.

"It can't be the little cupboard
Where mamma's things used to be -
So it must be the clothes-press, Gran'ma!"
And he found her with his Three.

Then she covered her face with her fingers,
That were wrinkled and white and wee,
And she guessed where the boy was hiding,
With a One and a Two and a Three.

And they never had stirred from their places,
Right under the maple tree -
This old, old, old, old lady
And the boy with the lame little knee -
This dear, dear, dear old lady,
And the boy who was half-past three.

Henry Cuyler Bunner [1855-1896]

THE CHAPERON

I take my chaperon to the play -
She thinks she's taking me.
And the gilded youth who owns the box,
A proud young man is he;
But how would his young heart be hurt
If he could only know
That not for his sweet sake I go
Nor yet to see the trifling show;
But to see my chaperon flirt.

Her eyes beneath her snowy hair
They sparkle young as mine;
There's scarce a wrinkle in her hand
So delicate and fine.
And when my chaperon is seen,
They come from everywhere -
The dear old boys with silvery hair,
With old-time grace and old-time air,
To greet their old-time queen.

They bow as my young Midas here
Will never learn to bow
(The dancing-masters do not teach
That gracious reverence now);
With voices quavering just a bit,
They play their old parts through,
They talk of folk who used to woo,
Of hearts that broke in 'fifty-two -
Now none the worse for it.

And as those aged crickets chirp,
I watch my chaperon's face,
And see the dear old features take
A new and tender grace;
And in her happy eyes I see
Her youth awakening bright,
With all its hope, desire, delight -
Ah, me! I wish that I were quite
As young - as young as she!

Henry Cuyler Bunner [1855-1896]

"A PITCHER OF MIGNONETTE"

A pitcher of mignonette
In a tenement's highest casement, -
Queer sort of flower-pot - yet
That pitcher of mignonette
Is a garden in heaven set,
To the little sick child in the basement -
The pitcher of mignonette,

In the tenement's highest casement.

Henry Cuyler Bunner [1855-1896]

OLD KING COLE

In Tilbury Town did Old King Cole
A wise old age anticipate,
Desiring, with his pipe and bowl,
No Khan's extravagant estate.
No crown annoyed his honest head,
No fiddlers three were called or needed;
For two disastrous heirs instead
Made music more that ever three did.

Bereft of her with whom his life
Was harmony without a flaw,
He took no other for a wife,
Nor sighed for any that he saw;
And if he doubted his two sons,
And heirs, Alexis and Evander,
He might have been as doubtful once
Of Robert Burns and Alexander.

Alexis, in his early youth,
Began to steal - from old and young.
Likewise Evander, and the truth
Was like a bad taste on his tongue.
Born thieves and liars, their affair
Seemed only to be tarred with evil -
The most insufferable pair
Of scamps that ever cheered the devil.

The world went on, their fame went on,
And they went on - from bad to worse;
Till, goaded hot with nothing done,
And each accoutered with a curse,
The friends of Old King Cole, by twos,
And fours, and sevens, and elevens,
Pronounced unalterable views
Of doings that were not of Heaven's.

And having learned again whereby
Their baleful zeal had come about,
King Cole met many a wrathful eye
So kindly that its wrath went out -
Or partly out. Say what they would,
He seemed the more to court their candor,
But never told what kind of good
Was in Alexis and Evander.

And Old King Cole, with many a puff

That haloed his urbanity,
Would smoke till he had smoked enough,
And listen most attentively.
He beamed as with an inward light
That had the Lord's assurance in it;
And once a man was there all night,
Expecting something every minute.

But whether from too little thought,
Or too much fealty to the bowl,
A dim reward was all he got
For sitting up with Old King Cole.
"Though mine," the father mused aloud,
"Are not the sons I would have chosen,
Shall I, less evilly endowed,
By their infirmity be frozen?"

"They'll have a bad end, I'll agree,
But I was never born to groan;
For I can see what I can see,
And I'm accordingly alone.
With open heart and open door,
I love my friends, I like my neighbors;
But if I try to tell you more,
Your doubts will overmatch my labors.

"This pipe would never make me calm,
This bowl my grief would never drown.
For grief like mine there is no balm
In Gilead, or in Tilbury Town.
And if I see what I can see,
I know not any way to blind it;
Nor more if any way may be
For you to grope or fly to find it.

"There may be room for ruin yet,
And ashes for a wasted love;
Or, like One whom you may forget,
I may have meat you know not of.
And if I'd rather live than weep
Meanwhile, do you find that surprising?
Why, bless my soul, the man's asleep!
That's good. The sun will soon be rising."

Edwin Arlington Robinson [1869-1935]

THE MASTER MARINER

My grandshire sailed three years from home,
And slew unmoved the sounding whale:
Here on the windless beach I roam
And watch far out the hardy sail.

The lions of the surf that cry
Upon this lion-colored shore
On reefs of midnight met his eye:
He knew their fangs as I their roar.

My grandsire sailed uncharted seas,
And toll of all their leagues he took:
I scan the shallow bays at ease,
And tell their colors in a book.

The anchor-chains his music made
And wind in shrouds and running-gear:
The thrush at dawn beguiles my glade,
And once, 'tis said, I woke to hear.

My grandsire in his ample fist
The long harpoon upheld to men:
Behold obedient to my wrist
A gray gull's-feather for my pen!

Upon my grandsire's leathern cheek
Five zones their bitter bronze had set:
Some day their hazards I will seek,
I promise me at times. Not yet.

I think my grandsire now would turn
A mild but speculative eye
On me, my pen and its concern,
Then gaze again to sea - and sigh.

George Sterling [1869-1926]

A ROSE TO THE LIVING

A rose to the living is more
Than sumptuous wreaths to the dead:
In filling love's infinite store,
A rose to the living is more, -
If graciously given before
The hungering spirit is fled, -
A rose to the living is more
Than sumptuous wreaths to the dead.

Nixon Waterman [1859-

A KISS

Rose kissed me to-day.
Will she kiss me to-morrow?
Let it be as it may,

Rose kissed me to-day
But the pleasure gives way
To a savor of sorrow; -
Rose kissed me to-day, -
Will she kiss me to-morrow?

Austin Dobson [1840-1921]

BIFTEK AUX CHAMPIGNONS

Mimi, do you remember -
Don't get behind your fan -
That morning in September
On the cliffs of Grand Manan,
Where to the shock of Fundy
The topmost harebells sway
(*Campanula rotundi-*
folia: cf. Gray)?

On the pastures high and level,
That overlook the sea,
Where I wondered what the devil
Those little things could be
That Mimi stooped to gather,
As she strolled across the down,
And held her dress skirt rather -
Oh, now, you need n't frown.

For you know the dew was heavy,
And your boots, I know, were thin;
So a little extra brevi-
ty in skirts was, sure, no sin.
Besides, who minds a cousin?
First, second, even third, -
I've kissed 'em by the dozen,
And they never once demurred.

"If one's allowed to ask it,"
Quoth I, " ma belle cousine,
What have you in your basket?"
(Those baskets white and green
The brave Passamaquoddies
Weave out of scented grass,
And sell to tourist bodies
Who through Mt. Desert pass.)

You answered, slightly frowning,
"Put down your stupid book -
That everlasting Browning! -
And come and help me look.
Mushroom you spik him English,
I call him champignon:

I'll teach you to distinguish
The right kind from the wrong."

There was no fog on Fundy
That blue September day;
The west wind, for that one day,
Had swept it all away.
The lighthouse glasses twinkled,
The white gulls screamed and flew,
The merry sheep-bells tinkled,
The merry breezes blew.

The bayberry aromatic,
The papery immortelle,
(That give our grandma's attic
That sentimental smell,
Tied up in little brush-brooms)
Were sweet as new-mown hay,
While we went hunting mushrooms
That blue September day.

Henry Augustin Beers [1847-1926]

EVOLUTION

When you were a Tadpole and I was a Fish,
In the Paleozoic time,
And side by side on the ebbing tide,
We sprawled through the ooze and slime,
Or skittered with many a caudal flip
Through the depths of the Cambrian fen -
My heart was rife with the joy of life,
For I loved you even then.

Mindless we lived, mindless we loved,
And mindless at last we died;
And deep in the rift of a Caradoc drift
We slumbered side by side.
The world turned on in the lathe of time,
The hot sands heaved amain,
Till we caught our breath from the womb of death,
And crept into life again.

We were Amphibians, scaled and tailed,
And drab as a dead man's hand.
We coiled at ease 'neath the dripping trees
Or trailed through the mud and sand,
Croaking and blind, with our three-clawed feet,
Writing a language dumb,
With never a spark in the empty dark
To hint at a life to come.

Yet happy we lived, and happy we loved,
And happy we died once more.
Our forms were rolled in the clinging mold
Of a Neocomian shore.
The aeons came and the aeons fled,
And the sleep that wrapped us fast
Was riven away in a newer day,
And the night of death was past.

Then light and swift through the jungle trees
We swung in our airy flights,
Or breathed the balms of the fronded palms
In the hush of the moonless nights.
And oh, what beautiful years were these
When our hearts clung each to each;
When life was filled and our senses thrilled
In the first faint dawn of speech!

Thus life by life, and love by love,
We passed through the cycles strange,
And breath by breath, and death by death,
We followed the chain of change.
Till there came a time in the law of life
When over the nursing sod
The shadows broke, and the soul awoke
In a strange, dim dream of God.

I was thewed like an Aurocks bull
And tusked like the great Cave-Bear,
And you, my sweet, from head to feet,
Were gowned in your glorious hair.
Deep in the gloom of a fireless cave,
When the night fell o'er the plain,
And the moon hung red o'er the river bed,
We mumbled the bones of the slain.

I flaked a flint to a cutting edge,
And shaped it with brutish craft;
I broke a shank from the woodland dank,
And fitted it, head to haft.
Then I hid me close in the reedy tarn,
Where the Mammoth came to drink -
Through brawn and bone I drave the stone,
And slew him upon the brink.

Loud I howled through the moonlit wastes,
Loud answered our kith and kin;
From west and east to the crimson feast
The clan came trooping in.
O'er joint and gristle and padded hoof,
We fought and clawed and tore,
And cheek by jowl, with many a growl,
We talked the marvel o'er.

I carved that fight on a reindeer bone
With rude and hairy hand;
I pictured his fall on the cavern wall
That men might understand.
For we lived by blood and the right of might,
Ere human laws were drawn,
And the Age of Sin did not begin
Till our brutal tusks were gone.

And that was a million years ago,
In a time that no man knows;
Yet here to-night in the mellow light,
We sit at Delmonico's.
Your eyes are deep as the Devon springs,
Your hair is as dark as jet,
Your years are few, your life is new,
Your soul untried, and yet -

Our trail is on the Kimmeridge clay,
And the scarp of the Purbeck flags;
We have left our bones in the Bagshot stones,
And deep in the Coralline crags.
Our love is old, and our lives are old,
And death shall come amain.
Should it come to-day, what man may say
We shall not live again?

God wrought our souls from the Tremadoc beds
And furnished them wings to fly;
He sowed our spawn in the world's dim dawn,
And I know that it shall not die;
Though cities have sprung above the graves
Where the crook-boned men made war,
And the ox-wain creaks o'er the buried caves
Where the mummied mammoths are.

Then, as we linger at luncheon here,
O'er many a dainty dish,
Let us drink anew to the time when you
Were a Tadpole and I was a Fish.

Langdon Smith [1858-1908]

A REASONABLE AFFLICTION

On his death-bed poor Lubin lies:
His spouse is in despair;
With frequent cries, and mutual sighs,
They both express their care.

"A different cause," says Parson Sly,

"The same effect may give:
Poor Lubin fears that he may die;
His wife, that he may live."

Matthew Prior [1664-1721]

A MORAL IN SEVRES

Upon my mantel-piece they stand,
While all its length between them lies;
He throws a kiss with graceful hand,
She glances back with bashful eyes.

The china Shepherdess is fair,
The Shepherd's face denotes a heart
Burning with ardor and despair.
Alas, they stand so far apart!

And yet, perhaps, if they were moved,
And stood together day by day,
Their love had not so constant proved,
Nor would they still have smiled so gay.

His hand the Shepherd might have kissed
The match-box Angel's heart to win;
The Shepherdess, his love have missed,
And flirted with the Mandarin.

But on my mantel-piece they stand,
While all its length between them lies;
He throws a kiss with graceful hand,
She glances back with bashful eyes.

Mildred Howells [1872-

ON THE FLY-LEAF OF A BOOK OF OLD PLAYS

At Cato's Head in Russell Street
These leaves she sat a-stitching;
I fancy she was trim and neat,
Blue-eyed and quite bewitching.

Before her on the street below,
All powder, ruffs, and laces,
There strutted idle London beaux
To ogle pretty faces;

While, filling many a Sedan chair
With monstrous hoop and feather,
In paint and powder London's fair
Went trooping past together.

Swift, Addison, and Pope, mayhap
They sauntered slowly past her,
Or printer's boy, with gown and cap,
For Steele, went trotting faster.

For beau nor wit had she a look;
Nor lord nor lady minding,
She bent her head above this book,
Attentive to her binding.

And one stray thread of golden hair,
Caught on her nimble fingers,
Was stitched within this volume, where
Until to-day it lingers.

Past and forgotten, beaux and fair,
Wigs, powder, all outdated;
A queer antique, the Sedan chair,
Pope, stiff and antiquated.

Yet as I turn these odd, old plays,
This single stray lock finding,
I'm back in those forgotten days,
And watch her at her binding.

Walter Learned [1847-1915]

THE TALENTED MAN

Letter From A Lady In London To A Lady At Lausanne

Dear Alice! you'll laugh when you know it, -
Last week, at the Duchess's ball,
I danced with the clever new poet, -
You've heard of him, - Tully St. Paul.
Miss Jonquil was perfectly frantic;
I wish you had seen Lady Anne!
It really was very romantic,
He is such a talented man!

He came up from Brazen Nose College,
Just caught, as they call it, this spring;
And his head, love, is stuffed full of knowledge
Of every conceivable thing.
Of science and logic he chatters,
As fine and as fast as he can;
Though I am no judge of such matters,
I'm sure he's a talented man.

His stories and jests are delightful; -
Not stories or jests, dear, for you;
The jests are exceedingly spiteful,

The stories not always quite true.
Perhaps to be kind and veracious
May do pretty well at Lausanne;
But it never would answer, - good gracious!
Chez nous - in a talented man.

He sneers, - how my Alice would scold him! -
At the bliss of a sigh or a tear;
He laughed - only think! - when I told him
How we cried o'er Trevelyan last year;
I vow I was quite in a passion;
I broke all the sticks of my fan;
But sentiment's quite out of fashion,
It seems, in a talented man.

Lady Bab, who is terribly moral,
Has told me that Tully is vain,
And apt - which is silly - to quarrel,
And fond - which is sad - of champagne.
I listened, and doubted, dear Alice,
For I saw, when my Lady began,
It was only the Dowager's malice; -
She does hate a talented man!

He's hideous, I own it. But fame, love,
Is all that these eyes can adore;
He's lame, - but Lord Byron was lame, love,
And dumpy, - but so is Tom Moore.
Then his voice, - such a voice! my sweet creature,
It's like your Aunt Lucy's toucan:
But oh! what's a tone or a feature,
When once one's a talented man?

My mother, you know, all the season,
Has talked of Sir Geoffrey's estate;
And truly, to do the fool reason,
He has been less horrid of late.
But to-day, when we drive in the carriage,
I'll tell her to lay down her plan; -
If ever I venture on marriage,
It must be a talented man!

P.S. - I have found, on reflection,
One fault in my friend, - entre nous;
Without it, he'd just be perfection; -
Poor fellow, he has not a sou!
And so, when he comes in September
To shoot with my uncle, Sir Dan,
I've promised mamma to remember
He's only a talented man!

Winthrop Mackworth Praed [1802-1839]

A LETTER OF ADVICE

From Miss Medora Trevilian, At Padua,
To Miss Araminta Vavasour, In London

"Enfin, Monsieur, homme aimable;
Voila pourquoi je ne saurais l'aimer." - Scribe

You tell me you're promised a lover,
My own Araminta, next week;
Why cannot my fancy discover
The hue of his coat, and his cheek?
Alas! if he look like another,
A vicar, a banker, a beau,
Be deaf to your father and mother,
My own Araminta, say "No!"

Miss Lane, at her Temple of Fashion,
Taught us both how to sing and to speak,
And we loved one another with passion,
Before we had been there a week:
You gave me a ring for a token;
I wear it wherever I go;
I gave you a chain, - it is broken?
My own Araminta, say "No!"

O think of our favorite cottage,
And think of our dear Lalla Rookh!
How we shared with the milkmaids their pottage,
And drank of the stream from the brook;
How fondly our loving lips faltered,
"What further can grandeur bestow?"
My heart is the same; - is yours altered?
My own Araminta, say "No!"

Remember the thrilling romances
We read on the bank in the glen;
Remember the suitors our fancies
Would picture for both of us then;
They wore the red cross on their shoulder,
They had vanquished and pardoned their foe -
Sweet friend, are you wiser or colder?
My own Araminta, say "No!"

You know, when Lord Rigmarole's carriage,
Drove off with your cousin Justine,
You wept, dearest girl, at the marriage,
And whispered "How base she has been!"
You said you were sure it would kill you,
If ever your husband looked so;
And you will not apostatize, - will you?
My own Araminta, say "No!"

When I heard I was going abroad, love,
I thought I was going to die;
We walked arm in arm to the road, love,
We looked arm in arm to the sky;
And I said, "When a foreign postilion
Has hurried me off to the Po,
Forget not Medora Trevilian: -
My own Araminta, say "No!"

We parted! but sympathy's fetters
Reach far over valley and hill;
I muse o'er your exquisite letters,
And feel that your heart is mine still;
And he who would share it with me, love, -
The richest of treasures below, -
If he's not what Orlando should be, love,
My own Araminta, say "No!"

If he wears a top-boot in his wooing,
If he comes to you riding a cob,
If he talks of his baking or brewing,
If he puts up his feet on the hob,
If he ever drinks port after dinner,
If his brow or his breeding is low,
If he calls himself "Thompson" or "Skinner,"
My own Araminta, say "No!"

If he studies the news in the papers
While you are preparing the tea,
If he talks of the damps or the vapors
While moonlight lies soft on the sea,
If he's sleepy while you are capricious,
If he has not a musical "Oh!"
If he does not call Werther delicious, -
My own Araminta, say "No!"

If he ever Sets foot in the city
Among the stockbrokers and Jews,
If he has not a heart full of pity,
If he don't stand six feet in his shoes,
If his lips are not redder than roses,
If his hands are not whiter than snow,
If he has not the model of noses, -
My own Araminta, say "No!"

If he speaks of a tax or a duty,
If he does not look grand on his knees,
If he's blind to a landscape of beauty,
Hills, valleys, rocks, waters, and trees,
If he dotes not on desolate towers,
If he likes not to hear the blast blow,
If he knows not the language of flowers, -
My own Araminta, say "No!"

He must walk like a god of old story
Come down from the home of his rest;
He must smile like the sun in his glory
On the buds he loves ever the best;
And oh! from its ivory portal
Like music his soft speech must flow! -
If he speak, smile, or walk like a mortal,
My own Araminta, say "No!"

Don't listen to tales of his bounty,
Don't hear what they say of his birth,
Don't look at his seat in the county,
Don't calculate what he is worth;
But give him a theme to write verse on,
And see if he turns out his toe; -
If he's only an excellent person,
My own Araminta, say "No!"

Winthrop Mackworth Praed [1802-1839]

A NICE CORRESPONDENT

"There are plenty of roses" (the patriarch speaks)
"Alas not for me, on your lips and your cheeks;
Fair maiden rose-laden enough and to spare,
Spare, spare me that rose that you wear in your hair."

The glow and the glory are plighted
To darkness, for evening is come;
The lamp in Glebe Cottage is lighted,
The birds and the sheep-bells are dumb.
I'm alone, for the others have flitted
To dine with a neighbor at Kew:
Alone, but I'm not to be pitied -
I'm thinking of you!

I wish you were here! Were I duller
Than dull, you'd be dearer than dear;
I am dressed in your favorite color -
Dear Fred, how I wish you were here!
I am wearing my lazuli necklace,
The necklace you fastened askew!
Was there ever so rude or so reckless
A Darling as you?

I want you to come and pass sentence
On two or three books with a plot;
Of course you know "Janet's Repentance"?
I am reading Sir Waverley Scott.
That story of Edgar and Lucy,
How thrilling, romantic, and true!

The Master (his bride was a goosey!)
Reminds me of you.

They tell me Cockaigne has been crowning
A Poet whose garland endures; -
It was you that first told me of Browning, -
That stupid old Browning of yours!
His vogue and his verve are alarming,
I'm anxious to give him his due;
But, Fred, he's not nearly so charming
A Poet as you!

I heard how you shot at The Beeches,
I saw how you rode Chanticleer,
I have read the report of your speeches,
And echoed the echoing cheer.
There's a whisper of hearts you are breaking,
Dear Fred, I believe it, I do!
Small marvel that Folly is making
Her Idol of you!

Alas for the World, and its dearly
Bought triumph, - its fugitive bliss;
Sometimes I half wish I were merely
A plain or a penniless Miss;
But, perhaps, one is blest with "a measure
Of pelf," and I'm not sorry, too,
That I'm pretty, because it's a pleasure,
My Darling, to you!

Your whim is for frolic and fashion,
Your taste is for letters and art; -
This rhyme is the commonplace passion
That glows in a fond woman's heart:
Lay it by in some sacred deposit
For relics - we all have a few!
Love, some day they'll print it, because it
Was written to You.

Frederick Locker-Lampson [1821-1895]

HER LETTER

I'm sitting alone by the fire,
Dressed just as I came from the dance,
In a robe even you would admire, -
It cost a cool thousand in France;
I'm be-diamonded out of all reason,
My hair is done up in a cue:
In short, sir, "the belle of the season"
Is wasting an hour upon you.

A dozen engagements I've broken;
I left in the midst of a set;
Likewise a proposal, half spoken,
That waits - on the stairs - for me yet.
They say he'll be rich, - when he grows up, -
And then he adores me indeed;
And you, sir, are turning your nose up,
Three thousand miles off, as you read.

"And how do I like my position?"
"And what do I think of New York?"
"And now, in my higher ambition,
With whom do I waltz, flirt, or talk?"
"And isn't it nice to have riches,
And diamonds and silks, and all that?"
"And aren't they a change to the ditches
And tunnels of Poverty Flat?"

Well, yes, - if you saw us out driving
Each day in the Park, four-in-hand,
If you saw poor dear mamma contriving
To look supernaturally grand, -
If you saw papa's picture, as taken
By Brady, and tinted at that, -
You'd never suspect he sold bacon
And flour at Poverty Flat.

And yet, just this moment, when sitting
In the glare of the grand chandelier, -
In the bustle and glitter befitting
The "finest soiree of the year," -
In the mists of a gaze de Chambéry,
And the hum of the smallest of talk, -
Somehow, Joe, I thought of the "Ferry,"
And the dance that we had on "The Fork,"

Of Harrison's bar, with its muster
Of flags festooned over the wall;
Of the candles that shed their soft lustre
And tallow on head-dress and shawl;
Of the steps that we took to one fiddle,
Of the dress of my queer vis-a-vis;
And how I once went down the middle
With the man that shot Sandy McGee.

Of the moon that was quietly sleeping
On the hill, when the time came to go;
Of the few baby peaks that were peeping
From under their bedclothes of snow;
Of that ride, - that to me was the rarest,
Of - the something you said at the gate.
Ah! Joe, then I wasn't an heiress
To "the best-paying lead in the State."

Well, well, it's all past; yet it's funny
To think, as I stood in the glare
Of fashion and beauty and money,
That I should be thinking, right there,
Of some one who breasted high water,
And swam the North Fork, and all that,
Just to dance with old Folinsbee's daughter,
The Lily of Poverty Flat.

But goodness! what nonsense I'm writing!
(Mamma says my taste still is low),
Instead of my triumphs reciting, -
I'm spooning on Joseph, - heigh-ho!
And I'm to be "finished" by travel, -
Whatever's the meaning of that.
Oh, why did papa strike pay gravel
In drifting on Poverty Flat?

Good-night! - here's the end of my paper;
Good-night! - if the longitude please, -
For maybe, while wasting my taper,
Your sun's climbing over the trees.
But know, if you haven't got riches,
And are poor, dearest Joe, and all that,
That my heart's somewhere there in the ditches,
And you've struck it, - on Poverty Flat

Bret Harte [1830-1902]

A DEAD LETTER

A coeur blessé - l'ombre et le silence. - Balzac

I
I drew it from its china tomb; -
It came out feebly scented
With some thin ghost of past perfume
That dust and days had lent it.

An old, old letter, - folded still!
To read with due composure,
I sought the sun-lit window-sill,
Above the gray enclosure,

That, glimmering in the sultry haze,
Faint-flowered, dimly shaded,
Slumbered like Goldsmith's Madam Blaize,
Bedizened and brocaded.

A queer old place! You'd surely say
Some tea-board garden-maker
Had planned it in Dutch William's day

To please some florist Quaker,

So trim it was. The yew-trees still,
With pious care perverted,
Grew in the same grim shapes; and still
The lipless dolphin spurted;

Still in his wonted state abode
The broken-nosed Apollo;
And still the cypress-arbor showed
The same umbrageous hollow.

Only, - as fresh young Beauty gleams
From coffee-colored laces,
So peeped from its old-fashioned dreams
The fresher modern traces;

For idle mallet, hoop, and ball
Upon the lawn were lying;
A magazine, a tumbled shawl,
Round which the swifts were flying;

And, tossed beside the Guelder rose,
A heap of rainbow knitting,
Where, blinking in her pleased repose,
A Persian cat was sitting.

"A place to love in, - live, - for aye,
If we too, like Tithonus,
Could find some God to stretch the gray
Scant life the Fates have thrown us;

"But now by steam we run our race,
With buttoned heart and pocket,
Our Love's a gilded, surplus grace, -
Just like an empty locket!

"'The time is out of joint.' Who will,
May strive to make it better;
For me, this warm old window-sill,
And this old dusty letter."

II

"Dear John (the letter ran), it can't, can't be,
For Father's gone to Chorley Fair with Sam,
And Mother's storing Apples, - Prue and Me
Up to our Elbows making Damson Jam:
But we shall meet before a Week is gone, -
'Tis a long Lane that has no Turning,' John!

"Only till Sunday next, and then you'll wait
Behind the White-Thorn, by the broken Stile -
We can go round and catch them at the Gate,

All to Ourselves, for nearly one long Mile;
Dear Prue won't look, and Father he'll go on,
And Sam's two Eyes are all for Cissy, John!

"John, she's so smart, - with every Ribbon new,
Flame-colored Sack, and Crimson Padesoy:
As proud as proud; and has the Vapors too,
Just like My Lady; - calls poor Sam a Boy,
And vows no Sweet-heart's worth the Thinking-on
Till he's past Thirty . . . I know better, John!

"My Dear, I don't think that I thought of much
Before we knew each other, I and you;
And now, why, John, your least, least Finger-touch,
Gives me enough to think a Summer through.
See, for I send you Something! There, 'tis gone!
Look in this corner, - mind you find it, John!

III

This was the matter of the note, -
A long-forgot deposit,
Dropped in an Indian dragon's throat
Deep in a fragrant closet,

Piled with a dapper Dresden world, -
Beaux, beauties, prayers, and poses, -
Bonzes with squat legs undercurled,
And great jars filled with roses.

Ah, heart that wrote! Ah, lips that kissed!
You had no thought or presage
Into what keeping you dismissed
Your simple old-world message!

A reverent one. Though we to-day
Distrust beliefs and powers,
The artless, ageless things you say
Are fresh as May's own flowers. . . .

I need not search too much to find
Whose lot it was to send it,
That feel upon me yet the kind,
Soft hand of her who penned it;

And see, through two-score years of smoke,
In by-gone, quaint apparel,
Shine from yon time-black Norway oak
The face of Patience Caryl, -

The pale, smooth forehead, silver-tressed;
The gray gown, primly flowered;
The spotless, stately coif whose crest
Like Hector's horse-plume towered;

And still the sweet half-solemn look
Where some past thought was clinging,
As when one shuts a serious book
To hear the thrushes singing.

I kneel to you! Of those you were,
Whose kind old hearts grow mellow, -
Whose fair old faces grow more fair,
As Point and Flanders yellow;

Whom some old store of garnered grief,
Their placid temples shading,
Crowns like a wreath of autumn leaf
With tender tints of fading.

Peace to your soul! You died unwed -
Despite this loving letter.
And what of John? The less that's said
Of John, I think, the better.

Austin Dobson [1840-1921]

THE NYMPH COMPLAINING FOR THE DEATH OF HER FAWN

The wanton troopers riding by
Have shot my fawn, and it will die.
Ungentle men! They cannot thrive
Who killed thee. Thou ne'er didst, alive,
Them any harm; alas! nor could
Thy death to them do any good.
I'm sure I never wished them ill,
Nor do I for all this; nor will:
But, if my simple prayers may yet
Prevail with Heaven to forget
Thy murder, I will join my tears
Rather than fail. But O my fears!
It cannot die so. Heaven's King
Keeps register of everything,
And nothing may we use in vain;
Even beasts must be with justice slain;
Else men are made their deodands.
Though they should wash their guilty hands
In this warm life-blood, which doth part
From thine, and wound me to the heart,
Yet could they not be clean; their stain
Is dyed in such a purple grain,
There is not such another in
The world to offer for their sin.

Inconstant Sylvio, when yet
I had not found him counterfeit,

One morning, I remember well,
Tied in this silver chain and bell,
Gave it to me: nay, and I know
What he said then - I'm sure I do.
Said he, "Look how your huntsman here
Hath taught a fawn to hunt his deer!"
But Sylvio soon had me beguiled:
This waxed tame, while he grew wild,
And, quite regardless of my smart,
Left me his fawn, but took his heart.

Thenceforth I set myself to play
My solitary time away
With this; and very well content
Could so mine idle life have spent;
For it was full of sport, and light
Of foot and heart, and did invite
Me to its game: it seemed to bless
Itself in me. How could I less
Than love it? Oh, I cannot be
Unkind to a beast that loveth me!

Had it lived long, I do not know
Whether it, too, might have done so
As Sylvio did; his gifts might be
Perhaps as false, or more, than he.
But I am sure, for aught that I
Could in so short a time espy,
Thy love was far more better than
The love of false and cruel man.

With sweetest milk and sugar first
I it at mine own fingers nursed;
And as it grew, so every day,
It waxed more white and sweet than they.
It had so sweet a breath! and oft
I blushed to see its foot more soft,
And white, shall I say? than my hand -
Nay, any lady's of the land!

It was a wondrous thing how fleet
'Twas on those little silver feet.
With what a pretty skipping grace
It oft would challenge me the race;
And when't had left me far away,
'Twould stay, and run again, and stay;
For it was nimbler much than hinds,
And trod as if on the four winds.

I have a garden of my own,
But so with roses overgrown,
And lilies, that you would it guess
To be a little wilderness;

And all the spring-time of the year
It loved only to be there.
Among the beds of lilies I
Have sought it oft, where it should lie,
Yet could not, till itself would rise,
Find it, although before mine eyes;
For in the flaxen lilies' shade,
It like a bank of lilies laid.
Upon the roses it would feed,
Until its lips e'en seemed to bleed;
And then to me 'twould boldly trip,
And print those roses on my lip.
But all its chief delight was still
On roses thus itself to fill;
And its pure virgin lips to fold
In whitest sheets of lilies cold.
Had it lived long, it would have been
Lilies without, roses within.

O help! O help! I see it faint
And die as calmly as a saint!
See how it weeps! the tears do come
Sad, slowly, dropping like a gum.
So weeps the wounded balsam; so
The holy frankincense doth flow;
The brotherless Heliades
Melt in such amber tears as these.

I in a golden vial will
Keep these two crystal tears, and fill
It, till it doth overflow, with mine,
Then place it in Diana's shrine.

Now my sweet fawn is vanished to
Whither the swans and turtles go;
In fair Elysium to endure
With milk-white lambs and ermines pure.
O, do not run too fast, for I
Will but bespeak thy grave, and die.

First my unhappy statue shall
Be cut in marble; and withal
Let it be weeping too; but there
The engraver sure his art may spare;
For I so truly thee bemoan
That I shall weep though I be stone,
Until my tears, still dropping, wear
My breast, themselves engraving there;
Then at my feet shalt thou be laid,
Of purest alabaster made;
For I would have thine image be
White as I can, though not as thee.

Andrew Marvell [1621-1678]

ON THE DEATH OF A FAVORITE CAT, DROWNED IN A TUB OF GOLD FISHES

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dyed
The azure flowers that blow;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima, reclined,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw; and purred applause.

Still had she gazed, but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream:
Their scaly armor's Tyrian hue
Through richest purple to the view
Betrayed a golden gleam.

The hapless Nymph with wonder saw:
A whisker first and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,
She stretched, in vain, to reach the prize.
What female heart can gold despise?
What Cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous Maid! with looks intent
Again she stretched, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between.
(Malignant Fate sat by, and smiled.)
The slippery verge her feet beguiled,
She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times emerging from the flood
She mewed to every watery god,
Some speedy aid to send.
No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirred:
Nor cruel Tom nor Susan heard, -
A Favorite has no friend!

From hence, ye Beauties, undeceived,
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold.
Not all that tempts your wandering eyes
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize;

Nor all that glisters, gold.

Thomas Gray [1716-1771]

VERSES ON A CAT

Clubby! thou surely art, I ween,
A Puss of most majestic mien,
So stately all thy paces!

With such a philosophic air
Thou seek'st thy professorial chair,
And so demure thy face is!

And as thou sit'st, thine eye seems fraught
With such intensity of thought
That could we read it, knowledge
Would seem to breathe in every mew,
And learning yet undreamt by you
Who dwell in Hall or College.

Oh! when in solemn taciturnity
Thy brain seems wandering through eternity,
What happiness were mine
Could I then catch the thoughts that flow,
Thoughts such as ne'er were hatched below,
But in a head like thine.

Oh then, throughout the livelong day,
With thee I'd sit and purr away
In ecstasy sublime;
And in thy face, as from a book,
I'd drink in science at each look,
Nor fear the lapse of time.

Charles Daubeny [1745-1827]

EPITAPH ON A HARE

Here lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter greyhound follow,
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor ear heard huntsman's hallo;

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
Who, nursed with tender care,
And to domestic bounds confined,
Was still a wild Jack-hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
His pittance every night,

He did it with a jealous look,
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,
And milk, and oats, and straw;
Thistles, or lettuces instead,
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
On pippins' russet peel;
And, when his juicy salads failed,
Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
Whereon he loved to bound,
To skip and gambol like a fawn,
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,
For then he lost his fear;
But most before approaching showers,
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons
He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humor's sake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to a smile.

But now, beneath this walnut-shade
He finds his long, last home,
And waits, in snug concealment laid,
Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more aged, feels the shocks
From which no care can save,
And, partner once of Tiney's box,
Must soon partake his grave.

William Cowper [1731-1800]

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. THROCKMORTON'S BULLFINCH

Ye Nymphs! if e'er your eyes were red
With tears o'er hapless favorites shed,
O share Maria's grief!
Her favorite, even in his cage,
(What will not hunger's cruel rage?)

Assassinated by a thief.

Where Rhenus strays his vines among,
The egg was laid from which he sprung,
And though by nature mute,
Or only with a whistle blessed,
Well-taught, he all the sounds expressed
Of flageolet or flute.

The honors of his ebon poll
Were brighter than the sleekest mole;
His bosom of the hue
With which Aurora decks the skies,
When piping winds shall soon arise
To sweep away the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,
Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,
No cat had leave to dwell;
And Bully's cage supported stood,
On props of smoothest-shaven wood,
Large-built and latticed well.

Well-latticed, - but the grate, alas!
Not rough with wire of steel or brass,
For Bully's plumage sake,
But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,
With which, when neatly peeled and dried,
The swains their baskets make.

Night veiled the pole - all seemed secure -
When, led by instinct sharp and sure,
Subsistence to provide,
A beast forth sallied on the scout,
Long-backed, long-tailed, with whiskered snout,
And badger-colored hide.

He, entering at the study-door,
Its ample area 'gan explore;
And something in the wind
Conjectured, sniffing round and round,
Better than all the books he found,
Food, chiefly, for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impressed
A dream disturbed poor Bully's rest;
In sleep he seemed to view
A rat, fast-clinging to the cage,
And, screaming at the sad presage,
Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,
Right to his mark the monster went -

Ah, Muse! forbear to speak
Minute the horror that ensued;
His teeth were strong, the cage was wood -
He left poor Bully's beak.

O had he made that too his prey!
That beak, whence issued many a lay
Of such mellifluous tone,
Might have repaid him well, I wote,
For silencing so sweet a throat,
Fast stuck within his own.

Maria weeps, - the Muses mourn; -
So, when by Bacchanalians torn,
On Thracian Hebrus' side
The tree-enchanted Orpheus fell,
His head alone remained to tell
The cruel death he died.

William Cowper [1731-1800]

AN ELEGY ON A LAP-DOG

Shock's fate I mourn; poor Shock is now no more:
Ye Muses! mourn; ye Chambermaids! deplore.
Unhappy Shock! Yet more unhappy fair,
Doomed to survive thy joy and only care.
Thy wretched fingers now no more shall deck,
And tie the favorite ribbon round his neck;
No more thy hand shall smooth his glossy hair,
And comb the wavings of his pendent ear.
Let cease thy flowing grief, forsaken maid!
All mortal pleasures in a moment fade:
Our surest hope is in an hour destroyed,
And love, best gift of Heaven, not long enjoyed.
Methinks I see her frantic with despair,
Her streaming eyes, wrung hands, and flowing hair;
Her Mechlin pinnars, rent, the floor bestrow,
And her torn fan gives real signs of woe.
Hence, Superstition! that tormenting guest,
That haunts with fancied fears the coward breast;
No dread events upon this fate attend,
Stream eyes no more, no more thy tresses rend.
Though certain omens oft forewarn a state,
And dying lions show the monarch's fate,
Why should such fears bid Celia's sorrow rise?
For, when a lap-dog falls, no lover dies.
Cease, Celia, cease; restrain thy flowing tears.
Some warmer passion will dispel thy cares.
In man you'll find a more substantial bliss,
More grateful toying and a sweeter kiss.
He's dead. Oh! lay him gently in the ground!

And may his tomb be by this verse renowned:
Here Shock, the pride of all his kind, is laid,
Who fawned like man, but ne'er like man betrayed.

John Gay [1685-1732]

MY LAST TERRIER

I mourn "Patroclus," whilst I praise
Young "Peter" sleek before the fire,
A proper dog, whose decent ways
Renew the virtues of his sire;
"Patroclus" rests in grassy tomb,
And "Peter" grows into his room.

For though, when Time or Fates consign
The terrier to his latest earth,
Vowing no wastrel of the line
Shall dim the memory of his worth,
I meditate the silkier breeds,
Yet still an Amurath succeeds:

Succeeds to bind the heart again
To watchful eye and strenuous paw,
To tail that gratulates amain
Or deprecates offended Law;
To bind, and break, when failing eye
And palsied paw must say good-bye.

Ah, had the dog's appointed day
But tallied with his master's span,
Nor one swift decade turned to gray
The busy muzzle's black and tan,
To reprobate in idle men
Their threescore empty years and ten!

Sure, somewhere o'er the Stygian strait
"Panurge" and "Bito," "Tramp" and "Mike,"
In couchant conclave watch the gate,
Till comes the last successive tyke,
Acknowledged with the countersign:
"Your master was a friend of mine."

In dreams I see them spring to greet,
With rapture more than tail can tell,
Their master of the silent feet
Who whistles o'er the asphodel,
And through the dim Elysian bounds
Leads all his cry of little hounds.

John Halsham [18 -

GEIST'S GRAVE

Four years! - and didst thou stay above
The ground, which hides thee now, but four?
And all that life, and all that love,
Were crowded, Geist! into no more?

Only four years those winning ways,
Which make me for thy presence yearn,
Called us to pet thee or to praise,
Dear little friend! at every turn?

That loving heart, that patient soul,
Had they indeed no longer span,
To run their course, and reach their goal
And read their homily to man?

That liquid, melancholy eye,
From whose pathetic, soul-fed springs
Seemed surging the Virgilian cry,
The sense of tears in mortal things -

That steadfast, mournful strain, consoled
By spirits gloriously gay,
And temper of heroic mould -
What, was four years their whole short day?

Yes, only four! - and not the course
Of all the centuries yet to come,
And not the infinite resource
Of Nature, with her countless sum

Of figures, with her fulness vast
Of new creation evermore,
Can ever quite repeat the past,
Or just thy little self restore.

Stern law of every mortal lot!
Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear,
And builds himself I know not what
Of second life I know not where.

But thou, when struck thine hour to go,
On us, who stood despondent by,
A meek last glance of love didst throw,
And humbly lay thee down to die.

Yet would we keep thee in our heart -
Would fix our favorite on the scene,
Nor let thee utterly depart
And be as if thou ne'er hadst been.

And so there rise these lines of verse
On lips that rarely form them now;
While to each other we rehearse:
Such ways, such arts, such looks hadst thou!

We stroke thy broad brown paws again,
We bid thee to thy vacant chair,
We greet thee by the window-pane,
We hear thy scuffle on the stair;

We see the flaps of thy large ears
Quick raised to ask which way we go;
Crossing the frozen lake, appears
Thy small black figure on the snow!

Nor to us only art thou dear,
Who mourn thee in thine English home;
Thou hast thine absent master's tear,
Dropped by the far Australian foam.

Thy memory lasts both here and there,
And thou shalt live as long as we.
And after that - thou dost not care!
In us was all the world to thee.

Yet, fondly zealous for thy fame,
Even to a date beyond our own,
We strive to carry down thy name
By mounded turf and graven stone.

We lay thee, close within our reach,
Here, where the grass is smooth and warm,
Between the holly and the beech,
Where oft we watched thy couchant form,

Asleep, yet lending half an ear
To travelers on the Portsmouth road; -
There choose we thee, O guardian dear,
Marked with a stone, thy last abode!

Then some, who through this garden pass,
When we too, like thyself, are clay,
Shall see thy grave upon the grass,
And stop before the stone, and say:

People who lived here long ago
Did by this stone, it seems, intend
To name for future times to know
The dachs-hound, Geist, their little friend.

Matthew Arnold [1822-1888]

"HOLD"

I know, where Hampshire fronts the Wight,
A little church, where "after strife"
Reposes Guy de Blanquely, Knight,
By Alison his wife:
I know their features' graven lines
In time-stained marble monotone,
While crouched before their feet reclines
Their little dog of stone!

I look where Blanquely Castle still
Frowns o'er the oak wood's summer state,
(The maker of a patent pill
Has purchased it of late),
And then through Fancy's open door
I backward turn to days of old,
And see Sir Guy - a bachelor
Who owns a dog called "Hold"!

I see him take the tourney's chance,
And urge his coal-black charger on
To an arbitrament by lance
For lovely Alison;
I mark the onset, see him hurl
From broidered saddle to the dirt
His rival, that ignoble Earl -
Black-hearted Massingbert!

Then Alison, with down-dropped eyes,
Where happy tears bedim the blue,
Bestows a valuable prize
And adds her hand thereto;
My lord, his surcoat streaked with sand,
Remounts, low muttering curses hot,
And with a base-born, hireling band
He plans a dastard plot!

.

'Tis night - Sir Guy has sunk to sleep,
The castle keep is hushed and still -
See, up the spiral stairway creep,
To work his wicked will,
Lord Massingbert of odious fame,
Soft followed by his cut-throat staff;
Ah, "Hold" has justified his name
And pinned his lordship's calf!

A growl, an oath, then torches flare;
Out rings a sentry's startled shout;
The guard are racing for the stair,
Half-dressed, Sir Guy runs out;

On high his glittering blade he waves,
He gives foul Massingbert the point,
He carves the hired assassin knaves
Joint from plebeian joint!

.

The Knight is dead - his sword is rust,
But in his day I'm certain "Hold"
Wore, as his master's badge of trust,
A collarette of gold:
And still I like to fancy that,
Somewhere beyond the Styx's bound,
Sir Guy's tall phantom stoops to pat
His little phantom hound!

Patrick R. Chalmers [18-

THE BARB OF SATIRE

THE VICAR OF BRAY

In good King Charles's golden days,
When loyalty no harm meant,
A zealous high-churchman was I,
And so I got preferment.
To teach my flock I never missed:
Kings were by God appointed,
And lost are those that dare resist
Or touch the Lord's anointed.
And this is law that I'll maintain
Until my dying day, sir,
That whatsoever king shall reign,
Still I'll be the Vicar of Bray, sir.

When royal James possessed the crown,
And popery grew in fashion,
The penal laws I hooted down,
And read the Declaration;
The Church of Rome I found would fit
Full well my constitution;
And I had been a Jesuit
But for the Revolution.

When William was our king declared,
To ease the nation's grievance,
With this new wind about I steered,
And swore to him allegiance;
Old principles I did revoke,
Set conscience at a distance;
Passive obedience was a joke,
A jest was non-resistance.

When royal Anne became our queen,
The Church of England's glory,
Another face of things was seen,
And I became a Tory;
Occasional conformists base,
I blamed their moderation,
And thought the Church in danger was,
By such prevarication.

When George in pudding-time came o'er,
And moderate men looked big, sir,
My principles I changed once more,
And so became a Whig, sir;
And thus preferment I procured
From our new Faith's defender,
And almost every day abjured
The Pope and the Pretender.

The illustrious house of Hanover,
And Protestant succession,
To these I do allegiance swear -
While they can keep possession:
For in my faith and loyalty
I nevermore will falter,
And George my lawful king shall be -
Until the times do alter.
And this is law that I'll maintain
Until my dying day, sir,
That whatsoever king shall reign,
Still I'll be the Vicar of Bray, sir.

Unknown

THE LOST LEADER [William Wordsworth]

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a ribbon to stick in his coat -
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
Lost all the others she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
So much was theirs who so little allowed:

How all our copper had gone for his service!
Rags - were they purple, his heart had been proud -
We that had loved him so, followed him, honored him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley, were with us, - they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
- He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!
We shall march prospering, - not through his presence;
Songs may inspire us, - not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done, - while he boasts his quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire:
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
One more devil's-triumph and sorrow for angels,
One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!
Life's night begins: let him never come back to us!
There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,
Forced praise on our part - the glimmer of twilight,
Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well, for we taught him - strike gallantly,
Menace our heart ere we master his own;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

Robert Browning [1812-1889]

ICHABOD

[Daniel Webster]

So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore!
The glory from his gray hairs gone
Forevermore!

Revile him not, the Tempter hath
A snare for all;
And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath,
Befit his fall!

Oh, dumb be passion's stormy rage,
When he who might
Have lighted up and led his age,
Falls back in night.

Scorn! would the angels laugh, to mark
A bright soul driven,
Fiend-goaded, down the endless dark,
From hope and heaven!

Let not the land once proud of him
Insult him now,
Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,
Dishonored brow.

But let its humbled sons, instead,
From sea to lake,
A long lament, as for the dead,
In sadness make.

Of all we loved and honored, naught
Save power remains;
A fallen angel's pride of thought,
Still strong in chains.

All else is gone; from those great eyes
The soul has fled:
When faith is lost, when honor dies,
The man is dead!

Then, pay the reverence of old days
To his dead fame;
Walk backward, with averted gaze,
And hide the shame!

John Greenleaf Whittier [1807-1892]

WHAT MR. ROBINSON THINKS

Guvener B. is a sensible man;
He stays to his home an' looks arter his folks;
He draws his furrer ez straight ez he can,
An' into nobody's tater-patch pokes;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.

My! aint it terrible? Wut shall we du?
We can't never choose him o' course, - thet's flat;
Guess we shall hev to come round, (don't you?)
An' go in fer thunder an' guns, an' all that;
Fer John P.
Robinson he
Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.

Gineral C. is a dreffle smart man:
He's ben on all sides that give places or pelf;
But consistency still wuz a part of his plan, -
He's ben true to one party, - an' thet is himself; -
So John P.
Robinson he
Sez he shall vote fer Gineral C.

General C. he goes in fer the war;
He don't vally princerples more'n an old cud;
Wut did God make us raytional creeturs fer,
But glory an' gunpowder, plunder an' blood?
So John P.
Robinson he
Sez he shall vote fer General C.

We were gittin' on nicely up here to our village,
With good old idees o' wut's right an' wut aint,
We kind o' thought Christ went agin war an' pillage,
An' thet eppyletts worn't the best mark of a saint;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez this kind o' thing's an exploded idee.

The side of our country must ollers be took,
An' Presidunt Polk, you know, he is our country,
An' the angel thet writes all our sins in a book
Puts the debit to him, an' to us the per contry;
An' John P.
Robinson he
Sez this is his view o' the thing to a T.

Parson Wilbur he calls all these argimunts lies;
Sez they're nothin' on airth but jest fee, faw, fum;
An' thet all this big talk of our destinies
Is half on it ign'ance, an' t'other half rum;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez it aint no sech thing; an', of course, so must we.

Parson Wilbur sez he never heerd in his life
That th' Apostles rigged out in their swaller-tail coats,
An' marched round in front of a drum an' a fife,
To git some on 'em office, an' some on 'em votes;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez they didn't know everythin' down in Judee.

Wal, it's a marcy we've gut folks to tell us
The rights an' the wrongs o' these matters, I vow, -
God sends country lawyers, an' other wise fellers,
To start the world's team wen it gits in a slough;
Fer John P.
Robinson he
Sez the world'll go right, ef he hollers out Gee!

James Russell Lowell [1819-1891]

THE DEBATE IN THE SENNIT

Sot To A Nursery Rhyme

"Here we stan' on the Constitution, by thunder!
It's a fact o' wich ther's bushils o' proofs;
Fer how could we trample on 't so, I wonder,
Ef't worn't thet it's ollers under our hoofs?"
Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;
"Human rights haint no more
Right to come on this floor,
No more'n the man in the moon," sez he.

"The North haint no kind o' bisness with nothin',
An' you've no idee how much bother it saves;
We aint none riled by their frettin' an' frothin',
We're used to layin' the string on our slaves,"
Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; -
Sez Mister Foote,
"I should like to shoot
The holl gang, by the gret horn spoon!" sez he.

"Freedom's Keystone is Slavery, thet ther's no doubt on,
It's sutthin' thet's - wha'd'ye call it? - divine, -
An' the slaves thet we ollers make the most out on
Air them north o' Mason an' Dixon's line,"
Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; -
"Fer all thet," sez Mangum,
"T would be better to hang 'em
An' so git red on 'em soon," sez he.

"The mass ough' to labor an' we lay on soffies,
Thet's the reason I want to spread Freedom's aree;
It puts all the cunninest on us in office,
An' reelises our Maker's orig'nal idee,"
Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; -
"Thet's ez plain," sez Cass,
"Ez thet some one's an ass,
It's ez clear ez the sun is at noon," sez he.

"Now don't go to say I'm the friend of oppression,
But keep all your spare breath fer coolin' your broth,
Fer I ollers hev strove (at least thet's my impression)
To make cussed free with the rights o' the North,"
Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; -
"Yes," sez Davis o' Miss.,
"The perfection o' bliss
Is in skinnin' that same old coon," sez he.

"Slavery's a thing thet depends on complexion,
It's God's law thet fetters on black skins don't chafe;
Ef brains wuz to settle it (horrid reflection!)
Wich of our onnable body'd be safe?"
Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; -
Sez Mister Hannegan,

Afore he began agin,
"Thet exception is quite oppertoon," sez he.

"Gen'nle Cass, Sir, you needn't be twitchin' your collar,
Your merit's quite clear by the dut on your knees;
At the North we don't make no distinctions o' color:
You can all take a lick at our shoes wen you please,"
Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; -
Sez Mister Jarnagin,
"They wun't hev to larn agin,
They all on 'em know the old toon," sez he.

"The slavery question aint no ways bewilderin',
North an' South hev one int'rest, it's plain to a glance,
No'thern men, like us patriarchs, don't sell their childrin,
But they du sell themselves, ef they git a good chance,"
Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; -
Sez Atherton here,
"This is gittin' severe,
I wish I could dive like a loon," sez he.

"It'll break up the Union, this talk about freedom,
An' your fact'ry gals (soon ex we split) 'll make head,
An' gittin' some Miss chief or other to lead 'em,
'll go to work raisin' permiscoous Ned,"
Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; -
"Yes, the North," sez Colquitt,
"Ef we Southerners all quit,
Would go down like a busted balloon," sez he.

"Jest look wut is doin', wut annyky's brewin'
In the beautiful clime o' the olive an' vine,
All the wise aristoxy's atumblin' to ruin,
An' the sankylo's drorin' an' drinkin' their wine,"
Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; -
"Yes," sez Johnson, "in France
They're beginnin' to dance
Beelzebub's own rigadoon," sez he.

"The South's safe enough, it don't feel a mite skeery,
Our slaves in their darkness an' dut air tu blest
Not to welcome with proud hallylugers the ery
Wen our eagle kicks yourn from the naytional nest,"
Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; -
"Oh," sez Westcott o' Florida,
"Wut treason is horrider
Than our priv'leges tryin' to proon?" sez he.

"It's 'coz they're so happy, thet, wen crazy sarpints
Stick their nose in our bizness, we git so darned riled;
We think it's our dooty to give pooty sharp hints,
Thet the last crumb of Edin on airth sha'n't be spilled,"
Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; -

"Ah," sez Dixon H. Lewis,
"It perfectly true is

Thet slavery's airth's grettest boon," sez he.

James Russell Lowell [1819-1891]

THE MARQUIS OF CARABAS
A Song With A Stolen Burden

Off with your hat! along the street
His Lordship's carriage rolls;
Respect to greatness - when it shines
To cheer our darkened souls.
Get off the step, you ragged boys!
Policeman, where's your staff?
This is a sight to check with awe
The most irreverent laugh.
Chapeau bas!
Chapeau bas!
Gloire au Marquis de Carabas!

Stand further back! we'll see him well;
Wait till they lift him out:
It takes some time; his Lordship's old,
And suffers from the gout.
Now look! he owns a castled park
For every finger thin;
He has more sterling pounds a day
Than wrinkles in his skin.

The founder of his race was son
To a king's cousin, rich;
(The mother was an oyster wench -
She perished in a ditch).
His patriot worth embalmed has been
In poets' loud applause:
He made twelve thousand pounds a year
By aiding France's cause.

The second marquis, of the stole
Was groom to the second James;
He all but caught that recreant king
When flying o'er the Thames.
Devotion rare! by Orange Will
With a Scotch county paid;
He gained one more - in Ireland - when
Charles Edward he betrayed.

He lived to see his son grow up
A general famed and bold,
Who fought his country's fights - and one,

For half a million, sold.
His son (alas! the house's shame)
Frittered the name away:
Diced, wenched and drank - at last got shot,
Through cheating in his play!

Now, see, where, focused on one head,
The race's glories shine:
The head gets narrow at the top,
But mark the jaw - how fine!
Don't call it satyr-like; you'd wound
Some scores, whose honest pates
The self-same type present, upon
The Carabas estates!

Look at his skin - at four-score years
How fresh it gleams and fair:
He never tasted ill-dressed food,
Or breathed in tainted air.
The noble blood glows through his veins
Still, with a healthful pink;
His brow scarce wrinkled! - Brows keep so
That have not got to think.

His hand 's ungloved! - it shakes, 'tis true,
But mark its tiny size,
(High birth's true sign) and shape, as on
The lackey's arm it lies.
That hand ne'er penned a useful line,
Ne'er worked a deed of fame,
Save slaying one, whose sister he -
Its owner - brought to shame.

They ye got him in - he's gone to vote
Your rights and mine away;
Perchance our lives, should men be scarce,
To fight his cause for pay.
We are his slaves! he owns our lands,
Our woods, our seas, and skies;
He'd have us shot like vicious dogs,
Should we in murmuring rise!
Chapeau bas!
Chapeau bas!
Gloire au Marquis de Carabas!

Robert Brough [1828-1860]

A MODEST WIT

A supercilious nabob of the East -
Haughty, being great - purse-proud, being rich -
A governor, or general, at the least,

I have forgotten which -

Had in his family a humble youth,
Who went from England in his patron's suit,
An unassuming boy, in truth
A lad of decent parts, and good repute.

This youth had sense and spirit;
But yet with all his sense,
Excessive diffidence
Obscured his merit.

One day, at table, flushed with pride and wine,
His Honor, proudly free, severely merry,
Conceived it would be vastly fine
To crack a joke upon his secretary.

"Young man," he said, "by what art, craft, or trade,
Did your good father gain a livelihood?" -
"He was a saddler, sir," Modestus said,
"And in his time was reckoned good."

"A saddler, eh! and taught you Greek,
Instead of teaching you to sew!
Pray, why did not your father make
A saddler, sir, of you?"

Each parasite, then, as in duty bound,
The joke applauded, and the laugh went round.
At length Modestus, bowing low,
Said (craving pardon, if too free he made),
"Sir, by your leave, I fain would know
Your father's trade!"

"My father's trade! by heaven, that's too bad!
My father's trade? Why, blockhead, are you mad?
My father, sir, did never stoop so low -
He was a gentleman, I'd have you know."

"Excuse the liberty I take,"
Modestus said, with archness on his brow,
"Pray, why did not your father make
A gentleman of you?"

Selleck Osborn [1783-1826]

JOLLY JACK

When fierce political debate
Throughout the isle was storming,
And Rads attacked the throne and state,
And Tories the reforming,

To calm the furious rage of each,
And right the land demented,
Heaven sent us Jolly Jack, to teach
The way to be contented.

Jack's bed was straw, 'twas warm and soft,
His chair, a three-legged stool;
His broken jug was emptied oft,
Yet, somehow, always full.
His mistress' portrait decked the wall,
His mirror had a crack,
Yet, gay and glad, though this was all
His wealth, lived Jolly Jack.

To give advice to avarice,
Teach pride its mean condition,
And preach good sense to dull pretence,
Was honest Jack's high mission.
Our simple statesman found his rule
Of moral in the flagon,
And held his philosophic school
Beneath the "George and Dragon"

When village Solons cursed the Lords,
And called the malt-tax sinful,
Jack heeded not their angry words,
But smiled and drank his skinful.
And when men wasted health and life,
In search of rank and riches,
Jack marched aloof the paltry strife,
And wore his threadbare breeches.

"I enter not the Church," he said,
"But I'll not seek to rob it;"
So worthy Jack Joe Miller read,
While others studied Cobbett.
His talk it was of feast and fun;
His guide the Almanack;
From youth to age thus gaily run
The life of Jolly Jack.

And when Jack prayed, as oft he would,
He humbly thanked his Maker;
"I am," said he, "O Father good!
Nor Catholic nor Quaker:
Give each his creed, let each proclaim
His catalogue of curses;
I trust in Thee, and not in them,
In Thee, and in Thy mercies!

"Forgive me if, midst all Thy works,
No hint I see of damning;
And think there's faith among the Turks,

And hope for e'en the Brahmin.
Harmless my mind is, and my mirth,
And kindly is my laughter;
I cannot see the smiling earth,
And think there's hell hereafter."

Jack died; he left no legacy,
Save that his story teaches: -
Content to peevish poverty;
Humility to riches.
Ye scornful great, ye envious small,
Come fellow in his track;
We all were happier, if we all
Would copy Jolly Jack.

William Makepeace Thackeray [1811-1863]

THE KING OF BRENTFORD

After Beranger

There was a King in Brentford, - of whom no legends tell,
But who, without his glory, - could eat and sleep right well.
His Polly's cotton nightcap - it was his crown of state,
He slept of evenings early, - and rose of mornings late.

All in a fine mud palace, - each day he took four meals,
And for a guard of honor, - a dog ran at his heels.
Sometimes to view his kingdoms, - rode forth this monarch good,
And then a prancing jackass - he royally bestrode.

There were no costly habits - with which this King was cursed,
Except (and where's the harm on't) - a somewhat lively thirst;
But people must pay taxes, - and Kings must have their sport;
So out of every gallon - His Grace he took a quart.

He pleased the ladies round him, - with manners soft and bland;
With reason good, they named him, - the father of his land.
Each year his mighty armies - marched forth in gallant show;
Their enemies were targets, - their bullets they were tow.

He vexed no quiet neighbor, - no useless conquest made,
But by the laws of pleasure, - his peaceful realm he swayed.
And in the years he reigned, - through all this country wide,
There was no cause for weeping, - save when the good man died.

The faithful men of Brentford, - do still their King deplore,
His portrait yet is swinging, - beside an alehouse door.
And toppers, tender-hearted, - regard his honest phiz,
And envy times departed, - that knew a reign like his.

William Makepeace Thackeray [1811-1863]

KAISER & CO

Der Kaiser auf der Vaterland
Und Gott on high, all dings gommand;
Ve two, ach don'd you understand?
Meinself - und Gott.

He reigns in heafen, und always shall,
Und mein own embire don'd vas shmall;
Ein noble bair, I dink you call
Meinself - und Gott.

Vile some mens sing der power divine,
Mein soldiers sing der "Wacht am Rhein,"
Und drink der healt in Rhenish wein
Auf me - und Gott.

Dere's France dot swaggers all aroundt,
She's ausgespielt - she's no aggroundt;
To mooch ve dinks she don'd amoundt,
Meinself - und Gott.

She vill not dare to fight again,
But if she shouldt, I'll show her blain
Dot Elsass und (in French) Lorraine
Are mein - und Gott's.

Dere's grandma dinks she's nicht shmall beer,
Mit Boers und dings she interfere;
She'll learn none runs dis hemisphere
But me - und Gott.

She dinks, goot frau, some ships she's got,
Und soldiers mit der sgarlet goat;
Ach! ve could knock dem - pouf! like dot,
Meinself - und Gott.

In dimes auf peace, brebared for wars,
I bear der helm und sbear auf Mars,
Und care nicht for den dousant czars,
Meinself - und Gott.

In short, I humor efery whim,
Mit aspect dark und visage grim,
Gott pulls mit me und I mit Him -
Meinself - und Gott.

Alexander Macgregor Rose [1846-1898]

NONGTONGPAW

John Bull for pastime took a prance,
Some time ago, to peep at France;
To talk of sciences and arts,
And knowledge gained in foreign parts.
Monsieur, obsequious, heard him speak,
And answered John in heathen Greek;
To all he asked, 'bout all he saw,
'Twas, "Monsieur, je vous n'entends pas."

John, to the Palais-Royal come,
Its splendor almost struck him dumb.
"I say, whose house is that there here?"
"House! Je vous n'entends pas, Monsieur."
"What, Nongtongpaw again!" cries John;
"This fellow is some mighty Don:
No doubt he's plenty for the maw, -
I'll breakfast with this Nongtongpaw."

John saw Versailles from Marli's height,
And cried, astonished at the sight,
"Whose fine estate is that there here?"
"State! Je vous n'entends pas, Monsieur."
"His? what, the land and houses too?
The fellow's richer than a Jew:
On everything he lays his claw!
I should like to dine with Nongtongpaw."

Next tripping came a courtly fair,
John cried, enchanted with her air,
"What lovely wench is that there here?"
"Ventch! Je vous n'entends pas, Monsieur."
"What, he again? Upon my life!
A palace, lands, and then a wife
Sir Joshua might delight to draw:
I should like to sup with Nongtongpaw."

"But hold! whose funeral's that?" cries John.
"Je vous n'entends pas." - "What, is he gone?
Wealth, fame, and beauty could not save
Poor Nongtongpaw, then, from the grave!
His race is run, his game is up, -
I'd with him breakfast, dine, and sup;
But since he chooses to withdraw,
Good night t' ye, Mounseer Nongtongpaw!"

Charles Dibdin [1745-1814]

THE LION AND THE CUB

How fond are men of rule and place,
Who court it from the mean and base!
These cannot bear an equal nigh,

But from superior merit fly.
They love the cellar's vulgar joke,
And lose their hours in ale and smoke.
There o'er some petty club preside;
So poor, so paltry, is their pride!
Nay, even with fools whole nights will sit,
In hopes to be supreme in wit.
If these can read, to these I write,
To set their worth in truest light.

A Lion-cub of sordid mind,
Avoided all the lion kind;
Fond of applause, he sought the feasts
Of vulgar and ignoble beasts;
With asses all his time he spent,
Their club's perpetual president.
He caught their manners, looks, and airs;
An ass in everything but ears!
If e'er his Highness meant a joke,
They grinned applause before he spoke;
But at each word what shouts of praise!
"Good gods! how natural he brays!"
Elate with flattery and conceit,
He seeks his royal sire's retreat;
Forward, and fond to show his parts,
His Highness brays; the Lion starts.
"Puppy! that cursed vociferation
Betrays thy life and conversation:
Coxcombs, an ever-noisy race,
Are trumpets of their own disgrace."
"Why so severe?" the Cub replies;
"Our senate always held me wise!"
"How weak is pride," returns the sire:
"All fools are vain when fools admire!
But know, what stupid asses prize,
Lions and noble beasts despise."

John Gay [1685-1732]

THE HARE WITH MANY FRIENDS

Friendship, like love, is but a name,
Unless to one you stint the flame.
The child, whom many fathers share,
Hath seldom known a father's care.
'Tis thus in friendship; who depend
On many, rarely find a friend.
A Hare, who, in a civil way,
Complied with everything, like Gay,
Was known by all the bestial train,
Who haunt the wood, or graze the plain;
Her care was never to offend,

And every creature was her friend.
As forth she went at early dawn,
To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn,
Behind she hears the hunter's cries,
And from the deep-mouthed thunder flies:
She starts, she stops, she pants for breath;
She hears the near advance of death;
She doubles, to mislead the hound,
And measures back her mazy round:
Till, fainting in the public way,
Half dead with fear she gasping lay.
What transport in her bosom grew,
When first the Horse appeared in view!
"Let me," says she, "your back ascend,
And owe my safety to a friend.
You know my feet betray my flight:
To friendship every burden's light."
The Horse replied: "Poor honest Puss,
It grieves my heart to see thee thus;
Be comforted; relief is near,
For all your friends are in the rear."
She next the stately Bull implored;
And thus replied the mighty lord:
"Since every beast alive can tell
That I sincerely wish you well,
I may, without offence, pretend,
To take the freedom of a friend.
Love calls me hence; a favorite cow
Expects me near yon barley-mow;
And when a lady's in the case,
You know, all other things give place.
To leave you thus might seem unkind;
But see, the Goat is just behind."
The Goat remarked her pulse was high,
Her languid head, her heavy eye;
"My back," says he, "may do you harm;
The Sheep's at hand, and wool is warm."
The Sheep was feeble, and complained
His sides a load of wool sustained:
Said he was slow, confessed his fears,
For hounds eat sheep as well as Hares.
She now the trotting Calf addressed,
To save from death a friend distressed.
"Shall I," says he, "of tender age,
In this important care engage?
Older and abler passed you by;
How strong are those, how weak am I!
Should I presume to bear you hence,
Those friends of mine may take offence.
Excuse me, then. You know my heart;
But dearest friends, alas! must part.
How shall we all lament! Adieu!
For see, the hounds are just in view."

John Gay [1685-1732]

THE SYCOPHANTIC FOX AND THE GULLIBLE RAVEN

A raven sat upon a tree,
And not a word he spoke, for
His beak contained a piece of Brie,
Or, maybe, it was Roquefort?
We'll make it any kind you please -
At all events, it was a cheese.

Beneath the tree's umbrageous limb
A hungry fox sat smiling;
He saw the raven watching him,
And spoke in words beguiling:
"J'admire," said he, "ton beau plumage,"
(The which was simply persiflage).

Two things there are, no doubt you know,
To which a fox is used, -
A rooster that is bound to crow,
A crow that's bound to roost,
And whichever he espies
He tells the most unblushing lies.

"Sweet fowl," he said, "I understand
You're more than merely natty:
I hear you sing to beat the band
And Adelina Patti.
Pray render with your liquid tongue
A bit from 'Gotterdammerung.'"

This subtle speech was aimed to please
The crow, and it succeeded:
He thought no bird in all the trees
Could sing as well as he did.
In flattery completely doused,
He gave the "Jewel Song" from "Faust."

But gravitation's law, of course,
As Isaac Newton showed it,
Exerted on the cheese its force,
And elsewhere soon bestowed it.
In fact, there is no need to tell
What happened when to earth it fell.

I blush to add that when the bird
Took in the situation,
He said one brief, emphatic word,
Unfit for publication.
The fox was greatly startled, but

He only sighed and answered "Tut!"

The moral is: A fox is bound
To be a shameless sinner.
And also: When the cheese comes round
You know it's after dinner.
But (what is only known to few)
The fox is after dinner, too.

Guy Wetmore Carryl [1873-1904]

THE FRIEND OF HUMANITY AND THE KNIFE-GRINDER

Friend Of Humanity

Needy knife-grinder! whither are you going?
Rough is the road; your wheel is out of order. -
Bleak blows the blast; - your hat has got a hole in't.
So have your breeches!

Weary knife-grinder! little think the proud ones
Who in their coaches roll along the turnpike-
Road, what hard work 'tis crying all day,
"Knives and
Scissors to grind O!"

Tell me, knife-grinder, how you came to grind knives?
Did some rich man tyrannically use you?
Was it the squire? or parson of the parish?
Or the attorney?

Was it the squire for killing of his game? or
Covetous parson, for his tithes destracting?
Or roguish lawyer made you lose your little
All in a lawsuit?

(Have you not read the Rights of Man, by Tom Paine?)
Drops of compassion tremble on my eyelids,
Ready to fall, as soon as you have told your
Pitiful story.

KNIFE-GRINDER

Story? God bless you! I have none to tell, sir;
Only, last night, a-drinking at the Chequers,
This poor old hat and breeches, as you see, were
Torn in a scuffle

Constables came up for to take me into
Custody; they took me before the justice;
Justice Oldmixon put me in the parish
Stocks for a vagrant.

I should be glad to drink your honor's health in

A pot of beer, if you will give me sixpence;
But for my part, I never love to meddle
With politics, sir.

FRIEND OF HUMANITY

I give thee sixpence! I will see thee damned first, -
Wretch! whom no sense of wrongs can rouse to vengeance! -
Sordid, unfeeling, reprobate, degraded,
Spiritless outcast!

George Canning [1770-1827]

VILLON'S STRAIGHT TIP TO ALL CROSS COVES

"Tout aux tavernes et aux fiells."

Suppose you screeve? or go cheap-jack?
Or fake the broads? or fig a nag?
Or thimble-rig? or knap a yack?
Or pitch a snide? or smash a rag?
Suppose you duff? or nose and lag?
Or get the straight, and land your pot?
How do you melt the multy swag?
Booze and the blowens cop the lot.

Fiddle, or fence, or mace, or mack;
Or moskeneer, or flash the drag;
Dead-lurk a crib, or do a crack;
Pad with a slang, or chuck a fag;
Bonnet, or tout, or mump and gag;
Rattle the tats, or mark the spot;
You can not bag a single stag;
Booze and the blowens cop the lot.

Suppose you try a different tack,
And on the square you flash your flag?
At penny-a-lining make your whack,
Or with the mummers mug and gag?
For nix, for nix the dibbs you bag!
At any graft, no matter what,
Your merry goblins soon stravag:
Booze and the blowens cop the lot.

THE MORAL

It's up the spout and Charley Wag
With wipes and tickers and what not,
Until the squeezer nips your scrag,
Booze and the blowens cop the lot.

William Ernest Henley [1849-1903]

VILLON'S BALLADE

Of Good Counsel, To His Friends Of Evil Life

Nay, be you pardoner or cheat,
Or cogger keen, or mumper shy,
You'll burn your fingers at the feat,
And howl like other folks that fry.
All evil folks that love a lie!
And where goes gain that greed amasses,
By wile, and guile, and thievery?
'Tis all to taverns and to lasses!

Rhyme, rail, dance, play the cymbals sweet,
With game, and shame, and jollity,
Go jiggling through the field and street,
With myst'ry and morality;
Win gold at gleek, - and that will fly,
Where all your gain at passage passes, -
And that's? You know as well as I,
'Tis all to taverns and to lasses!

Nay, forth from all such filth retreat,
Go delve and ditch, in wet or dry,
Turn groom, give horse and mule their meat,
If you've no clerkly skill to ply;
You'll gain enough, with husbandry,
But - sow hempseed and such wild grasses,
And where goes all you take thereby? -
'Tis all to taverns and to lasses!

ENVOY

Your clothes, your hose, your broidery,
Your linen that the snow surpasses,
Or ere they're worn, off, off they fly,
'Tis all to taverns and to lasses!

Andrew Lang [1844-1912]

A LITTLE BROTHER OF THE RICH

To put new shingles on old roofs;
To give old women wadded skirts;
To treat premonitory coughs
With seasonable flannel shirts;
To soothe the stings of poverty
And keep the jackal from the door, -
These are the works that occupy
The Little Sister of the Poor.

She carries, everywhere she goes,
Kind words and chickens, jams and coals;
Poultices for corporeal woes,

And sympathy for downcast souls:
Her currant jelly, her quinine,
The lips of fever move to bless;
She makes the humble sick-room shine
With unaccustomed tidiness.

A heart of hers the instant twin
And vivid counterpart is mine;
I also serve my fellow-men,
Though in a somewhat different line.
The Poor, and their concerns, she has
Monopolized, because of which
It falls to me to labor as
A Little Brother of the Rich.

For their sake at no sacrifice
Does my devoted spirit quail;
I give their horses exercise;
As ballast on their yachts I sail.
Upon their tallyhos I ride
And brave the chances of a storm;
I even use my own inside
To keep their wines and victuals warm.

Those whom we strive to benefit
Dear to our hearts soon grow to be;
I love my Rich, and I admit
That they are very good to me.
Succor the Poor, my sisters, - I,
While heaven shall still vouchsafe me health,
Will strive to share and mollify
The trials of abounding wealth.

Edward Sandford Martin [1856-

THE WORLD'S WAY

At Haroun's court it chanced, upon a time,
An Arab poet made this pleasant rhyme:

"The new moon is a horseshoe, wrought of God,
Wherewith the Sultan's stallion shall be shod."

On hearing this, the Sultan smiled, and gave
The man a gold-piece. Sing again, O slave!

Above his lute the happy singer bent,
And turned another gracious compliment.

And, as before, the smiling Sultan gave
The man a sekkah. Sing again, O slave!

Again the verse came, fluent as a rill
That wanders, silver-footed, down a hill.

The Sultan, listening, nodded as before,
Still gave the gold, and still demanded more.

The nimble fancy that had climbed so high
Grew weary with its climbing by and by:

Strange discords rose; the sense went quite amiss;
The singer's rhymes refused to meet and kiss:

Invention flagged, the lute had got unstrung,
And twice he sang the song already sung.

The Sultan, furious, called a mute, and said,
O Musta, straightway whip me off his head!

Poets! not in Arabia alone
You get beheaded when your skill is gone.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich [1837-1907]

FOR MY OWN MONUMENT

As doctors give physic by way of prevention,
Mat, alive and in health, of his tombstone took care;
For delays are unsafe, and his pious intention
May haply be never fulfilled by his heir.

Then take Mat's word for it, the sculptor is paid;
That the figure is fine, pray believe your own eye;
Yet credit but lightly what more may be said,
For we flatter ourselves, and teach marble to lie.

Yet counting as far as to fifty his years,
His virtues and vices were as other men's are;
High hopes he conceived, and he smothered great fears,
In a life parti-colored, half pleasure, half care.

Nor to business a drudge, nor to faction a slave,
He strove to make interest and freedom agree;
In public employments industrious and grave,
And alone with his friends, lord! how merry was he!

Now in equipage stately, now humbly on foot,
Both fortunes be tried, but to neither would trust;
And whirled in the round, as the wheel turned about,
He found riches had wings, and knew man was but dust.

This verse, little polished, though mighty sincere,
Sets neither his titles nor merit to view;

It says that his relics collected lie here,
And no mortal yet knows too if this may be true.

Fierce robbers there are that infest the highway,
So Mat may be killed, and his bones never found;
False witness at court, and fierce tempests at sea,
So Mat may yet chance to be hanged or be drowned.

If his bones lie in earth, roll in sea, fly in air,
To Fate we must yield, and the thing is the same;
And if passing thou giv'st him a smile or a tear,
He cares not - yet, prithee, be kind to his fame.

Matthew Prior [1664-1721]

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT SAINT PRAXED'S CHURCH

Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews - sons mine . . . ah God, I know not! Well -
She, men would have to be your mother once,
Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!
What's done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;
And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:
- Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped, but thence
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aery dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk:
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.
- Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!
Draw close: that conflagration of my church
- What then? So much was saved if aught were missed!

My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sink,
And if ye-find. . . Ah God, I know not, !! . . .
Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft,
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,
Some lump, ah God, of lapis lazuli,
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast. . .
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
That brave Frascati villa with its bath,
So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's globe on both his hands
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years:
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black -
'T was ever antique-black I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath? -
The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp
Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy travertine
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me - all of jasper, then!
'T is jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve
My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world -
And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?
- That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line -
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need!
And then how I shall lie through centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,

And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work:
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life before I lived this life,
And this life too, popes, cardinals and priests,
Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,
- Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend? -
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
All lapis, all, sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
They glitter like your mother's for my soul,
Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,
Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
With grapes, and add a visor and a Term,
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
To comfort me on my entablature
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death - ye wish it - God, ye wish it! Stone -
Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through -
And no more lapis to delight the world!
Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row: and, going, turn your backs
- Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
That I may watch at leisure if he leers -
Old Gandolf - at me, from his onion-stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was!

Robert Browning [1812-1889]

UP AT A VILLA - DOWN IN THE CITY
As Distinguished By An Italian Person Of Quality

Had I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city-square.
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there!
Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at least!
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast;
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than a beast.

Well now, look at our villa! stuck like the horn of a bull
Just on a mountain-edge as bare as the creature's skull,

Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull!
- I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair's turned wool.

But the city, oh the city - the square with the houses! Why?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there's something to take the eye!
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry!
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries by;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the sun gets high;
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted properly.

What of a villa? Though winter be over in March by rights,
'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well off the heights:
You've the brown ploughed land before, where the oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint gray olive trees.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns.
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great red bell,
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick and sell.

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine such foam-bows flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance and paddle and pash
Round the lady atop in the conch - fifty gazers do not abash,
Though all that she wears is some weeds round her waist in a sort of sash.

All the year round at the villa, nothing's to see though you linger,
Except yon cypress that points like Death's lean lifted fore finger.
Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix in the corn and mingle,
Or thrud the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem a-tingle.
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala is shrill
And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous firs
on the hill.
Enough of the seasons, - I spare you the months of the fever and chill.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed church-bells begin:
No sooner the bells leave off, than the diligence rattles in:
You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin.
By and by there's the travelling doctor gives pills, lets blood,
draws teeth;
Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the market beneath.
At the post-office such a scene-picture - the new play, piping hot!
And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves were shot.
Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes,
And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law
of the Duke's!
Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend Don So-and-so,
Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, St. Jerome, and Cicero,
"And moreover," (the sonnet goes rhyming), "the skirts of
St. Paul has reached,
Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous than
ever he preached."

Noon strikes, - here sweeps the procession! our Lady borne
smiling and smart
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords stuck in her heart!
Bang-whang-whang, goes the drum, tootle-k-tootle the fife;
No keeping one's haunches still: it's the greatest pleasure in life.

But bless you, it's dear - it's dear! fowls, wine, at double the rate.
They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil pays passing the gate
It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for me, not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still - ah, the pity, the pity!
Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks with cowls and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white skirts, a-holding the yellow candles;
One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross with handles,
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the better prevention
of scandals.
Bang-whang-whang, goes the drum, tootle-te-tootle the fife.
Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such pleasure in life!

Robert Browning [1812-1889]

ALL SAINTS'

In a church which is furnished with mullion and gable,
With altar and reredos, with gargoyle and groin,
The penitents' dresses are sealskin and sable,
The odor of sanctity's eau-de-cologne.

But only could Lucifer, flying from Hades,
Gaze down on this crowd with its paniers and paints,
He would say, as he looked at the lords and the ladies,
"Oh, where is All Sinners' if this is All Saints'?"

Edmund Yates [1831-1894]

AN ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID, OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS

My son, these maxims make a rule,
And lump them aye thegither:
The Rigid Righteous is a fool
The Rigid Wise anither:
The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
May hae some pyles o' caff in;
Sae ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' daffin.
Solomon - Eccles. vii. 16.

Oh ye wha are sae guid yoursel',
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've naught to do but mark and tell
Your neebor's fauts and folly: -
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,

Supplied wi' store o' water,
The heaped happer's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter.

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals
That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door,
For glaikit Folly's portals!
I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
Would here propone defences,
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
And shudder at the niffer;
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What maks the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave
That purity ye pride in,
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hidin'.

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop:
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way; -
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It makes an unco lee-way.

See Social Life and Glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmugrified, they've grown
Debauchery and Drinking:
Oh, would they stay to calculate
The eternal consequences;
Or your more dreaded hell to state,
Damnation of expenses!

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
Tied up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases;
A dear-loved lad, convenience snug,
A treacherous inclination, -
But, let me whisper i' your lug,
Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Though they may gang a kennin' wrang,
To step aside is human:

One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving why they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord, - its various tone,
Each spring, - its various bias:
Then at the balance let's be mute;
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted.

Robert Burns [1759-1796]

THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE, OR THE WONDERFUL "ONE-HOSS SHAY" A Logical Story

Have you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,
That was built in such a logical way
It ran a hundred years to a day,
And then, of a sudden, it - ah, but stay,
I'll tell you what happened without delay,
Scaring the parson into fits,
Frightening people out of their wits, -
Have you ever heard of that, I say?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
Georgius Secundus was then alive, -
Snuffy old drone from the German hive.
That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock's army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to its crown.
It was on the terrible Earthquake-day
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,
There is always somewhere a weakest spot, -
In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,
In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,
In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace, - lurking still,
Find it somewhere you must and will, -
Above or below, or within or without, -
And that's the reason, beyond a doubt,
That a chaise breaks down, but doesn't wear out.

But the Deacon swore (as Deacons do,
With an "I dew vum," or an "I tell yeou,")
He would build one shay to beat the taown
'N' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun';

It should be so built that it couldn' break daown:
"Fur," said the Deacon, "'t's mighty plain
Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain;
'N' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,
Is only jest
T' make that place uz strong uz the rest."

So the Deacon inquired of the village folk
Where he could find the strongest oak,
That couldn't be split nor bent nor broke, -
That was for spokes and floor and sills;
He sent for lancewood to make the thills;
The crossbars were ash, from the straightest trees,
The panels of white-wood, that cuts like cheese,
But lasts like iron for things like these;
The hubs of logs from the "Settler's ellum," -
Last of its timber, - they couldn't sell 'em,
Never an axe had seen their chips,
And the wedges flew from between their lips,
Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;
Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,
Steel of the finest, bright and blue;
Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
Found in the pit when the tanner died.
That was the way he "put her through."
There! said the Deacon, "naow she'll dew!"

Do! I tell you, I rather guess
She was a wonder, and nothing less!
Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,
Deacon and deaconess dropped away,
Children and grandchildren - where were they?
But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay
As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED; - it came and found
The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.
Eighteen hundred increased by ten;
"Hahnsum kerridge" they called it then.
Eighteen hundred and twenty came; -
Running as usual; much the same.
Thirty and Forty at last arrive,
And then come Fifty, and Fifty-Five.

Little of all we value here
Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
Without both feeling and looking queer.
In fact, there's nothing that keeps its youth,
So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
(This is a moral that runs at large;
Take it. - You're welcome. - No extra charge.)

FIRST OF November, - the Earthquake-day, -
There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay.
A general flavor of mild decay,
But nothing local, as one may say.
There couldn't be, - for the Deacon's art
Had made it so like in every part
That there wasn't a chance for one to start.
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
And the floor was just as strong as the sills,
And the panels just as strong as the floor,
And the whipple-tree neither less nor more,
And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,
And spring and axle and hub encore.
And yet, as a whole, it is past a doubt
In another hour it will be worn out!

First of November, Fifty-five!
This morning the parson takes a drive.
Now, small boys, get out of the way!
Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,
Drawn by a rat-railed, ewe-necked bay.
"Huddup!" said the parson. - Off went they.

The parson was working his Sunday's text,-
Had got to fifthly, and stopped perplexed
At what the - Moses - was coming next.
All at once the horse stood still,
Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.
First a shiver, and then a thrill,
Then something decidedly like a spill, -
And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
At half past nine by the meet'n'-house clock, -
Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!
What do you think the parson found,
When he got up and stared around?
The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,
As if it had been to the mill and ground!
You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,
How it went to pieces all at once, -
All at once, and nothing first, -
Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.
Logic is logic. That's all I say.

Oliver Wendell Holmes [1809-1894]

BALLADE OF A FRIAR
After Clement Marot

Some ten or twenty times a day,

To bustle to the town with speed,
To dabble in what dirt he may, -
Le Frere Lubin's the man you need!
But any sober life to lead
Upon an exemplary plan,
Requires a Christian indeed, -
Le Frere Lubin is not the man!

Another's wealth on his to lay,
With all the craft of guile and greed,
To leave you bare of pence or pay, -
Le Frere Lubin's the man you need!
But watch him with the closest heed,
And dun him with what force you can, -
He'll not refund, howe'er you plead, -
Le Frere Lubin is not the man -

An honest girl to lead astray,
With subtle saw and promised meed,
Requires no cunning crone and gray, -
Le Frere Lubin's the man you need!
He preaches an ascetic creed,
But, - try him with the water can -
A dog will drink, whate'er his breed, -
Le Frere Lubin is not the man!

ENVOY

In good to fail, in ill succeed,
Le Frere Lubin's the man you need!
In honest works to lead the van,
Le Frere Lubin is not the man!

Andrew Lang [1844-1912]

THE CHAMELEON

Oft has it been my lot to mark
A proud, conceited, talking spark,
With eyes, that hardly served at most
To guard their master 'gainst a post,
Yet round the world the blade has been
To see whatever could be seen,
Returning from his finished tour,
Grown ten times perter than before;
Whatever word you chance to drop,
The traveled fool your mouth will stop;
"Sir, if my judgment you'll allow,
I've seen - and sure I ought to know,"
So begs you'd pay a due submission,
And acquiesce in his decision.

Two travelers of such a cast,

As o'er Arabia's wilds they passed,
And on their way in friendly chat,
Now talked of this, and then of that,
Discoursed awhile, 'mongst other matter,
Of the chameleon's form and nature.
"A stranger animal," cries one,
"Sure never lived beneath the sun.
A lizard's body, lean and long,
A fish's head, a serpent's tongue,
Its foot with triple claw disjoined;
And what a length of tail behind!
How slow its pace; and then its hue -
Who ever saw so fine a blue?"

"Hold, there," the other quick replies,
"'Tis green, - I saw it with these eyes,
As late with open mouth it lay,
And warmed it in the sunny ray:
Stretched at its ease, the beast I viewed
And saw it eat the air for food."
"I've seen it, sir, as well as you,
And must again affirm it blue;
At leisure I the beast surveyed,
Extended in the cooling shade."
"'Tis green, 'tis green, sir, I assure ye!"
"Green!" cries the other in a fury -
"Why, sir! - d'ye think I've lost my eyes?"
"'Twere no great loss," the friend replies,
"For, if they always serve you thus,
You'll find them of but little use."

So high at last the contest rose,
From words they almost came to blows:
When luckily came by a third -
To him the question they referred,
And begged he'd tell 'em, if he knew,
Whether the thing was green or blue.
"Sirs," cries the umpire, "cease your pother!
The creature's neither one or t'other.
I caught the animal last night,
And viewed it o'er by candlelight:
I marked it well - 't was black as jet -
You stare - but, sirs, I've got it yet,
And can produce it." "Pray, sir, do;
I'll lay my life the thing is blue."
"And I'll be sworn, that when you've seen
The reptile, you'll pronounce him green."

"Well, then, at once to ease the doubt,"
Replies the man, "I'll turn him out:
And when before your eyes I've set him,
If you don't find him black, I'll eat him."
He said: then full before their sight

Produced the beast, and lo! - 'twas white.

Both stared, the man looked wondrous wise -

"My children," the chameleon cries,
(Then first the creature found a tongue),
"You all are right, and all are wrong:
When next you talk of what you view,
Think others see as well as you:
Nor wonder, if you find that none
Prefers your eyesight to his own."

After De La Motte, by James Merrick [1720-1769]

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

A Hindoo Fable

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"

The Second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, "Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"

The Third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"

The Fourth reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee.
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"

The Fifth who chanced to touch the ear,

Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"

The Sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

MORAL

So oft in theologic wars,
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
And prate about an Elephant
Not one of them has seen!

John Godfrey Saxe [1816-1887]

THE PHILOSOPHER'S SCALES

A monk, when his rites sacerdotal were o'er,
In the depths of his cell with its stone-covered floor,
Resigning to thought his chimerical brain,
Once formed the contrivance we now shall explain;
But whether by magic's or alchemy's powers
We know not; indeed, 'tis no business of ours.

Perhaps it was only by patience and care,
At last, that he brought his invention to bear.
In youth 'twas projected, but years stole away,
And ere 'twas complete he was wrinkled and gray;
But success is secure, unless energy fails;
And at length he produced the Philosopher's Scales.

"What were they?" you ask. You shall presently see;
These scales were not made to weigh sugar and tea.
Oh no; for such properties wondrous had they,
That qualities, feelings, and thoughts they could weigh,
Together with articles small or immense,
From mountains or planets to atoms of sense.

Naught was there so bulky but there it would lay,
And naught so ethereal but there it would stay,
And naught so reluctant but in it must go:
All which some examples more clearly will show.

The first thing he weighed was the head of Voltaire,
Which retained all the wit that had ever been there;
As a weight, he threw in the torn scrap of a leaf
Containing the prayer of the penitent thief;
When the skull rose aloft with so sudden a spell
That it bounced like a ball on the roof of the cell.

One time he put in Alexander the Great,
With the garment that Dorcas had made, for a weight;
And though clad in armor from sandals to crown,
The hero rose up and the garment went down.

A long row of almshouses, amply endowed
By a well-esteemed Pharisee, busy and proud,
Next loaded one scale; while the other was pressed
By those mites the poor widow dropped into the chest:
Up flew the endowment, not weighing an ounce,
And down, down the farthing-worth came with a bounce.

By further experiments (no matter how)
He found that ten chariots weighed less than one plough;
A sword with gilt trappings rose up in the scale,
Though balanced by only a ten-penny nail;
A shield and a helmet, a buckler and spear,
Weighed less than a widow's uncrystallized tear.

A lord and a lady went up at full sail,
When a bee chanced to light on the opposite scale;
Ten doctors, ten lawyers, two courtiers, one earl,
Ten counsellors' wigs, full of powder and curl,
All heaped in one balance and swinging from thence,
Weighed less than a few grains of candor and sense;
A first-water diamond, with brilliants begirt,
Than one good potato just washed from the dirt;
Yet not mountains of silver and gold could suffice
One pearl to outweigh, - 'twas the Pearl of Great Price.

Last of all, the whole world was bowled in at the grate,
With the soul of a beggar to serve for a weight,
When the former sprang up with so strong a rebuff
That it made a vast rent and escaped at the roof!
When balanced in air, it ascended on high,
And sailed up aloft, a balloon in the sky;
While the scale with the soul in't so mightily fell
That it jerked the philosopher out of his cell.

Jane Taylor [1783-1824]

THE MAIDEN AND THE LILY

A lily in my garden grew,
Amid the thyme and clover;
No fairer lily ever blew,
Search all the wide world over.
Its beauty passed into my heart:
I know 'twas very silly,
But I was then a foolish maid,
And it - a perfect lily.

One day a learned man came by,
With years of knowledge laden,
And him I questioned with a sigh,
Like any foolish maiden: -
"Wise sir, please tell me wherein lies -
I know the question's silly -
The something that my art defies,
And makes a perfect lily."

He smiled, then bending plucked the flower,
Then tore it, leaf and petal,
And talked to me for full an hour,
And thought the point to settle: -
"Therein it lies," at length he cries;
And I - I know 'twas silly -
Could only weep and say, "But where -
O doctor, where's my lily?"

John Fraser [1750-1811]

THE OWL-CRITIC

"Who stuffed that white owl? No one spoke in the shop:
The barber was busy, and he couldn't stop;
The customers, waiting their turns, were all reading
The Daily, the Herald, the Post, little heeding
The young man who blurted out such a blunt question;
Not one raised a head, or even made a suggestion;
And the barber kept on shaving.

"Don't you see, Mister Brown,"
Cried the youth with a frown,
"How wrong the whole thing is,
How preposterous each wing is,
How flattened the head is, how jammed down the neck is -
In short, the whole owl, what an ignorant wreck 'tis!
I make no apology;
I've learned owl-eology.
I've passed days and nights in a hundred collections,

And cannot be blinded to any deflections
Arising from unskilful fingers that fail
To stuff a bird right, from his beak to his tail.
Mister Brown! Mister Brown!
Do take that bird down,
Or you'll soon be the laughing-stock all over town!"
And the barber kept on shaving.

"I've studied owls
And other night fowls,
And I tell you
What I know to be true:
An owl cannot roost
With his limbs so unloosed;
No owl in this world
Ever had his claws curled,
Ever had his legs slanted,
Ever had his bill canted,
Ever had his neck screwed
Into that attitude.
He can't do it, because
'Tis against all bird-laws.
Anatomy teaches,
Ornithology preaches
An owl has a toe
That can't turn out so!
I've made the white owl my study for years,
And to see such a job almost moves me to tears!
Mister Brown, I'm amazed
You should be so gone crazed
As to put up a bird
In that posture absurd!
To look at that owl really brings on a dizziness;
The man who stuffed him don't half know his business!"
And the barber kept on shaving.

"Examine those eyes.
I'm filled with surprise
Taxidermists should pass
Off on you such poor glass;
So unnatural they seem
They'd make Audubon scream,
And John Burroughs laugh
To encounter such chaff.
Do take that bird down;
Have him stuffed again, Brown!"
And the barber kept on shaving.

"With some sawdust and bark
I could stuff in the dark
An owl better than that.
I could make an old hat
Look more like an owl

Than that horrid fowl,
Stuck up there so stiff like a side of coarse leather.
In fact, about him there's not one natural feather."

Just then, with a wink and a sly normal lurch,
The owl, very gravely, got down from his perch,
Walked round, and regarded his fault-finding critic
(Who thought he was stuffed) with a glance analytic
And then fairly hooted, as if he would say:
"Your learning's at fault this time, any way;
Don't waste it again on a live bird, I pray.
I'm an owl; you're another. Sir Critic, good-day!"
And the barber kept on shaving.

James Thomas Fields [1816-1881]

THE BALLAD OF IMITATION

C'est imiter quelqu'un que de planter des choux. - Alfred De Musset

If they hint, O Musician, the piece that you played
Is naught but a copy of Chopin or Spohr;
That the ballad you sing is but merely "conveyed"
From the stock of the Ames and the Purcells of yore;
That there's nothing, in short, in the words or the score,
That is not as out-worn as the "Wandering Jew";
Make answer - Beethoven could scarcely do more -
That the man who plants cabbages imitates, too!

If they tell you, Sir Artist, your light and your shade
Are simply "adapted" from other men's lore;
That - plainly to speak of a "spade" as a "spade" -
You've "stolen" your grouping from three or from four;
That (however the writer the truth may deplore),
'Twas Gainsborough painted your "Little Boy Blue";
Smile only serenely - though cut to the core -
For the man who plants cabbages imitates, too!

And you too, my Poet, be never dismayed
If they whisper your Epic - "Sir Eperon d'Or" -
Is nothing but Tennyson thinly arrayed
In a tissue that's taken from Morris's store;
That no one, in fact, but a child could ignore
That you "lift" or "accommodate" all that you do;
Take heart - though your Pegasus' withers be sore -
For the man who plants cabbages imitates, too!

POSTSCRIPTUM. - And you, whom we all so adore,
Dear Critics, whose verdicts are always so new! -
One word in your ear. There were Critics before. . . .
And the man who plants cabbages imitates, too!

Austin Dobson [1840-1921]

THE CONUNDRUM OF THE WORKSHOPS

When the flush of a new-born sun fell first on Eden's green and gold,
Our father Adam sat under the Tree and scratched with a stick in
the mould;
And the first rude sketch that the world had seen was joy to
his mighty heart,
Till the Devil whispered behind the leaves: "It's pretty, but is it Art?"

Wherefore he called to his wife, and fled to fashion his work anew -
The first of his race who cared a fig for the first, most dread review;
And he left his lore to the use of his sons - and that was a glorious gain
When the Devil chuckled: "Is it Art?" in the ear of the branded Cain.

They builded a tower to shiver the sky and wrench the stars apart,
Till the Devil grunted behind the bricks: "It's striking, but is it Art?"
The stone was dropped at the quarry-side and the idle derrick swung,
While each man talked of the aims of Art, and each in an alien tongue.

They fought and they talked in the North and the South, they talked
and they fought in the West,
Till the waters rose on the pitiful land, and the poor Red Clay had rest -
Had rest till that dank, blank-canvas dawn when the dove was
preened to start,
And the Devil bubbled below the keel: "It's human, but is it Art?"

The tale is as old as the Eden Tree - and new as the new-cut tooth -
For each man knows ere his lip-thatch grows he is master
of Art and Truth;
And each man hears as the twilight nears, to the beat of his dying heart,
The Devil drum on the darkened pane: "You did it, but was it Art?"

We have learned to whittle the Eden Tree to the shape of a surplice-peg,
We have learned to bottle our-parents twain in the yelk of an addled egg,
We know that the tail must wag the dog, for the horse is drawn
by the cart;
But the Devil whoops, as he whooped of old: "It's clever, but is it Art?"

When the flicker of London sun falls faint on the clubroom's
green and gold,
The sons of Adam sit them down and scratch with their pens in the mould -
They scratch with their pens in the mould of their graves,
and the ink and the anguish start,
For the Devil mutters behind the leaves: "It's pretty, but is it Art?"

Now, if we could win to the Eden Tree where the Four Great Rivers flow,
And the Wreath of Eve is red on the turf as she left it long ago,
And if we could come when the sentry slept, and softly scurry through,
By the favor of God we might know as much - as our father Adam knew.

THE V-A-S-E

From the madding crowd they stand apart,
The maidens four and the Work of Art;

And none might tell from sight alone
In which had Culture ripest grown, -

The Gotham Million fair to see,
The Philadelphia Pedigree,

The Boston Mind of azure hue,
Or the soulful Soul from Kalamazoo, -

For all loved Art in a seemly way,
With an earnest soul and a capital A.

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Long they worshipped; but no one broke
The sacred stillness, until up spoke

The Western one from the nameless place,
Who blushing said: "What a lovely vase!"

Over three faces a sad smile flew,
And they edged away from Kalamazoo.

But Gotham's haughty soul was stirred
To crush the stranger with one small word.

Deftly hiding reproof in praise,
She cries: "'Tis, indeed, a lovely vase!"

But brief her unworthy triumph when
The lofty one from the home of Penn,

With the consciousness of two grandpapas,
Exclaims: "It is quite a lovely vase!"

And glances round with an anxious thrill,
Awaiting the word of Beacon Hill.

But the Boston maid smiles courteouslee,
And gently murmurs: "Oh pardon me!

"I did not catch your remark, because
I was so entranced with that charming vase!"

Dies erit praegelida
Sinistra quum Bostonia.

James Jeffrey Roche [1847-1908]

HEM AND HAW

Hem and Haw were the sons of sin,
Created to shally and shirk;
Hem lay 'round and Haw looked on
While God did all the work.

Hem was a fogy, and Haw was a prig,
For both had the dull, dull mind;
And whenever they found a thing to do,
They yammered and went it blind.

Hem was the father of bigots and bores;
As the sands of the sea were they.
And Haw was the father of all the tribe
Who criticise to-day.

But God was an artist from the first,
And knew what he was about;
While over his shoulder sneered these two,
And advised him to rub it out.

They prophesied ruin ere man was made:
"Such folly must surely fail!"
And when he was done, "Do you think, my Lord,
He's better without a tail?"

And still in the honest working world,
With posture and hint and smirk,
These sons of the devil are standing by
While Man does all the work.

They balk endeavor and baffle reform,
In the sacred name of law;
And over the quavering voice of Hem,
Is the droning voice of Haw.

Bliss Carman [1861-1929]

MINIVER CHEEVY

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;

The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace,
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the medieval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

Edwin Arlington Robinson [1869-1935]

THEN AG'IN

Jim Bowker, he said, ef he'd had a fair show,
And a big enough town for his talents to grow,
And the least bit assistance in hoein' his row,
Jim Bowker, he said,
He'd filled the world full of the sound of his name,
An' clumb the top round in the ladder of fame;
It may have been so;
I dunno;
Jest so it might been,
Then ag'in -

But he had tarnal luck - everythin' went ag'in him,
The arrers er fortune they allus 'ud pin him;
So he didn't get no chance to show off what was in him.
Jim Bowker, he said,

Ef he'd had a fair show, you couldn't tell where he'd come,
An' the feats he'd a-done, an' the heights he'd a-clumb -
It may have been so;
I dunno;
Jest so it might been,
Then ag'in -

But we're all like Jim Bowker, thinks I, more or less -
Charge fate for our bad luck, ourselves for success,
An' give fortune the blame for all our distress,
As Jim Bowker, he said.
Ef it hadn' been for luck an' misfortune an' sich,
We might a-been famous, an' might a-been rich.
It might be jest so;
I dunno;
Jest so it might been,
Then ag'in -

Sam Walter Foss [1858-1911]

A CONSERVATIVE

The garden beds I wandered by
One bright and cheerful morn,
When I found a new-fledged butterfly,
A-sitting on a thorn,
A black and crimson butterfly,
All doleful and forlorn.

I thought that life could have no sting
To infant butterflies,
So I gazed on this unhappy thing
With wonder and surprise,
While sadly with his waving wing
He wiped his weeping eyes.

Said I, "What can the matter be?
Why weepest thou so sore?
With garden fair and sunlight free
And flowers in goodly store." -
But he only turned away from me
And burst into a roar.

Cried he, "My legs are thin and few
Where once I had a swarm!
Soft fuzzy fur - a joy to view -
Once kept my body warm,
Before these flapping wing-things grew,
To hamper and deform!"

At that outrageous bug I shot
The fury of mine eye;

Said I, in scorn all burning hot,
In rage and anger high,
"You ignominious idiot!
Those wings are made to fly!

'I do not want to fly," said he,
"I only want to squirm!"
And he drooped his wings dejectedly,
But still his voice was firm:
"I do not want to be a fly!
I want to be a worm!"

O yesterday of unknown lack!
To-day of unknown bliss!
I left my fool in red and black,
The last I saw was this, -
The creature madly climbing back
Into his chrysalis.

Charlotte Perkins Stetson Gilman [1860-1935]

SIMILAR CASES

There was once a little animal,
No bigger than a fox,
And on five toes he scampered
Over Tertiary rocks.
They called him Eohippus,
And they called him very small,
And they thought him of no value -
When they thought of him at all;
For the lumpish old Dinoceras
And Coryphodon so slow
Were the heavy aristocracy
In days of long ago.

Said the little Eohippus,
"I am going to be a horse!
And on my middle finger-nails
To run my earthly course!
I'm going to have a flowing tail!
I'm going to have a mane!
I'm going to stand fourteen hands high
On the psychozoic plain!"

The Coryphodon was horrified,
The Dinoceras was shocked;
And they chased young Eohippus,
But he skipped away and mocked.
And they laughed enormous laughter,
And they groaned enormous groans,
And they bade young Eohippus

Go view his father's bones.
Said they, "You always were as small
And mean as now we see,
And that's conclusive evidence
That you're always going to be.
What! Be a great, tall, handsome beast,
With hoofs to gallop on?
Why! You'd have to change your nature!"
Said the Loxolophodon.
They considered him disposed of,
And retired with gait serene;
That was the way they argued
In "the early Eocene."

There was once an Anthropoidal Ape,
Far smarter than the rest,
And everything that they could do
He always did the best;
So they naturally disliked him,
And they gave him shoulders cool,
And when they had to mention him
They said he was a fool.

Cried this pretentious Ape one day,
"I'm going to be a Man!
And stand upright, and hunt, and fight,
And conquer all I can!
I'm going to cut down forest trees,
To make my houses higher!
I'm going to kill the Mastodon!
I'm going to make a fire!"

Loud screamed the Anthropoidal Apes
With laughter wild and gay;
They tried to catch that boastful one,
But he always got away.
So they yelled at him in chorus,
Which he minded not a whit;
And they pelted him with cocoanuts,
Which didn't seem to hit.
And then they gave him reasons
Which they thought of much avail,
To prove how his preposterous
Attempt was sure to fail.
Said the sages, "In the first place,
The thing cannot be done!
And, second, if it could be,
It would not be any fun!
And, third, and most conclusive,
And admitting no reply,
You would have to change your nature!
We should like to see you try!"
They chuckled then triumphantly,

These lean and hairy shapes,
For these things passed as arguments
With the Anthropoidal Apes.

There was once a Neolithic Man,
An enterprising wight,
Who made his chopping implements
Unusually bright.
Unusually clever he,
Unusually brave,
And he drew delightful Mammoths
On the borders of his cave.
To his Neolithic neighbors,
Who were startled and surprised,
Said he, "My friends, in course of time,
We shall be civilized!
We are going to live in cities!
We are going to fight in wars!
We are going to eat three times a day
Without the natural cause!
We are going to turn life upside down
About a thing called gold!
We are going to want the earth, and take
As much as we can hold!
We are going to wear great piles of stuff
Outside our proper skins!
We are going to have diseases!
And Accomplishments!! And Sins!!!"

Then they all rose up in fury
Against their boastful friend,
For prehistoric patience
Cometh quickly to an end.
Said one, "This is chimerical!
Utopian! Absurd!"
Said another, "What a stupid life!
Too dull, upon my word!"
Cried all, "Before such things can come,
You idiotic child,
You must alter Human Nature!"
And they all sat back and smiled.
Thought they, "An answer to that last
It will be hard to find!"
It was a clinching argument
To the Neolithic Mind!

Charlotte Perkins Stetson Gilman [1860-1935]

MAN AND THE ASCIDIAN
A Morality

"The Ancestor remote of Man,"

Says Darwin, "is the Ascidian,"
A scanty sort of water-beast
That, ninety million years at least
Before Gorillas came to be,
Went swimming up and down the sea.

Their ancestors the pious praise,
And like to imitate their ways;
How, then, does our first parent live,
What lesson has his life to give?

The Ascidian tadpole, young and gay,
Doth Life with one bright eye survey,
His consciousness has easy play.
He's sensitive to grief and pain,
Has tail, a spine, and bears a brain,
And everything that fits the state
Of creatures we call vertebrate.
But age comes on; with sudden shock
He sticks his head against a rock!
His tail drops off, his eye drops in,
His brain's absorbed into his skin;
He does not move, nor feel, nor know
The tidal water's ebb and flow,
But still abides, unstirred, alone,
A sucker sticking to a stone.

And we, his children, truly we
In youth are, like the Tadpole, free.
And where we would we blithely go,
Have brains and hearts, and feel and know.
Then Age comes on! To Habit we
Affix ourselves and are not free;
The Ascidian's rooted to a rock,
And we are bond-slaves of the clock;
Our rocks are Medicine - Letters - Law,
From these our heads we cannot draw:
Our loves drop off, our hearts drop in,
And daily thicker grows our skin.

Ah, scarce we live, we scarcely know
The wide world's moving ebb and flow,
The clanging currents ring and shock,
But we are rooted to the rock.
And thus at ending of his span,
Blind, deaf, and indolent, does Man
Revert to the Ascidian.

Andrew Lang [1844-1912]

THE CALF-PATH

One day, through the primeval wood,
A calf walked home, as good calves should;
But made a trail all bent askew,
A crooked trail as all calves do.

Since then two hundred years have fled,
And, I infer, the calf is dead.
But still he left behind his trail,
And thereby hangs my moral tale.

The trail was taken up next day
By a lone dog that passed that way;
And then a wise bell-wether sheep
Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep,
And drew the flock behind him, too,
As good bell-wethers always do.

And from that day, o'er hill and glade,
Through those old woods a path was made;
And many men wound in and out,
And dodged, and turned, and bent about
And uttered words of righteous wrath
Because 'twas such a crooked path.

But still they followed - do not laugh -
The first migrations of that calf,
And through this winding wood-way stalked,
Because he wobbled when he walked.

This forest path became a lane,
That bent, and turned, and turned again;
This crooked lane became a road,
Where many a poor horse with his load
Toiled on beneath the burning sun,
And traveled some three miles in one.
And thus a century and a half
They trod the footsteps of that calf.

The years passed on in swiftness fleet,
The road became a village street;
And this, before men were aware,
A city's crowded thoroughfare;
And soon the central street was this
Of a renowned metropolis;
And men two centuries and a half
Trod in the footsteps of that calf.

Each day a hundred thousand rout
Followed the zigzag calf about;
And o'er his crooked journey went
The traffic of a continent.
A hundred thousand men were led
By one calf near three centuries dead.

They followed still his crooked way,
And lost one hundred years a day;
For thus such reverence is lent
To well-established precedent.

A moral lesson this might teach,
Were I ordained and called to preach;
For men are prone to go it blind
Along the calf-paths of the mind,
And work away from sun to sun
To do what other men have done.
They follow in the beaten track,
And out and in, and forth and back,
And still their devious course pursue,
To keep the path that others do.

But how the wise old wood-gods laugh,
Who saw the first primeval calf!
Ah! many things this tale might teach, -
But I am not ordained to preach.

Sam Walter Foss [1858-1911]

WEDDED BLISS

"O come and be my mate!" said the Eagle to the Hen;
"I love to soar, but then
I want my mate to rest
Forever in the nest!"
Said the Hen, I cannot fly,
I have no wish to try,
But I joy to see my mate careering through the sky!"
They wed, and cried, "Ah, this is Love, my own!"
And the Hen sat, and the Eagle soared, alone.

"O come and be my mate!" said the Lion to the Sheep;
"My love for you is deep!
I slay, - a Lion should, -
But you are mild and good!"
Said the Sheep, "I do no ill -
Could not, had I the will -
But I joy to see my mate pursue, devour and kill."
They wed, and cried, "Ah, this is Love, my own!"
And the Sheep browsed, the Lion prowled, alone.

"O come and be my mate!" said the Salmon to the Clam;
"You are not wise, but I am.
I know the sea and stream as well;
You know nothing but your shell."
Said the Clam, "I'm slow of motion,
But my love is all devotion,
And I joy to have my mate traverse lake and stream and ocean!"

They wed, and cried, "Ah, this is Love, my own!"
And the Clam sucked, the Salmon swam, alone.

Charlotte Perkins Stetson Gilman [1860-1935]

PARADISE: A HINDOO LEGEND

A Hindoo died; a happy thing to do,
When fifty years united to a shrew.
Released, he hopefully for entrance cries
Before the gates of Brahma's paradise.
"Hast been through purgatory?" Brahma said.
"I have been married!" and he hung his head.
"Come in! come in! and welcome, too, my son!
Marriage and purgatory are as one."
In bliss extreme he entered heaven's door,
And knew the peace he ne'er had known before.

He scarce had entered in the gardens fair,
Another Hindoo asked admission there.
The self-same question Brahma asked again:
"Hast been through purgatory?" "No; what then?"
"Thou canst not enter!" did the god reply.
"He who went in was there no more than I."
"All that is true, but he has married been,
And so on earth has suffered for all his sin."
"Married? Tis well, for I've been married twice."
"Begone! We'll have no fools, in paradise!"

George Birdseye [1844-1919]

AD CHLOEN, M. A.

(Fresh From Her Cambridge Examination)

Lady, very fair are you,
And your eyes are very blue,
And your nose;
And your brow is like the snow,
And the various things you know
Goodness knows.

And the rose-flush on your cheek,
And your algebra and Greek
Perfect are;
And that loving lustrous eye
Recognizes in the sky
Every star.

You have pouting piquant lips,
You can doubtless an eclipse
Calculate;

But for your cerulean hue,
I had certainly from you
Met my fate.

If by an arrangement dual
I were Adams mixed with Whewell,
Then some day
I, as wooer, perhaps might come
To so sweet an Artium
Magistra.

Mortimer Collins [1827-1876]

"AS LIKE THE WOMAN AS YOU CAN"

"As like the Woman as you can" -
(Thus the New Adam was beguiled) -
"So shall you touch the Perfect Man" -
(God in the Garden heard and smiled).
"Your father perished with his day:
A clot of passions fierce and blind,
He fought, he hacked, he crushed his way:
Your muscles, Child, must be of mind.

"The Brute that lurks and irks within,
How, till you have him gagged and bound,
Escape the foulest form of Sin?"
(God in the Garden laughed and frowned).
"So vile, so rank, the bestial mood
In which the race is bid to be,
It wrecks the Rarer Womanhood:
Live, therefore, you, for Purity!

"Take for your mate no gallant croup,
No girl all grace and natural will:
To work her mission were to stoop,
Maybe to lapse, from Well to Ill.
Choose one of whom your grosser make" -
(God in the Garden laughed outright) -
"The true refining touch may take,
Till both attain to Life's last height.

"There, equal, purged of soul and sense,
Beneficent, high-thinking, just,
Beyond the appeal of Violence,
Incapable of common Lust,
In mental Marriage still prevail" -
(God in the Garden hid His face) -
"Till you achieve that Female-Male
In which shall culminate the race."

William Ernest Henley [1849-1903]

"NO FAULT IN WOMEN"

No fault in women to refuse
The offer which they most would choose:
No fault in women to confess
How tedious they are in their dress:
No fault in women to lay on
The tincture of vermilion,
And there to give the cheek a dye
Of white, where Nature doth deny:
No fault in women to make show
Of largeness, when they're nothing so;
When, true it is, the outside swells
With inward buckram, little else:
No fault in women, though they be
But seldom from suspicion free:
No fault in womankind at all,
If they but slip, and never fall.

Robert Herrick [1591-1674]

"ARE WOMEN FAIR?"

"Are women fair?" Ay! wondrous fair to see too.
"Are women sweet?" Yea, passing sweet they be too;
Most fair and sweet to them that only love them;
Chaste and discreet to all save those that prove them.

"Are women wise?" Not wise, but they be witty.
"Are women witty?" Yea, the more the pity;
They are so witty, and in wit so wily,
That be you ne'er so wise, they will beguile ye.

"Are women fools?" Not fools, but fondlings many.
"Can women found be faithful unto any?"
When snow-white swans do turn to color sable,
Then women fond will be both firm and stable.

"Are women saints?" No saints, nor yet no devils.
"Are women good?" Not good, but needful evils;
So Angel-like, that devils I do not doubt them;
So needful evils, that few can live without them.

"Are women proud?" Ay! passing proud, and praise them.
"Are women kind?" Ay! wondrous kind and please them,
Or so imperious, no man can endure them,
Or so kind-hearted, any may procure them.

Francis Davison (?) [fl. 1602]

A STRONG HAND

Tender-handed stroke a nettle,
And it stings you for your pains;
Grasp it like a lad of mettle,
And it soft as silk remains:

So it is with these fair creatures,
Use them kindly, they rebel;
But be rough as nutmeg graters,
And the rogues obey you well.

Aaron Hill [1685-1750]

WOMEN'S LONGING

From "Women Pleased"

Tell me what is that only thing
For which all women long;
Yet, having what they most desire,
To have it does them wrong?

'Tis not to be chaste, nor fair,
(Such gifts malice may impair),
Richly trimmed, to walk or ride,
Or to wanton unespied,
To preserve an honest name
And so to give it up to fame -
These are toys. In good or ill
They desire to have their will:
Yet, when they have it, they abuse it,
For they know not how to use it.

John Fletcher [1579-1625]

TRIOLET

All women born are so perverse
No man need boast their love possessing.
If naught seem better, nothing's worse:
All women born are so perverse.
From Adam's wife, that proved a curse,
Though God had made her for a blessing,
All women born are so perverse
No man need boast their love possessing.

Robert Bridges [1844-1930]

THE FAIR CIRCASSIAN

Forty Viziers saw I go
Up to the Seraglio,
Burning, each and every man,
For the fair Circassian.

Ere the morn had disappeared,
Every Vizier wore a beard;
Ere the afternoon was born,
Every Vizier came back shorn.

"Let the man that woos to win
Woo with an unhairly chin;"
Thus she said, and as she bid
Each devoted Vizier did.

From the beards a cord she made,
Looped it to the balustrade,
Glided down and went away
To her own Circassia.

When the Sultan heard, waxed he
Somewhat wroth, and presently
In the noose themselves did lend
Every Vizier did suspend.

Sages all, this rhyme who read,
Guard your beards with prudent heed,
And beware the wily plans
Of the fair Circassians.

Richard Garnett [1835-1906]

THE FEMALE PHAETON

Thus Kitty, beautiful and young,
And wild as colt untamed,
Bespoke the fair from whence she sprung,
With little rage inflamed:

Inflamed with rage at sad restraint,
Which wise mamma ordained;
And sorely vexed to play the saint,
Whilst wit and beauty reigned:

"Shall I thumb holy books, confined
With Abigails, forsaken?
Kitty's for other things designed,
Or I am much mistaken.

"Must Lady Jenny frisk about,
And visit with her cousins?

At balls must she make all the rout,
And bring home hearts by dozens?

"What has she better, pray, than I,
What hidden charms to boast,
That all mankind for her should die,
Whilst I am scarce a toast?

"Dearest mamma! for once let me,
Unchained, my fortune try;
I'll have my earl as well as she,
Or know the reason why.

"I'll soon with Jenny's pride quit score,
Make all her lovers fall:
They'll grieve I was not loosed before;
She, I was loosed at all."

Fondness prevailed, mamma gave way;
Kitty, at heart's desire,
Obtained the chariot for a day,
And set the world on fire.

Matthew Prior [1664-1721]

THE LURE

"What bait do you use," said a Saint to the Devil,
"When you fish where the souls of men abound?"
"Well, for special tastes," said the King of Evil,
"Gold and Fame are the best I've found."

"But for general use?" asked the Saint. "Ah, then,"
Said the Demon, "I angle for Man, not men,
And a thing I hate
Is to change my bait,
So I fish with a woman the whole year round."

John Boyle O'Reilly [1844-1890]

THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES

When the Himalayan peasant meets the he-bear in his pride,
He shouts to scare the monster, who will often turn aside;
But the she-bear thus accosted rends the peasant tooth and nail,
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

When Nag, the wayside cobra, hears the careless foot of man,
He will sometimes wriggle sideways and avoid it if he can;
But his mate makes no such motion where she camps beside the trail,
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

When the early Jesuit fathers preached to Hurons and Choctaws,
They prayed to be delivered from the vengeance of the squaws.
'Twas the women, not the warriors, turned those stark enthusiasts pale,
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

Man's timid heart is bursting with the things he must not say,
For the Woman that God gave him isn't his to give away;
But when hunter meets with husband, each confirms the other's tale -
The female of the species is more deadly than the male.

Man, a bear in most relations - worm and savage otherwise, -
Man propounds negotiations, Man accepts the compromise.
Very rarely will he squarely push the logic of a fact
To its ultimate conclusion in unmitigated act.

Fear, or foolishness, impels him, ere he lay the wicked low,
To concede some form of trial even to his fiercest foe.
Mirth obscene diverts his anger - Doubt and Pity oft perplex
Him in dealing with an issue - to the scandal of The Sex!

But the Woman that God gave him, every fibre of her frame
Proves her launched for one sole issue, armed and engined for the same;
And to serve that single issue, lest the generations fail,
The female of the species must be deadlier than the male.

She who faces Death by torture for each life beneath her breast
May not deal in doubt or pity - must not swerve for fact or jest.
These be purely male diversions - not in these her honor dwells.
She, the Other Law we live by, is that Law and nothing else.

She can bring no more to living than the powers that make her great
As the Mother of the Infant and the Mistress of the Mate;
And when Babe and Man are lacking and she strides unclaimed to claim
Her right as femme (and baron), her equipment is the same.

She is wedded to convictions - in default of grosser ties;
Her contentions are her children, Heaven help him who denies! -
He will meet no cool discussion, but the instant, white-hot, wild,
Wakened female of the species warring as for spouse and child.

Unprovoked and awful charges - even so the she-bear fights;
Speech that drips, corrodes, and poisons - even so the cobra bites;
Scientific vivisection of one nerve till it is raw
And the victim writhes in anguish - like the Jesuit with the squaw!

So it comes that Man, the coward, when he gathers to confer
With his fellow-braves in council, dare not leave a place for her
Where, at war with Life and Conscience, he uplifts his erring hands
To some God of Abstract Justice - which no woman understands.

And Man knows it! Knows, moreover, that the Woman that God gave him
Must command but may not govern - shall enthrall but not enslave him.

And She knows, because She warns him, and Her instincts never fail,
That the Female of Her Species is more deadly than the Male.

Rudyard Kipling [1865-1936]

THE WOMAN WITH THE SERPENT'S TONGUE

She is not old, she is not young,
The woman with the Serpent's Tongue,
The haggard cheek, the hungering eye,
The poisoned words that wildly fly,
The famished face, the fevered hand, -
Who slights the worthiest in the land,
Sneers at the just, contemns the brave,
And blackens goodness in its grave.

In truthful numbers be she sung,
The Woman with the Serpent's Tongue;
Concerning whom, Fame hints at things
Told but in shrugs and whisperings:
Ambitious from her natal hour,
And scheming all her life for power;
With little left of seemly pride;
With venomous fangs she cannot hide;
Who half makes love to you to-day,

To-morrow gives her guest away.
Burnt up within by that strange soul
She cannot slake, or yet control:
Malignant-lipped, unkind, unsweet;
Past all example indiscreet;
Hectic, and always overstrung, -
The Woman with the Serpent's Tongue.

To think that such as she can mar
Names that among the noblest are!
That hands like hers can touch the springs
That move who knows what men and things?
That on her will their fates have hung! -
The Woman with the Serpent's Tongue.

William Watson [1858-1935]

SUPPOSE

How sad if, by some strange new law,
All kisses scarred!
For she who is most beautiful
Would be most marred.

And we might be surprised to see

Some lovely wife
Smooth-visaged, while a seeming prude
Was marked for life.

Anne Reeve Aldrich [1866-1892]

TOO CANDID BY HALF

As Tom and his wife were discoursing one day
Of their several faults in a bantering way,
Said she, "Though my wit you disparage,
I'm sure, my dear husband, our friends will attest
This much, at the least, that my judgment is best."
Quoth Tom, "So they said at our marriage."

John Godfrey Saxe [1816-1887]

FABLE

The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter "Little Prig;"
Bun replied,
"You are doubtless very big;
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together,
To make up a year
And a sphere.
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry.

I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track;
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I cannot carry forests on thy back,
Neither can you crack a nut.

Ralph Waldo Emerson [1803-1882]

WOMAN'S WILL

That man's a fool who tries by art and skill
To stem the torrent of a woman's will:
For if she will, she will; you may depend on't -
And if she won't, she won't - and there's an end on't.

Unknown

WOMAN'S WILL

Men, dying, make their wills, but wives
Escape a task so sad;
Why should they make what all their lives
The gentle dames have had?

John Godfrey Saxe [1816-1887]

PLAYS

Alas, how soon the hours are over
Counted us out to play the lover!
And how much narrower is the stage
Allotted us to play the sage!

But when we play the fool, how wide
The theatre expands! beside,
How long the audience sits before us!
How many prompters! what a chorus!

Walter Savage Landor [1775-1864]

THE REMEDY WORSE THAN THE DISEASE

I sent for Ratcliffe; was so ill,
That other doctors gave me over:
He felt my pulse, prescribed his pill,
And I was likely to recover.

But, when the wit began to wheeze,
And wine had warmed the politician,
Cured yesterday of my disease,
I died last night of my physician.

Matthew Prior [1664-1721]

THE NET OF LAW

The net of law is spread so wide,
No sinner from its sweep may hide.

Its meshes are so fine and strong,
They take in every child of wrong.

O wondrous web of mystery!
Big fish alone escape from thee!

James Jeffrey Roche [1847-1908]

COLOGNE

In Koln, a town of monks and bones,
And pavements fanged with murderous stones,
And rags, and hags, and hideous wenches;
I counted two and seventy stenches,
All well defined, and several stinks!
Ye Nymphs that reign o'er sewers and sinks,
The river Rhine, it is well known,
Doth wash your city of Cologne;
But tell me, Nymphs! what power divine
Shall henceforth wash the river Rhine?

Samuel Taylor Coleridge [1772-1834]

EPITAPH ON CHARLES II

Here lies our Sovereign Lord the King,
Whose word no man relies on,
Who never said a foolish thing,
Nor ever did a wise one.

John Wilmot [1647-1680]

CERTAIN MAXIMS OF HAFIZ

I
If It be pleasant to look on, stalled in the packed serai,
Does not the Young Man try Its temper and pace ere he buy?
If She be pleasant to look on, what does the Young Man say?
"Lo! She is pleasant to look on, give Her to me today!"

II
Yea, though a Kaffir die, to him is remitted Jehannum
If he borrowed in life from a native at sixty per cent per annum.

III
Blister we not for bursati? So when the heart is vexed,
The pain of one maiden's refusal is drowned in the pain of the next.

IV
The temper of chums, the love of your wife, and a new piano's tune -
Which of the three will you trust at the end of an Indian June?

V
Who are the rulers of Ind - to whom shall we bow the knee?
Make your peace with the women, and men will make you L. G.

VI

Does the woodpecker flit round the young ferash?
Does the grass clothe a new-built wall?
Is she under thirty, the woman who holds a boy in her thrall?

VI

If She grow suddenly gracious - reflect. Is it all for thee?
The black-buck is stalked through the bullock, and Man through jealousy.

VIII

Seek not for favor of women. So shall you find it indeed.
Does not the boar break cover just when you're lighting a weed?

IX

If He play, being young and unskilful, for shekels of silver and gold,
Take His money, my son, praising Allah. The kid was ordained to be sold.

X

With a "weed" among men or horses verily this is the best,
That you work him in office or dog-cart lightly - but give him no rest.

XI

Pleasant the snaffle of Courtship, improving the manners and carriage;
But the colt who is wise will abstain from the terrible thornbit
of Marriage.

XII

As the thriftless gold of the babul, so is the gold that we spend
On a Derby Sweep, or our neighbor's wife, or the horse that we buy
from a friend.

XIII

The ways of a man with a maid be strange, yet simple and tame
To the ways of a man with a horse, when selling or racing that same.

XIV

In public Her face turneth to thee, and pleasant Her smile when ye meet.
It is ill. The cold rocks of El-Gidar smile thus on the waves at
their feet.
In public Her face is averted, with anger She nameth thy name.
It is well. Was there ever a loser content with the loss of the game?

XV

If She have spoken a word, remember thy lips are sealed,
And the Brand of the Dog is upon him by whom is the secret revealed.
If She have written a letter, delay not an instant, but burn it.
Tear it in pieces, O Fool, and the wind to her mate shall return it!
If there be trouble to Herward, and a lie of the blackest can clear,
Lie, while thy lips can move or a man is alive to hear.

XVI

My Son, if a maiden deny thee and scufflingly bid thee give o'er,
Yet lip meets with lip at the lastward - get out!

She has been there before.
They are pecked on the ear and the chin and the nose
who are lacking in lore.

XVII

If we fall in the race, though we win, the hoof-slide is scarred
on the course.
Though Allah and Earth pardon Sin, remaineth forever Remorse.

XVIII

"By all I am misunderstood!" if the Matron shall say, or the Maid: -
"Alas! I do not understand," my son, be thou nowise afraid.
In vain in the sight of the Bird is the net of the Fowler displayed.

XIX

My Son, if I, Hafiz, thy father, take hold of thy knees in my pain,
Demanding thy name on stamped paper, one day or one hour - refrain.
Are the links of thy fetters so light that thou cravest
another man's chain?

Rudyard Kipling [1865-1936]

A BAKER'S DUZZEN UV WIZE SAWZ

Them ez wants, must choose.
Them ez hez, must lose.
Them ez knows, won't blab.
Them ez guesses, will gab.
Them ez borrows, sorrows.
Them ez lends, spends.
Them ez gives, lives.
Them ez keeps dark, is deep.
Them ez kin earn; kin keep.
Them ez aims, hits.
Them ez hez, gits.
Them ez waits, win.
Them ez will, kin.

Edward Rowland Sill [1841-1887]

EPIGRAMS

What is an epigram? a dwarfish whole,
Its body brevity, and wit its soul.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge [1772-1834]

As in smooth oil the razor best is whet,
So wit is by politeness sharpest set;

Their want of edge from their offence is seen,
Both pain the heart when exquisitely keen.

Unknown

"I hardly ever ope my lips," one cries;
"Simonides, what think you of my rule?"
"If you're a fool, I think you're very wise;
If you are wise, I think you are a fool."

Richard Garnett [1835-1906]

Philosopher, whom dost thou most affect,
Stoics austere, or Epicurus' sect?
Friend, 'tis my grave infrangible design
With those to study, and with these to dine.

Richard Garnett [1835-1906]

Joy is the blossom, sorrow is the fruit,
Of human life; and worms are at the root.

Walter Savage Landor [1775-1864]

No truer word, save God's, was ever spoken,
Than that the largest heart is soonest broken.

Walter Savage Landor [1775-1864]

This house, where once a lawyer dwelt,
Is now a smith's. Alas!
How rapidly the iron age
Succeeds the age of brass!

William Erskine [1769-1822]

"I would," says Fox, "a tax devise
That shall not fall on me."
"Then tax receipts," Lord North replies,
"For those you never see."

Richard Brinsley Sheridan [1751-1816]

You beat your pate, and fancy wit will come.
Knock as you please, - there's nobody at home.

Alexander Pope [1688-1744]

If a man who turnips cries
Cry not when his father dies,
'Tis a proof that he would rather
Have a turnip than a father.

Samuel Johnson [1709-1784]

Life is a jest, and all things show it;
I said so once, and now I know it.

John Gay [1685-1732]

I am his Highness' dog at Kew.
Pray, sir, tell me, - whose dog are you?

Alexander Pope [1688-1744]

Sir, I admit your general rule,
That every poet is a fool,
But you yourself may serve to show it,
That every fool is not a poet.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge [1772-1834]

Damis, an author cold and weak,
Thinks as a critic he's divine;
Likely enough; we often make
Good vinegar of sorry wine.

Unknown

Swans sing before they die - 'twere no bad thing

Did certain persons die before they sing.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge [1772-1834]

He who in his pocket hath no money
Should, in his mouth, be never without honey.

Unknown

Nobles and heralds, by your leave,
Here lies what once was Matthew Prior,
The son of Adam and of Eve;
Can Bourbon or Nassau claim higher?

Matthew Prior [1664-1721]

Here lie I, Martin Elginbrodde;
Hae mercy o' my soul, Lord God,
As I wad do were I Lord God,
And ye were Martin Elginbrodde.

George Macdonald [1824-1905]

Who killed Kildare? Who dared Kildare to kill?
Death killed Kildare - who dare kill whom he will.

Jonathan Swift [1667-1745]

With death doomed to grapple,
Beneath the cold slab he
Who lied in the chapel
Now lies in the abbey.

Byron's epitaph for Pitt

When doctrines meet with general approbation,
It is not heresy, but reformation.

David Garrick [1717-1779]

Treason doth never prosper; what's the reason?
Why, if it prosper, none dare call it treason.

John Harington [1561-1612]

God bless the King - I mean the faith's defender!
God bless (no harm in blessing!) the Pretender!
But who pretender is, or who is King -
God bless us all! - that's quite another thing.

John Byrom [1692-1763]

'Tis highly rational, we can't dispute,
The Love, being naked, should promote a suit:
But doth not oddity to him attach
Whose fire's so oft extinguished by a match?

Richard Garnett [1835-1906]

"Come, come," said Tom's father, "at your time of life,
There's no longer excuse for thus playing the rake. -
It is time you should think, boy, of taking a wife." -
Why, so it is, father, - whose wife shall I take?"

Thomas Moore [1779-1852]

When Eve upon the first of men
The apple pressed with specious cant,
O, what a thousand pities then
That Adam was not Adam-ant!

Thomas Moore [1779-1852]

Whilst Adam slept, Eve from his side arose:
Strange! his first sleep should be his last repose!

Unknown

"What? rise again with all one's bones,"
Quoth Giles, "I hope you fib:

I trusted, when I went to Heaven,
To go without my rib.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge [1772-1834]

Here lies my wife: here let her lie!
Now she's at rest, and so am I.

John Dryden [1631-1700]

After such years of dissension and strife,
Some wonder that Peter should weep for his wife;
But his tears on her grave are nothing surprising, -
He's laying her dust, for fear of its rising.

Thomas Hood [1799-1845]

WRITTEN ON A LOOKING-GLASS

I change, and so do women too;
But I reflect, which women never do.

Unknown

AN EPITAPH

A lovely young lady I mourn in my rhymes:
She was pleasant, good-natured, and civil sometimes.
Her figure was good: she had very fine eyes,
And her talk was a mixture of foolish and wise.
Her adorers were many, and one of them said,
"She waltzed rather well! It's a pity she's dead!"

George John Cayley [?]

ON THE ARISTOCRACY OF HARVARD

And this is good old Boston,
The home of the bean and the cod,
Where the Lowells talk to the Cabots
And the Cabots talk only to God.

John Collins Bossidy [1860-1928]

ON THE DEMOCRACY OF YALE

Here's to the town of New Haven,
The home of the Truth and the Light,
Where God talks to Jones in the very same tones
That He uses with Hadley and Dwight!

Frederick Scheetz Jones [1862-

A GENERAL SUMMARY

We are very slightly changed

From the semi-apes who ranged
India's prehistoric clay;
Whoso drew the longest bow,
Ran his brother down, you know,
As we run men down to-day.
"Dowb," the first of all his race,
Met the Mammoth face to face
On the lake or in the cave,
Stole the steadiest canoe,
Ate the quarry others slew,
Died - and took the finest grave.

When they scratched the reindeer-bone,
Someone made the sketch his own,
Filched it from the artist - then,
Even in those early days,
Won a simple Viceroy's praise
Through the toil of other men.
Ere they hewed the Sphinx's visage,
Favoritism governed kissage,
Even as it does in this age.

Who shall doubt "the secret hid
Under Cheops' pyramid"
Was that the contractor did
Cheops out of several millions?
Or that Joseph's sudden rise
To Comptroller of Supplies
Was a fraud of monstrous size
On King Pharaoh's swart Civilians?

Thus, the artless songs I sing
Do not deal with anything
New or never said before.
As it was in the beginning,
Is to-day official sinning,
And shall be for evermore!

Rudyard Kipling [1865-1936]

THE MIMICS

AN OMAR FOR LADIES

I

One for her Club and her own Latch-key fights,
Another wastes in Study her good Nights.
Ah, take the Clothes and let the Culture go,
Nor heed the grumble of the Women's Rights!

Look at the Shop-girl all about us - "Lo,
The Wages of a month," she says, "I blow
Into a Hat, and when my hair is waved,
Doubtless my Friend will take me to the Show."

And she who saved her coin for Flannels red,
And she who caught Pneumonia instead,
Will both be Underground in Fifty Years,
And Prudence pays no Premium to the dead.

Th' exclusive Style you set your heart upon
Gets to the Bargain counters - and anon,
Like monograms on a Saleslady's tie,
Cheers but a moment - soon for you 'tis gone.

Think, in the sad Four Hundred's gilded halls,
Whose endless Leisure ev'n themselves appalls,
How Ping-pong raged so high - then faded out
To those far Suburbs that still chase its Balls.

They say Sixth Avenue and the Bowery keep
The dernier cri that once was far from cheap;
Green veils, one season chic - Department stores
Mark down in vain - no profit shall they reap.

II

I sometimes think that never lasts so long
The Style as when it starts a bit too strong;
That all the Pompadours the parterre boasts
Some Chorus-girl began, with Dance and Song.

And this Revival of the Chignon low

That fills the most of us with helpless Woe,
Ah, criticise it Softly! for who knows
What long-necked Peeress had to wear it so!

Ah, my beloved, try each Style you meet;
To-day brooks no loose ends, you must be neat.
Tomorrow! why tomorrow you may be
Wearing it down your back like Marguerite!

For some we once admired, the Very Best
That ever a French hand-boned Corset prest,
Wore what they used to call Prunella Boots,
And put on Nightcaps ere they went to rest.

And we that now make fun of Waterfalls
They wore, and whom their Crinoline appalls,
Ourselves shall from old dusty Fashion plates
Assist our Children in their Costume balls.

Ah, make the most of what we yet may wear,
Before we grow so old that we don't care!
Before we have our Hats made all alike,
Sans Plumes, sans Wings, sans Chiffon, and - sans Hair!

III

Alike to her who Dines both Loud and Long,
Or her who Banting shuns the Dinner-gong,
Some Doctor from his Office chair will shout,
"It makes no Difference - both of you are Wrong!"

Why, all the Health-Reformers who discussed
High Heels and Corsets learnedly are thrust
Square-toed and Waistless forth; their Duds are scorned,
And Venus might as well have been a Bust.

Myself when slim did eagerly frequent
Delsarte and Ling, and heard great Argument
Of muscles trained to Hold me up, but still
Spent on my Modiste what I'd always spent!

With walking Clubs I did the best I could;
With my own Feet I tramped my Ten Miles, good;
And this was All that I got out of it -
I ate much more for Dinner than I should.

.

And fear not lest your Rheumatism seize
The Joy of Life from other people's Sprees;
The Art will not have Perished - au contraire,
Posterity will practise it with Ease!

When you and I have ceased Champagne to Sup,

Be sure there will be More to Keep it Up;
And while we pat Old Tabby by the fire,
Full many a Girl will lead her Brindled Pup.

Josephine Daskam Bacon [1876-

"WHEN LOVELY WOMAN"

After Goldsmith

When lovely woman wants a favor,
And finds, too late, that man won't bend,
What earthly circumstance can save her
From disappointment in the end?

The only way to bring him over,
The last experiment to try,
Whether a husband or a lover,
If he have feeling is - to cry.

Phoebe Cary [1824-1871]

FRAGMENT IN IMITATION OF WORDSWORTH

There is a river clear and fair,
'Tis neither broad nor narrow;
It winds a little here and there -
It winds about like any hare;
And then it holds as straight a course
As, on the turnpike road, a horse,
Or, through the air, an arrow.

The trees that grow upon the shore
Have grown a hundred years or more;
So long there is no knowing:
Old Daniel Dobson does not know
When first those trees began to grow;
But still they grew, and grew, and grew,
As if they'd nothing else to do,
But ever must be growing.

The impulses of air and sky
Have reared their stately heads so high,
And clothed their boughs with green;
Their leaves the dews of evening quaff, -
And when the wind blows loud and keen,
I've seen the jolly timbers laugh,
And shake their sides with merry glee -
Wagging their heads in mockery.

Fixed are their feet in solid earth
Where winds can never blow;

But visitings of deeper birth
Have reached their roots below.
For they have gained the river's brink
And of the living waters drink.

There's little Will, a five years' child -
He is my youngest boy;
To look on eyes so fair and wild,
It is a very joy.
He hath conversed with sun and shower,
And dwelt with every idle flower,
As fresh and gay as them.
He loiters with the briar-rose, -
The blue-bells are his playfellows,
That dance upon their slender stem.

And I have said, my little Will,
Why should he not continue still
A thing of Nature's rearing?
A thing beyond the world's control -
A living vegetable soul, -
No human sorrow fearing.

It were a blessed sight to see
That child become a willow-tree,
His brother trees among.
He'd be four times as tall as me,
And live three times as long.

Catherine M. Fanshawe [1765-1834]

ONLY SEVEN After Wordsworth

I marvelled why a simple child,
That lightly draws its breath,
Should utter groans so very wild,
And look as pale as death.

Adopting a parental tone,
I asked her why she cried;
The damsel answered with a groan,
"I've got a pain inside!

"I thought it would have sent me mad
Last night about eleven."
Said I, "What is it makes you bad?
How many apples have you had?"
She answered, "Only seven!"

"And are you sure you took no more,
My little maid?" quoth I;

"Oh, please, sir, mother gave me four,
But they were in a pie!"

"If that's the case," I stammered out,
"Of course you've had eleven."
The maiden answered with a pout,
"I ain't had more nor seven!"

I wondered hugely what she meant,
And said, "I'm bad at riddles;
But I know where little girls are sent
For telling taradiddles.

"Now, if you don't reform," said I,
"You'll never go to heaven."
But all in vain; each time I try,
That little idiot makes reply,
"I ain't had more nor seven!"

POSTSCRIPT:

To borrow Wordsworth's name was wrong,
Or slightly misapplied;
And so I'd better call my song
"Lines after Ache-inside."

Henry Sambrooke Leigh [1837-1883]

LUCY LAKE

After Wordsworth

Poor Lucy Lake was overgrown,
But somewhat underbrained.
She did not know enough, I own,
To go in when it rained.

Yet Lucy was constrained to go;
Green bedding, - you infer.
Few people knew she died, but oh,
The difference to her!

Newton Mackintosh [1858-

JANE SMITH

After Wordsworth

I journeyed, on a winter's day,
Across the lonely wold;
No bird did sing upon the spray,
And it was very cold.

I had a coach with horses four,

Three white (though one was black),
And on they went the common o'er,
Nor swiftness did they lack.

A little girl ran by my side,
And she was pinched and thin.
"Oh, please, sir, do give me a ride!
I'm fetching mother's gin."

"Enter my coach, sweet child," said I,
"For you shall ride with me;
And I will get you your supply
Of mother's eau-de-vie."

The publican was stern and cold,
And said: "Her mother's score
Is writ, as you shall soon behold,
Behind the bar-room door!"

I blotted out the score with tears,
And paid the money down;
And took the maid of thirteen years
Back to her mother's town.

And though the past with surges wild
Fond memories may sever,
The vision of that happy child
Will leave my spirits never!

Rudyard Kipling [1865-1936]

FATHER WILLIAM
From "Alice in Wonderland"
After Southey

"You are old, Father William," the young man said,
"And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head -
Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

"In my youth," Father William replied to his son,
"I feared it might injure the brain;
But, now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,
Why, I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "as I mentioned before,
And have grown most uncommonly fat;
Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door -
Pray, what is the reason of that?"

"In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his gray locks,
"I kept all my limbs very supple

By the use of this ointment - one shilling the box -
Allow me to sell you a couple?"

"You are old," said the youth, "and your jaws are too weak
For anything tougher than suet;
Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the beak -
Pray, how did you manage to do it?"

"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law,
And argued each case with my wife;
And the muscular strength which it gave to my jaw,
Has lasted the rest of my life."

"You are old," said the youth, "one would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose -
What made you so awfully clever?"

"I have answered three questions and that is enough,"
Said his father; "don't give yourself airs!
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or I'll kick you downstairs!"

Lewis Carroll [1832-1898]

THE NEW ARRIVAL

After Campbell

There came to port last Sunday night
The queerest little craft,
Without an inch of rigging on;
I looked and looked - and laughed!
It seemed so curious that she
Should cross the Unknown water,
And moor herself within my room -
My daughter! O, my daughter!

Yet by these presents witness all
She's welcome fifty times,
And comes consigned in hope and love -
And common-metre rhymes.
She has no manifest but this;
No flag floats o'er the water;
She's too new for the British Lloyds -
My daughter! O, my daughter!

Ring out, wild bells - and tame ones too;
Ring out the lover's moon.
Ring in the little worsted socks,
Ring in the bib and spoon.
Ring out the muse, ring in the nurse,
Ring in the milk and water.

Away with paper, pen, and ink -
My daughter! O, my daughter!

George Washington Cable [1844-1925]

DISASTER

After Moore

'Twas ever thus from childhood's hour
My fondest hopes would not decay:
I never loved a tree or flower
Which was the first to fade away!
The garden, where I used to delve
Short-frocked, still yields me pinks in plenty;
The pear-tree that I climbed at twelve,
I see still blossoming, at twenty.

I never nursed a dear gazelle.
But I was given a paroquet -
How I did nurse him if unwell!
He's imbecile, but lingers yet.
He's green, with an enchanting tuft;
He melts me with his small black eye:
He'd look inimitable stuffed,
And knows it - but he will not die!

I had a kitten - I was rich
In pets - but all too soon my kitten
Became a full-sized cat, by which
I've more than once been scratched and bitten;
And when for sleep her limbs she curled
One day beside her untouched plateful,
And glided calmly from the world,
I freely own that I was grateful.

And then I bought a dog - a queen!
Ah, Tiny, dear departing pug!
She lives, but she is past sixteen,
And scarce can crawl across the rug.
I loved her beautiful and kind;
Delighted in her pert Bow-wow:
But now she snaps if you don't mind;
'Twere lunacy to love her now.

I used to think, should e'er mishap
Betide my crumple-visaged Ti,
In shape of prowling thief, or trap,
Or coarse bull-terrier - I should die.
But ah! disasters have their use;
And life might e'en be too sunshiny:
Nor would I make myself a goose,
If some big dog should swallow Tiny.

Charles Stuart Calverley [1831-1884]

'T WAS EVER THUS

After Moore

I never reared a young gazelle,
(Because, you see, I never tried);
But had it known and loved me well,
No doubt the creature would have died.
My rich and aged Uncle John
Has known me long and loves me well
But still persists in living on -
I would he were a young gazelle.

I never loved a tree or flower;
But, if I had, I beg to say
The blight, the wind, the sun, or shower
Would soon have withered it away.
I've dearly loved my Uncle John,
From childhood to the present hour,
And yet he will go living on -
I would he were a tree or flower!

Henry Sambrooke Leigh [1837-1883]

A GRIEVANCE

After Byron

Dear Mr. Editor: I wish to say -
If you will not be angry at my, writing it -
But I've been used, since childhood's happy day,
When I have thought of something, to inditing it;
I seldom think of things; and, by the way,
Although this meter may not be exciting, it
Enables one to be extremely terse,
Which is not what one always is in verse.

I used to know a man, - such things befall
The observant wayfarer through Fate's domain -
He was a man, take him for all in all,
We shall not look upon his like again;
I know that statement's not original;
What statement is, since Shakespeare? or, since Cain,
What murder? I believe 'twas Shakespeare said it, or
Perhaps it may have been your Fighting Editor.

Though why an Editor should fight, or why
A Fighter should abase himself to edit,
Are problems far too difficult and high
For me to solve with any sort of credit.

Some greatly more accomplished man than I
Must tackle them: let's say then Shakespeare said it;
And, if he did not, Lewis Morris may
(Or even if he did). Some other day,

When I have nothing pressing to impart,
I should not mind dilating on this matter.
I feel its import both in head and heart,
And always did, - especially the latter.
I could discuss it in the busy mart
Or on the lonely housetop; hold! this chatter
Diverts me from my purpose. To the point:
The time, as Hamlet said, is out of joint,

And perhaps I was born to set it right, -
A fact I greet with perfect equanimity.
I do not put it down to "cursed spite,"
I don't see any cause for cursing in it. I
Have always taken very great delight
In such pursuits since first I read divinity.
Whoever will may write a nation's songs
As long as I'm allowed to right its wrongs.

What's Eton but a nursery of wrong-righters,
A mighty mother of effective men;
A training ground for amateur reciters,
A sharpener of the sword as of the pen;
A factory of orators and fighters,
A forcing-house of genius? Now and then
The world at large shrinks back, abashed and beaten,
Unable to endure the glare of Eton.

I think I said I knew a man: what then?
I don't suppose such knowledge is forbid.
We nearly all do, more or less, know men, -
Or think we do; nor will a man get rid
Of that delusion while he wields a pen.
But who this man was, what, if aught, he did,
Nor why I mentioned him, I do not know,
Nor what I "wished to say" a while ago.

James Kenneth Stephen [1859-1892]

"NOT A SOU HAD HE GOT"

After Charles Wolfe

Not a sou had he got - not a guinea or note -
And he looked confoundedly flurried,
As he bolted away without paying his shot,
And the landlady after him hurried.

We saw him again at dead of night,

When home from the club returning;
We twigged the doctor beneath the light
Of the gas-lamp brilliantly burning.

All bare and exposed to the midnight dews,
Reclined in a gutter we found him;
And he looked like a gentleman taking a snooze
With his Marshall cloak around him.

"The doctor's as drunk as the devil," we said,
And we managed a shutter to borrow;
We raised him; and sighed at the thought that his head
Would consumedly ache on the morrow.

We bore him home, and we put him to bed,
And we told his wife and his daughter
To give him next morning a couple of red-
Herrings, with soda-water.

Loudly they talked of his money that's gone,
And his lady began to upbraid him;
But little he recked, so they let him snore on
'Neath the counterpane, just as we laid him.

We tucked him in, and had hardly done,
When, beneath the window calling,
We heard the rough voice of a son of a gun
Of a watchman "One o'clock!" bawling.

Slowly and sadly we all walked down
From his room on the uppermost story;
A rushlight we placed on the cold hearth-stone,
And we left him alone in his glory.

Richard Harris Barham [1788-1845]

THE WHITING AND THE SNAIL

From "Alice in Wonderland"

After Mary Howitt

"Will you walk a little faster?" said a whiting to a snail,
"There's a porpoise close behind us, and he's treading on my tail,
See bow eagerly the lobsters and the turtles all advance!
They are waiting on the shingle - will you come and join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?"

"You can really have no notion how delightful it will be
When they take us up and throw us, with the lobsters, out to sea!"
But the snail replied, "Too far, too far!" and gave a look askance -
Said he thanked the whiting kindly, but he would not join the dance.
Would not, could not, would not, could not, would not join the dance.

Would not, could not, would not, could not, could not join the dance.

"What matters it how far we go?" his scaly friend replied.

"There is another shore, you know, upon the other side.

The further off from England the nearer is to France -

Then turn not pale, beloved snail, but come and join the dance.

Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?

Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?"

Lewis Carroll [1832-1898]

THE RECOGNITION

After Tennyson

Home they brought her sailor son,
Grown a man across the sea,
Tall and broad and black of beard,
And hoarse of voice as man may be.

Hand to shake and mouth to kiss,
Both he offered ere he spoke;
But she said, "What man is this
Comes to play a sorry joke?"

Then they praised him - called him "smart,"
"Tightest lad that ever stept;"
But her son she did not know,
And she neither smiled nor wept.

Rose, a nurse of ninety years,
Set a pigeon-pie in sight;
She saw him eat: - "'Tis he! 'tis he!"
She knew him - by his appetite!

Frederick William Sawyer [1810-1875]

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM IN A NUTSHELL

After Tennyson

One, who is not, we see: but one, whom we see not, is;
Surely this is not that: but that is assuredly this.

What, and wherefore, and whence? for under is over and under;
If thunder could be without lightning, lightning could be without thunder.

Doubt is faith in the main: but faith, on the whole, is doubt;
We cannot believe by proof: but could we believe without?

Why, and whither, and how? for barley and rye are not clover;
Neither are straight lines curves: yet over is under and over.

Two and two may be four: but four and four are not eight;
Fate and God may be twain: but God is the same thing as fate.

Ask a man what he thinks, and get from a man what he feels;
God, once caught in the fact, shows you a fair pair of heels.

Body and spirit are twins: God only knows which is which;
The soul squats down in the flesh, like a tinker drunk in a ditch.

One and two are not one: but one and nothing is two;
Truth can hardly be false, if falsehood cannot be true.

Once the mastodon was: pterodactyls were common as cocks;
Then the mammoth was God; now is He a prize ox.

Parallels all things are: yet many of these are askew.
You are certainly I: but certainly I am not you.

Springs the rock from the plain, shoots the stream from the rock;
Cocks exist for the hen: but hens exist for the cock.

God, whom we see not, is: and God, who is not, we see;
Fiddle, we know, is diddle; and diddle, we take it, is dee.

Algernon Charles Swinburne [1837-1909]

THE WILLOW-TREE

After Hood

Long by the willow-trees
Vainly they sought her,
Wild rang the mother's screams
O'er the gray water:
"Where is my lovely one?
Where is my daughter?

"Rouse thee, Sir Constable -
Rouse thee and look;
Fisherman, bring your net,
Boatman, your hook.
Beat in the lily-beds,
Dive in the brook!"

Vainly the constable
Shouted and called her;
Vainly the fisherman
Beat the green alder;
Vainly he flung the net,
Never it hauled her!

Mother beside the fire
Sat, her nightcap in;

Father, in easy chair,
Gloomily napping,
When at the window-sill
Came a light tapping!

And a pale countenance
Looked through the casement.
Loud beat the mother's heart,
Sick with amazement,
And at the vision which
Came to surprise her,
Shrieked in an agony -
"Lor! it's Elizar!"

Yes, 'twas Elizabeth -
Yes, 'twas their girl;
Pale was her cheek, and her
Hair out of curl.
"Mother," the loving one,
Blushing exclaimed,
"Let not your innocent
Lizzy be blamed.

"Yesterday, going to Aunt
Jones's to tea,
Mother, dear mother, I
Forgot the door-key!
And as the night was cold
And the way steep,
Mrs. Jones kept me to
Breakfast and sleep."

Whether her Pa and Ma
Fully believed her,
That we shall never know,
Stern they received her;
And for the work of that
Cruel, though short, night
Sent her to bed without
Tea for a fortnight.

MORAL

Hey diddle diddley,
Cat and the fiddley,
Maidens of England, take caution by she!
Let love and suicide
Never tempt you aside,
And always remember to take the door-key.

William Makepeace Thackeray [1811-1863]

After Robert Browning

Where'er there's a thistle to feed a linnet
And linnets are plenty, thistles rife -
Or an acorn-cup to catch dew-drops in it
There's ample promise of further life.
Now, mark how we begin it.

For linnets will follow, if linnets are minded,
As blows the white-feather parachute;
And ships will reel by the tempest blinded -
Aye, ships and shiploads of men to boot!
How deep whole fleets you'll find hid.

And we blow the thistle-down hither and thither
Forgetful of linnets, and men, and God.
The dew! for its want an oak will wither -
By the dull hoof into the dust is trod,
And then who strikes the cither?

But thistles were only for donkeys intended,
And that donkeys are common enough is clear,
And that drop! what a vessel it might have befriended,
Does it add any flavor to Glugabib's beer?
Well, there's my musing ended.

Tom Hood [1835-1874]

THE JAM-POT

The Jam-pot - tender thought!
I grabbed it - so did you.
"What wonder while we fought
Together that it flew
In shivers?" you retort.

You should have loosed your hold
One moment - checked your fist.
But, as it was, too bold
You grappled and you missed.
More plainly - you were sold.

"Well, neither of us shared
The dainty." That your plea?
"Well, neither of us cared,"
I answer. . . . "Let me see.
How have your trousers fared?"

Rudyard Kipling [1865-1936]

BALLAD

After William Morris

Part I

The auld wife sat at her ivied door,
(Butler and eggs and a pound of cheese)
A thing she had frequently done before;
And her spectacles lay on her aproned knees.

The piper he piped on the hill-top high,
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
Till the cow said "I die," and the goose asked "Why?"
And the dog said nothing, but searched for fleas.

The farmer he strode through the square farmyard;
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
His last brew of ale was a trifle hard -
The connection of which with the plot one sees.

The farmer's daughter hath frank blue eyes;
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
She hears the rooks caw in the windy skies,
As she sits at her lattice and shells her peas.

The farmer's daughter hath ripe red lips;
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
If you try to approach her, away she skips
Over tables and chairs with apparent ease.

The farmer's daughter hath soft brown hair;
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
And I met with a ballad, I can't say where,
Which wholly consisted of lines like these.

Part II

She sat, with her hands 'neath her dimpled cheeks,
(Butler and eggs and a pound of cheese)
And spake not a word. While a lady speaks
There is hope, but she didn't even sneeze.

She sat, with her hands 'neath her crimson cheeks,
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
She gave up mending her father's breeks,
And let the cat roll in her new chemise.

She sat, with her hands 'neath her burning cheeks,
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
And gazed at the piper for thirteen weeks;
Then she followed him out o'er the misty leas.

Her sheep followed her, as their tails did them.
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
And this song is considered a perfect gem,
And as to the meaning, it's what you please.

Charles Stuart Calverley [1831-1884]

THE POSTER-GIRL

After Dante Gabriel Rossetti

The blessed Poster-girl leaned out
From a pinky-purple heaven;
One eye was red and one was green;
Her bang was cut uneven;
She had three fingers on her hand,
And the hairs on her head were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No sunflowers did adorn,
But a heavy Turkish portiere
Was very neatly worn;
And the hat that lay along her back
Was yellow like canned corn.

It was a kind of wobbly wave
That she was standing on,
And high aloft she flung a scarf
That must have weighed a ton;
And she was rather tall - at least
She reached up to the sun.

She curved and writhed, and then she said,
Less green of speech than blue:
"Perhaps I am absurd - perhaps
I don't appeal to you;
But my artistic worth depends
Upon the point of view."

I saw her smile, although her eyes
Were only smudgy smears;
And then she swished her swirling arms,
And wagged her gorgeous ears,
She sobbed a blue-and-green-checked sob,
And wept some purple tears.

Carolyn Wells [186? -

AFTER DILETTANTE CONCETTI

After Dante Gabriel Rossetti

"Why do you wear your hair like a man,
Sister Helen?
This week is the third since you began."
"I'm writing a ballad; be still if you can,
Little brother.

(O Mother Carey, mother!
What chickens are these between sea and heaven?)"

"But why does your figure appear so lean,
Sister Helen?
And why do you dress in sage, sage green?"
"Children should never be heard, if seen,
Little brother!
(O Mother Carey, mother!
What fowls are a-wing in the stormy heaven!)"

"But why is your face so yellowy white,
Sister Helen?
And why are your skirts so funnily tight?"
"Be quiet, you torment, or how can I write,
Little brother?
(O Mother Carey, mother!
How gathers thy train to the sea from the heaven!)"

"And who's Mother Carey, and what is her train,
Sister Helen?
And why do you call her again and again?"
"You troublesome boy, why that's the refrain,
Little brother.
(O Mother Carey, mother!
What work is toward in the startled heaven?)"

"And what's a refrain? What a curious word,
Sister Helen!
Is the ballad you're writing about a sea-bird?"
"Not at all; why should it be? Don't be absurd,
Little brother.
(O Mother Carey, mother!
Thy brood flies lower as lowers the heaven.)"

(A big brother speaketh:)

"The refrain you've studied a meaning had,
Sister Helen!
It gave strange force to a weird ballad.
But refrains have become a ridiculous 'fad',
Little brother.
And Mother Carey, mother,
Has a bearing on nothing in earth or heaven.

"But the finical fashion has had its day,
Sister Helen.
And let's try in the style of a different lay
To bid it adieu in poetical way,
Little brother.
So, Mother Carey, mother!
Collect your chickens and go to - heaven."

(A pause. Then the big brother singeth, accompanying himself
in a plaintive wise on the triangle:)

"Look in my face. My name is Used-to-was,
I am also called Played-out and Done-to-death,
And It-will-wash-no-more. Awakeneth
Slowly, but sure awakening it has,
The common-sense of man; and I, alas!
The ballad-burden trick, now known too well,
Am turned to scorn, and grown contemptible -
A too transparent artifice to pass.

"What a cheap dodge I am! The cats who dart
Tin-kettled through the streets in wild surprise
Assail judicious ears not otherwise;
And yet no critics praise the urchin's 'art',
Who to the wretched creature's caudal part
Its foolish empty-jingling 'burden' ties."

Henry Duff Traill [1842-1900]

IF
After Swinburne

If life were never bitter,
And love were always sweet,
Then who would care to borrow
A moral from to-morrow -
If Thames would always glitter,
And joy would ne'er retreat,
If life were never bitter,
And love were always sweet!

If care were not the waiter
Behind a fellow's chair,
When easy-going sinners
Sit down to Richmond dinners,
And life's swift stream flows straighter,
By Jove, it would be rare,
If care were not the waiter
Behind a fellow's chair.

If wit were always radiant,
And wine were always iced,
And bores were kicked out straightway
Through a convenient gateway;
Then down the year's long gradient
'Twere sad to be enticed,
If wit were always radiant,
And wine were always iced.

Mortimer Collins [1827-1876]

NEPHELIDIA

After Swinburne

From the depth of the dreamy decline of the dawn through
a notable nimbus of nebulous noonshine,
Pallid and pink as the palm of the flag-flower that flickers
with fear of the flies as they float,
Are the looks of our lovers that lustrously lean from a marvel of
mystic, miraculous moonshine,
These that we feel in the blood of our blushes that thicken and
threaten with throbs through the throat?
Thicken and thrill as a theatre thronged at appeal of an actor's
appalled agitation,
Fainter with fear of the fires of the future than pale with the
promise of pride in the past;
Flushed with the famishing fulness of fever that reddens with
radiance of rather recreation,
Gaunt as the ghastliest of glimpses that gleam through the gloom
of the gloaming when ghosts go aghast?

Nay, for the nick of the tick of the time is a tremulous touch on
the temples of terror,
Strained as the sinews yet strenuous with strife of the dead who
is dumb as the dust-heaps of death;
Surely no soul is it, sweet as the spasm of erotic, emotional,
exquisite error,
Bathed in the balms of beatified bliss, beatific itself by
beatitude's breath.
Surely no spirit or sense of a soul that was soft to the spirit
and soul of our senses
Sweetens the stress of suspiring suspicion that sobs in the
semblance and sound of a sigh;
Only this oracle opens Olympian in mystical moods and triangular tenses, -
"Life is the lust of a lamp for the light that is dark till the dawn
of the day when we die."

Mild is the mirk and monotonous music of memory, melodiously mute
as it may be,
While the hope in the heart of a hero is bruised by the breach of
men's rapiers, resigned to the rod;
Made meek as a mother whose bosom-beats bound with the bliss-bringing
bulk of a balm-breathing baby,
As they grope through the graveyard of creeds under skies growing
green at a groan for the grimness of God.
Blank is the book of his bounty beholden of old, and its binding
is blacker than bluer:
Out of blue into black is the scheme of the skies, and their dews
are the wine of the blood-shed of things;
Till the darkling desire of delight shall be free as a fawn that
is freed from the fangs that pursue her,

Till the heart-beats of hell shall be hushed by a hymn from the
hunt that has harried the kennel of kings.

Algernon Charles Swinburne [1837-1909]

COMMONPLACES

After Heine

Rain on the face of the sea,
Rain on the sodden land,
And the window-pane is blurred with rain
As I watch it, pen in hand.

Mist on the face of the sea,
Mist on the sodden land,
Filling the vales as daylight fails,
And blotting the desolate sand.

Voices from out of the mist,
Calling to one another:
"Hath love an end, thou more than friend,
Thou dearer than ever brother?"

Voices from out of the mist,
Calling and passing away;
But I cannot speak, for my voice is weak,
And. . . this is the end of my lay.

Rudyard Kipling [1865-1936]

THE PROMISSORY NOTE

After Poe

In the lonesome latter years
(Fatal years!)
To the dropping of my tears
Danced the mad and mystic spheres
In a rounded, reeling rune,
'Neath the moon,
To the dripping and the dropping of my tears.
Ah, my soul is swathed in gloom,
(Ulalume!)
In a dim Titanic tomb,
For my gaunt and gloomy soul
Ponders o'er the penal scroll,
O'er the parchment (not a rhyme),
Out of place, - out of time, -
I am shredded, shorn, unshifty,
(Oh, the fifty!)
And the days have passed, the three,
Over me!

And the debit and the credit are as one to him and me!

'Twas the random runes I wrote
At the bottom of the note,
(Wrote and freely
Gave to Greeley)
In the middle of the night,
In the mellow, moonless night,
When the stars were out of sight,
When my pulses, like a knell,
(Israfe!)

Danced with dim and dying fays,
O'er the ruins of my days,
O'er the dimeless, timeless days,
When the fifty, drawn at thirty,
Seeming thrifty, yet the dirty
Lucre of the market, was the most that I could raise!

Fiends controlled it,
(Let him hold it!)
Devils held me for the inkstand and the pen;
Now the days of grace are o'er,
(Ah, Lenore!)
I am but as other men;
What is time, time, time,
To my rare and runic rhyme,
To my random, reeling rhyme,
By the sands along the shore,
Where the tempest whispers, "Pay him!" and I answer,
"Nevermore!"

Bayard Taylor [1825-1878]

MRS. JUDGE JENKINS
Being The Only Genuine Sequel To "Maud Muller"
After Whittier

Maud Muller all that summer day
Raked the meadow sweet with hay;

Yet, looking down the distant lane,
She hoped the Judge would come again.

But when he came, with smile and bow,
Maud only blushed, and stammered, "Ha-ow?"

And spoke of her "pa," and wondered whether
He'd give consent they should wed together.

Old Muller burst in tears, and then
Begged that the Judge would lend him "ten";

For trade was dull and wages low,
And the "craps," this year, were somewhat slow.

And ere the languid summer died,
Sweet Maud became the Judge's bride.

But on the day that they were mated,
Maud's brother Bob was intoxicated;

And Maud's relations, twelve in all,
Were very drunk at the Judge's hall;

And when the summer came again,
The young bride bore him babies twain;

And the Judge was blest, but thought it strange
That bearing children made such a change.

For Maud grew broad, and red, and stout,
And the waist that his arm once clasped about

Was more than he now could span; and he
Sighed as he pondered, ruefully,

How that which in Maud was native grace
In Mrs. Jenkins was out of place;

And thought of the twins, and wished that they
Looked less like the men who raked the hay

On Muller's farm, and dreamed with pain
Of the day he wandered down the lane.

And, looking down that dreary track,
He half regretted that he came back.

For, had he waited, he might have wed
Some maiden fair and thoroughbred;

For there be women as fair as she,
Whose verbs and nouns do more agree.

Alas for maiden! alas for judge!
And the sentimental, - that's one-half "fudge";

For Maud soon thought the Judge a bore,
With all his learning and all his lore;

And the Judge would have bartered Maud's fair face
For more refinement and social grace.

If, of all words of tongue and pen,

The saddest are, "It might have been,"

More sad are these we daily see:
"It is, but hadn't ought to be."

Bret Harte [1839-1902]

THE MODERN HIAWATHA

From "The Song of Milkanwatha"

He killed the noble Mudjokivis,
With the skin he made him mittens,
Made them with the fur side inside,
Made them with the skin side outside,
He, to get the warm side inside,
Put the inside skin side outside:
He, to get the cold side outside,
Put the warm side fur side inside:
That's why he put the fur side inside,
Why he put the skin side outside,
Why he turned them inside outside.

George A. Strong [1832-1912]

HOW OFTEN

After Longfellow

They stood on the bridge at midnight,
In a park not far from the town;
They stood on the bridge at midnight,
Because they didn't sit down.

The moon rose o'er the city,
Behind the dark church spire;
The moon rose o'er the city,
And kept on rising higher.

How often, oh! how often
They whispered words so soft;
How often, oh! how often,
How often, oh! how oft.

Ben King [1857-1894]

"IF I SHOULD DIE TO-NIGHT"

After Arabella Eugenia Smith

If I should die to-night
And you should come to my cold corpse and say,
Weeping and heartsick o'er my lifeless clay -

If I should die to-night,
And you should come in deepest grief and woe -
And say: "Here's that ten dollars that I owe,"
I might arise in my large white cravat
And say, "What's that?"

If I should die to-night
And you should come to my cold corpse and, kneel,
Clasping my bier to show the grief you feel,
I say, if I should die to-night
And you should come to me, and there and then
Just even hint at paying me that ten,
I might arise the while,
But I'd drop dead again.

Ben King [1857-1894]

SINCERE FLATTERY

Of W. W. (Americanus)

The clear cool note of the cuckoo which has ousted the legitimate
nest-holder,
The whistle of the railway guard dispatching the train to the
inevitable collision,
The maiden's monosyllabic reply to a polysyllabic proposal,
The fundamental note of the last trump, which is presumably D natural;
All of these are sounds to rejoice in, yea, to let your very ribs
re-echo with:
But better than all of them is the absolutely last chord of the
apparently inexhaustible pianoforte player.

James Kenneth Stephen [1859-1892]

CULTURE IN THE SLUMS

Inscribed To An Intense Poet

I. RONDEAU

"O crikey, Bill!" she ses to me, she ses.
"Look sharp," ses she, "with them there sossiges.
Yea! sharp with them there bags of mysteree!
For lo!" she ses, "for lo! old pal," ses she,
"I'm blooming peckish, neither more nor less."
Was it not prime - I leave you all to guess
How prime! - to have a Jude in love's distress
Come spooning round, and murmuring balmilee,
"O crikey, Bill!"

For in such rorty wise doth Love express
His blooming views, and asks for your address,
And makes it right, and does the gay and free.
I kissed her - I did so! And her and me

Was pals. And if that ain't good business,
"O crikey, Bill!"

II. VILLANELLE

Now ain't they utterly too-too
(She ses, my Missus mine, ses she),
Them flymy little bits of Blue.

Joe, just you kool 'em - nice and skew
Upon our old meogginnee,
Now ain't they utterly too-too?

They're better than a pot'n' a screw,
They're equal to a Sunday spree,
Them flymy little bits of Blue!

Suppose I put 'em up the flue,
And booze the profits, Joe? Not me.
Now ain't they utterly too-too?

I do the 'lgh Art fake, I do.
Joe, I'm consummate; and I see
Them flymy little bits of Blue.

Which, Joe, is why I ses ter you -
Aesthetic-like, and limp, and free -
Now ain't they utterly too-too,
Them flymy little bits of Blue?

William Ernest Henley [1849-1903]

THE POETS AT TEA

I. - (Macaulay)
Pour, varlet, pour the water,
The water steaming hot!
A spoonful for each man of us,
Another for the pot!
We shall not drink from amber,
No Capuan slave shall mix
For us the snows of Athos
With port at thirty-six;
Whiter than snow the crystals
Grown sweet 'neath tropic fires,
More rich the herb of China's field,
The pasture-lands more fragrance yield;
Forever let Britannia wield
The teapot of her sires!

II. - (Tennyson)

I think that I am drawing to an end:
For on a sudden came a gasp for breath,
And stretching of the hands, and blinded eyes,
And a, great darkness falling on my soul.
O Hallelujah! . . . Kindly pass the milk.

III. - (Swinburne)

As the sin that was sweet in the sinning
Is foul in the ending thereof,
As the heat of the summer's beginning
Is past in the winter of love:
O purity, painful and pleading!
O coldness, ineffably gray!
O hear us, our handmaid unheeding,
And take it away!

IV. - (Cowper)

The cosy fire is bright and gay,
The merry kettle boils away
And hums a cheerful song.
I sing the saucer and the cup;
Pray, Mary, fill the teapot up,
And do not make it strong.

V. - (Browning)

Tut! Bah! We take as another case -
Pass the pills on the window-sill; notice the capsule
(A sick man's fancy, no doubt, but I place
Reliance on trade-marks, Sir) - so perhaps you'll
Excuse the digression - this cup which I hold
Light-poised - Bah, it's spilt in the bed - well, let's on go -
Hold Bohea and sugar, Sir; if you were told
The sugar was salt, would the Bohea be Congo?

VI. - (Wordsworth)

"Come, little cottage girl, you seem
To want my cup of tea;

And will you take a little cream?
Now tell the truth to me."

She had a rustic, woodland grin,
Her cheek was soft as silk,

And she replied, "Sir, please put in
A little drop of milk."

"Why, what put milk into your head?
'Tis cream my cows supply;"
And five times to the child I said,
"Why, pig-head, tell me, why?"

"You call me pig-head," she replied;

"My proper name is Ruth.
I called that milk" - she blushed with pride -
"You bade me speak the truth."

VII. - (Poe)

Here's a mellow cup of tea - golden tea!
What a world of rapturous thought its fragrance brings to me!
Oh, from out the silver cells
How it wells!
How it smells!
Keeping tune, tune, tune,
To the tintinnabulation of the spoon.
And the kettle on the fire
Boils its spout off with desire,
With a desperate desire
And a crystalline endeavor
Now, now to sit, or never,
On the top of the pale-faced moon,
But he always came home to tea, tea, tea, tea, tea,
Tea to the n-th.

VIII. - (Rossetti)

The lilies lie in my lady's bower,
(O weary mother, drive the cows to roost),
They faintly droop for a little hour;
My lady's head droops like a flower.

She took the porcelain in her hand
(O weary mother, drive the cows to roost);
She poured; I drank at her command;
Drank deep, and now - you understand!
(O weary mother, drive the cows to roost).

IX. - (Burns)

Weel, gin ye speir, I'm no inclined,
Whusky or tay - to state my mind
Fore ane or ither;
For, gin I tak the first, I'm fou,
And gin the next, I'm dull as you:
Mix a' thegither.

X. - (Walt Whitman)

One cup for my self-hood,
Many for you. Allons, camarados, we will drink together,
O hand-in-hand! That tea-spoon, please, when you've done with it.
What butter-colored hair you've got. I don't want to be personal.
All right, then, you needn't. You're a stale-cadaver.
Eighteen-pence if the bottles are returned.
Allons, from all bat-eyed formulas.

Barry Pain [1864-1928]

WORDSWORTH

Two voices are there: one is of the deep;
It learns the storm cloud's thunderous melody,
Now roars, now murmurs with the changing sea,
Now birdlike pipes, now closes soft in sleep;
And one is of an old half-witted sheep
Which bleats articulate monotony,
And indicates that two and one are three,
That grass is green, lakes damp, and mountains steep:
And, Wordsworth, both are thine: at certain times,
Forth from the heart of thy melodious rhymes
The form and pressure of high thoughts will burst;
At other times-good Lord! I'd rather be
Quite unacquainted with the A, B, C,
Than write such hopeless rubbish as thy worst.

James Kenneth Stephen [1859-1892]

End of Project Gutenberg V4 The Home Book of Verse, by Burton Stevenson
This ends Volume I of the two volume paper edition.

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n the stars were out of sight,

When my pulses, like a knell,

(Israfel!)

Danced with dim and dying fays,

O'er the ruins of my days,

O'er the dimeless, timeless days,

When the fifty, drawn at thirty,

Seeming thrifty, yet the dirty

Lucre of the market, was the most that I could raise!

Fiends controlled it,

(Let him hold it!)

Devils held me for the inkstand and the pen;
Now the days of grace are o'er,
(Ah, Lenore!)
I am but as other men;
What is time, time, time,
To my rare and runic rhyme,
To my random, reeling rhyme,
By the sands along the shore,
Where the tempest whispers, "Pay him!" and I answer,
"Nevermore!"

Bayard Taylor [1825-1878]

MRS. JUDGE JENKINS

Being The Only Genuine Sequel To "Maud Muller"

After Whittier

Maud Muller all that summer day
Raked the meadow sweet with hay;
Yet, looking down the distant lane,
She hoped the Judge would come again.
But when he came, with smile and bow,
Maud only blushed, and stammered, "Ha-ow?"

And spoke of her "pa," and wondered whether
He'd give consent they should wed together.

Old Muller burst in tears, and then
Begged that the Judge would lend him "ten";

For trade was dull and wages low,
And the "craps," this year, were somewhat slow.

And ere the languid summer died,
Sweet Maud became the Judge's bride.

But on the day that they were mated,
Maud's brother Bob was intoxicated;

And Maud's relations, twelve in all,
Were very drunk at the Judge's hall;

And when the summer came again,
The young bride bore him babies twain;

And the Judge was blest, but thought it strange
That bearing children made such a change.

For Maud grew broad, and red, and stout,
And the waist that his arm once clasped about

Was more than he now could span; and he

Sighed as he pondered, ruefully,

How that which in Maud was native grace

In Mrs. Jenkins was out of place;

And thought of the twins, and wished that they

Looked less like the men who raked the hay

On Muller's farm, and dreamed with pain

Of the day he wandered down the lane.

And, looking down that dreary track,

He half regretted that he came back.

For, had he waited, he might have wed

Some maiden fair and thoroughbred;

For there be women as fair as she,

Whose verbs and nouns do more agree.

Alas for maiden! alas for judge!

And the sentimental, - that's one-half "fudge";

For Maud soon thought the Judge a bore,

With all his learning and all his lore;

And the Judge would have bartered Maud's fair face

For more refinement and social grace.

If, of all words of tongue and pen,

The saddest are, "It might have been,"

More sad are these we daily see:

"It is, but hadn't ought to be."

Bret Harte [1839-1902]

THE MODERN HIAWATHA

From "The Song of Milkanwatha"

He killed the noble Mudjokivis,

With the skin he made him mittens,

Made them with the fur side inside,

Made them with the skin side outside,

He, to get the warm side inside,

Put the inside skin side outside:

He, to get the cold side outside,

Put the warm side fur side inside:

That's why he put the fur side inside,

Why he put the skin side outside,

Why he turned them inside outside.

George A. Strong [1832-1912]

HOW OFTEN

After Longfellow

They stood on the bridge at midnight,

In a park not far from the town;

They stood on the bridge at midnight,

Because they didn't sit down.

The moon rose o'er the city,

Behind the dark church spire;

The moon rose o'er the city,

And kept on rising higher.

How often, oh! how often

They whispered words so soft;

How often, oh! how often,

How often, oh! how oft.

Ben King [1857-1894]

"IF I SHOULD DIE TO-NIGHT"

After Arabella Eugenia Smith

If I should die to-night

And you should come to my cold corpse and say,

Weeping and heartsick o'er my lifeless clay -

If I should die to-night,

And you should come in deepest grief and woe -

And say: "Here's that ten dollars that I owe,"

I might arise in my large white cravat

And say, "What's that?"

If I should die to-night

And you should come to my cold corpse and, kneel,

Clasping my bier to show the grief you feel,

I say, if I should die to-night

And you should come to me, and there and then

Just even hint at paying me that ten,

I might arise the while,

But I'd drop dead again.

Ben King [1857-1894]

SINCERE FLATTERY

Of W. W. (Americanus)

The clear cool note of the cuckoo which has ousted the legitimate
nest-holder,

The whistle of the railway guard dispatching the train to the
inevitable collision,

The maiden's monosyllabic reply to a polysyllabic proposal,

The fundamental note of the last trump, which is presumably D natural;

All of these are sounds to rejoice in, yea, to let your very ribs
re-echo with:

But better than all of them is the absolutely last chord of the
apparently inexhaustible pianoforte player.

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