LAUGHTER FROM A CLOUD


WALTER RALEIGH Kt
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LAUGHTER FROM A CLOUD

BY

WALTER RALEIGH

WITH A FOREWORD BY

HILARY RALEIGH

"Listen; you may be allowed
To hear my laughter from a cloud"

CONSTABLE AND COMPANY LIMITED
LONDON SYDNEY
BOMBAY
1923

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN.
CHISWICK PRESS: CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND GRIGGS (PRINTERS), LTD.
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

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FOREWORD

THE real introduction to this book is to be found in the "Address to the Apostles" (p. 1-16), which, written as long ago as 1882, contains the germ of the view of life which my father held throughout his own: I attempt no more than a word or two of explanation.

To those who knew him intimately nothing in these pages will come as a surprise; they will remember him in his gay, nonsense-loving moods, and may, while reading, "hear his laughter"; but those who only knew his more serious side—and they can never have talked with him for long—may find here much that will startle them.

Of the Little Plays, "The Riddle" and "James" have both been performed more than once; "Richard who would not be King" was written for the children of Lady Betty and Mr. Gerald Balfour, who owned a toy theatre and complained that the stock plays supplied with it were poor stuff.

The Contributions to Family Magazines are culled from back numbers of periodicals that from time to time made their appearance at home. There were, if I remem-

ber right, three of them: *The Dabchick*, which I edited myself with immense labour—since I insisted on copying out all contributions in my own scrawl, so that many of the original manuscripts were lost; *The Nutshell*, and *The Hobgoblin*, edited by my brothers. My father used to promise at breakfast that his contribution would be ready by lunch time, and would devote the morning to its production. He never failed us.

The poems collected under the heading "Word and Question Game," take me back to long summer evenings at Ashton Keynes in Wiltshire, when we used to gather round a table after dinner, each armed with paper and pencil, and write down on separate slips a word and a question. The slips were pooled, and when we had all drawn a word and a question, our object was to write each a poem, answering or treating of the question and introducing the word, within a time limit of a quarter of an hour. I remember one evening, when a certain distinguished scholar staying in the house had confessed, after a struggle, his inability to write a poem in the stipulated fifteen minutes, my brother protested: "Don't you think it might be 'Consequences' to-morrow night? *Anyone* can play that!"

We played many games that summer, and it was at a family "sing-song" held one evening about that time that my father conceived the brilliant idea of setting English classic poetry to the tunes of well-known nursery rhymes. "Gray's Elegy," sung in chorus to the

air of " Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son," was an unqualified success!

The poem beginning " The Artist and his Luckless Wife " was originally sent on postcards, a verse at a time, to Mr. Robert Anning Bell, R.A.

The " Battle Hymn of Kensit's Men " was written in collaboration with Mr. Charles Strachey at the time of the John Kensit disturbances, and set to music, though, as my father was not responsible for the setting, I have not given it here. Of this hymn he always used to say that it was the truest piece of collaboration ever done, as when it was finished neither of the collaborators could remember for which lines or ideas he had been responsible!

The book is for the most part the effervescence of my father's lighter moments, yet there is a certain seriousness and deep philosophy underlying even the most frivolous pieces that puts them on a higher plane than most nonsense prose and verse.

As to the illustrations, the portrait of my father in Elizabethan costume that forms the frontispiece is reproduced from a painting by Mr. Francis Dodd, in the possession of Dr. John Sampson; " The Wedding Guest " is by Mr. Robert Anning Bell, as also are the frontispiece to " The Riddle " and the picture taken from a Visitors' Book (page 99); while the " Lion Comique " is the only extant original drawing by my father himself.

Several of the poems have been published before: "Johannesburg" and "Stand on the Trestles of the World" in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and "Stans Puer ad Mensam" in the *Cornhill Magazine*. I am indebted to the editors of both these periodicals for permission to reproduce them here.

My grateful thanks are also due to Dr. John Sampson, of Liverpool University, who edited *The Milan*, and without whose aid I should have been unable to secure much that is in these pages, for his kind and valuable assistance in the preparation of the book.

HILARY RALEIGH

Ferry Hinksey
July 1922

LAUGHTER FROM A CLOUD

IS SENSE OF HUMOUR OR PERSONAL INTEGRITY MORE POTENT FOR PLEASURE TO ITS OWNER?

An address delivered to The Apostles, 9th December 1882

I ASK the question, but the alternative is perhaps not a real one.

In the first place I am bound on my own behalf to advocate the former of the qualities; for I can hardly come forward to recommend the pleasures of personal virtue to the brothers when each, whether he has intimately revelled in them, or resolutely forgone them, can declare the naked truth.

In the second place the alternatives may not be genuinely interexclusive, and some brother may be disposed to assert that he is both good and funny.

In all its bearings the question of how far he may be both is extremely complicated. To begin with, there is no doubt that he may have an eye for the humorous without habitually and pertinaciously indulging in the more pronounced of the vices. On the other hand, there

is no doubt that if he is to be humorous in any wide sense of the word, his language must be irreverent on occasion, and quite frequently obscene. Irreverence and obscenity are not offences for the humorist.

As advocate for the humorist, I may further say on his behalf that his character is incompatible with the most degraded of the vices. There is a business-like activity about the burglar, even when unoccupied in crime, that forbids any full measure of enjoyment from the critical or perceptive faculties. Even the man who bears false witness against his neighbour is too absorbed in compassing his end to see how ludicrously great are his exertions to attain a little thing; and although the preacher may contract evil habits in private which he has for years publicly inveighed against, it is not likely that a man who has heartily derided these habits will ever yield to their temptations. To take an instance, Mr. Gilbert is not likely to be in court at an early date under a charge of assault upon his mother by jumping on her.

This, I think, is something to say for the humorist, that he is not preoccupied with the petty aims of men—aims which would rattle in a mind of reasonable capacity, and which produce the crimes of the day-labourer, the professional thief, or the lady member of a school-board. His view-point is too exalted to admit of any mundane object filling in the whole of his foreground, and he takes a just view of the worthlessness of the pleasures which

allure the criminals I have mentioned. He is liable to drunkenness, it is true, for this, he finds, does not dull his humorous faculty; and so he may possibly underestimate the less obvious pleasures enjoyed by the abstemious. He seeks the influence of generous liquor to give full play to his enjoyment of his favourite pleasure —the overestimation of which is his only fault in the eyes of others.

In trying to show that the man who enjoys the pleasure of humour to the utmost is prevented from being vicious as everyday people are vicious, I have just indicated that he is not improbably a person of high moral endowment. But as he cannot be very wicked neither can he, it would seem, be very good. Integrity in its bare sense he may possess, but what is known as "exalted virtue" is foreign to him. For although his moral vision is clear and extended, he has nothing within him which urges him to action, his life is purely aesthetic, he is neither Reformer nor Hero. The man who is great in virtue is probably intent, like the criminal, on some object which he will gain or die; all but one aspect of this object is lost to his sight, while the humorist, who probably places it for his own amusement in juxtaposition with something mean, appears merely irreverent.

And this fervent being must be the type of the good man until a much greater lucidity is exercised; until men can apply enthusiasm to an ideal set up by con-

clusive reasoning; until the drum is not necessary in war, nor blinkers on the high road.

This is the probable relation, then, between the sense of humour and personal integrity, that although not absolutely irreconcilable in the same individual, the humorist is not capable of the extremes of the moral scale. This brings me at once to my subject. For his gain from this fact is patent—he preserves that golden mean between virtue and vice which is most fruitful in unsophisticated pleasures, and shuns the hedonistic mistakes of the martyr and the murderer alike.

I hope no one will deny the genuineness of the pleasure derivable from humour; it is a pleasure of a delicate, because of a highly complex, nature, and is therefore easily extruded from consciousness by strong emotions, which strong emotions it is the aim of the humorist to avoid. But it is a pleasure of a deep enthralling nature and derivable under more diverse circumstances than any other pleasure in the world. That is, it is really enjoyable while it lasts, and a highly cultivated nature can find it in all the circumstances of life enumerated in the Prayer Book. And lest I be accused of glozing the faults of the humorist, I will notice, to refute, an accusation which might be brought against him—that his pleasure is of a selfish nature, and his enjoyment often positively disconcerts others. I deny this for the present on two grounds: (1) That I utterly discard the form of joke known as "practical," a form the true humorist

could not be led to indulge in, and which must always possess a low aesthetic value. Hoaxes and the like should not be admitted within the pale of the humorous. Eating and drinking are pleasures of some intensity, but cannot be called aesthetic because they cannot be shared. The practical joke is not only unshareable but inflicts pain, while the appreciation of high humour is like that of a fine painting, open to all and real in nature. (2) I regard the expression known as " laughter "—one of the many inarticulate noises which remind us of man's sunken nature—as by no means necessarily connected with the appreciation of the humorous. " Man alone can laugh "—and this singular trait of his is employed to evince his superiority over the brutes by persons who are confident that such must exist. Let us rather say that he has forgone bellowing only to take up with a more noisome cachinnation: let us remember the sallow-visaged Tom Hood, or Artemus Ward eaten of melancholy, and relegate laughter for ever from the paradise of humour to the limbo of a beastly buoyancy.

The enjoyments of the humorist are not, then, positively offensive to others—a fact I was concerned to prove because such a feature is incompatible with the highest degree of individual pleasure. I shall have occasion to show further how he is probably capable of the deepest sympathy, so far from being the heartless creature he is commonly esteemed. But meantime, what shall we say of the man of spotless character who is

" bent on walking uprightly," a phrase that fitly indicates the impossibility of his attempt? What pleasure of his can we compare with the pleasure the humorist gets from observing him? What is his moment of enjoyment? When he refrains from pocket-picking or adultery it is evident that he either does not feel the temptation of these pastimes, or he is tempted by them, possibly severely, and resists; in which case his feeling at the time is painful.

He is obliged practically, when asked to make show of his profit, to point to the past or the future—to the past in asserting the pleasure of having subdued his baser instincts, to the future in demonstrating the injuries which Nature or the State inflict on those who transgress their laws. The upright man in this narrow sense has thus no unit of present pleasure like that of the humorist. He is certainly better off than otherwise if the vices have at no time proved attractive for him, but even here his condition is neutral as to feeling. And the pleasure which he takes in avoiding the fate that seeks out the erring is dangerously like the pharisaical pleasure of thanking God that he is not as other men are, a pleasure which, oddly enough, he himself discountenances. Yet even humility seems to lose its charm if we may not thank God now and then that we resemble the publican rather than the Pharisee.

Treating him on a higher moral platform altogether, it is still hard to find the man of virtue any opportunity

for strong enjoyment. The ecstasy of self-sacrifice might be insisted on for him, but self-sacrifice made universally desirable as such, without regard to its purpose or effect, would spill creation. So that the ecstasy is only the enjoyment of an image of the pleasure to come either to himself or others.

Taking him all in all he seems to live a hard life. His ultimate desire, of course, is to bring the world up to his own level, and so on to perfect good: this, if effected, increases his pleasure from sympathy which has been at no time very great; but removes the pleasure of vanity, for he is again "one of the herd."

I have done with the question I proposed, and have barely touched my real subject. For it is evident that no final solution can be sought on this narrow ground of personal pleasure; the good man and his friends themselves call us off it, to engage in airy combat elsewhere. Just as they can seek support in argument, when they need it from a golden age long past, or from some aboriginal practice or custom long abandoned, so now they accuse the humorist of blindness alike to his own and the general interest, of enjoying himself while work is to be done, and of doing nothing to help forward that

> far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves,

and which consoles our brother Tennyson for the loss of his friend.

Plainly we can no longer restrict ourselves to the old line of argument, for we are in the presence of that sickliest of Nature's abortions, or most ironical of her freaks—the optimist. If a Domesday book were to be compiled for the world as it is, setting forth in a preamble all the laws that have been discovered regulating it, and summarizing the heritage of man, showing how it was obtained, and how it is divided, I can imagine no more instructive marginal note for the student of mankind than the word denoting that particular phenomenon —optimism. To account for its existence is harder, but the point where desire passes into conviction should be narrowly studied. There is a large region in thought where knowledge, in the ordinary sense, fails, but where man nevertheless pursues his speculations. He first defines Good, then desires it as defined, and lastly believes in it as desired. The multitude believe, not the truth, but what will be, or what they think will be, best for them. And it says much for the tangled state of Nature's handiwork, that even with this carte blanche in belief, they are unable to fix on an ideal that does not involve some unpleasantness, and are obliged to commit the solution of this difficulty to a higher ruler, contenting themselves for the present with the statement that all is for the best—a proposition always occupying the position of premise, never of conclusion. And this very view of theirs is Nature's masterpiece; just as she supplements the existence of faithless wives by the creation of a due

number of unsuspicious husbands, so she gives piquancy to a universe of inconsistencies by the creation of a man who believes in it.

This being the genesis of the optimist, his attitude through life is determined; every deformity that he cannot help seeing, if he be a student of Nature's anatomy, becomes at once the basis for an evangel.

Listen to the words of a brother of past times who was led by study to disbelieve in any life but this, and largely in the happiness of this as we know it. Of these two beliefs he composes a consolatory address to humanity in this wise:

"But for you, noble and great ones, who have loved and laboured yourselves not for yourselves, but for the universal folk, in your time not for your time only, but for the coming generations, for you there shall be life as broad and far-reaching as your love, for you life-giving action to the utmost reach of the great wave whose crest you sometime were" (Clifford, *Unseen Universe*).

Briefly, our brother Clifford derides the idea of a future life, but makes nervous haste to give assurance that it doesn't matter, for we really live in our descendants and those we benefit, and they in theirs, and so on for a good long way. He has no answer to two concise questions:

(1) Is life in itself good or bad?

(2) If good is not its cessation, near or distant, bad? If bad, whence the nobility of communicating it to others?

The florid sentence about this nobility of being the crest of the wave is yet necessary to gain any credence for his general doctrine.

The brothers, I am sure, will pardon me for this seeming digression: it is really necessary in the line of my argument. For here is at last the root of strife between the humorist and the man of virtue—to wit, that the last is at heart an optimist.

He has an intense conviction that human nature is high and holy, and he is made uneasy by the obscenity of the humorist; he is overwhelmed by the importance of life and the weightiness of its issues, and accordingly the humorous treatment of these things seems to him irreverent; he is eager to reach truth as a means of progress, and humour seems painfully independent of truth.

And I cannot answer his scruples about the legitimacy of humour save by, as I think, attacking his fundamental position. But I can put in no light plea for humour on my own behalf by adopting a different position.

A contemporary essayist has endeavoured to draw a distinction between two methods of doing good in the world. One, the commoner, is that of merely annulling or counteracting evil, as by visiting the sick, practising medicine, relieving distress, and so forth. The other and rarer may be called "*creative* good," and consists in the production of works of art in painting or music or good poetry, which carry those affected away from evil altogether, and give them something *positive*.

This distinction doubtless has something in it. For good and evil, as generally understood, have something essentially complementary about them; if heaven were attained and evil banished, it almost seems as if good would lose its meaning for us. Certainly the ordinary good, as employed in the technical phrase " to do good," would become meaningless, for there would be no evil to annul. And in this would be included some part of the effect of the creative good, for high-toned poetry is supposed to have a practical moral effect. There is left, however, that part of creative good which is purely aesthetic—a fine painting is something gained, it is said, and put on the credit side of the account for all time. I can understand this idea without wholly subscribing to it. For once remove every trait of ugliness, and even beauty, although still giving pleasure, loses interest in many ways; it is no longer a motive in life, and is regarded indifferently except by some creature perfectly passive. But if this claim for a positive value is advanced for beauty, how much more can it be urged on behalf of humour, to which it is difficult to find an opposite (except, on a physiological analogy, wonder), which is irrespective of good or evil, beauty or ugliness, and yet yields a genuine aesthetic pleasure!

Seeing then how true this is, I no longer despond under the dread sentence: " Ye cannot serve God and Mammon "—addressed, presumably, to persons anxious to serve both; on the contrary, I call God and Mammon

into court and accost them in something this way: "My Christian friends (for in spite of your determined mutual exclusiveness I intend to remain in amicable relations with you both), your noisy importunity harasses me; I have no intention of serving either of you. In dividing your territory and bondslaves, and in observing carefully that no one of them does double work, you have perhaps omitted to notice that a portion of the earth yet remains belonging to neither of you, and that men are to be found outside of your plantations. In fact, to be candid with you, you are in a fair way to become obsolete; your heaven and hell, once of terrible import, are already no more than stage-properties, raked out now and then by poets on a quest for antitheses. The man who has treated them best is Lucian. I must really ask you to leave me in peace, for I have observed a certain incongruity between the aims of men and their achievements which I should be sorry not to enjoy fully."

This is one position to be recognized, but there is another—that of one who believes that man is nothing, knows nothing, and has nothing to hope; who apostrophizes virtue in the words of Brutus: "O Miserable Virtue, thou art but a mere phrase, and I have followed thee as though thou wert a reality. Fate is stronger than thee." This man too can turn to humour for consolation. The problem of life is the problem of good and evil. The attitude of men towards it is various. To some it is indifferent. Some are overburdened and

crushed by it either because they have found it insoluble, or because their solution is unfavourable. For both these classes humour is a valuable drug—affording them escape from the problem of life. And that this escape is needful for many—indeed, it would seem, for anyone who sets himself to realize the problem—is shown by the hundreds who are rushing every minute into war, or monasteries, who go to the play, or to bed, who commit suicide, or enter trade, who become dissolute or religious. Leonardo da Vinci, full of the energy of the Renaissance, learned in all the science of the time and of exquisite skill in all the arts, attempted to guess the secret of the universe and failed. A generation of half-hearted fumblers is not likely to reverse his defeat. To these, however, humour has a good deal to offer; it is a pure aesthetic pleasure, unentangled, apparently, in the moral mazes which involve the appreciation of beauty and truth. Further, it is a pleasure whose intensity increases every day as society develops.

Greeks, rapt in the contemplation of beauty, gave it comparatively little attention, and hardly developed it at all. The progress it has made in modern times might almost convince us that it may become for us what beauty was to the Hellenic world, and so bring about another brief eclipse of the sun which shines on the evil and on the good, and sets them in painfully strong relief.

The metaphysical, rather than the scientific, aspect of humour has occupied me. It only remains to give point

to what I have said by defining more clearly the conditions of humour and its relation to morals.

The essence of humour and what constitutes it humour is generally known in treatises on the subject as incongruity. It is perhaps better called unexpectedness in its lower forms. Tickling, which causes laughter, is the unit of humorous perception. And the essential feature is shown by the fact that no one can tickle himself to laughter. In more complex forms its two principal features are isolation and contrast, both owing what is humorous in them to their unwontedness. For instance, a flour barrel, top-hat, pig, or man, conceived of in vacant space, becomes humorous—it is pilloried for laughter. So with contrast, a cockney in the Alps, a man "dressed up," and so on, are humorous from unaccustomed surroundings. And this being so, without further exposition it may be easily seen how society develops the humorous in the sense of creating artificial relations which may be broken through—relations massed under such names as titles, clothing, marriage, etiquette. Carlyle's naked Duke of Windlestraw is funny, for we are called on to realize dukedom apart from clothing. Now all these complex relations which society sets up afford scope for humour, but have another important feature, for it is about them that morality grows up and is matured. So that the man with a keen eye for humour in collecting materials or picturing situations for his hobby is incessantly obliged to regard

things from every point of view, and to go as far afield as possible in order to see if things are really as unlaughable as they are taken for at first sight, whether they are not much less adapted for their ends and much less complete than is commonly supposed. In this process he can hardly avoid a true and extended view of the moral universe. My favourite example is falsehood—a definite means adopted by someone to gain a definite end, and possessing no incongruity in his own mind, but which, when considered in relation to its real effects, or even to its forger's purpose, is ludicrously out of joint.

The gods would thus be in a position to appreciate the humour of human life, from their lofty view-point, unless they are supposed either to will or to foreknow the course of events when the element of surprise would be lost, and with it much of the humour. So perception of the humorous and perception of imperfection are closely allied. It may be asked why Nature gives less scope for humour than society, for natural relations and complexities are as numerous, and beget in us the same habit of thought. This is true, but besides the greater difficulty of disturbing these relations, Nature does not make the mistake of society in sacrificing the means to the end. Each natural object is an end in itself; the egg not only produces the owl, but is egg-shaped and white and smooth and beautiful. But the creations of man, especially in cities, are nothing apart from their end, so that an umbrella floating about, say, on the sea, and

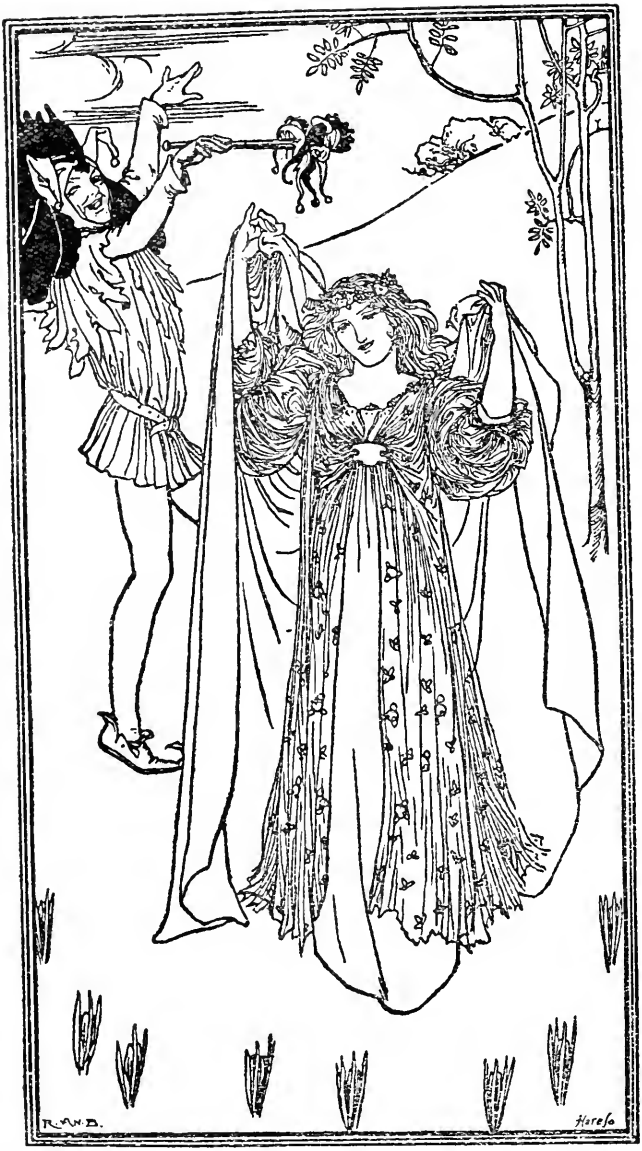
evidently not serving its purpose, is nothing. Nothing, I say, but here the humorist steps in and amends this; he contemplates it for a moment, enjoys the situation, and, by so doing, completes its destiny, rendering it ludicrous.

LITTLE PLAYS

THE RIDDLE

JAMES

RICHARD WHO WOULD NOT BE KING


R. ANNING BELL.
Horsley

THE RIDDLE

A PLEASANT PASTORAL COMEDY

Adapted from *The Wife of Bath's Tale*
as it is set forth in the Works of
Master GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Presented at Otterspool on
Midsummer Eve, 1895

Written by WALTER RALEIGH

To the FIRST WOMAN

Mother Eve,

Thou who didst not blench at the first question propounded in the Garden of Paradise, which was asked by the Devil and answered by thee; who gavest to man of the Tree, not, as the dotage of certain Rabbinical commentators doth allege, of the twigs of the Hazel, but rather of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, and he did eat; who, in the cool of the day, didst hide thyself amongst the trees of the garden;—to the memory of thy Speculative Intrepidity, of thy Private and Familiar Generosity, and of thy Dislike of Public Fame, this RIDDLE, *wherein the tastes of thy numerous and worthy posterity of daughters are investigated and unravelled, is dedicated with remote veneration by thy degenerate Great Grandson*

THE AUTHOR.

PERSONS OF THE COMEDY

KING ARTHUR, *King of Britain.*
SIR PHARAMOND, *a Knight of King Arthur's Court.*
SIR CALEPINE, *his friend.*
SIR PARIDELL, *a Knight newly returned from Foreign Courts.*
SIR GOLIAS, *a fat thirsty Knight.*
SIR EGLAMOUR, *an affected foppish Knight.*
THE COURT JESTER.
A Herald, Knights, Attendants, Falconers, etc.
THE QUEEN.
AN OLD WOMAN, *afterwards transformed, in love with* Sir Pharamond.
Ladies *of King Arthur's Court.*
Fairies, Elves, *and other Good People.*

THE RIDDLE

THE SCENE: *A Woodland Glade. The noise of horns is heard. Enter a company of knights,* SIR CALEPINE, SIR PARIDELL, SIR GOLIAS, SIR EGLAMOUR, *and others, with attendants, and the* Court Jester.

[*The knights sit in a group and drink;* CALEPINE *and* PARIDELL *walk to and fro, talking.*

Paridell.

IS this the place?

Calepine. It is, I know it well,
'Twas on this very spot, Sir Paridell,
The king gave judgement, in full audience,
That Pharamond should die.

Par. And what offence
Had he committed?

Cal. Falsely he defamed
A noble lady; all his heart inflamed
With jealousy, they said, for she had turned
A cold ear to the love wherein he burned;

Yet in the verdict none could find a flaw,
His head was forfeit by King Arthur's law.

Par. Lo, I have lived in courts of many a king
And many an emperor, but ne'er this thing
Have I beheld, that sentence should be passed,
And not made good; far otherwise, as fast
As the king spake in wrath the fatal word
The headsman plied his axe. Who ever heard
Of execution thus remote? You say
The Court was held a year ago to-day.

Cal. When the king's doom was given, our gracious Queen
And all her ladies knelt upon this green,
And begged the offender's life, that it should be
Delivered over to their lenity.
Their prayer was granted; then the Queen uprose
The sentence of her ladies to disclose,
And respited his life a single year
If he would come to-day and answer here
The question that they set him; which was this,
WHEREIN DO WOMEN FIND THEIR GREATEST BLISS?
This well might puzzle sages, 'twas beyond
The simple wit of poor Sir Pharamond.
He left the court and wandered far afield,
To try if travel might fresh wisdom yield.
To-day must he give answer, and abide
The test that shall his death or life decide.
His tardiness bodes ill.

Golias. Ye argue long,
This noble company demands a song.
Knights. A song! A song! A song!
Gol. A song of mirth;
By 'r Lady, there is grief enough on earth.

THE SONG

May he be hanged high on a tree,
Or fast bound to a post,
He that will not merry, merry be,
With a generous bowl and toast.

Chorus

Let him be merry, merry, merry there,
And we will be merry, merry here,
For who can know
Where we may go
To be merry another year,
Brave boys,
To be merry another year.

He that will not merry, merry be,
With a company of jolly boys,
May he be plagued with a scolding wife,
To confound him with her noise.
Chorus—*Let him be merry, etc.*

Gol. Is not this better than your mumping talk?
Cal. The birds cease singing when they see the hawk;

Death hovers o'er us, poising on the wing,
Who knows where he may strike?

Gol. Then drink and sing!
Perchance Sir Pharamond has found a clue
To this same riddle, and will answer true.
So warm with wine your thoughts that grief benumbs;
Care killed a cat!

Knights. See, where he comes! He comes!

[*Enter* SIR PHARAMOND, *travel-stained and weary. He salutes the company.*

Cal. I dare not bid thee welcome, till I hear
How thou'rt attended, whether Hope or Fear
Hath shown thy wandering steps the homeward way.
What issue had thy errand? Quickly, say.

Pharamond. Comfortless, hopeless. Though a man should run
From the bright orient to the setting sun,
And put this question unto all he meets,
'Twere the most profitless of idle feats.
I have travelled from the great *Mongolian* plain
To where the *Atlantic* bounds the realm of *Spain*,
From *Barbary* to snow-bound *Astrachan*,
And here I end as wise as I began.
I have asked them, sage and simple, rich and poor,

Christian and *Turk*, the *Scythian* and the *Moor*,
The Cham of *Tartary* and Prester *John*
What women most do set their hearts upon;
And each made answer gladly, with a show
Of telling secrets he alone did know.
At first this pleased me well; but, woe is me,
No pair of answers ever did agree.
So here I stand, undone, discomfited,
Teasing my wits in vain to save my head.

Jester. Now, a plague on this game of joyous demands, that sends a gentleman coursing round the world like a greyhound after a swallow! A man were better to stay at home and teach ducks to quack at his funeral.

Par. Among so many answers could you find
None to bring hope of comfort to your mind?
Your travelled observation should impart
Skill to descry the secrets of the heart.

Jester. Perchance Sir Knight of the sorrowful visage has travelled much and seen little, like Sir *Jonas* of old time in the belly of the whale, who spent the greater part of his observation in observing the pitiful fix he was in.

Cal. Some answer must be given; let us unite
Our efforts, haply we may guess aright.

Phar. Lend me your wits, my own are at a stand.
What shall I say?

1*st Knight.* Rich husbands!

2nd Knight. Dresses!

3rd Knight. Land!

Jester. The ten commandments!

Par. Praise for secrecy!

Cal. A pound of truth and tons of flattery!

Phar. Ah, miserable counsel! Had ye said
That they desire a man should lose his head
For their fair sakes, 'twere nearer to the mark.

Eglamour. It seems to me ye all are in the dark;
Will no one ask my counsel?

Phar. That will I.
Sir Eglamour, what think you?

[EGLAMOUR *pauses, looks wise, and struts about.*

Be not shy!
My life stands on the hazard.

Egl. What think you?
This cloak is not ill-cut—the cap is new,
A fancy of my own, designed in *France,*
I think it has some little elegance.

Phar. May rust and moth consume thy trashy gear
For sporting thus with death! What help is here?

Jester. Fie, fie, gaffer! Take a lesson in civility from King *Caradoc,* who, eating oysters with the *Pope* on Ash Wednesday, when he came to a bad oyster made no wry faces, but fell to praising the shells. Curse not the feathers because the flesh is rank! Mew! We can have no more of the cat but her skin!

Egl. Do you not take my meaning? Force me not
To be immodest!

Phar. Tell thy meaning, sot!

Jester. The meaning of Sir Eglamour is like the quality of modesty, the more you talk of it, the less there is. 'Tis ill looking for eggs in a mare's nest!

Egl. Give ear to me a moment, Sir Knight, and if I may do it without presumption, I will tell you how you may save your life. When the Queen and all her ladies are set, and the question put to you, as thus, What do women love best? or wherein do they take their chief delight? or what is their greatest pleasure? then you, standing silent like a baffled man at a loss for an answer, must ever gaze on me, and I, stepping forward, will smile upon the Queen, as thus [*smiling fantastically*], then will the Queen and all her ladies blush to be caught thinking of me. This long while it hath been matter for amazement how they dote on me. Then you still gazing on me, and I still smiling,—

Phar. Take thyself off, Sir Fop, or I shall beat thee inordinately!

Jester. Nay, gaffer, soft words! What says the proverb—*Better kiss a fool than be troubled by him?* This poor Sir Eglamour is ambitious of my calling, but he is young at the business.

Egl. Beating, say you? 'Tis a tyrannical world when a man must be beaten for telling the truth from

motives of sheer human kindness. Beating, forsooth! Alack-a-daisy! Never talk to me of beating! [*Exit.*

Jester. This is a pleasant grave-yard, gaffer, but the butterflies will not stay in it.

Phar. Now my sad remnant of existence wanes,
Grief blurs my thoughts, and deadly peril drains
My life-blood from me and confounds my sense;
Give aid, my friends, concoct some poor defence.

Cal. We have argued high and low, our bolt is shot;
Some wizard only could untie this knot.
[*To* GOL.] My hawk sights quarry, he begins to tower,
The Court holds sessions in another hour.

Gol. Some wizard? Now there comes into my thought
One gleam of comfort for a wit distraught.
Do they not call this lawn the *Fairies'* glade?

Cal. 'Tis so. The country yokels are afraid
To pass by night lest *Mab* and all her crew
Should capture them and pinch them black and blue,
Or prison them in dungeons underground
For seven long years, then loose them to be found
Asleep where first their steps were led astray;
And ever on the high Midsummer Day
The fairies hold full revel, in broad light,
Then, so the legend goes, the happy wight
Who sees them dance and breaks the magic ring,

May force their Queen to grant him anything
That he demands—

Gol. Look up, the sun rides high;
'Tis the Midsummer solstice, let us try
This last forlorn device; if we give place,
Sir Pharamond may find the fairies' grace.
Come then, Sir Knights, away!

Cal. These old wives' tales
Are broken reeds to trust, yet nought avails
That we can do. Then, Pharamond, good speed!
Heaven send the fairies help thee at thy need!

[*The* Knights *go out.*

PHARAMOND *stands lost in thought.*

Jester. Who was the first man, gaffer?

Phar. Gad-fly, what dost thou here?

Jester. Nothing, gaffer, but that I thought it was the fashion to ask riddles. Do thou answer me, 'twill get thee into the habit. I will begin with an easy one, and draw thee to perfection by degrees. Be not angry—who was the first man?

Phar. Thou art a good priest, fool, and dost stablish me in religious knowledge by way of shrift. Was it not *Adam*?

Jester. I know not. Who was the first woman?

Phar. Eve.

Jester. And what was *Eve's* straw hat made of? There is a harder one, and so we lift the novice higher.

Phar. Fool, thou troublest me. Leave me.

Jester. I feared thou would'st not know what *Eve's* straw hat was made of. 'Tis a question in millinery, wherein thou art no expert, for thou knowest neither what is on women's heads nor what is in them. But thou must persevere, we shall have thee a scholar ere long. Be not surly, gaffer, let me help thee.

Phar. And how does thy miserable folly help my foolish misery?

Jester. Bravely, gaffer; if folly were not to lend a hand to wisdom, neither of them two would ever get to *Tewkesbury.* Now *Eve's* straw hat was made of straw, take that from my folly; and what women do most desire is to be desired, save that for thine own wisdom. For there is no woman, be she young, be she fair, but doth secretly rejoice and chuck unto herself to be gazed upon with the eye of affection.

Phar. [*Throwing himself on the grass.*] Away, fool, away! Must thy babble be the last sound in my ears?

Jester. Good-night, gaffer! Sleep not too long, lest the fairies clap an ass's head on thee and give the Separator trouble to determine whether he is cutting the body off a donkey or the head off a man.

Here comes a candle to light thee to bed
And here comes a chopper to chop off the head
Of the last, last, last, last man. [*Exit.*

Enter the Old Woman, *dishevelled and hobbling. She takes her stand in the middle of the lawn and turns thrice, weaving magic circles with her staff. She whistles; the fairies creep out from the wood, at first one by one, then in troops, and surround her.*

A Dance of Fairies.

[*The fairies vanish.* Pharamond *approaches, and crosses the ring. The* Old Woman *rises and speaks.*

O. W. What seek'st thou here, Sir Knight, by whose command
Com'st thou to break the peace of fairy land?
This lawn is sacred to the Queen of Fays,
Take warning, save thy life, and go thy ways.

Phar. Fair speech, good mother, to a desperate man!
My life is forfeit 'neath King Arthur's ban.
I've wandered o'er the world to pay my debt,
And paid it will be, ere the sun shall set.
Call back your goblins, let them do their worst.

O. W. Do thou give answer to my question first,
What brings thee here?

Phar. It seems the common cry,
Answer my question, or at once you die.—
Nay, lady, spare an overburdened mind,
I seek an answer that I cannot find

To no such easy question as you ask;
Answer *my* question were the worthy task
For witches or for seers.

O. W. Propound it, son!

Phar. And idly cater for the elvish fun
Of all your dancing brood! Here lies my way,
The headsman's axe yields better comfort.

O. W. Stay!
Truth dwelt in woodlands in the Age of Gold,
And years bring cunning with them; trust the old!
Three hundred springs have laughed upon the leas,
Three hundred summers faded from the trees,
Since I was young with youth's simplicity.
Who knows but I may help thee?—tell it me.

Phar. In very truth, good mother, here it is:
I am a dead man if I tell amiss
Before King Arthur's court, this day convened,
The answer to the riddle of a fiend—
What thing is that which women most desire?
To cut this knot have I dared flood and fire,
Through many a court and many a continent,
Yet still have I returned the way I went,
Unhelped by clown or courtier, fool or knave.
If, by thy magic art, thou now canst save
My name from smirch, my body from despite,
My lands and fees shall all be thine of right.

O. W. Plight me thy hand in mine, and promise me
That anything I may require of thee
Thou wilt perform it, be it in thy power,
And I will save thee ere another hour.

Phar. Here is my hand, I swear with all goodwill!

O. W. Then I may boast, for all thy little skill,
Thy life is safe, for I will stand thereby.
The Queen herself will say the same as I,
And not the proudest lady of her court
Will dare to contradict thy true report;
The silence of them, widow, maid, and wife,
Shall prove my wisdom and preserve thy life.
Let us go forth at once, and in thine ear
The answer shall be told. Away with fear!

[*Exeunt.*

The Court of KING ARTHUR *enters, preceded by* Trumpeters, *the* KING *and* QUEEN, *then the* Ladies, *then the* Knights. *The* KING *and* QUEEN *are seated together, the* Ladies *of the court as assessors on either side, the* Knights *stand grouped on either side.*

Herald. OYEZ! OYEZ! OYEZ! This is the Court of King Arthur!

All wild beasts and creeping things are straitly charged in the name of our Sovran Lord the King to leave the court! All birds, dragons, and

other flying things are forbidden, under pain of death, to fly over the court while our liege Lord and Lady are in session. Let all those persons who have matters to transact before the court, and all those who are bound over to appear this day before our Sovran Lord the King or our Sovran Lady the Queen, now stand forward!

OYEZ! OYEZ! OYEZ! This is the Court of King Arthur!

[SIR PHARAMOND *enters and stands before the* KING *and* QUEEN, *facing them : the* Knights *give way on either hand.*

Phar. My Sovran Lord, my Lady without peer,
Ye noble Dames that are assembled here,
Maidens, that in the seat of judgement sit
By virtue of your gentleness and wit,
Wives, whom true faith empowers, and widows, ye
Whom old experience hath taught subtlety,
Lo, I have held my day; and here I stand,
For judgement at my Sovran Lady's hand.

Herald. OYEZ! OYEZ! OYEZ! Let all that are in the Court keep silence, that the cause between our Sovran Lady the Queen and Sir Pharamond may be well and truly tried!

Queen. Read him the question from the Rolls of State,
According to his answer is his fate.

Herald. [*Unrolls a large parchment and reads.*

THE COURT HEREBY DECREES THAT TWELVE
MONTHS HENCE
SIR PHARAMOND SHALL TELL IN AUDIENCE,
WHAT WOMEN MOST DO SET THEIR HEARTS UPON.
Give answer truly, for the year is gone.

Phar. My gracious Lady, universally,
Women desire to have sovereignty,
And to be absolute in power above
The men they sway, in policy or love.
This is the utmost goal of their desire,
Take now my life, if justice do require.

Queen. How say you ladies, has he spoken true?
What, none deny it? You, nor you, nor you?
Shall this blunt answer expiate his guilt?
Or shall his life upon this place be spilt?

1st Lady. Absolve him!

2nd Lady. Quit him!

3rd Lady. Spare the brazen-face!

1st Lady. Pardon the ribald!

2nd Lady. Pity!

3rd Lady. Mercy!

All the Ladies. Grace!

Queen. You see, Sir Knight, these ladies plead for you,
Perchance (I know not) thou hast spoken true.
Howbeit, we spare thy life. Let it be seen
Thou knowest to prize the mercy of thy Queen.

Phar. [*Kneeling.*] My gracious Lady, in all lowliness,
Saved by thy puissance from my black distress,

I thank and praise thee; [*rising*] now as free as air
Joyful I take my leave.

Old Woman. [*Coming forward with uplifted arm.*] Hold, stop him there!

1st Lady. Who is this person?

2nd Lady. Shocking!

3rd Lady. Turn her out!

O. W. Justice, my liege! 'Twas I that solved his doubt.
The answer that the noble Court has heard
And has approved, I taught him, every word.

1st Lady. Odious old scrub!

2nd Lady. Her finger in the pie!

3rd Lady. Not nice!

1st Lady. I wish we'd killed him!

2nd Lady. So do I!

3rd Lady. If some one doesn't stop her, I shall faint!

O. W. Give ear, my lady Queen, to my complaint!
This man has pledged to me his knightly oath
That whatsoe'er I ask him, nothing loth
He will perform, if it be in his power.
And now before the Court, this very hour,
Sir Knight, I pray thee, take me for thy wife,
For well thou knowest I have saved thy life.
Do I speak true or false?

Phar. Alas! too true!
That was the promise that I gave to you—

Fool that I am! But, lady, think again,
Make me not thus the wretchedest of men.
For love of Heaven choose some new request,
Take all my goods, or what you fancy best
Of lands or tenements; 'twere ill to save
A man from death and wed him to the grave.

O. W. My mind is fixed, not all that thou canst do
Will change it;—judge, O Queen, betwixt us two!
Lo! here I stand to vindicate my claim,
What does he see in me that he can blame?
I saved his life, does that deserve his hate?
Why am I deemed unworthy for his mate?
If I have faults they may in time amend.

Queen. Sir Knight, give answer.

Herald. Let the Court attend!

Phar. O Queen, my word is passed, and I will keep
The hasty vow I made. Yet silly sheep
Led to the slaughter are not asked to praise
The butcher's knife in many a glozing phrase.
Pardon my frankness, therefore, if I call
This beldame old and poor and therewithal
Ugly extremely, and of base degree.
Are these defects that may amended be?

1*st Lady.* Here is a gentle wooer.

2*nd Lady.* Does he well
Rashly to cheapen what he cannot sell?

3*rd Lady.* I like his plainness.

Herald. Silence in the Court!

Phar. My answer, therefore, lady Queen, is short,
I hate her, and will marry her to-day.

O. W. Now let me speak, O Queen, and I will say
My answer to the charges that he brings.
First, I am poor; they say the poor man sings
Even when he meets with robbers on the road;
And poverty hath ever been a goad
To honourable toil, a happy test
Whereby true friends are sifted from the rest;
Yea, a man learns, by poverty brought low,
Not his friends only, but himself to know.
And is not merry poverty as good
As groaning 'neath a cumbrous livelihood?
But I am old, he saith; should that not be
A reason for redoubled courtesy?
Wisdom and prudence are the wealth of age,
If youth would but accept the heritage.
Once more, I am the object of his scorn
Because I fortune to be lowly born.
Ah, if a Nobleman could but devise
A means to leave his virtue when he dies
Tied up with all his titles and estate,
Then were nobility of higher rate;
But if a noble's son do churlish deeds,
And flout the hand that helps him in his needs,
He is not gentle, be he Duke or Earl,
For base ungrateful actions make a churl.
Lastly, I am displeasing to the eye,

But many excellences come thereby.
Think of the famous women of old time,
Shrined in true history or poet's rhyme,
For whom the direst wicked deeds were done,
They all were Queens of beauty, every one.
Whole empires have been shattered, cities sacked,
And busy valleys left a lifeless tract,
Millions of men have perished for the kiss
Of *Cleopatra* or *Semiramis*;
Yet still in beauty take ye childish joy,
Remembering *Helen*, but forgetting *Troy*.
Nay, look on me with gladness; for this face
No towns shall burn, no champions court disgrace,
No kings shall agonize in mad despair,
Nor screams of widowed women rend the air.
Deceit here is not, what I am, I seem,
No painter's fantasy nor poet's dream:
The homely virtues, proper to the shade,
Dwell in this face and flourish undismayed.
Yet, lest this knight, O Queen, should curse his hap,
And taunt me that I caught him in a trap,
I can again employ the magic lore
Whereby I rescued him from death before.
Let him now choose if he will have his wife
Virtuous and faithful to him all her life,
But old and all uncomely; or endowed
With matchless beauty, but of spirit proud
Peevish and fickle, skilled in every wile,

Charming and faithless, beautiful and vile.
For one of these two let him give his voice,
And he shall have the lady of his choice.

[PHARAMOND *sighs, and falls into a brown study.*

Queen. The offer is a fair one. Come, Sir Knight.

Phar. O, gracious Queen, thou seest to what a plight
I am reduced; full well may I repine,
Squalor or wickedness must needs be mine.
Yet since this lady hath by fate been sent
To be my succour and admonishment,
I fain would have my sentence make it plain
That all her lesson has not been in vain.
Lady, I will not choose; but do protest
That I approve whiche'er to you seems best,
Do as you please, and I am satisfied.

O. W. Then do you utterly renounce your pride,
And here submit to my authority?

Phar. I do.

O. W. Now have I gained the victory,
Look up, be joyful, cast away despair,
And you shall have a bride both good and fair.

[*The* Old Woman *throws off her cloak and appears transformed. Sensation in the Court.*

Queen. Take her, Sir Knight, and let this day be spent
In feasting, revelry, and merriment.

King. Strike up the music! Though we are a King,

Our rule is brief, and frail, and wavering,
Compared with that great Sovranty whose sway
Hath been established in our Court to-day.
This night shall be resigned to mirth and sport,
In honour of the despots of our Court.
Ye Knights, take each your lady by the hand,
And modestly submit to her command.
In full procession to the palace go;
Ourselves will lead you. Let the trumpets blow!

JAMES

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

BY

WALTER RALEIGH

First acted in 1903

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

JAMES BAGSTER, *a commercial traveller.*

AUGUSTUS PECKWATER, *Fellow and Senior Tutor of Craven College, Oxford.*

CAMILLA DAVENTRY.

MARY, *in the service of* Henry Jolly, *of the Lamb and Flag Inn, Worcester.*

The Scene is laid at Worcester, in the Commercial Room of the Lamb and Flag Inn.

Time: the Present.

JAMES

The Commercial Room of the Lamb and Flag. A Dinner Table, with one place laid, at the back.

Enter JAMES BAGSTER.

James.

MARY! [*Sets down his bag, throws himself into an armchair.*] Mary!! If that girl doesn't come——! Mary!!!

Enter MARY.

Mary. You needn't shout so loud. A person hasn't hardly time to turn round.

Jas. A glass of brandy and water, Mary. And, Mary, not too much water. And—Mary—three lumps of sugar in it, for I am sick of this deceitful world.

Mary. Why, what's the matter, Mr. Bagster? You that was always so cheerful!

Jas. Bring the brandy! [*Exit* MARY. What's the use of talking to a girl about fancy shirtings? She wouldn't understand. I don't understand 'em myself. Seems as if no one cared to have a decent shirt to his back. I might as well have been travelling in the Garden of Eden for all the business I've done this day.

Modern love-making's a poor thing! A grey flannel shirt has as good a chance as pink stripes and a diamond pin. Women have no imagination; it's poetry and sentiment that fetches 'em—poetry and sentiment in a grey flannel shirt! I shall turn colportoor, and hawk the Holy Bible for all it's worth. Mary!

Enter MARY *with the brandy.*

Ah! that's better. Set it down, my dear. Is my dinner getting ready? You've laid my place, I see.

Mary. [*Embarrassed.*] That isn't for you, Mr. Bagster. It's for a lady, Sir, if you won't mind.

Jas. The deuce it is! What's a lady doing in the Commercial Room? And dining, too. I thought they lived on tea.

Mary. They do mostly, Mr. Bagster. But this one was very partickler. She wouldn't go into the Coffee Room, not on no account. She said she'd been deceived in her own sex, and didn't want never to see them again. So when she ordered dinner, I thought I'd better put her here—with your permission, Sir.

Jas. Well, put me beside her. If she doesn't like women, she can't object to men. It's a poor world—there are only two sorts. Perhaps she'll smile on James Bagster, the Unsuccessful Traveller in Fancy Shirtings. What's she like?

Mary. She's a real lady, Mr. Bagster. Never asked no questions, and ordered me about quite easy and kind,

just as if she was in her own house. Not bad-looking, either. There's something mysterious about her, for she came alone, and when I tell her about the Sights, the Cathedral, and the Potteries, and the Floral Fête, she doesn't listen. But she's quite pleasant-spoken, only rather nervous-like.

Jas. When she wants dinner, show her in here; James Bagster will do his modest best. Pleasant speech is his profession. No [*to* MARY, *laying the table*], put me opposite her. Why should I be ashamed of my face? It has saved me before now.

A Voice. [*Off the stage.*] Waitress! Waitress!

Enter AUGUSTUS PECKWATER.

Peck. Waitress! The Coffee Room is sadly draughty! Will you be so very kind as to lay me a place here?

[MARY *is already laying a place.*

Yes, that will do nicely. And bring me the *Menu à la carte.*

Mary. I'll bring you what you please, Sir. But I'm laying this place for this gentleman here.

Peck. Very well: the one opposite will do.

Mary. That's for a lady, Sir.

Peck. A lady! Dear, dear, how terribly awkward! But, no doubt it is an elderly lady?

Mary. No, Sir, quite young. But I can easily lay you another place, if this gentleman don't object.

Peck. Well, I suppose I must let you. Dear, dear! How very tiresome!

Jas. [*From his chair.*] Excuse me, Sir; what's the matter with the lady?

Peck. [*Starting.*] I beg your pardon, Sir. Perhaps the lady is your wife!

Jas. No, Sir, she's not my wife. But she don't bite, I believe, and she won't prevent you eating your dinner.

Peck. Whether she prevents me eating my dinner or not is a question on which it will hardly be profitable for us to enter. I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance.

Jas. [*Rising.*] Don't mention it. My name's James Bagster, Sir, representing the firm of Bleach and Tatters. Thirty-seven years of age, unmarried, resident at Acacia Grove, Manchester. Here's my card. Twelve stone ten, Sir, at your service.

Peck. [*Pocketing card.*] Well, well, well; thank you. When one is in Rome I suppose one must do as Rome does. [*To* MARY.] At what hour is dinner?

Mary. The lady asked for dinner at seven, Sir.

[*Exit* MARY.

Peck. It is now twenty-seven and a half minutes past five. That will hardly leave one time for one's usual constitutional. Personally, I am accustomed to take a fair amount of walking exercise in the afternoon.

Jas. So am I. *And* in the morning. And, if the floral designs don't buck up, I shall soon be on the road all night.

Peck. Ah! you also believe in active exercise?

Jas. It don't matter what I believe in. Messrs. Bleach and Tatters believe in active exercise, and when they ask for it they see that they get it. I'm merely the Executant. Might I ask you, Sir, what's your line? No offence, I hope?

Peck. None in the world. The Great Western is my line. When I say "my line"—of course I do not exactly own it, but, as I dare say you know, it is the line most patronized by residents in Oxford, by the Senior Members of the University as well as by those who are still *in statu pupillari.*

Jas. Whew! So it is! [*Confidentially.*] If you'll allow me to say so, you did that first-rate. Music-hall business fairly brisk? Seems to me it's generally not much good except in the big money-making centres. But Oxford's a go-ahead sort of a place, no doubt.

Peck. We should hardly venture, I fear, to describe it in those terms. We do not pride ourselves on being "up to date," to use the odious modern slang. And I personally have but little knowledge of the music-halls: our young men are not encouraged to frequent them.

Jas. Drapery business, I presume. I don't get further south than Leamington, or I could show you something you'd really like. How's Clipper's patent for detachable cuffs doing with you?

Peck. It is not doing anything with us, presumably for the reason that we have nothing whatever to do with *it.* I am afraid there is an almost complete misunder-

standing between us. I belong to the academical world —indeed, to be perfectly exact, I may say that I am a Member of the University of Oxford. I am afraid I did not make this clear.

Jas. My mistake. No doubt that keeps you busy.

Peck. [*Smiling tolerantly.*] Well, hardly. Mere membership of the University is not in itself an employment. But I am also Fellow and Senior Tutor of my College.

Jas. *Now* I'm with you. Juvenile department, eh? Well, it's wonderful what's being done for the boys and girls of this age. They're fed better, and they're dressed better, and no doubt they're taught all manner of useful things. It's wonderful. We're all at it. I put a shirt or blouse on the body, so to say, and you put a polish on the mind, and we turn 'em out in their thousands to be ornaments of Society. [*Taking his hat.*] Excuse me, Sir, for a moment; I must wire to my firm before the office closes. [*Exit* JAMES.

Peck. *This* comes of going to the smaller class of hotel for reasons of privacy. I suppose one must go through with it. If the lady is a comparatively educated person, dinner will be a terrible ordeal. One must do what one can to protect her. And I have so much to think of! [*Rings bell.*

Enter MARY.

Peck. Do you happen to know how far it is from here to Camberwell Lodge—Mr. Patmore Daventry's place?

Mary. Well, Sir, I'm not rightly sure. We never see them here. When they come into Worcester they mostly go to the Cup o' Tea—the Temperance Hotel, I mean, Sir. I believe it's a matter of about five mile, Sir. Very curious gentleman, Mr. Daventry, Sir, if all accounts are true.

Peck. I have no recollection of asking you for your opinions concerning the character of Mr. Daventry.

Mary. Beg pardon, Sir, I'm sure. I didn't know the gentleman was a friend of yours.

Peck. I should hardly be justified in asserting that he is precisely a friend of mine. In a certain sense he is rather a relative. In short, when one is engaged to be married to a man's youngest daughter, one naturally cannot with propriety listen to idle and frivolous criticisms on his character. I mention this merely as a warning to you. Will you have the goodness to order a closed brougham to be ready for me here at ten o'clock to-morrow morning, to take me to Camberwell Lodge? It is most important that it should be punctual. Perhaps it would be better to say 9.45, to allow for unavoidable accidents.

Mary. Very good, Sir.

Peck. Have you taken a small jug of hot water to my room?

Mary. Yes, Sir.

Peck. And closed all the windows, leaving only an aperture not exceeding four inches at the top?

Mary. Yes, Sir.

Peck. Then perhaps one had better get ready for dinner. Let this be a lesson to you not to form hasty judgements with regard to contemporaries.

Mary. I'll try, Sir. [*Exit* PECKWATER. Well, here's a go! Who'd have thought that he was fit to walk out with a young lady, let alone marry her! Not much of a Bank-holiday for her, I should say!

Enter CAMILLA.

Cam. They told me dinner was laid here. [*Looking at table.*] I thought I was to have dinner alone?

Mary. Yes, Miss, I'm very sorry, Miss, but the private room's being painted, Miss, so I thought perhaps you wouldn't mind having dinner in here. There's only *two* gentlemen, Miss, if you don't mind, Miss.

Cam. No, why should I mind? It's better than the Coffee Room, anyhow. May I stay here till dinner-time?

Mary. I'm sure, anywhere you please, Miss. And Mr. Jolly says will you please put your name in the Visitors' Book. [*Opens Visitors' Book and presents to* CAMILLA.]

Cam. I'd rather not. Won't it do when I go away? [*Looking at book, in alarm, suddenly.*]—Why, what's this? Are all these people staying in the hotel?

Mary. No, Miss; only the last dozen or so, Miss. Here's Mr. and Mrs. Todgers, they left for Stratford-on-Avon this morning, Miss—for the Mary Corelli Jubilee,

Miss. Mr. Wotherspoon, he's gone to London, Miss; a very nice gentleman, Mr. Wotherspoon, Miss——

Cam. Yes, yes—but these others at the bottom of the page?

Mary. Oh, *they're* here all right enough, Miss. Mr. Bagster and Mr. Peckwater—that's the two gentlemen having dinner with you, Miss.

Cam. Oh, *what* shall I do? I can't dine here! I can't stay here! Everything is impossible!

Mary. La! Miss, don't take on so. I can bring you up a bit of dinner in your room, if you'd rather.

Cam. No, no. I can't stay here a minute! Pack my things; call a cab at the back door; take the bill up to my room; bring me a Railway Guide—Listen! [*A step is heard in the passage, the handle of the door behind the screen is turned.*] Oh! There he is! [*Falls into arm-chair, and buries her face in her hands.*]

Enter JAMES BAGSTER.

Jas. [*Looking first at* CAMILLA *and then at* MARY.] Lady in pain? Can I be of any use?

Cam. [*Looking up.*] Thank Heaven! It's not that dreadful Mr. Peckwater! [*Rising.*] Perhaps there's still time! I must fly from here! Oh, where shall I go?

Jas. If I may advise you, Madam, I would stay where you are! If you don't object to any one now in the room, the room shall stay as it is. If you do, any of us can clear out.

Cam. Oh, but *he* may come in at any moment! They'll bring him his dinner here!

Jas. Not if you'd rather not, Madam. Who is this villain?

Mary. It's the gentleman you were talking to, Sir. *He* couldn't hurt a fly. He's cleaning up for dinner.

Jas. He offends this lady, and he must not be left at large. Look here, Mary. Go at once to Mr. Peckwater's room—if that's his name. Unless he has moved the key, it's outside the door. Turn it very gently, and conceal it under the mat. Come down and tell me when you've done it. [*Exit* MARY.

Meantime, until he is secured, Madam, no one shall enter this room.

Cam. Oh, thank you, thank you. But he's sure to get out later, and I must think what to do. I'm ashamed to behave like this, but if you only knew!

Jas. Any confidence you put in me, Madam, shall be respected. I will do what I can.

Enter MARY.

Mary. I've locked him in. He's brushing his clo'es. I don't think he's cleaned up yet. Oh, what'll Mr. Jolly say?

Jas. I'll talk to your master. Now, Mary, you must go on guard. When the gentleman begins to knock, come and tell us again.

Mary. *He* won't knock; he'll yell as if the house was on fire. Oh, what'll Mr. Jolly say? [*Exit* MARY.

Cam. Sir, you have a kind face, and I have no one to help me. He must have known that I was coming here, though I told no one, not even my sisters. If I go anywhere else, he'll come and order dinner there. What *am* I to do?

Jas. You are to sit down here, Madam, and to tell me, as clearly as you can, what it is that brings you here, and what is your objection to the gentleman imprisoned upstairs.

Cam. Oh, I hate him, and his voice, and his learned ways, and his silly little conceited airs. He's just like an old maid, and—and—and—I'm engaged to be married to him! Oh, do you think he can get out?

Jas. Not, I trust, till we have made proper arrangements for him. Where do you live?

Cam. At Camberwell Lodge. It's not at Camberwell, but my father called it Camberwell because Ruskin and Browning lived at Camberwell. It's about five miles from here.

Jas. Why not go home?

Cam. But he's going to get me there! He's only on his way just now. They're all against me there. They made me get engaged to him. Besides, I've just run away from there.

Jas. It's going to be rather a complicated business, I'm afraid. Would you mind telling me how all this trouble began?

Cam. It began long before I was born. My father's

always been mad on culture: he has quite a kind heart, he really has, but he thinks there's no one in the world like authors and professors and people of that sort. So ever since I can remember we've all belonged to Browning Societies, and Home Reading Unions, and Live and Learn Leagues; and I collected autographs, and Ariadne (that's my eldest sister) made a Mrs. Humphry Ward Birthday Book. And we've always gone to Extension Lectures, and had the lecturers to tea. Some of them were quite like ordinary human beings; they made jokes, and laughed at them themselves. But Ariadne said they were only faint reflections of the real thing, and that all the most elevating people stayed quietly in Oxford, and didn't extensionize. So she got my father to send her to the George Eliot Hostel, and she got on splendidly there, and was made a lecturer, and then she had me up to stay with her for a fortnight. That's how it all began.

Jas. And where did the unfortunate gentleman upstairs come in?

Cam. Oh, he came in almost every day; and Ariadne said his lectures were *most* wonderful, and that even when he coughed, in between the words, his cough was a *revelation.* And he told her that I was like Dante's Beatrice, and that he had always longed for an object of worship whose image he could enshrine in his heart, and whose character he could mould to his ideal. That was me. And I suppose I was stupid; at any rate, I

didn't in the least realize what was going on, until Ariadne told me that he had proposed, and that she had accepted for me. She said it was an enormous honour, and that he was a most beautifully reverent lover, like Michael Angelo. So she talked me over, and when I said I didn't think him good-looking, she said I was base and material, and that I must learn to live on a higher plane. But now that he's coming to stay in the house and mould my character, I feel I can't bear it. I should hate to be moulded. So I ran away this morning. I'm twenty-one and I have some money, but I don't know what I'm to do. Can't you help me?

Jas. I'm a plain, straightforward man, Madam, and perhaps I don't understand the delicacies of high society. But if I were in your place, I'd give orders to have that gentleman let loose, and then I'd tell him to go away.

Cam. Oh, but that's impossible. He's a Tutor of a College. If I were to be rude to a Tutor of a College, my father would think I was mad. And he really is dreadfully clever. He knows all about the mysteries of Eleusis.

Jas. Well, I suppose they do take some knowing. But if there's anything in Eloosis more mysterious than the sudden fluctuations in the demand for cotton shirtings—I should be glad to hear of it.

Cam. Oh, my sister would hate it if you talked to her like that!

Jas. I don't want to talk to her. But why don't you

go home and explain it all to her, and tell her that you've changed your mind?

Cam. No, no, it would never do. You don't understand. I suppose, going about in business, you only talk to men. Men are perfectly easy to talk to—at least, most men. But women keep on thinking of something you didn't say—at least, most women. If I threw him over, the whole family would feel the disgrace. They would never, never forgive me.

Jas. Then I see nothing for it but to make him throw you over.

Cam. Don't you think that would be rather mean?

Jas. If you won't stay in the house, Madam, you must go out either by the front door or by the back. Besides, it seems you didn't get into this fix of your own free will.

Cam. Well, I should never have done it if my sister hadn't kept on at me, and told me it would all come right. But I did say—Oh, how could I bring myself to say it! And I should have to be nasty to him for weeks before he would notice. He never looks at you while he talks.

Jas. It's a ticklish job, but it ought to be dealt with in less time than a week. I'm a plain man, Madam, as I think I told you. You have honoured me with your confidence, and I'm bound to do my best for you. The question is—if I'm to try, will you trust me, and do as I tell you?

Cam. Oh, yes, yes. But are you going to let him out?

Jas. Not for a minute or two. My name's James Bagster; for this evening it will be necessary that, whenever you speak to me, you should call me James.

Cam. Well, if you don't mind.

Jas. I do not. May I ask, what is your name?

Cam. Camilla—Camilla Daventry. It's after something in Virgil.

Jas. Thank you. Now, if you'll kindly go to your room for a bit, I'll have him down and get him into order. Come back in about ten minutes.

[*Going to the bell.*

Cam. Wait, wait! I don't know in the least what I'm to do. What shall I say to him when we meet?

Jas. Say? Say anything that comes into your head. If it's something cheerful and pleasant, so much the better, for he's a bilious bird, and we shall need a pick-me-up. If he asks you any questions, refer him to me. Don't answer him yourself; refer him to me. I'm James, remember—James, your friend. And whatever I tell him, you must say that's so. Oh, most of it will be so; there's no call for lies. If we have any luck, we ought to get the thing under weigh, and then you must help yourself. Now I think we're ready. Cheer up!

[*Rings the bell.*

Cam. It's awful; but I'll think of Joan of Arc and Boadicea, and I'll come down in ten minutes.

[*Exit* CAMILLA.

Enter MARY.

Jas. That gentleman may be let out. Is he restless?

Mary. No, Mr. Bagster, Sir, but I think he's changing all his clo'es and putting on a white choker. He hasn't tried the door yet.

Jas. Make haste, then. Go and tell him that I hope he'll be my guest at dinner. [*Exit* MARY. That'll frighten him, and bring him down in a twitter.

[*Reads the newspaper, and whistles softly to himself.*

Enter PECKWATER.

Peck. Hm. Hm. I beg your pardon, Sir.

Jas. It's granted. I hope, Sir, you'll do me the honour to take a bit of dinner with me—pot-luck, you know, and something to wash it down.

Peck. Er—er—er—That was the very matter concerning which I desired to speak to you. I understand from the waitress that you wish me to dine as your guest—

Jas. Right O! Seems unusual, I dare say. But with us gentlemen travellers, you know, we're always on the jog, and the Commercial Room's pretty well the only home we've got. So if you'll excuse ceremony, and do the friendly, I'd take it handsome on your part. Besides, the young lady that's to dine here says she knows you quite well in Oxford.

Peck. That is utterly impossible. There must be some dreadful mistake. No young lady knows me quite

well in Oxford;—that is to say, none who is at all likely to be found casually dining on an occasion like the present.

Jas. Well, never mind; no bones broken, even if you're not the man she takes you for. And as you've done me the honour to come in here for dinner, you're my guest, in a manner, already. Come, Sir, I'll take no refusal. It ain't often that book-learning graces my humble board, and I'm proud of my luck.

Peck. Dear, dear, what *would* they think at Camberwell Lodge, if they found me here—dining with a young female, too. These brazen modern Amazons ought not to be permitted to go about alone—it is most embarrassing. What would the Common Room say? [*To* JAMES.] It is to be hoped you do not think, Sir, that one does not fully recognize your kindly intentions. But although it would no doubt be inconvenient to have separate tables, I really must insist, with all the emphasis at my command, on separate accounts.

Jas. Well, have it as you like. Anyhow, you'll crack a bottle with me? What's your lotion?

Peck. I beg your pardon; I am very much afraid I do not rightly apprehend your meaning. The only form of lotion that I am in the habit of using is a preparation for allaying irritation in the throat.

Jas. Same here. "The gargle, to be taken with, before, and after food." You're a downy one, you are; you know all about it. Ah, here's the young lady!

Enter CAMILLA.

Peck. Camilla!! Miss Daventry!!! What has happened? How came you here?

Jas. Oh, my friend, I thought you were cutting it a bit too thick! Don't know no young lady in Oxford, eh? Oh, oh, oh, you're a downy one, you are!

Peck. [*To* CAMILLA.] You will kindly pay no attention whatever to these coarse pleasantries, but inform me at once—what has occurred? Is all well at home? Is your father with you? Where is your sister?

Cam. What! aren't you glad to see me?

Peck. In a certain sense, I am, of course, delighted, delighted. But I could have wished that we had met elsewhere than in the Commercial Room of a second-rate hostelry. How came you here?

Cam. [*To* JAMES.] How did I come here, James?

Peck. James!!!

Jas. Young lady came in a cab, I believe. She's going to have dinner with us.

Peck. I cannot possibly countenance any such thing. [*To* CAMILLA.] Are you alone, and unprotected?

Jas. Of course not. There's me to protect her, and you, and, if that's not enough, we can call the landlord. But I don't think we need bother him just now, till the enemy heaves in sight over the dim horizon.

Peck. There are times when ribald jesting of this description is most unacceptable. [*To* CAMILLA.] Will you,

or will you not, return with me at once to the shelter of your father's house?

Cam. What do you think, James?

Peck. James!!!

Jas. Well, since you both ask for my opinion, I should say that the best thing we can do is to have dinner first. There's no dodging dinner. Sooner or later you've got to have it. Friends are fleeting, and love's a dream, but dinner's a reg'lar fixture in this vale of tears. So the best thing to do is to sit down quiet and enjoy it.

Peck. [*Bitterly.*] Ah, no doubt that is *your* view.

Jas. [*Cheerfully.*] Everything I say's my view. What's the young lady's view?

Cam. I think it would be rather fun to have something to eat. It must be almost ready, and if we went away now wouldn't it be rather rude?

Jas. The honourable member has expressed my sentiments to a nicety. So let's cut the cackle and proceed with the business of the evening.

Peck. I cannot lend the support of my presence to what promises to be a mere orgy of vulgarity. Once more, Camilla, will you dissociate yourself from this *person* and return with me to your father's house?

Cam. Oh, Mr. Peckwater, you mustn't be unkind to James. He's been very kind to me when I was in trouble. You ought to be thankful to him for befriending me. I don't think you're at all generous—there!

Peck. I find myself totally unable to express my

emotions. Here are you, a delicately nurtured girl, proposing to *feast,* in a *low inn,* with one who, whatever trivial services he may have rendered you, is neither more nor less than a vulgar itinerant tradesman. Can you explain this?

Cam. It was only because I wanted something to eat —wasn't it, James?

Peck. Is that the only excuse you have to offer? I await your reply.

A pause.

Peck. In that case, I have my position and influence to consider. One cannot drag one's College through the mud. I am thankful that I have had my eyes opened on the threshold of a step that would have been irretrievable. I am spared the necessity of making the acquaintance of your father. I shall write at once to that designing woman, your sister, explaining and justifying my action. I have been deceived by her, and it will be my duty to bring her, if possible, to a sense of the depravity of her conduct. As for you, I can benefit you no further; I leave you to your own meditations and to the protection of this highly refined person. [*Exit* PECKWATER.

A pause. JAMES *laughs guiltily.*

Cam. I'm really rather sorry for him. But I'm sure Michael Angelo can't have been a bit like that.

Jas. Went off like a damp squib, didn't he? And

now let's see whether he's done any harm. In the first place, where's he going?

Cam. Oh, he's sure to go straight back to Oxford. He doesn't know my father, and I'm certain he wouldn't like to go on there now.

Jas. So much the better. Then we've got him back into his box again. But he'll write to your sister.

Cam. I'm not afraid of that. He's sure to write a perfectly horrid letter. Besides, I can get round her far better than he can. She's dreadfully managing, but she's very fond of me.

Jas. [*With conviction.*] I should think she was.

Cam. Oh, have you met her?

Jas. No, I haven't had that privilege. But I'm a very quick judge of character at a distance. So she'll listen to you, will she?

Cam. Yes; you see, I shall be there, and he'll only write letters, and that's always something.

Jas. Yes, I see that. There's a lot of difference between you there, and him writing letters, and in my humble opinion the difference is not in his favour. But now we mustn't get you into a scrape. Do you think they've missed you yet? Wouldn't it be wise to go home at once?

Cam. No, I don't think they've missed me. I often go long walks and come home quite late. But I ought to go home soon. Oh, James—Sir—how can I thank you?

Jas. Better wait and see if there's anything to thank me for. How about your father?

Cam. If my sister's all right, he'll be perfectly easy. He doesn't care much about real life. He's working out the Bacon theory of Shakespeare.

Jas. I see. Well, with your permission, I will give my last orders, before I resign command. [*Rings bell.*

Enter MARY.

Gentleman gone?

Mary. Yes, Mr. Bagster, Sir; he's gone off in a dreadful tantrum to try to catch the 6.31. Left his clo'es and all, for me to pack and send to Oxford.

Jas. Good luck to him! Order a cab for this lady at once. And bring her some dinner as quick as you can.

Cam. Oh, but *you* must have dinner with me. It'll be all right if I start in half an hour.

Jas. Very well. [*To* MARY.] Dinner for two inside ten minutes; if you take eleven, the Lamb and Flag's seen the last of me. [*Exit* MARY.

If it isn't asking too much, Madam, I'll be glad to hear in a day or two whether all goes well. I shouldn't like to think I'd made a mess of it. If you'll honour me by dropping a word to the people here, I should feel grateful. I'm round here every few weeks.

Cam. It's I who am grateful, eternally grateful, to you. You mustn't go off like this. Of *course* you must come and see us when you're back in Worcester. Prom-

ise! And you really mustn't call me Madam. I didn't mind a bit calling you James.

Jas. I'm a plain man, Miss Daventry, and a commercial traveller by profession. You'll excuse my saying that I don't think your relations would value a call from me—not in the social line. I've been kept hard at work, and outside the papers I haven't had much time for fancy reading.

Cam. It's true that Ariadne generally talks of books the whole time. She's so tremendously clever. That's what made her admire Mr. Peckwater. But you can't think, Mr. Bagster, what a comfort it's been to me that you're not in the least clever. I don't really know what I should have done without you. And of course if Ariadne came to realize how you saved me, she'd want to make a friend of you. Why, you've done more for me than my family ever did; they only got me engaged to Mr. Peckwater, and you got me away from him. You *must* come and see us. I owe my happiness to you.

Jas. Well, Miss Daventry, if your sister invites me, of course I shan't refuse. But I've never known much good come of mixing drinks or classes. That's where it is; you're a very highly educated young lady, and I'm a commercial traveller. We travellers meet all sorts of people and all kinds of luck while we're on the road—good and bad—hither and thither. I've sometimes been so hard hit that I've felt inclined to lie down in the nearest ditch and die. It's a poor life, but we have our

compensations from time to time, and anyhow, I've been a King this night. I shan't ever forget that you trusted me, and if you'll allow me, I want, before you go, to drink to your health and happiness.

CURTAIN

RICHARD

WHO WOULD NOT BE KING

A PUPPET PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY

WALTER RALEIGH

1911

RICHARD

WHO WOULD NOT BE KING

ACT I

A room in the Palace. The KING *and the* QUEEN *are seated at breakfast.*

Queen.

Y love!

King. My angel!

Queen. But, my love, you do not eat your egg.

King. My angel, I take no joy in my egg.

Queen. O Henry! The egg is a good egg!

King. My angel, the egg is perfect. It is a hundred miles above any possible suspicion. But I take no joy in it. I am troubled in my mind.

Queen. O dear, O dear! You are troubled in your mind. I am sure the Archbishop has been talking to you.

King. No, my angel, it is not that. He has only said the usual things. But I have been thinking.

Queen. O dear, O dear! You look so pale. You should not think. Consider what an important King

you are, even if you never thought at all. What have you been thinking?

King. I have been thinking how lonely and dull it is here in this splendid palace.

Queen. Lonely! Henry, you have me! And I am sure it cannot be dull, for the dancing dogs are ordered for to-morrow.

King. I know, my angel, and they ought to be enough. But I cannot help thinking of Dick. He is the most interesting person I ever met.

Queen. O, I might have known it was that dreadful Dick! How *can* you call him interesting? He was so rough and common, and he waved his arms up and down like a railway signal. I was so glad when he went home.

King. Yes, yes, my angel; of course you are right. But I cannot help thinking of Dick. He was so hearty and real. I wonder if we could get him to come back.

Queen. O, this is terrible! [*She rises, and walks up and down in agitation.*] That wretched Dick is spoiling our lives. The ladies are all quite silly about him; it is nothing but Dick, Dick, all the day long. They have made a Bag-pudding Club; and instead of attending to the Tonic Sol-fa system, they are all making horrid puddings from morning to night. But I never thought that *you* would be so silly. O dear, O dear!

King. Sit down by me, my angel, and let us try to think. Something must be done.

Enter the LORD HIGH GOLDSTICK.

Lord High Goldstick. The ladies present their duty, Sire, and they desire to know if you would graciously judge the puddings.

King. Let them come in. I will judge the puddings.

[*Exit* LORD HIGH GOLDSTICK.

King. Cheer up, my angel. Perhaps the puddings will please Dick.

Re-enter the LORD HIGH GOLDSTICK.

Lord High Goldstick. I forgot to say, Sire, the Prime Minister is in the ante-chamber. He desires to know if you would be graciously pleased to make a thousand Dukes. He says the matter is urgent, and the Dukes must be ready by to-morrow, or they will be no use.

King. Tell him to call again. I am judging the puddings. [*Exit* LORD HIGH GOLDSTICK.

O my angel, I am so excited! Suppose the puddings should please Dick! What a day that would be for all of us!

Enter the Ladies, *in cooking-aprons, with puddings.*

The Ladies. Here they are!

First Lady. Mine's the biggest!

Second Lady. Mine's the blackest!

Third Lady. Mine's got most plums in it!

[*The* KING *inspects the puddings.*

King. O me! I am the unhappiest of men! A cloud is on my mind!

Queen. For shame, Henry! Here you are, in your splendid palace, with your exquisitely dressed wife, and all these puddings.

King. A cloud is on my mind. I cannot judge the puddings.

The Ladies. How terrible! A cloud is on his mind. He cannot judge the puddings. [*They jump about.*

Queen. I do not understand. How is it that you cannot judge the puddings? [*She jumps about.*

King. If you will all sit down, I will tell you. While you are jumping about I cannot explain what I feel. [*They sit down on the ground.*] Now I will tell you. A pudding is a real thing. I cannot judge real things. I do not know enough about them. I have never been taught about real things. I think all your puddings are very wonderful, and I believe I could eat them. But I cannot judge them.

Queen. Nonsense, Henry. You know as much about them as anyone else.

King. My angel, consider the sort of life I have led. It has all been like a dream. There is the Prime Minister; he is a dear good fellow, and he wants me to make a thousand Dukes. When I say a man is a Duke, he *is* a Duke. But puddings are not like that. What I say about them does not alter them in the least. What I say may be wrong, for I do not know about puddings. We must find someone who knows.

The Ladies. [*Rising and jumping about.*] We must find someone who knows!

Queen. I think you have all gone mad. We have all eaten a great many puddings. I am sure they are not very nice.

King. Yes, my angel, we have all eaten a great many puddings. But we did not know what we were eating. O, if only Dick were here!

The Ladies. O, if only Dick were here! He knows what he is eating! He knows! [*They kneel to the* KING.] O Sir, will you be graciously pleased to send for Dick?

King. I would send for him at once, but I do not know whether he would come.

Queen. It is quite certain he would not come. He is very rude, and he does not care a bit.

King. I will offer him the Princess, and half my kingdom.

Queen. I don't think he likes Mary. When she played the banjo to him he waved his arms and ran away.

The Ladies. Yes, and he ran away from us! We were all perfectly sweet to him.

King. Very well, then. I will not trouble about Mary, but he must have something instead, so I will offer him the whole of my kingdom.

Queen. Of course you know best, my love. You have a kind generous heart, but there will be a great many arrangements to make, all very troublesome and fussy.

King. Yes, my angel, but think what a pleasure to make them. Making plans for a holiday is the most

enjoyable thing there is. O yes, I will send at once, and offer Dick my kingdom. He can be Richard the Fourth. Long live King Richard!

The Ladies. Long live King Richard!

Queen. My own impulsive pet, are you not too hasty? What makes you think that Dick will come? When you last sent for him, he took no notice. He is so very uncouth. Why, you said yourself that when you spoke to him, he only stood in the corner and made faces.

King. My sweet angel, I myself will go and see Dick. He has brusque manners, but his heart is pure gold. When he made faces at me, I had nothing particular to say to him, so he was trying to make things less awkward. Now I am going to offer him my kingdom. I shall take the Archbishop with me, and the Lord Chamberlain, and forty solicitors to draw up the deed, so he will see I am in earnest.

The Ladies. O, how delightful! Long live King Richard!

Enter the LORD HIGH GOLDSTICK.

Lord High Goldstick. The Prime Minister has called again, Sire.

King. Dear good fellow! I must make his Dukes for him. Tell him that I can give him ten minutes, and that I am going for a holiday to-morrow. Wish me joy, my angel. Ladies, attend to your puddings. Dick will be here to-morrow.

Queen. Take care of yourself, my love.

The Ladies. Good success to your Majesty!

[*They curtsey.*

[*Exit* LORD HIGH GOLDSTICK, *followed by* KING.

CURTAIN

ACT II

The interior of the Miller's Cottage at Mansfield. The Miller *and his* Wife *are seated, one at each side of the fire.* DICK *is leaning back in his chair, with his feet on the table.*

Miller. [*Sings.*]

The landlord he looks very big,
With his high cock'd hat and his powder'd wig,
Methinks he looks both fair and fat,
But he may thank you and me for that,
For 'tis O, good ale, thou art my darling,
And my joy both night and morning.

Thou oft hast made my friends my foes,
And often made me pawn my clothes;
But since thou art so nigh my nose,
Come up, my friend,—and down he goes,
For 'tis O, good ale, thou art my darling,
And my joy both night and morning.[1]

Dick. Hooray! [*Thumps with his feet on the table.*] Here be I!

[1] The music of this song is in Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time* (1893, vol. ii, p. 179).

Miller. What's for supper, wife?

Wife. A bag-pudding and onions.

Miller. Any company coming along?

Wife. None that I knows of.

Dick. Hooray! Here be I!

Miller. Get up, Dick, and make room for the supper.

Dick. [*Sings.*] "Come up, my friend,—and down he goes." Hooray!

[*He gets up, and stands in the corner. A knocking is heard at the door.*

Wife. Lift the latch, and step inside, please.

Enter the KING.

Miller. Bless my soul if it bain't the King!

King. My good people, I have made bold to call on you because I wish to have a few words with your worthy son.

Wife. Speak to his Royal Majesty, Dick.

King. Mr. Richard, I am very pleased to see you again.

Dick. That's as it may be.

King. How true! Dick is wonderful; wonderful! How I wish my angel could hear him talk. So sensible! [*To* DICK.] Mr. Richard, I have come to offer you my kingdom. [*A pause.*] I have brought the Archbishop, and the Lord Chamberlain, and forty solicitors. They are all waiting outside.

Wife. Sakes alive! They'll be up to some mischief or other in the yard! [*Exit* WIFE.

King. I very much hope, Mr. Richard, that you will see your way to accept the kingdom. It is all I have to offer. You could be Richard the Fourth, you know.

Dick. That's as it may be.

King. I am sure you are right, Mr. Richard. So I hope you will take the kingdom.

Dick. I won't have it, and that's flat. Here be I!

Enter WIFE.

Wife. Here's a fine to-do! Them solicitors have got into the dairy and are eating us out of house and home! If it please your Royal Majesty, would you call them off?

King. They shall attend me on my return to the palace. I fear I have been too sudden. But before I go, I should like to persuade Mr. Richard to pay me a visit. We will do what we can to please him.

Dick. I won't go, and that's flat. Here be I!

Wife. O Dick, Dick, remember your poor old father and mother. They've finished the cream, and they're starting on the buttermilk.

Dick. Well, Mr. King, have you got a bag-pudding at the palace? Tell me that now.

King. There were three bag-puddings when I left, and they are making many, many more.

Dick. Right. I'm off. Come along.

King. O, this will be joyful news! Be pleased to walk first, Mr. Richard. Good-bye, my worthy friends. This is a great day for England! [*Exit* DICK *and* KING.

ACT III

A room in the Palace. The KING *and* QUEEN *are seated on thrones.* The Ladies *and the* LORD HIGH GOLDSTICK *are ranged in front of them.* DICK *stands in a corner.*

Dick. Here be I! [*He waves his arms.*] Where be the puddings?

King. [*Rising.*] Mr. Richard, and people of England! Before we call for the puddings, I wish to say a few words. And first I will tell you the sad story of my life.

Dick. Here, cut it, Mister! I bain't come here to listen to no talk! [*He waves his arms.*

King. People of England! You hear what Mr. Richard says, from the depths of his splendid practical mind. I am no match for Mr. Richard. All my life I have listened to talk. My palace is a nightmare of ideas. My ministers talk all day when one of them has an idea. They often have ideas. When I ordered the Mistress of the Robes to make a bag for a bag-pudding she only said, "The idea!" The tutor of the Prince of Wales is an idealist. I am weary of my life. The Prince of Wales is weary of his life. The Queen—my angel, are you weary of your life?

Queen. Of course, Henry, if you wish it.

King. The Queen is weary of her life. People of England, from all this I would deliver you. There stands Dick. He is your true King. Persuade him to rule over you. I will abdicate in his favour. The Queen—my angel, speak to the people.

Queen. Of course I think that what the King says is all very right and proper, though there will be a great many arrangements to make, all very troublesome and fussy.

King. The Queen will abdicate. Thank you, my angel. It rests with you, people of England, to make Mr. Richard your King. Give him a hearty welcome!

The Ladies. Long live King Richard!

King. Now, Mr. Richard, will you kindly step this way?

Dick. How often must I tell 'ee, I won't have it! It's none so fat a job, by your way of it.

King. How real and true he is! Implore him to rule over you!

The Ladies. O Mr. Dick, we beseech you to be our King! Adorable Mr. Dick, true-hearted Mr. Dick, practical Mr. Dick, be our King!

Queen. [*To* KING.] My love, I think you should say a word to them to stop them from being so silly. He'll only be rude to them if they go on fussing like that.

Dick. Where be the puddings? Fetch 'em out, or I'm off.

King. What a grasp of reality! Let the puddings be

brought! [*A pudding is wheeled in on a table.*] Now, Mr. Richard, I hope you will think better of us. That pudding is for you.

Dick. I bain't thinking of you; I be thinking of the puddings. 'Tis hungry work thinking of puddings. Bain't there no more than one?

King. O yes, Mr. Richard, but that is the best one.

Dick. That be the best one, be it? [*He laughs long and loud.*] Well, here do be a go! [*He laughs again.*] So that be the best pudding, be it? And this be the best palace, eh? [*He laughs again.*] Which be the best way home? I be missing my dinner. I'm off.

[*Exit* DICK.

King. My angel, be strong! Dick is gone! O how can we bear it?

The Ladies. O how can we bear it!

Queen. I don't know how we can bear it, though of course there would have been a great many arrangements to make, and now we can just go on as we were.

The Ladies. We can just go on as we were. Dick is gone.

Enter the LORD HIGH GOLDSTICK.

Lord High Goldstick. The Prime Minister has called, Sire.

King. Dear me, I'm sure I made him his Dukes. What can he want? He's a dear good fellow, but I get

quite nervous about him when he calls so often. Do you think, my angel, that he has anything on his mind?

Queen. I'm sure I don't know, Henry.

Lord High Goldstick. He says he has an idea, Sire.

CURTAIN

CONTRIBUTIONS TO FAMILY MAGAZINES

1908 to 1911

SONG OF MYSELF

WAS a Poet!
But I did not know it,
Neither did my Mother,
Nor my Sister nor my Brother.
The Rich were not aware of it;
The Poor took no care of it.
The Reverend Mr. Drewitt
Never knew it.
The High did not suspect it;
The Low could not detect it.
Aunt Sue
Said it was obviously untrue.
Uncle Ned
Said I was off my head:
(This from a Colonial
Was really a good testimonial.)
Still everybody seemed to think
That genius owes a good deal to drink.
So that is how
I am not a poet now,
And why
My inspiration has run dry.

It is no sort of use
To cultivate the Muse
If vulgar people
Can't tell a village pump from a church steeple.
I am merely apologizing
For the lack of the surprising
In what I write
To-night.
I am quite well-meaning,
But a lot of things are always intervening
Between
What I mean
And what it is said
I had in my head.
It is all very puzzling.
Uncle Ned
Says Poets need muzzling.
He might
Be right.
Good-night!

STEIN, SWITZERLAND
August 1910

THE DABCHICK

HERE are many birds upon the earth
For beauty and for use,
The Partridge and the Pheasant
And the Sage-and-onions goose:
The Snipe and Quail are good to eat,
Although their size is small,
But the Dabchick (O the Dabchick!)
It is no use at all.

The Lark makes music in the heavens,
The Thrush upon a bough,
The Sparrows on the housetops
Make a cheerful kind of row;
They all make merry in their glee
And pour their souls abroad,
But the Dabchick (O the Dabchick!)
Is a melancholy fraud.

I'm fond of curiosities,
And every sort of fun;
And of these curiosities
I think the Dodo's one;

He's dead, the dear old Dodo,
And no more will wade and dive,
But the Dabchick (O the Dabchick!)
It never came alive.

Then let us sing a little hymn,
And tell what we do think
Of this fabulous deception, made
Of paper and of ink.
When Noah took in all the birds
By order of the Lord,
The Dabchick (serve the Dabchick right!)
He chucked it overboard.

The only Paper in the Ark
Was not a feathered sham;
It was called the Hippopotamus,
And edited by Ham;
There was lots of solid reading
In that primitive Gazette;
But the Dabchick (O the Dabchick!)
Was no patriarchal pet.

Come all you righteous people,
Who love to think and read,
And truss this most ungainly fowl
Of journalistic breed.

We love the little songsters
  Who hop and run and fly;
But the Dabchick (O the abominable bird!
  O the degraded mongrel!
    O the Dabchick!)
  We'll dab it in the eye!

THE HOB

UR age is an age of progression,
And papers come out by the score,
Every day you can purchase a fresh 'un,
And still be left asking for more;
There's some that cost only a halfpenny,
And others that run to a bob,
But the brightest and best
In the east or the west
Is that excellent journal *The Hob*.

If you haven't a good education,
And are only just learning to read;
If you're crammed full of book-information,
And your knowledge is running to seed;
If you're known as a beggar and robber,
Or a man that the poor want to rob,
It's all just the same,
You are badly to blame
If you do not subscribe to *The Hob*.

The Nutshell comes out every minute,
To keep you from pining away,
There's nothing particular in it,
But it's spicily written and gay;

The Dabchick has pictures and stories,
Some are comic, and some make you sob;
But the best of all papers
To cure you of vapours
Is the paper that's christened *The Hob.*

You can use it for boiling the kettle,
It never will tell you a lie,
You can spread it about on a settle,
Or on things that you want to keep dry.
Whatever your purpose and fancy,
You will find it is good at the job;
You can wrap up the cheese,
Or your boots if you please,
In the pages you tear from *The Hob.*

You can bind it and keep it beside you,
Or employ it for throwing about
At the vulgar who dare to deride you
Because you are lazy or stout,
If " Donks " is the name that they call you,
You can suddenly drop on their nob
When they're wrapped in sweet slumber
A heavy back number
Of that prize publication *The Hob.*

You can buy it to read to your mother
To put her to sleep after tea;
You can make it a loan to your brother
As ballast for going to sea;

If your house is attacked by a burglar,
Or beset by a furious mob,
You can drive them away
If you'll only display
The pictures you'll find in *The Hob*.

So here's to the glory and credit
Of those who are bringing it out!
To the great who contribute and edit,
And the humble who hawk it about!
To the army of people who buy it,
The sage, and the sot, and the snob;
Let us join their array
Round the hearthstone to-day,
And all of us sit on *The Hob*.

TO THE BIRTHDAY MANAGER

(OF *THE DABCHICK*)

T writing I am not a dab,
But I send these few lines in my haste,
To ask that you charter a cab,
And send me a cake for to taste.
I should like a large suetty slab,
It would help to develop my waist;
At writing I am not a dab,
But I should like a cake for to taste.
I have not the gift of the gab,
And I'm rather unhappily placed,
For I like cake and jam and dressed crab,
And there's none of them here for to taste.
So mind that you charter a cab,
With a cake in it carefully placed,
You can put on a label (or tab),
But you'll find that I'm easily traced.
There's no need to tattle or blab,
I don't want the cab to be chased;
If you send me the cake in the cab,
There shan't be a morsel of waste.
If you don't send the cake in the cab
(On which this petition is based),

I have an umbrella to jab,
And I think you will find you're disgraced.
Never mind if there isn't a cab,
It's the cake I desire for to taste,
As much as I ever can nab,
And I rather enjoy almond paste.
Never mind though your prospects seem drab,
And you're hungry and carrotty-faced,
Just send me the cake in a cab,
For I swear I'll have more than a taste.

THE LION COMIQUE

, I am the side-splitting Lion Comique,
With my hat in my hand and my tongue in my cheek!
My fun is the brightest, my japes are the oddest;
'Tis yours to enjoy them, so laugh and be modest!
Ri-tolderol-toshery-tooral-ri-ol.

My face is so pleasant, my wit is so bright,
That I steadily get my five guineas a night;
'Tis yours to be modest, to listen and pay,
As I patter my balderdash day after day.
Ri-tolderol-toshery-tooral-ri-ol.

When I've said a thing once, I shall say it again;
'Tis yours to be humble, so do not complain:
I have tears for the humble, whom I call "the paw,"
And the newest of jests on my mother-in-law.
Ri-tolderol-toshery-tooral-ri-ol.

'Tis you are the public, and I'm the artiste,
Though each of us reckons the other a beast;
'Tis you must be silent, and leave me to speak,
For I am the side-splitting Lion Comique!
Ri-tolderol-toshery-tooral-ri-ol.

WORD AND QUESTION GAME

ASHTON KEYNES

Summer 1908

HAVE heard no word of my darling Jim,
And I sit and weep by the sea;
I am thinking and dreaming all day of him,
Perhaps he is thinking of me.

Perhaps he went wandering over the moor,
And fell down a dark ravine;
Perhaps he has gone on a cheap Cook's tour,
And has married a dusky queen.

Perhaps in a motor-car, far and fleet,
He is scudding into the night;
Perhaps he is sitting with wet, wet feet
By the river to wait for a bite.

Perhaps he's enlisted in the Police,
Or fallen in the soup tureen;
But my weary heart aching will never cease,
And its O for the might-have-been!

Send him back ye winds and ye waves so sad,
Send him back ye Sprites and Jinns;
For he's got my bottle of hair pomade,
And my box of safety-pins.

Question: What has become of Jim?
Word: Safety-pins.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

 IS body's dust and ashes,
And he hasn't got no money;
He clambers in through the window-sashes
And squeaks like a tortured bunny;
He hides in the flapping curtain,
And he shouts in the singing flame;
He's a nuisance in anyone's house, that's certain,
But I don't know what's his name.

When I go and get my candle,
And crawl up to bed at night,
He groans when I turn the parlour handle,
And whisks up the stair in white.
I can't tell you what he's after,
Or what is his little game;
I've had many a fright from his distant laughter,
But I don't know what's his name.

Is he solid or merely vapour?
I think he's a blooming ghost.
I wish I could pack him in strong brown paper
And send him away by post.

My life is a burden to me,
I think it's a horrid shame.
The screams of that bogey they go right through me,
But I don't know what's his name.

Question: What's his name?
Word: Ashes.

"  HAT is the use of waiting?"
I heard a blackbird say,
"The flowers are out, and without a doubt
This is the month of May;
So what is the use of waiting?
The time has come for mating,
And I'm off to find a wife to my mind
On this beautiful golden day."

"What is the use of waiting?"
Said a man in a parachute,
"The balloon is bust, and I can't adjust
The ribs of this tangled brute.
So what is the use of waiting?
I shall have to be gravitating;
But a smaller jump and less of a bump
On the hard round earth would suit."

"What is the use of waiting?"
Said a man in evening dress,
"The men I wait on they gorge like Satan,
And can only say 'More' or 'Yes.'

So what is the use of waiting?
And forking and knifing and plating?
I'd rather dwell in a prison cell
Where the customers eat less."

Question: What is the use of waiting?
Word: Parachute.

OW far is it to London? Well, my friend,
I do not answer questions till I know
That he who asks them has a worthy end;
If I should tell you truly, will you go?
I hate a talkative and idle knave
With silly questions always on his lips:
"Who is your hatter?" "Where's Cock Robin's grave?"
"What was the reason of the late eclipse?"
You seem to me a promising young man,
And if you really want to get away
I shall be glad to help you if I can,
I can't stand here debating all the day.
A place there is to which I bid you go:
It is not London; it is Jericho!

Question: How far is it to London?
Word: Eclipse.

HEN I go to my wardrobe and pull out my
clo'es,
I hang them on chairs and survey them in
rows,
And which will become me best who the deuce knows?

My complexion is brown, and my eyes are pea-green,
So the thing that will suit me (I learn from *The Queen*),
Is a red shooting-coat trimmed with ultramarine.

What's the use of discussing the hundred best books,
Or the hundred best garments? What counts is your
looks;
The food is all right if you see to the cooks.

So Gammon and Sneck up and Fiddle-de-dee,
With your lubberly Lubbocks and cultured high tea!
The hundred best books are the books that suit me.

Question: What are the hundred best
books?
Word: Wardrobe.


IFE rang the bell to call the people in;
The play was played by Folly, Pride, and Sin;
Old Age, with fingers trembling and uncertain,
Turned off the gas, and Death let down the curtain.

Question: Who rang the bell?
Word: Life.

SHORT STORIES

SHORT STORIES

[*Most so-called short stories are not short enough. In the following examples an attempt has been made to remedy that fault.*]

I

The Grave

HERE was a tree.
Under the tree there was a grave.
Nothing happened.

II

Two Men

Two men were walking in the street. One went into a house. The other went away. A policeman came by, looking bored. The man did not come out of the house that day. Next day he came out, but he went in again in the evening. Perhaps he lived there. Yet he did not seem content, for he was always coming out and going in. But perhaps the other was content, for he never came back.

III

Dolls

A girl had a doll. When she grew up she threw the doll away. Presently she married, and had a daughter. She did not throw the daughter away. But the daughter had a doll and threw the doll away. That was two dolls thrown away. After that the thing went on quite regularly. All the dolls were thrown away and none of the people. But there were always enough dolls, for the people died. Dolls do not die.

IV

The Tiger

A tiger lay licking his chops in a jungle in Bengal. He was a ferocious creature. But when he thought of himself he thought of a kitten. He did not seem ferocious to himself. After a while he ate a native postman. Then he stretched himself in the sun and purred. Everything seemed to be all right. Then Mr. Browning came by, and Mr. Browning was singing a song:

"God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world,"

sang Mr. Browning. Then the tiger ate Mr. Browning.

V

The Hymn-Singers

A man went into a church where people were singing hymns. "Why do you do that?" said the man. "To please God," said the people. "O," said the man, "I thought it was to please yourselves." "Something of that too," said the people. "Well," said the man, "it doesn't please me." So he went out.

VI

Fame

A boy once went to school. He did many things and got hardly any marks for them. So he cut his name on the desk. "There!" said the boy; "now they will remember me." But when they read his name, a hundred years later, they thought he was someone else.

1908

SOME THOUGHTS ON EXAMINATIONS

SOME THOUGHTS ON EXAMINATIONS

OD gave Faculties, and the Devil sent Examiners.

We are as near to Heaven in the Fourth Class as in the First.

No one was ever injured by missing a First: all who deserve a First read for fun, and have their reward.

Tutors believe in Predestination: Examiners in Works.

The World was made in a week, and its Maker pronounced it good. At that time there were no Examiners.

A Fourth Class Honours degree is a degree with Honours. Examiners often forget this.

A Second Class Honours degree is a degree with Honours. Candidates often forget this.

The Oxford Final Schools and the Day of Judgement are two examinations, not one.

Doctor Johnson said that questioning is not the mode of conversation among gentlemen. Doctor Johnson left Oxford without a degree.

Not all Firsts are geniuses.

There goes more to a First than hearsay.

The fastest runner lost the obstacle race.

No race was ever won except on the race-course.

A headache lost the battle of Waterloo.

Candidates write their opinions in manuscript books: Examiners on class lists. Both are often wrong.

The brilliant man who did not know, and the learned man who did not think, met in the Second Class and disliked each other. The poet sat in the Third and laughed.

Knowledge cries out for recognition: Wisdom that asks for recognition is Folly.

The nightingale got no prize at the poultry show.

No instrument smaller than the World is fit to measure men and women: Examinations measure Examinees.

When three Examiners differ, the odd man is the Holy Ghost.

When three Examiners agree, then is the time to study the psychology of middle-aged pedagogues.

The King who made all his subjects Dukes was an anarchist.

In Examinations those who do not wish to know ask questions of those who cannot tell.

The apprentice spent three years hammering at leather. Then said the shoemaker, "This shoe is badly cobbled." "Who talks of cobbling?" said the apprentice; "I am a man of genius."

If preferment and merit always went together, there would be no escape from the pit.

"Why do you condemn that man?" said the Philanthropist. "Because," said the Judge, "the jury and I think him guilty." "That is merely an opinion," said

the Philanthropist, " as a matter of fact he is the best man I ever knew." " I daresay," said the Judge.

The Idealist took a giraffe to the cattle market. " An intelligent lot of farmers you have there," he said, when he came home; " my beast was the tallest in the place, and there was no bid for it."

Shakespeare did not write so much in all his life as is written in a single room during one week of examination. Yet some dotards deny progress.

THE TWO MORALITIES

THE TWO MORALITIES

An Address delivered to a Liverpool Audience

THERE are not many questions that philosophy can hope to answer, and the progress of philosophy consists not so much in solving the old problems and propounding new, as in finding a new and, if possible, a clearer expression for the identical problems that occupied the earliest philosophers.

In this way questions that absorbed the energies of whole generations disappear, not because they are finally answered, but because they are restated in other terms.

Every question, or wellnigh every question, that divided the nominalists and the realists is an unanswered question to-day; but the terminology and the method of approach have altered, so that we are free to talk, if we please, of the futilities of the schoolmen, who discussed the eternal mysteries of time and space, love and pain, in terms borrowed from theology when we prefer to borrow an equally abstract vocabulary from science.

But there are dead questions as well as old questions still alive in a new dress. One of the constant activities of philosophy is the attempt to show that certain specific questions, which have engaged the attention of thinkers,

are idle, that they involve contradiction and nonsense in their very statement, or that the disputants who have argued so hotly on the one side and the other are divided by no difference save the partiality of their own points of view. An attempt has been made, as it seems to me with reason, to dismiss the question of free will in this way. No one denies that man is free, if he be not physically constrained, to do this or that. But for the sake of clearness we map man out into artificial provinces according as we see him in this aspect or that, emotion, sensation, cognition, will, and the rest, and then discuss the boundaries and government of these provinces as if we were international lawyers sitting on a frontier commission. The action of the man is determined by his will. His will is determined by the strongest motive or army of motives. But what determines the motive or constitutes its strength? We can hardly answer this question without being driven back to a consideration of the man once more, as a bundle of habits, instincts, impulses, woven of the operation of experience round a central self, fitted to the central self as a glove is fitted to a hand, and shaped by it as a web is shaped by the loom. So that having cut man into bits in order to explain him, we find that we cannot explain any one of the bits until we have put them together again and forgone the use of our artificially simple and quite misleading terminology.

I wish merely to propose a question, not to answer it;

and I shall think I am successful if the question I propound cannot be shown to be an unreal question—one of those thousand questions that take their rise from confusion of thought or excess of dialectical distinction and subtlety. And as it is a question in morals, I should prefer to put it in some way that relates it at once to practical life—to show that it is not, like free will, a question that has never troubled anyone save philosophers in their studies, but rather that it has bewildered man in the market-place and the battlefield with a choice between two aims and two principles of action mutually inconsistent. Stated abstractly it is the question that arises from the diverse and sometimes conflicting principles of self-regard and self-sacrifice. Stated in more dangerously concrete form it might be put thus: "How is it possible to be a Christian and a gentleman?"—taking the first term in its simplest, clearest, and most absolute meaning, and the second with all the best of the associations that have grown round it in the course of ages. Or, to put it in yet another form, how is any code of honour to be reconciled with a code founded on the precepts of the Gospels?

I have called these two codes the Two Moralities. I believe them to be two, although I am well aware that neither of them is easily to be found unmixed in practice. There are men, humane, generous, upright, and magnanimous, whose code of action, inherited and accepted by them, has in it not the smallest tincture of distinct-

ively Christian principle; it would be harder, though perhaps not impossible, to find among those who do sincerely and actively follow the precepts of the Gospel a man who did not in some matters and on some occasions shape his action rather by an appeal to his own unchastened pride or self-respect.

> To thine own self be true,
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.

That is a principle of self-assertion. It is not distinctively a Christian principle, although it is capable of great sacrifices from motives of pride.

The Englishman of Sir Alfred Lyall's poem who is caught by the Mahometan rebels at the time of the Mutiny and asked as the price of his life to repeat the formula, "There is no god but God, and Mahomet is his prophet," exemplifies this code. He is not a Christian; he reflects that he believes the Mahometan creed to be as true as another:

> Ay, but the word, if I could have said it,
> I by no terrors of hell perplext;
> Hard to be silent and have no credit
> From man in this world or reward in the next,
> None to bear witness and reckon the cost
> Of the name that is saved and the life that is lost.

But he cannot say it, his gorge rises, and he dies for the pride of his name and country. More vivid than the poem is the short extract from a newspaper on which the

poem is based: "They would have spared life to any of their English prisoners who should consent to repeat the usual short formula of Mahometanism; *but only one half-caste cared to save himself that way.*"

My only object in quoting this is to illustrate the power of the non-Christian morality based upon pride or self-respect, its power even in self-sacrifice. These principles of honour and self-respect are inherent in the better-bred members of all governing races, and produce admirable, if rather odd, mixtures of behaviour in those of them who profess Christianity. Spenser, Bishop of Norwich, who, in the fourteenth century, defeated the rebels in battle at the head of his feudal levy, condemned them to death by legal process as judge, confessed and absolved them as priest, and hanged them in his capacity of sheriff, is only a more vigorous prototype of many an excellent modern who combines the duties of priest and squire, and administers an equal-handed justice to those who do not know their catechism, and to those who are found poaching game.

Moreover, Christianity has long been the professed religion of Europe, and all kinds of compromises, allowances, and concessions have grown up and even come to seem natural. It is instructive to see the excitement caused by the appearance in the seventeenth century of a man like George Fox, or, in the nineteenth, of one like Count Tolstoi, and the reprehension that they earn while each in his own simple way attempts to put into practice

the precepts of the Gospel. Some of these precepts are usually, for educational purposes, explained away, *e.g.*, "Take no thought for the morrow what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink" is made to run "Give only reasonable thought to the bare necessities of life, so as to avoid the fault of improvidence, for the rest let your mind be fixed on higher things." But if language means anything, the precept should certainly be interpreted "Be ye improvident."

I am got into a well-worn groove, and need not multiply instances when everyone can supply them from his own memory. Some compromise and adaptation was inevitable when the visions and inspirations of a seer were taken as the basis for the ordering of a community. The salt of the earth may keep its savour while it is sprinkling only, but if the whole dish were salt, how are ordinary appetites to be satisfied? The Catholic Church has always recognized the difficulties of the position, and has allowed large concessions to political and family duties. Not every priest dares aspire to saintship, not every man is called to be a priest. And so by the creation of an *imperium in imperio*, an aristocracy of humility and piety and devotion within the Church, something of the ideal has been preserved. The religion of the Gospels is essentially aristocratic in this sense, that it is a religion for rare natures, and that any popularization of it always has been, and so far as can be foretold always will be, something of a parody. (Such a parody has

lately had a circulation of 4,000,000 copies—a novel in which patriotic sentiment and the sexual interest are united in the blend that has become almost a recipe for success, and in which it is seriously considered whether Jesus Christ, if he were editor of a Chicago newspaper, would permit advertisements of whisky to appear in the columns of his journal.)

But the fact is, the difficulty is deep-seated and need not be illustrated from these baser examples. The Gospel precepts admit of no transaction. "They that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly." What is it to them that their conduct, if it became the rule, would make the continuance of civil society difficult or impossible? The material prosperity and social order that law and politics take such pains to preserve and increase are no part of their care. They are strangers and pilgrims, content to live on the alms of those in whose country they pitch their tent for one short night. If you reproach them with their dependence on others whose labours increase the stock of material wealth, and maintain the social fabric, they are ready with a perfect answer; they care nothing for their lives, and if so they might the sooner wake and find their dream true, would willingly see the world shattered into a million fragments. How dare

they spend time and thought on cherishing and decorating the painted veil called life, when their desires are fixed on what it conceals? When Tacitus called the Christian religion a "deadly superstition," he spoke as a true Roman, a member of the race of empire-builders who denied the franchise to fathers with fewer than three children. His subtle political instinct scented danger from those who looked with coldness on the business and desire of this world. He could not foresee, for he knew Christianity (so far as he knew it at all) only in its earliest form, that a time would come when Lord Kitchener, a man after his own heart, should represent the civilizing mission of an empire that has accepted the name of Christian. The historical problems that seized on the imagination of Gibbon when he saw Christianity throned in the seat and wielding the remnants of the power of the old pagan empire is still, after all Gibbon's efforts, the chief problem suggested by the history of western Europe.

It is impossible for me to get help from history, for history has not often exhibited the two types of character and conduct in clear contrast. Many of the pagan virtues survived and survive to this day. The spirit of the Roman republic is not dead. The spirit of the German warrior gave shape to feudal institutions, and through them is influential to-day in all moral questions. The two moralities, as I said, are intermixed and can be separated only theoretically. A man who sincerely,

arduously, and painfully follows, or strives to follow, the Gospel teaching in many of the affairs of life will fall back on the other morality when he is attacked by robbers in a dark lane. His instinctive and impulsive actions are still exactly what they were in the forests of Germany.

I cannot enlarge further on the difficulties and contradictions which arise when we conceive the highest precepts of the Gospels to be accepted and followed in daily life by all the members of a nation. Anyone who has thought on the question will not be likely to deny or ignore them. Self-sacrifice for its own sake generally followed would make an end of any community. Self-sacrifice for the sake of others would lose its fairest field of action in a community where all were actuated by the same desire. It is habitual with men of a practical turn of mind, and with those impatient of speculation, to make appeal, at this point in the argument, to common sense. Common sense is an excellent guide, but it never yet led anyone to the acceptance of the Christian mysteries or the practice of a Christian life. Its jurisdiction is wholly alien to the question. Enough is left to it, for nothing like the community I imagine has ever been seen in the world; the principle of self-regard still holds a wider and stronger sway. There remains, therefore, the other side of the question, instead of considering how a Christian can be a good citizen, I wish to consider how a gentleman can be a Christian.

The German rhapsodist, Frederick Nietzsche, has put

the question in his own way in his *Genealogy of Morals.* The book is hoarse with prejudice and obscure with passion. If, therefore, I borrow his distinction of slave-morality and master-morality, it is because I believe he has formulated a real problem, and on the side of master-morality at least has given incidentally a valuable description of the conduct and character that is still called noble.

Slave-morality, which Nietzsche illustrates by reference to Christianity, begins according to his account in resentment. In its very genesis it says " no " to something exterior. Its action is throughout reaction, and it determines its moral values by denying the values that are accepted as a matter of course by more generous natures.

The reverse is true in the case of noble valuation. It acts and grows spontaneously. It only seeks for its antithesis in order to say still more thankfully, still more rejoicingly, *Yea* to itself. Its negative concept " low," " mean," " evil," is merely a late-born and pale after-image in comparison with the positive fundamental concept of the noble valuation, which is thoroughly saturated with life and passion, and says: " We, the noble; we, the good; we, the fair; we, the happy! " Sometimes it mistakes and misrepresents the lower natures which it despises. But the action of contempt, of looking down, will never falsify its object so completely as will suppressed and cunning hatred, the revenge of the impotent, which maltreats its opponent in effigy.

A kind of pity is mixed with the contempt felt by large natures, and the idea of unhappiness blends with, and sometimes almost obscures, the idea of lowness and meanness.

" The life of the noble man is self-confident and self-sincere," whereas " the man of resentment is neither sincere, nor naïve, neither honest nor straightforward against himself. His soul *squints*; his mind loves hiding-places, alleys, and back doors; everything hidden appeals to him as *his* world, *his* shelter, *his* comfort; he is master in the art of keeping silence, of forgetting nothing, of waiting, of provisional self-diminution, of self-humiliation. A race of such men of resentment will at last, of necessity, be more *prudent* than any noble race; it will also learn to appreciate prudence in quite different measure, namely, as a primary condition of existence; whereas prudence in the case of noble men is apt to have about it a dainty tang of luxury and *refinement*. For in their case prudence is far less essential than the perfect reliableness of function of the regulating *unconscious* instincts, or even a certain imprudence, such as readiness to encounter things—whether danger or an enemy—or that eccentric suddenness of anger, love, reverence, gratitude, and revenge, by which noble souls at all times have recognized themselves as such. Even the resentment of superior man, when it appears in him, acts and exhausts itself in the reaction which follows at once, and hence it does not *poison*. And again, it will

not manifest itself in countless cases, in which with the poor and the feeble it is inevitable. Not to be able to take seriously, for a long time, an enemy, or a misfortune, or even one's own *misdeeds*—that is the characteristic of strong and full natures, abundantly endowed with plastic, formative, restorative, and also obliterative force: a good example of this is Mirabeau, who had no memory for insults and affronts received, and who could not forgive for the sole reason that he *forgot*. Such a man, with a single jerk, shakes off much vermin which burrows in others. Only in natures like these is it possible, if on earth it be possible at all, to find true '*love*' for one's enemies. How much veneration for his enemy has not superior man!—and such veneration is already a bridge to love. He demands an enemy for himself as his distraction; he will only suffer an enemy in whom he finds nothing to despise and very much to honour!"

I value this description not for its antithesis, but for what seems to me the insight and happiness with which Nietzsche describes the noble races, the makers of the master-morality. In the modern idea of a gentleman there are many of these traits still extant, traits originally of what Nietzsche elsewhere calls "the splendid *blond beast*, lustfully roving in search of spoils and victory." "In every land and sea," said Pericles, in his famous oration to the Athenians, "our boldness has cut a way for itself, setting up for itself, everywhere, imperishable monuments for good and for evil." The same traits

appear in our modern English games, which we hardly inherited from Christianity. It is a deep-seated instinct that makes a gentleman unwilling to shrink from a proffered combat or rivalry, even in a drinking bout, unwilling to allow prudential motives to carry the day. The frontier tribesmen in India are better disposed to the English after a war than before. Their homesteads have been ruined and their valleys desolated, but they have met a worthy enemy in whom they recognize their own strength and eagerness for the game of war. Not one of them looks at the question from the utilitarian and sentimental point of view of those who plead their cause in England. When they come into camp for a parley, or are brought in as prisoners, they banter the English officers on their bad shooting as if it were a military tournament. A man of this character (I take the Pathan as a passing illustration) seeks self-fulfilment by way of self-assertion, not by way of self-abnegation. He is magnanimous and loves his equals, hating the relationships of subservience or patronage alike. The eccentric suddenness of the natural passions, which Nietzsche remarks on, is a mark even of the modern gentleman. He acts by his *unconscious* instincts, whether acquired or inherited, he does not distrust himself, he indulges his impulses, and fulfils his desires. It is easy to take a kindness from such a man without any sacrifice of pride, for he is pleasing himself, not patronizing nor conciliating you, so no debt is created, and

your gratitude is not weighed in a balance. His intellectual processes are equally quick and confident. He jumps to conclusions, and reaches his judgement on men and conduct instantaneously. This is what Dr. William James, perhaps the best of living American psychologists, has to say on this point: "The essence of plebeianism, that which separates vulgarity from aristocracy, is, perhaps, less a defect than an excess, the constant need to animadvert upon matters which, for the aristocratic temperament, do not exist. To ignore, to disdain, to overlook, are the essence of the gentleman. Often most provokingly so, for the things ignored may be of the deepest moral consequence. But in the very midst of our indignation with the gentleman, we have a consciousness that his preposterous inertia and negativeness in the actual emergency is, somehow or other, allied with his general superiority. It is not only that the gentleman ignores considerations relative to conduct, sordid suspicions, fears and calculations which the vulgarian is fated to entertain; it is that he is silent where the vulgarian talks; that he gives nothing but results where the vulgarian is profuse of reasons; that he does not explain or apologize; that he uses one sentence instead of twenty; and that, in a word, there is an amount of *interstitial* thinking, so to call it, which it is quite impossible to get him to perform, but which is nearly all that the vulgarian mind performs at all. All this suppression of the secondary leaves the field clear—

for higher flights if they should choose to come. But even if they never came, what thoughts there were would still manifest the aristocratic type and wear the well-bred form."

This brief sketch and these quotations must serve for description of the character. In action, and feeling, and thinking there are the same fundamental characteristics. Many of them are set forth, to take one illustration more, by Walt Whitman:

> I know I am august,
> I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood,
> I see that the elementary laws never apologize,
> (I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant my house by, after all).

Or where he praises the animals, for their quiet content with themselves:

> They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
> They do not lie awake in the dark or weep for their sins,
> They do not make me sick, discussing their duty to God.

This last quotation may serve to introduce my question. Walt Whitman does not consider it. He takes up his own attitude, holds his own creed, his "foothold is tenon'd and mortised in granite," and the question for him would be rather how far does the teaching of Christianity happen to fall in with his own convictions than how far his own convictions conform to Christianity.

Christianity teaches, and has constantly taught, original sin, the corruption of man's heart. In practice, from the Spanish Jesuit to the English Puritan, it has encouraged self-examination, self-questioning, self-distrust. Millions of people under its regime have lived in a morass of scruples and misgivings, checking and trying the impulses of their hearts in case they should be evil, disciplining and emaciating their natural desires and instincts. Instead of the full exercise of all exuberant healthy functions, Christianity has taught abstinence and asceticism; for pride as a motive of action it has substituted humility, for the qualities of the hawk and the lion those of the dove and the lamb.

How far are the good elements of the one code reconcilable with the good of the other? And if they are not altogether reconcilable which of the two is to be preferred?

I believe there is a real question here, and I should be sorry if the reputation of anything ill-considered or ill-expressed by me were allowed to draw us away from the true issue. The question is rather: "Is there any difficulty? Has it been felt by many men in the ordering of their lives or actions? How may it best be stated?"

I promised only to ask a question, but I shall guard against useless misunderstandings if I allude more explicitly to certain positions that I do not wish to maintain and certain questions that I do not desire to rouse.

In the first place, nothing that I have said, on the one part, by way of demur to the character fostered by Christianity, applies in the slightest degree to the most singular and beautiful exemplifications of that character. It is only the small characters that are consistent, in the great there is always a strong and merciless individuality that subdues to itself all sorts of diverse elements. St. Francis of Assisi fulfilled himself by self-abnegation as fully as any pagan warrior ever did by self-glorification, he poured out his soul in adoration of the great things of nature as simply as any sun-worshipper. Or, not to shrink from the test by omitting to consider the crucial case, there are in the Gospels sayings attributed to Jesus Christ, and actions related of him, which have never been harmonized or thoroughly incorporated in any system of Christian dogmatics. Some of the sayings are reported by men who plainly did not understand them, and therefore are the more significant. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." "I came not to send peace, but a sword." There is a fierce irony and brevity in the reply to the young "ruler" who came to him with the lazy suave address "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The conventional expression is torn to pieces at once—"Why callest thou me good? None is good save one." And then, for answer to the question, the Jewish commandments are solemnly recited as an epitome of the duty of man! There is no more live scene

in the Gospels, none more convincing by the very audacity of the irony.

All the elements that have been noted as the marks of the noble character, individuality, suddenness, surprise, the indulgence of a vein, are present in this conversation. We feel that we have to do not with a code, but with a person. And if, forgetting for a moment the modern impoverishment of the word, you care to add, with a gentleman, I raise no objection: at least it is a better term here than in the much-praised lines of Dekker, which I have always found somewhat inadequate, with their too much sweetness or too little strength:

> The best of men
> That e'er wore earth about him was a sufferer,
> A soft, meek, patient, modest, tranquil spirit,
> The first true gentleman that ever breathed.

And now, if I admit so much in the greatest examples, or example, it may be urged that I have made an end of the difficulty I propose. I think not; for, in the second place, I am dealing not primarily with the Christian religion, but with Christian morality. The amazing sayings of a person have been codified and taught as the necessary basis of morality. The greatest Christians, those who by natural sympathy have laid the finest hold on Christianity, and have exemplified its spirit most brilliantly and unconsciously, have for the most part cared comparatively little for Christian

morality as a code of law, and much for the mystical and emotional elements in the religion. Great deeds and great thoughts spring from the heart. The fruit grows on the tree, as Luther remarked, or it is dead and rotten. But nevertheless the choice between the religion and the morality has taken place. How else could we speak of a Christian nation, and not speak nonsense? The conception of a nation is an unchristian, if not an anti-Christian, conception: tribal morality, honourable and considerate if you will, but still the morality of the gentleman of the old duelling days, is all-powerful here. It is a kind of nonsense to speak of the Christianizing mission of a nation; men, not as members of a nation, but as living souls, are the only possible conduit-pipes of the Christian religion. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and a heavy burden of hypocrisy is inevitably laid on any body of men who pretend, even for an instant, that the wind follows the flag.

The separation of Christian morality from the extraordinary qualities of insight and faith that generated it has gone further yet. Thousands of people lead pitiful lives of restraint and contorted effort in setting themselves to imitate the ideal set up. But imitation, or conscious imitation at least, is vain and futile: further, it produces a particularly unlovely type of character. I know that I am merely repeating the doctrine of most of the pulpits of Christendom: I must be excused, for I want it for my own ends. All kinds of false motives run

riot in this pseudo-Christian character: fear, they say, is out of date; it was a poor motive, perhaps, but more respectable in essence than the desire to influence or edify others.

The unselfishness that knows itself for unselfishness, that is conscious of itself either as an imitation of the great Exemplar, or as a model that may profit others, is put to shame at once by the unselfishness of those natures with which it is a natural function, like breathing.

Along with the unhappy consequences that ensue from the attempt to codify Christian morality as law for those who profess and call themselves Christians, there must be considered the train of consequences, not less unhappy, that result from the attempt to democratize it. Any new principle of valuation in the realm of ideas, especially one so startlingly new as that introduced by the Christian religion, is bound to cut across all received distinctions and hierarchies. The highest type of Christian character may be found in a man of any class, high or low, rich or poor. Hence one can pass, by an easy fallacy, to the further proposition that it *ought* to be found in men of all classes and everywhere, and if it be not found, then that it should be cultivated. But it is a shy plant, and does not take kindly to cultivation. It is natural and inevitable that a man should give voice to what he believes, when he hopes or thinks that he may move or help his fellows. But the Evangelicism of the last century made a kind of bastard Christian democracy; with the best

motives it debased Christian ideas, and made the high figures of mystics an odious jargon. It is commonly taken as a slight on the books of the Bible to ask that they should be read as poetry, but if only the Gospel of St. John were treated with the average amount of reverence that is paid to a great poem, how much better it would fare than it does at present!

I may seem to be suggesting an answer to my question, which is more than I intend to do. But I do not wish to conceal my conviction that any satisfactory answer must take full account of the extraordinary rarity of the Christian type of character. It is the modern fashion to state these things in the language of naturalism: to say that the occurrences of a certain temperament are few; I had rather use the old theological language and shelter myself under the orthodoxy of St. Paul and St. Augustine, and even of John Calvin whom, though I abhor him for some things, I respect for this, that he taught the doctrines of prevenient grace, of predestination, of the difficulty and rarity of the Christian calling, and of the impotence and folly, with regard to ultimate things, of all human culture and human effort.

EXTRACTS FROM "THE MILAN"

1898

LOVE'S PROGRESS

UPID rubs his eyes and wakes,
Sees the world is very fair,
Flutters out, and makes mistakes,
Is reproved, and—unaware
That he is not all to blame—
Cries for shame.

Cupid, older grown, must learn
A severer etiquette;
Though his cheeks with blushes burn,
And his eyes with tears are wet,
Powder for the cheeks, for th'eyes
Graceful lies.

Cupid, formal now and staid,
Finds his sight is getting dim,
Seeks retirement's grateful shade,
Says the world must visit him,
Shuns assemblies, concerts, balls:
No one calls.

Cupid limps on crutches twain,
  Long ago his wings were shed;
Cynical, in constant pain,
  Till one morning finds him dead.
Poets flock to lay their verse
  On his hearse.

STAND ON THE TRESTLES OF THE WORLD

TAND on the trestles of the world,
And mark the humours of the fair,
Where jugglers' flaming knives are hurled,
And God leads round His starry bear.

Here, on the boards, the prince of clowns,
Man, in his motley struts and leers,
And with his mirthless laughter drowns
The humming music of the spheres.

The air grows chill; the farce is played;
His tinsel doffed, in tattered plight
(See how the torches flare and fade!)
He passes out into the night.

TO A BAPTIST FRIEND

ABOUT TO TAKE A SHORT HOLIDAY ABROAD

Written on behalf of a Touring Agency

MY DEAR SIR,

I TRUST you will pardon my addressing you directly in the matter of our circular tours. A common friend of ours, Professor F****** G****, has informed me that you contemplate a little trip abroad, and are looking for suitable companions. May I recommend our cycling tour through the Rhine country as likely to be specially breezy and invigorating? For one who likes cultured society I am sure it would be a real refreshment. We have already three schoolmasters (one of them a head master), two lady teachers of the violin (one of them a Baptist), a secretary to the Oldham Young Men's Christian Association, and a good many other people of real worth and distinction who have promised to join the tour. There will be, we hope, some forty or fifty of us in all, and we shall cycle together, so that no member of the party may feel lonely. Among some of the grandest historical associations offered by the Continent we shall make ourselves quite at home, beguiling the way with

chat and merriment. Special arrangements have been made with innkeepers to supply a *British* bill of fare for the party, which will it is hoped obviate the objections of those who dislike the greasy foreign cooking. We should be particularly gratified by your joining us as we have always made a special feature of art-workers on these educational trips. I may mention that Dean Farrar will lecture to us on "Art in the Home" during our passage up the Rhine, and Mr. Clement Shorter will give readings from Smiles's *Lives of the Engineers* in the sacristy of Cologne Cathedral. By special request of the ladies a lecture on the "Horrors of Vivisection" will be delivered by Miss Spoonbill at Munich.

You would, I am sure, find it an altogether cheery and elevating experience, sending you back to your missionary work in your great city with a new sense of zest and vigour.

None of the ladies will wear the divided skirt; whereby so much of feminine charm is destroyed or marred. I mention this little matter because our ecclesiastical friends made a great point of it.

Believe me,

Yours truly.

The Wedding Guest

TO A FRIEND, DESCRIBING THE WEDDING OF THE AUTHOR'S SISTER

DEAR *******,

MY sister A** and my friend S******* were wedded on Wednesday, and were very pleased with your telegram. Their demeanour up to the last moment was resigned, and their conversation edifying. Both accepted the penultimate ministrations of the Church with exemplary humility, went up the trap with great fortitude, and exhibited none but Christian feelings towards the curate who turned them off. S*******'s behaviour was especially beautiful and calm. I saw a good deal of him, for he spent the last week walking with me in Cornwall. In our conversation I often urged him to withdraw his thoughts from present cares, and fix his mind on the future, to trouble less about the precise division between us of liabilities incurred for ginger-brandy and cigars, and to remember that his losses at Californian Jack, a game he is a poor hand at, were my gains. He listened with great docility to my advice, and actually accomplished the perusal of a devotional work entitled *Autour du Divorce* by "Gyp," professing that he had derived

much profit from it, and gained light on future things. He freely forgave all the officials who carried out the last sad function, telling them that they only did their duty, and giving them 31*s.* 6*d.* among them to buy mourning rings. I was much impressed by his fortitude and calm. When I expressed my regret that the Church should deem it necessary to make such pointed mention of fornication in the service celebrated over him, he rebuked me sternly. "It seems to me," said he, "that we ought all to be very thankful that the Church did not seize the opportunity to enlarge upon graver offences. They have dealt very gently with us, and shown an unexpected forbearance, in which I rejoice." So determined was he to rise above a grovelling dejection and find good in the severest dispensations.

They bade good-bye to their immediate relations (the public at large and all reporters were rigorously excluded), and are now at a public-house, small, remote, and secluded, on the banks of the Thames. I derive satisfaction from the knowledge that I was with them at the ordeal and supported them in the triple capacity of best man, chief (and only) bridesmaid, and father of the bride. S*******, whose own sufferings did not prevent his having keen sympathy to bestow on others, was pleased to commend the manner in which I gave the bride away. The question, "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" he told me, is commonly responded to with stentorian vigour and alacrity; from

me it elicited no response, and a graceful hesitation was apparent in my carriage. The presiding parson then beckoned me to approach; the spirit of command ennobled his gesture, and, yielding to pressure, I indicated by an inclination of my head that I would no longer withhold the bride. I would not tell you this if it were not that it gave pleasure to my poor friend, and prompted him to express his satisfaction. He said that I yielded at the precise moment when to hesitate any longer might have run the risk of the imputation of discourtesy. To hesitate is permissible, to refuse is churlish. And worst of all is the attitude of him in the story who, on hearing the question put "Who giveth this woman away?" rose in the body of the church vociferating "I could, but I won't."

I thought you might care to know these few poor details of the accident whereby I have become to my sister "one of her husband's friends," to my friend "a brother of his wife's." For a circle may be described round any centre; and a whole planetary system be transferred in the twinkle of an eye.

Yours ever.

HOW ONE WHO WOULD

NOT TELL TRUTH FOR PRESENT FEAR OF DEATH MADE NO BONES OF TELLING TRUTH FOR MONEY

IT fell out on a day that God met a *Jongleur* (for so these men be called in France), and seeing they were going the same way, he proffered him his company as boonfellow, and that they should travel together and divide their earnings fairly. So the bargain was clapped up, and they took the road with heart of grace. Now at the first town they came to, it fortuned that the people of the town were rejoicing in a great wedding, and there was wine and feasting and minstrels. And it chanced also that a great man of the town who had died before his time, must that day be buried. "I am fain to go to the wedding," said the *Jongleur*, "go thou to the funeral, and in the evening we will meet." And the *Jongleur* returned in the evening with a full skin and empty-handed, but God brought with him to the inn where they lodged a purse full of gold besants, which he had earned by the pursuit of his lawful calling in raising the dead to life. But the *Jongleur* took from him the purse to buy some food withal, and thereafter he bought a lamb,

and he cooked it privily when God had wandered out, and the smell of the lamb set his chops a watering, so that his stomach bleated motherly for it, and in the end he cut off the kidneys of the lamb and ate them. So when dinner-time came, and they were set at table, quoth God "Where are the kidneys?" "See what it is to be a silly untravelled wight," said the *Jongleur*, "a tinker's drab could tell thee the sheep of this part of the country have no kidneys." So no more was said at that time, and they fell to supper.

And it chanced again, as they went on their way that they came to a town where was also a wedding and a funeral of a young man, and God had speech with the *Jongleur*, and said "I am for the wedding, for it has fallen to my turn; and do thou go to this funeral." "Nay," said the *Jongleur*, "for what should I do at a funeral? I play no miracles, and they reward my songs with halfpence." But God was earnestly resolved to be at the wedding, for it was long since he had borne a hand at a bridal feast. "'Tis all one," he said, "if I teach thee the trick of it, and thou raise the dead man, they will reward thee also." So he told him all that matter, and how he must speak thus and thus, and observe such-like rules, and I know not what, and the dead should rise. Then the *Jongleur*, nothing loth to play so fine a part, set off for the funeral, and when he was come there he startled all that company by his cracking and boasting, calling heaven to witness that if the man were dead 'twas

a light matter, for he could raise him to life again. But when it came to the trial, his memory of all that God had told him was blurred and faded, so that the dead man rose not for all his mutterings, but lay still dead. And the father of the dead man was moved to anger, and he bade seize the trickster, and hang him on a gallows. At that time while they led him to the gallows, there came thither God, for the wedding was over and the feasting done. "Thou seest what plight I am in," said the *Jongleur*, "and all through thy *abracadabras* and *hocus-pocuses*; raise the man now quickly, and make them quit me handsomely, and we will be off." "The dead fret not that they be dead," said God, "and there is a question sticks in my mind that I had to ask of thee, the answer to which, if truly given, may hap to comfort me, and perchance thee, marvellous well; and it is nothing other than this—Who ate the kidneys?" Then the *Jongleur* struck his breast, and he raised his hands to heaven and cried with a firm voice: "In the name of that eternal life into which these men are hastening me, and from which thou wilt not pull me back, I swear I do not know." And the men laid hold upon him to string him up. But God felt compassion for him, and he bade them tarry for a moment, and put forth his power, and the dead man came to life, and all his kin and the people there assembled were wonder-struck, and they loosed the *Jongleur*, and to both they gave money and robes. Then those two returned

together and no word was spoke betwixt them. But on the morning of the next day, God came to the *Jongleur* and said "Behold, we took the road together as joyous and loyal companions, to lighten the burden of the journey, and to be true the one to the other. But methinks thou art forsworn and hast betrayed me. Now therefore do thou take one road and I another, for I am weary of thy company. And to that end let us divide the earnings we have gathered together and take each his part." So they tabled their earnings, a goodly pile, and God took them and made of them three equal heaps. "Here be two of us and no third," said the *Jongleur*, "wherefore dost thou pat up the stuff into three shares?" "I will tell thee," said God, "'tis one for me and one for thee; as for that other, that falls by right to the man who ate the kidneys." "Well-a-day!" then said the *Jongleur*, "Thou seest that I am an old man and a frail, I dare not tell a lie, 'twas I that ate the kidneys." And with that he chopped up the third heap and so went his way.

HOW ONE MADE APPEAL TO THE MOTHER OF GOD

A RICH townsman of Burgundy purposed on a time to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James of Galicia, so he trussed up his fardels and made ready to take the road. But the Devil, who loves not pilgrimages, took occasion to heat his head with wine the night before he should start, and then fell the pilgrim into deadly sin with a wench, and confessed not, but started on that business unhouseled. So as he took his way through the country he met with the Devil, who had rigged himself up with saintly tackle to play the part of St. James. Then did the false saint's thundering menaces of damnation and heart-searching reproofs of sin so work upon the pilgrim that the poor caitiff was seized with a black terror, and besought him if there were no device whereby he might avoid that burning wrath. "There is but one," says the Devil, "for it is written 'if thy hand offend thee cut it off, and thou shalt save thy soul alive.'" No sooner said than done, for with his knife did the pilgrim maim himself, and of the injury thereof he straightway died. Then was the Devil glad and seized upon the soul, but before ever he could make off with it

there came up St. James himself. "My most reverend and apostolic blade," says Satan, "here is a matter that you have no voice in. The man is mine; I was at the trouble of leading him into sin; he died unhouseled, and his soul is my reward." "Peace, rascal!" said then St. James, "the wretch is my pilgrim, and thou didst take my name and semblance to play thy wiles on him, false liar that thou art. But I will spend no words in quarrel with thee, for here and now do I make appeal unto the Mother of God, that she may judge in this matter." "Yea truly," quoth Satan, "a fair appeal when thou art assured of gaining the case. Foul fall the day that ever God took that lady for his mother! Night and morning she steals from us our due, and puts rebuffs and slights on us to boot. Give her her will, and never a soul would win to hell; be he thief or murderer, let a man but beck to her image, she puts her seal upon him, and we may seek elsewhere. Justice is become a name. Every day I make complaint to God that he should no longer suffer her caprices: I have my labour for my reward; as is his precept, 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' so is his example. She is Lady and Governess in his heaven, he stoppeth his ears to reason, and she worketh at her will. Appeal call you it? 'Tis flat cozening."

Then wended these three to the court of the Virgin to lay the case before her. And as Satan had said, so it fell out. For Our Lady, or ever she heard the pleadings,

did advise and give order that the pilgrim's soul should be put back in his body, and he be given time for penitence and prayer. So said, so done; the townsman found his feet again, and was sensible neither of pain nor wound. And he betook himself to Cluny, and was there received gladly by the holy abbot Hugh and made a monk.

MEAT FOR BABES

A
Pri-mer
Care-ful-ly
Grad-u-a-ted
Syl-lab-ic-al-ly.

TO A FRIEND

DEAR *******,

HERE is the preface to my little book. I think there must also be a few words of explanation prefixed, pointing out the use of the book, and insisting that the little ones shall not be forced too quickly. If the book is widely adopted in schools I purpose issuing a sequel where all is narrated in words of five, six, and seven syllables. This would be invaluable for journalists.

Yours ever.

PREFACE

(1, 2, 3, 4, 5 SYLLABLES, *DA CAPO*)

THE subjoined juvenile exercises, elementary in nature, purposely exemplify characteristic styles. Moral earnestness distinguishes indifferently the entire collection. Fornication, intoxication, and other similar lamentable extravagances are censured severely. Pitiably irredeemable is any unfeeling adolescent Epicurean who, reading several exercises, experiences no remorse. Various beetle-witted individuals have derived enormous encouragement, indubitably from frequent perusal undertaken conscientiously. Marked progress supervened, eliciting congratulation, in morals, accidence, orthography, etymology. May others benefit similarly, ecstaticizing the author!

THE GOOD DEAN

(One Syllable)

O you know old Slops? He has been made a Dean. You must not call him a fat fraud, or I will whip you. He will live in a big house in the close, and show bad men how to go to God. Folk may ask you why he should have so snug a berth. You must say it is a prize for his good life. He has not drunk too much gin, nor beat his wife more than was good for her. He talks in a fine thick voice, for all the world like a man whose mouth is full of plums. Now he will wear black tights and a nice big gown. How well he has trimmed his sails to suit the wind! His wife will sit on all the wives of the men that he rules.

TRAGIC EVENT

(Two Syllables)

 OMETIMES deadly fevers visit cities, taking away lively aged buffers. Edward Bumble indulged very many sordid habits, dwelling within sundry gloomy mansions. Thither wandered sickly stenches making Bumble's being joyless. Supine upon Mr. Sandbag's truckle pallet Bumble tumbled about groaning loudly. Doctors, quickly summoned, vainly emptied nasty mixtures into Bumble's gullet. Useless labour! After thirteen prescribed doses Bumble's jaded spirit parted, kindly critics suppose skywards.

SCANDALOUS OCCURRENCE

(Three Syllables)

HATEVER reverend gentlemen, eagerly desiring deaneries, wantonly asserted, Rosebery, ignoring personal demerits, extremely properly promoted Farina, rejoicing cathedral coteries. However, undeserved promotion produces impudence. Seventy respected delegates, including several Liverpool citizens, arriving suddenly, discovered Farina embracing various unshaven archdeacons. Criminal Justices, neglecting numerous perjurers, convicted Farina, inflicting permanent servitude.

LAMENTABLE COLLEGIATE REVELATIONS

(Four Syllables)

LITERARY professorships undoubtedly remunerate occupancy. Nevertheless, extravagant expenditure, libidinous proclivities, unlimited gulosity, deplenishing personalty superinduce nauseating recollections. Thereinafter subordinates vociferate contemptuous references, academic dignitaries insinuate reprehension, municipal nonentities (unreasoning mammalians) usually intensify universal execration. Veritably unrepentant, inebriate whore-mongering ex-professors asseverate remarkable qualifying circumstances, mutually inconsistent, *videlicet*:

Exceptional sobriety.
Infrequency.
Meretricious depravity.
Librarian's complicity.
Reputable antecedents.
Lapsarian hypotheses.
Satiety guaranteeing non-recurrence.
Salubrious concomitants distinguishing carnality.

Equitable expiation.
Syphilitic heredity.
Excusable festivity.
Animated categoric contradictions.
Affectionate disposition.
Hedonistic philosophy.
Prelatical absolution.

et-cetera, et-cetera.

Everything, howsoever sedulously demonstrated, curiously ineffective! Unfortunate librarian! undergoing exemplary indignities, municipal authorities imprisoning collegiate sympathizers. Literary professorships, admittedly enjoyable, manifestly necessitate impeccable propriety.

ECCLESIASTICS MISAPPROPRIATE CEREMONIAL APPURTENANCES

TRAGI-COMICAL DENOMINATIONS!

ZOOLOGICAL TESTIMONIALS!

CONSTABULARY DESIDERATED!

(Five Syllables)

NTHUSIASTIC poverty-stricken individuals, tumultuously accelerating Disestablishment, indubitably underestimate theological tergiversation. Irresponsible ecclesiastics, ingeniously accumulating simoniacal remunerations, unanimously anathematize unapostolic sectarianism, irrelevantly depreciating impecunious heterodoxy. Insufferable insinuations, indescribable exaggerations, ungentlemanly falsifications disillusionize Presbyterians. Eventually miscellaneous monomaniacs, abominably intoxicated Spiritualists, idealistic Swedenborgians, romantically impracticable Christadelphians,

contemptuously repudiating Episcopacy, unanimously recapitulate contumelious generalities, unscrupulously retaliating interminable unsavouriness, extravagantly undeferential. "Happy-go-lucky hippopotamus," "irredeemable ichthyosaurus," — reprehensible colloquialisms unquestionably necessitating Bowdlerization— irreparably deteriorate appreciative reciprocity. Discreditable denunciations, reverberated ubiquitously, exacerbating contumaciousness, inevitably Americanize immemorial complimentary terminology, expatriating evangelical magnanimity.

END OF MEAT FOR BABES

OF THE NATIONS

A Hymn of Love and Praise

 AMN the Russian
And the Prussian;
Clap a tax on
Every Saxon;
Beat the Gael
With a flail.
What a sot
Is the Scot!
Who says thankee
For the Yankee,
Or has need
Of the Swede,
Or would ask
For the Basque?
That rapscallion,
The Italian
Rolls in sin
(Like the Finn).
Men of Spain
Are a bane,

And the French
Yield a stench;
The Chinese
Fail to please,
So perhaps
Do the Lapps.
Good men spit on
Celt and Briton,
And abuse
The Hindus.
The Icelander
Is a gander.
Dangers lurk
In the Turk.
May the low
Esquimaux
Go to pot
With the lot!
In Japan a
Bechuana
Finds a devil
On his level.
The Armenian
And the Fenian
And the Swiss
Are amiss.
Let us squelch
All the Welsh,

Not to speak
Of the Greek,
And the Norse
Too, of course.
They are more
Than a bore,
If they fell
Down to hell
With their bibs on,
Praising Ibsen,
Or were sent
By a gent
To the Zoo—
That would do.

ODE TO HIMSELF

In the Manner of Robert Browning on the Occasion of the Author's Marriage


ICENCES? Yes. Poetic Licence,
And Marriage Licences for the nonce,
And banns for whoso refuses my sense,
And the click of the tomahawk on his sconce.

Marriage? By all means. And marriage banquets?
Better and better. You catch my drift?
Put case you marry a wife: your lank wits
And sober sages thrive ill on thrift.

From the celibate ranks if a colleague rat, you
Regale him richly, as is most just,
While those who prefer to remain *in statu*
Are not forbidden to share the bust.

O the overpotency of the muchness
Of what men call marriage, and I call—what?
Nothing, be sure, that involves the suchness
Of things that, being so, yet are not.

But I catch at a thought as it twinkles past me;
So a boy flings cap at a butterfly,
And I pin it out in a poem to last me;
He falls atop, crushes it; so not I.

Hands round! my friends, 'twere a thousand pities
If you missed the point, as I'll stand bail
You mostly do in my lucid ditties.
But how to avoid it?—accept a tale.

In the days of the Spanish Inquisition
A certain Señor of ancient name
Enjoyed the responsible position
Of sending victims to rack or flame.

One morning up gets my Don to his duty;
"Heigh ho!" he yawned, "shall I boil or bake?"
Then they brought some maids of dazzling beauty
Whose heresy had deserved the stake.

The dullest of men as well as the wittiest
May find in St. Paul what serves his turn;
So "This one at least"—(and he picked the prettiest)
"It is better to marry," says he, "than burn."

But he shortly found he had caught a Tartar,
And his wife, ill-pleased to forgo her rights,
Enacted the rôle of Christian martyr
For a brilliant run of ten thousand nights.

Who runs may read: you remark the moral?
It's a thankless business your soul to vex
On behalf of persons who have no quarrel
With the halter that hangs about their necks.

For benevolent schemes come oft to a deadlock,
And well-meant overtures earn you frowning,
Whether one more bachelor's saved from wedlock,
Or one more heretic's saved from browning.

Though the clan Mackay enlarge with rapture
On the vanished glories of bygone years,
When marriage of souls was marriage by capture;
Though Kuno contribute his crocodile tears;

Yet marry come up! And marry, the rest of you!
For it still shall be as it still has been,
So I chant the nuptial hymn with the best of you,
And I bang my head with my tambourine.

BALLADE OF THE ANTHROPOID

(*"The Professor represented that it was impossible to carry on the work of the department without the assistance of a demonstrator and a boy."*)

HEN Man sat high upon a tree—
Ah, sacred days, before the Fall!—
And gibbered of the things to be
In accents aboriginal;
Did dreams or visions e'er forestall
The time when he should walk, and coy,
Obsequious, at his tail should crawl
A Demonstrator and a Boy?

Majestic mammal! Now doth he
Two-footed pace this flying ball,
He bleeds the young examinee,
And scouts the supernatural:
What matters it to quote St. Paul?
Who cares what deeds were done in Troy?
Two things are not apocryphal,
A Demonstrator and a Boy.

From out the vasty depths of sea
The mage of old could spirits call—
A task of no utility;
Far wiser he, to dredge and trawl

For weeds and shells and fishes small,
And summon, should the labour cloy,
To range the pickles on the wall
A Demonstrator and a Boy.

ENVOY

Prince! In Thy high celestial hall
To tune his harp with holy joy,
Grant him Thy grace;—and therewithal
A Demonstrator and a Boy.

BALLADE OF THE GOTH

N days of old when Spenser sang,
And Art and Letters were akin,
The halls of Verse re-echoing rang
With voice of bard and paladin;
Now are those singers gathered in,
Their garments given to the moth,
And o'er their bones there gleams the grin
Of Saxon, Icelander, and Goth.

Shakespeare and Milton may go hang,
For what knew they of sage Alcuin?
St. Patrick's Dean wrote modern slang,
And Wordsworth is not worth a pin;
Poor ghosts of poets, worn and thin,
Brayed all to pieces by the wrath
Symphonious, from the lion's skin
Of Saxon, Icelander, and Goth.

And now does that barbaric gang
Invade all learning, and begin,
From San Francisco to Penang,
To stroke the beard, and wag the chin,

And drown all music in their din,
  And cut all letters to their cloth,
And brain all poets with the shin
  Of Saxon, Icelander, and Goth.

ENVOY

Prince of Examiners! They sin
  Who brush our Art aside like froth.
Be of good cheer; 'tis ours to spin
  The Saxon, Icelander, and Goth.

EATING SONG

Being a Rendering of the Fervours of our best Drinking Songs into the equivalent terms of a kindred Art.

F you want to drive wrinkles from belly and brow,
You must tighten the skin, as I tighten it now;
For at gobbets of bacon I sit at my ease,
And I button my mouth over dollops of cheese,
And I laugh at the Devil, who plays on his pipes
With the wind from a famishing traveller's tripes.
The French call it dining to peddle and peck,
But an Englishman's watchword is "Full to the neck!"
Does the parson deny it?—he's lean as a cat,
And the men that I like are all puffy and fat:
Perhaps you'll find music in heaven, but by George!
You won't get a thundering suetty gorge.
So down with your victuals, and stuff till you burst,
And let him who refuses a morsel be curst!

A NEW BALLAD OF WILLIAM POTTINGER

AS IT IS SUNG IN THE STREETS OF THE PRINCIPAL CITIES OF ENGLAND

TTEND and hearken gentles all
Of each and every sect,
Unto the tale of Pottinger,
That noble architect;

And how a child of common kind
This Pottinger was born,
Yet for to rise by honest means
He did not hold it scorn;

And how Sir William Pottinger,
When come to high degree,
Still kept his lowly modest ways,
And "As you please" says he.

For first he was apprentice bound
Unto a worthy man,
Who quickly taught him how to draw
An elevated plan.

And so he drew and kept accounts,
The space of seven long year,
And learned to please the customers,
As shortly shall appear.

Now all this time he bent himself
Unto his master's will,
And not a single penny piece
Was missing from the till.

So when his articles were out
He went to London town,
And there, as Pottinger and Co.,
He came to great renown.

The pigsties and the palaces
That shine on either hand,
The churches and the galleries
All over fair England,

The workhouse and the hospital,
The cottage and the hall,
It was this William Pottinger
Got orders for them all.

His clerks were working day and night
All in a room so large,
In planning out the gable roofs
And adding up the charge.

Now listen, gentles all, and hear
Of Pottinger the praise,
And how, though great, he practised still
His lowly modest ways.

For when a University
Was needed by and by,
" O send for William Pottinger! "
The people all did cry.

Then Pottinger made no delay,
But came a hundred miles,
And in a bag he brought the plans
And specimens of tiles.

And now the five Committee-men
All round a board are ranged,
To give advice upon the plans,
And how they should be changed.

O in came William Pottinger,
The blandest of them all:
A fairer-spoken gentleman
Ne'er stepped into a hall!

Then up stood one Committee-man,
And he spake bold and free,
" This porch," says he, " is twelve foot high,
I'd have it twenty-three."

Then out there spake another one.
  Says he " I think it best
To take these gables facing South
  And turn them to the West."

And last of all the wise Chairman,
  Whom nothing did escape,
" The building seems all right," says he,
  " But I do not like its shape."

Then gentle William Pottinger
  With modest mien began
To applaud the ingenuity
  Of each Committee-man.

" And I, if I may be allowed
  To speak my mind," says he,
" With all the changes you suggest
  Most fully do agree:

" The shape I know not how to change,
  But if it fail to please "—
(And from his bag he drew a tile)—
  " I'll plaster it with these."

This new device with one accord
  They praise it to the skies,
And still he smiles and rubs his hands
  In lowly loving wise.

" My dear," said each Committee-man,
Unto his wife that night,
" Our Master-builder Pottinger
Admitted I was right."

Then unto fair Balmoral Towers
Came tidings of his fame,
And " Rise Sir William Pottinger! "
The Queen she did exclaim.

Now, gentles all, my song is sung,
There is no more to tell;
But all you young apprentices,
If you would prosper well,

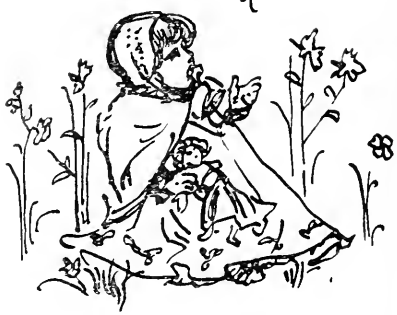
And if great store of wealth and fame
You would be sure to find,
Remember still to cultivate
A lowly modest mind.

ON BEING CHALLENGED TO WRITE AN EPIGRAM IN THE MANNER OF HERRICK

TO Griggs, that learned man, in many a bygone session,
His kids were his delight, and physics his profession;
Now Griggs, grown old and glum, and less intent on knowledge,
Physics himself at home, and sends his kids to college.

Robert Fleming Bell

July 21 – 29. 97.



This time, as a dunce could tell,
Was drawn { clever Mister Bell.,
Perhaps he did it in a minute,
(There's nothing very special in it)
It took me fifteen times so long
To make this little grateful song
To say I am ever more your debtor
For food and drink and something better

Walter Raleigh.

Sept. 24 – 30th

WRITTEN IN A VISITORS' BOOK

BENEATH A PEN-AND-INK SKETCH BY MR. ROBERT ANNING BELL, WHO HAD HAPPENED TO PRECEDE THE AUTHOR AS A GUEST OF THE HOUSE

THIS figure, as a dunce could tell,
Was drawn by clever Mister Bell,
Perhaps he did it in a minute,
(There's nothing very special in it).
It took me fifteen times as long
To make this little grateful song,
To say I am once more your debtor
For food and drink and something better.

EARLY OR LATE LUNCH

An Exercise in the Manner of Mr. W. E. Gladstone

"WITH regard to the exceedingly interesting and important question that you have put to me, I need hardly say that it has been to me a subject of profound meditation for many years. I have not a shadow of hesitation in declaring, from long experience of dietetic vicissitudes, that there can be no doubt that the acceleration or premature consumption of what may without exaggeration be called, in a sense, the most important meal of the day, is a contingency that ought by all reasonable means to be averted, except in cases where the procrastination of indulgence in nutriment is attended with inconvenient, deleterious, or (as I have myself known it under exceptional circumstances to be) even with fatal results. I have this subject so much at heart that I shall feel the greatest pleasure in permitting you to give my opinion on the matter that measure of publicity which the admirable journalistic enterprise of this age demands."

AUSTIN'S PRIDE

A Dramatic Lyric, wherein Mr. Alfred Austin accepts the Laureate's Wreath of Office

IN—is it tin? Well, may be,
But I'll have it, boys, all the same;
Do they think me an oaf or gaby
To be cowed by old Alfred's fame?
Who cares though the wits make merry,
Though black be Sir Edwin's looks?
Just think of that butt of sherry,
And how it will sell my books!

There are girls in London city,
There are mothers and children too,
Who will think all I say is witty,
And will say all I write is new;
If only I get that laurel
And wear it, then you will see,
I'll cram any mortal moral
Down the throats of the great B.P.

I'll find in my kitchen garden
The stuff for a deathless work;
I'll rile the old man at Hawarden
By refusing to curse the Turk;

And I'll bless the poetic Party
That took down the wreath from the hooks,
And Salisbury, who gave it to me,
While Balfour looked after Brooks.

When gold-diggers seek bonanzas,
When companies plan a raid,
My spavined and wind-galled stanzas
Shall hobble to bring them aid;
With my budget of common-places,
And my musical-box of rhymes,
I can give old friends new faces
For the public that reads the *Times*.

I'll model my style on Tupper,
I'll borrow my tags from *Punch*,
I'll have Marie Corelli to supper,
And Lewis Morris to lunch;
I'll feed them on small potatoes,
And teach them the way to thrive
Is to sing of oneself, and the House of Guelph,
When it dies or comes alive!

REMARKS

N leaving the Exhibition at the Royal Academy in company with his friend Mr. Bell, the Author expressed his conviction that it is better, after all, to be a Human Being.

Speaking of the writings of William Morris, Olive Schreiner, and Andrew Lang, the Author remarked that they were very like the Bible, only sillier.

(*Mr. Raleigh also made other remarks which have been lost.*)

OCCASIONAL VERSE

JOHANNESBURG, NEW YEAR, 1896

("Several financiers have applied to the Boer Government for permission to leave the city."—*Daily papers, 9th January.*)

ALIEN blood and hearts of mud, who shall
mete you the measure due?
Remorse is a man's grim penance, and
harrowing shame, but you—
Do they care, your kind? Will ye call to mind that day
of the days gone by
When your panic yelp brought men to help, and ye
kennelled, and let them die?

Helots of Boers ye have been, their helots ye still shall be,
Their brand on your craven foreheads shall sever you
from the free.
Grab, when the till is opened; at the crack of the musket,
fly!
Gibber with fear when ye see draw near the death that ye
dare not die!

Live then, and shame the living; live, as the mongrel can,
Safe in the friendly limbo of the scorn of God and man:
Not heaven or earth will judge you, ye must take your cause to try
Where deep in hell your brethren dwell, the worms that cannot die.

TO A LADY WITH AN UNRULY AND ILL-MANNERED DOG

WHO BIT SEVERAL PERSONS OF IMPORTANCE

OUR dog is not a dog of grace;
He does not wag the tail or beg;
He bit Miss Dickson in the face;
He bit a Bailie in the leg.

What tragic choices such a dog
Presents to visitor or friend!
Outside there is the Glasgow fog;
Within, a hydrophobic end.

Yet some relief even terror brings,
For when our life is cold and gray
We waste our strength on little things,
And fret our puny souls away.

A snarl! A scuffle round the room!
A sense that Death is drawing near!
And human creatures reassume
The elemental robe of fear.

So when my colleague makes his moan
Of careless cooks, and warts, and debt,
—Enlarge his views, restore his tone,
And introduce him to your Pet!

Quod Raleigh.

UFFINGTON, BERKSHIRE
8*th May* 1903

STANS PUER AD MENSAM

TTEND my words, my gentle knave,
And you shall learn from me
How boys at dinner may behave
With due propriety.

Guard well your hands: two things have been
Unfitly used by some;
The trencher for a tambourine,
The table for a drum.

We could not lead a pleasant life,
And 'twould be finished soon,
If peas were eaten with the knife,
And gravy with the spoon.

Eat slowly: only men in rags
And gluttons old in sin
Mistake themselves for carpet bags
And tumble victuals in.

The privy pinch, the whispered tease,
The wild, unseemly yell—
When children do such things as these,
We say, " It is not well."

Endure your mother's timely stare,
  Your father's righteous ire,
And do not wriggle on your chair
  Like flannel in the fire.

Be silent: you may chatter loud
  When you are fully grown,
Surrounded by a silent crowd
  Of children of your own.

If you should suddenly feel bored
  And much inclined to yawning,
Your little hand will best afford
  A modest useful awning.

Think highly of the Cat: and yet
  You need not therefore think
That portly strangers like your pet
  To share their meat and drink.

The end of dinner comes ere long
  When, once more full and free,
You cheerfully may bide the gong
  That calls you to your tea.

ERATURE LESSON.

SIR PATRICK SPENS

In the Eighteenth Century manner

VERSE I

IN a famed town of Caledonia's land,
A prosperous port contiguous to the strand,
A monarch feasted in right royal state;
But care still dogs the pleasures of the Great,
And well his faithful servants could surmise
From his distracted looks and broken sighs
That though the purple bowl was circling free,
His mind was prey to black perplexity.
At last, while others thoughtless joys invoke,
Fierce from his breast the laboured utterance broke;
"Alas!" he cried, "and what to me the gain
Though I am king of all this fair domain,
Though Ceres minister her plenteous hoard,
And Bacchus with his bounty crowns my board,
If Neptune still, reluctant to obey,
Neglects my sceptre and denies my sway?
On a far mission must my vessels urge
Their course impetuous o'er the boiling surge;
But who shall guide them with a dextrous hand,
And bring them safely to that distant land?
Whose skill shall dare the perils of the deep,
And beard the Sea-god in his stormy keep?

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Verse II

He spake: and straightway, rising from his side
An ancient senator, of reverend pride,
Unsealed his lips, and uttered from his soul
Great store of flatulence and rigmarole;
—All fled the Court, which shades of night invest,
And Pope and Gay and Prior told the rest.

* * * *

Nov. 1900

LINES SUGGESTED BY AN EDITION OF BLAKE'S POEMS

I have taken to the Blake manner :

" IF you try to do what's right
You pass your life in a horrible fright,
And your Emanation—Lord protect her!—
Commits adultery with your Spectre."

I write to you because you won't write to me :

" He that answers a Friend's letter
Makes the Morning Star his debtor."

I like the visionary style.

Poplar, Malden, and Lambeth's Vale
Each held on to the other's tail;
Poplar lived on chickweed and groundsel,
Malden danced to please the Council;
Lambeth's Vale in an old plug hat
Played the bones on the front-door mat,
And then crept round to the back garden
To get his money and ask for pardon.
A Christian's heart is never hard,
So they gave him a pound of lard.
What's the reason, Christians, tell,
Why the most of us go to Hell?

OXFORD
27th Oct. 1905

THE ARTIST

HE Artist and his Luckless Wife
They lead a horrid haunted life,
Surrounded by the things he's made
That are not wanted by the trade.

The world is very fair to see;
The Artist will not let it be;
He fiddles with the works of God,
And makes them look uncommon odd.

The Artist is an awful man,
He does not do the things he can;
He does the things he cannot do,
And we attend the private view.

The Artist uses honest paint
To represent things as they ain't,
He then asks money for the time
It took to perpetrate the crime.

1917

THE BATTLE HYMN OF KENSIT'S MEN

(*Written in collaboration with Charles Strachey*)

1

HE Church is in a hawful state,
With Richerlists and such;
The Pope 'e won't 'ave long to wait
For most of 'em—not much!
So Mister Kensit's took the 'ump
(And rightly too, says I),
And when 'e goes upon the stump
You'll see the feathers fly.

Then pack yer traps, and clear the way; depart, be gone, get Hout!
And make no noise, or Kensit's boys 'll show you 'oo can shout;—
No more of yer 'anky panky now, no more of yer Romish rot,
For Johnny K. is hon the way to bust the blooming lot.

2

They've aconites and chasubells
(Same like the Papists wears),
And makes the most unchristian smells
With hincense at their prayers;

They've sacred pictures by the stack,
And lamps that halways burn;
Such 'eaps of 'oly bric-a-brac,
There's 'ardly room to turn!
So pack yer traps, etc.

3

Now what would Martin Luther say
If 'e come back to earth?
(And 'e was never in 'is day
A foe to Honest Mirth)—
I think that 'im and old John Knox
Would twig the little game,
And, knowing it was 'eterodox,
They simply would exclaim—
Now pack yer traps, etc.

4

A prayer may serve a useful hend
With something for to git,
But prayer for Nokes, my pore old friend,
Is neither sense nor wit;
'E's safely planted hin 'is grave,
(No longer hin the swim)
—Hup comes a low blasphemious knave
And takes and prays for *'im.*
Then pack yer traps, etc.

5

It fairly makes my blood to bile,
That Jesuites from Rome
Should crawl about the 'arth and spile
The sanctity of 'ome;
And if my missus, or the gals,
Gets talkative, and tries
To blab in them confessionals
I'll black their blooming eyes!

Then pack yer traps, etc.

6

I went into St. Ninny's Church,
Where those so-called divines
Do bob, and jinnyflect and lurch,
Figged up unto the nines;
I ups and says—" You un'oly clown,
'Ow dare you 'ave the face
To go a capering hup and down
Before the Throne of Grace?

Now pack yer traps, etc.

7

" I don't object to fancy dress
On niggers at the races;
I'm fond of dancin', I confess,
(That is, in proper places);

But parsons doing cellar-flaps
To music by the band,
Rigged out in petticoats and caps,
Is more than I can stand."

So pack yer traps, etc.

8

" Sit down! "—says 'e. " *I won't* "—says I.
" Then, verger, turn 'im out."
With that I lets a Bible fly,
And lands 'im hon the snout:
To stop 'is richerlistic row
I knocked 'im orf 'is perch,
And there and then we taught 'im 'ow
To desecrate a Church.

Then pack yer traps, etc.

9

My friends all stuck to me like bricks,
The 'ymn-books flew like 'ail;
With one of them big candlesticks
I smashed the haltar-rail:
The idolaters set up a squall,
But soon they got the Toe:—
We made a 'olesome Gospel-'all
Of that galanty-show.

So pack yer traps, etc.

10

Come all you noble Protestants
(For 'alf the job ain't done),
It is your 'elp that Hengland wants—
Yuss! Hevery mother's son!
If each of you brings 'alf a brick,
A better church we'll raise
Than hany blooming Cawtholic
In hall 'is blighted days.

They'll pack their traps, they'll clear the way, depart—
be gone—get Hout—
They'll make no noise, or we're the boys will show them
'oo can shout!
They'll stow their 'anky-panky then, they'll chuck their
Romish rot,
When Johnny K. 'as 'ad 'is way and bust the blooming lot.

ODE

To The Glasgow Ballad Club

21st December 1901

MEN and Bards!
I, whom my dull brain retards,
Cannot make an ode that beats
Keats.

Yet I fain
Would uplift my humble strain
As your grateful and distressed
Guest.

Emerson
Says the bard must dwell alone,
Social habits make his verse
Worse.

This may be
In the cities oversea,
Boston or New York, or Hong
Kong.

Here we find
That it elevates the mind,
And revives the muse to hob-
nob.

Must we shine,
Buried diamonds in a mine,
Wasting rays that might adorn
Morn.

Joined in one
We shall glitter in the sun
(When he next illumines Clyde-
side).

Though our songs
Cannot vanquish ancient wrongs;
Though they follow where the rose
Goes;

And their sound,
Swooning over hollow ground,
Fade and leave the enchanted air
Bare;

Yet the wise
Say that not unblest he dies
Who has known a single May
Day.

If we have laughed,
Loved, and laboured in our craft,
We may pass with a resigned
Mind.

While our cage
Is this narrow Iron Age,
Make it ring with many a brave
Stave!

—But enough
Of this complicated stuff,
Lest the critics murmur " Hoots
Toots! "

Some are foes
To whatever is not prose;
Verse, they say, is merely fact
Cracked.

You may meet
Daily in the public street
Men who call a sonnet clap-
Trap.

Here's a health!
To the poets wine and wealth;
Let the critics go to—well—
Hell!

TO PROFESSOR H. A. STRONG, LL.D.

24th November 1900

DEAR STRANG,

ON this your natal day,
We Glaisgie bodies wish to say
We're sorry that we canna gae
That far to see ye;
But though oor bodies here maun stay,
In hairt we're wi' ye.

The Northern clans, wi' pipes and drones—
The " Scotswhahaes " and brave " Hechmons,"
The " Hootsawas " and " Sodascones "—
Are here thegither;
And ilka ane in joyful tones
Proclaims you brither.

We're fine and glad ye didna scorn
The fashious wark o' being born,
Whilk wad ha' left us sair forlorn;
But noo—Losh guide us!—
Ye're fand, this braw November morn,
On airth beside us.

'Twas in this toun ye first assayed
The ancient gerund-grinding trade,
Wi' Latin in a spune ye gaed
The fowk to feed them;
And eh! the bonny jokes ye made—
Deil kens wha seed them!

Oor thochts hae dwalt upon you aft,
The climate's turned a wee thing saft,
Oor college noo wi' gowks is staffed,
Wi' gomerals deevit;
But, Lord be praised! there's Heaven alaft,
And here, Glenleevit.

In Scotlan' nane need droop or dwine;
For them that feels their stren'th decline
The certain cure (it's just divine)
Each year returns
(Whilk mony a lassie had lang syne)
—A nicht wi' Burns.

We twa hae strayed ower Brownlow Hill,
And pu'd lang faces on the sill,
While toddling ben to yon auld mill
That still plays clatter;
—And auld Mackay is there, and still
As daft's a hatter.

Lang may the flags o' Bedford Street
Resound beneath your honoured feet!
Lang may ye hauld your annual treat
For a' the leddies!
Lang may ye flout and jink and cheat
The Laird o' Hades!

SESTINA OTIOSA

UR great work, the *Otia Merseiana*,
Edited by learned Mister Sampson,
And supported by Professor Woodward,
Is financed by numerous Bogus Meetings
Hastily convened by Kuno Meyer
To impose upon the Man of Business.

All in vain! The accomplished Man of Business
Disapproves of *Otia Merseiana*,
Turns his back on Doctor Kuno Meyer;
Cannot be enticed by Mister Sampson,
To be present at the Bogus Meetings,
Though attended by Professor Woodward.

Little cares the staid Professor Woodward:
He, being something of a man of business,
Knows that not a hundred Bogus Meetings
To discuss the *Otia Merseiana*
Can involve himself and Mister Sampson
In the debts of Doctor Kuno Meyer.

So the poor deluded Kuno Meyer,
Unenlightened by Professor Woodward—

Whom, upon the word of Mister Sampson,
He believes to be a man of business
Fit to run the *Otia Merseiana*—
Keeps on calling endless Bogus Meetings.

Every week has now its Bogus Meetings,
Punctually convened by Kuno Meyer
In the name of *Otia Merseiana :*
Every other week Professor Woodward
Takes his place, and, as a man of business,
Audits the accounts with Mister Sampson.

He and impecunious Mister Sampson
Are the mainstay of the Bogus Meetings;
But the alienated Man of Business
Cannot be allured by Kuno Meyer
To attend and meet Professor Woodward,
Glory of the *Otia Merseiana.*

Kuno Meyer! Great Professor Woodward!
Bogus Meetings damn, for men of business,
Mister Sampson's *Otia Merseiana.*

INDEX TO SESTINA OTIOSA

ON J*** M*****

Founder of the Society for the Suppression of Demoralizing Literature

"HENCEFORTH let all Creation be refined!"
Said M*****, sole Protector of the Mind;
By none of my young men let it be said
That rivers come together in their bed;
And if they write of Venus—very well,
They write; I do not print; it does not sell;
I mean, it does not sell; I do not print;
—I hope that my young men will take the hint.
My grandfather, who licked the boots of Byron,
Thought chaste themes best for bards to spank the lyre on;
But Byron was a young man in a hurry;
He's gone the Lord knows where, and I'm J*** M*****.

WISHES OF AN ELDERLY MAN

Wished at a Garden Party, June 1914

WISH I loved the Human Race;
I wish I loved its silly face;
I wish I liked the way it walks;
I wish I liked the way it talks;
And when I'm introduced to one
I wish I thought *What Jolly Fun*!

SONNET

To J. S.

March 1908

NEVER cared for literature as such.
The spondee, dactyl, trochee, anapaest,
Do not inflame my passions in the least;
And cultured persons do not please me much.
Great works may be composed in French or Dutch,
Yet my poor happiness is not increased:
To me the learned critic is a beast,
And poetry a decorated crutch.
One book among the rest is dear to me;
As when a man, having tired himself in deed
Against the world, and, falling back to write,
Sated with love, or crazed by vanity,
Or drunk with joy, or maimed by Fortune's spite,
Sets down his Paternoster and his Creed.

MY LAST WILL


HEN I am safely laid away,
Out of work and out of play,
Sheltered by the kindly ground
From the world of sight and sound,
One or two of those I leave
Will remember me and grieve,
Thinking how I made them gay
By the things I used to say;
—But the crown of their distress
Will be my untidiness.

What a nuisance then will be
All that shall remain of me!
Shelves of books I never read,
Piles of bills, undocketed,
Shaving-brushes, razors, strops,
Bottles that have lost their tops,
Boxes full of odds and ends,
Letters from departed friends,
Faded ties and broken braces
Tucked away in secret places,
Baggy trousers, ragged coats,
Stacks of ancient lecture-notes,

And that ghostliest of shows,
Boots and shoes in horrid rows.
Though they are of cheerful mind,
My lovers, whom I leave behind,
When they find these in my stead,
Will be sorry I am dead.

They will grieve; but you, my dear,
Who have never tasted fear,
Brave companion of my youth,
Free as air and true as truth,
Do not let these weary things
Rob you of your junketings.

Burn the papers; sell the books;
Clear out all the pestered nooks;
Make a mighty funeral pyre
For the corpse of old desire,
Till there shall remain of it
Naught but ashes in a pit:
And when you have done away
All that is of yesterday,
If you feel a thrill of pain,
Master it, and start again.

This, at least, you have never done
Since you first beheld the sun:
If you came upon your own
Blind to light and deaf to tone,

Basking in the great release
Of unconsciousness and peace,
You would never, while you live,
Shatter what you cannot give;
—Faithful to the watch you keep,
You would never break their sleep.

Clouds will sail and winds will blow
As they did an age ago
O'er us who lived in little towns
Underneath the Berkshire downs.
When at heart you shall be sad,
Pondering the joys we had,
Listen and keep very still.
If the lowing from the hill
Or the tolling of a bell
Do not serve to break the spell,
Listen; you may be allowed
To hear my laughter from a cloud.

Take the good that life can give
For the time you have to live.
Friends of yours and friends of mine
Surely will not let you pine.
Sons and daughters will not spare
More than friendly love and care.
If the Fates are kind to you,
Some will stay to see you through;
And the time will not be long
Till the silence ends the song.

Sleep is God's own gift; and man,
Snatching all the joys he can,
Would not dare to give his voice
To reverse his Maker's choice.
Brief delight, eternal quiet,
How change these for endless riot
Broken by a single rest?
Well you know that sleep is best.

We that have been heart to heart
Fall asleep, and drift apart.
Will that overwhelming tide
Reunite us, or divide?
Whence we come and whither go
None can tell us, but I know
Passion's self is often marred
By a kind of self-regard,
And the torture of the cry
" You are you, and I am I."
While we live, the waking sense
Feeds upon our difference,
In our passion and our pride
Not united, but allied.

We are severed by the sun,
And by darkness are made one.

OXFORD, 1919

LONDON : CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND GRIGGS (PRINTERS), LTD.
CHISWICK PRESS, TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE.