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LOCAL LYRICS.

BY

H. KNIGHT.



BRADFORD :

"YORKSHIREMAN" NEWSPAPER COMPANY, LIMITED,
AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.



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WM. BYLES AND SONS, PRINTERS, BRADFORD.

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LOCAL LYRICS.

ODES TO EMINENT PERSONAGES.

To W. L. JACKSON, Esq., M.P.

In days gone by, when Persian captains led,
On glory bent, their serried hosts to battle,
They hired poets—so the legend said—
To cheer their camp; and when the deadly rattle
Of hostile arms lapsed for a season, they
Employed those bards to sing a roundelay.

So, now my Lawies, when your wordy fray
Has lulled, at length, although your eyes still glisten
With warlike ardour, prithee turn away
To some cool shade, where you, in peace, may listen
The while the bard, in plaintive number, sings
Of your career, and divers other things.

'Tis said, by whom I know not, at your birth,
Whilst still you lay enshrined within your cradle—
A human snowdrop peeping from the earth—
Your infant jaws contained no silver ladle:
A stupid oversight—by Nature's fluke,
You found yourself a tanner—not a duke.

And yet the fairies, who are said to trace
Man's fate ere birth, refused to leave you stranded
Upon the desert shores of Common-place;
To struggle on, unarmed and single-handed,
They named you "Lawies." Had they wished you ill,
They might have blighted you with simple "Bill."

"Bill Jackson." Ah, enwrapped in such a name,
Cursed by a term so bare and uneuphonious,
Though born a statesman, still unknown to Fame,
You might have died a rat, like poor Polonius;
Your "proper person" hidden from men's gaze
Behind the arras of a homely phrase.

But "William Lawies," soon this wafted thee
 Beyond the vulgar herd of men and tanners ;
 It hatn a ring of "old nobilitie "

Which well might soften even Lord John Manners.
 Thus soon you climbed to Rank's select resorts,
 And passed from kips to Councils and to Courts.

Yet would I not malign you. For although
 To some the gods have given lungs like bellows,
 And such, by mere abnormal power to blow
 Their own brass trumpets, soar above their fellows ;
 Success like yours a man alone attains
 By two possessions—honesty and brains.

Plain people like you, Lawies, for they feel
 That when your mind once forms a clear conviction
 You let them have it straight, and off the reel,
 Without a deluge of verbose restriction.
 You do not use your sword in Truth's redoubt
 To cut a dozen holes for getting out.

Such men alone can rule ; the rank and file
 Despise commanders whose extreme good-breeding
 Prompts them to turn, and with benignant smile
 Request their troops to come and do the leading.
 The bard eschews all party—still no less
 He loves those traits which merit all success.

To JOHN BARRAN, Esq., M.P.

But, on second thoughts, perhaps it would be better for Mr. Barran to speak for himself, which, with your kind permission, he will proceed to do, after the manner of Gama, of *Princess Ida* celebrity.

If you give me your attention I will tell you how I came
 To achieve my proud position and my legislative fame ;
 How I passed from youthful garments of a kind the world calls "slop,"
 To arise, a second Phœnix, from the ashes of the shop ;
 How I grew, at length, so haughty that I not unfrequently
 Speak of my friend Mr. Gladstone, and ask Herbert in to tea ;
 How to climb, in short, life's ladder I'll unfold to you the plan ;
 For though everybody sees that I'm a most successful man,
 Many don't know why.

When I started on life's journey, the traditional half-crown
 Formed the sum of my possessions, but I succered at Fortune's frown.
 With the wide world for mine oyster, and a needle's tiny blade
 For a sword to force it open, I went in at once for trade.

I was young and energetic—I am energetic still—
 Be my task to frame a garment or a County Franchise Bill—
 I am ever energetic, and, when my career I scan,
 To discover how I came to be a most successful man,
 That's one reason why.

The successful playwright, Shakspeare, is reported to have said,
 "A tide occurs in men's affairs, which, taken at a head,
 Leads a person on to fortune," and, though this remark was made
 Without any special bearing on the wholesale clothing trade,
 I adopted it without reserve, it seemed to me to say :—
 "Go forth, O John, and conquer, in a wholesale kind of way.
 Go forth and clothe humanity as cheaply as you can."
 So I clothed it, and I am to-day a most successful man,
 You will all see why.

Thus, "Energy and Promptitude" became my golden rule,
 And I picked up elocution at a local Sunday school.
 On discovering my intellect I strove to be refined,
 And I steadily developed the resources of my mind.
 I became, you know, a councillor, an alderman, a mayor,
 And the cry of "Vote for Barran" rent, at length, the startled air.
 Then the race for junior membership victoriously I ran,
 And my rivals murmured, "Barran seems a most successful man,
 And we can't tell why."

On my legislating powers my detractors set slight store,
 But my friends respect and trust me, and I ask for nothing more.
 I'm a "risen" man, snobs whisper. I'm plebeian in the eyes
 Of the men who haven't risen, and who haven't brains to rise.
 But this doesn't weigh upon me; I can bear it, never fear;
 I don't grudge these human failures the small solace of a sneer.
 So, farewell till next election, and I'll end as I began,
 With the brief and simple statement, I'm a most successful man,
 And you now know why.

To SIR EDWARD BAINES, Kt.

Last night, Sir Edward, in his gloomy den,
 The bard reclined. Dark waxed his weary soul;
 With deep dislike he viewed his fellow-men,
 And loathed existence, taken as a whole.
 Grim Indigestion held him in its thrall,
 The Bilious demon sat upon his chest,
 And these twin-fiends first dipped his pen in gall,
 Then bade him write,—and he, at their request
 (At their insistence rather), racked his brains
 To write some lines on thee—Sir Edward Baines.

Quoth Indigestion, "Here, my friend, is game
 For even thy weak arrows: barb thy shaft
 (His fads and fancies offer thee fair aim)
 With all the cunning of thy rhyming craft;
 You know your cue—a narrow moral code—
 A home-made saint, who sorrowfully wends
 His way to heaven, by a private road,
 With Mr. Willans and a few choice friends,
 All self-backed favourites, who are bound to win
 Against a field so handicapped by sin."

"Remember, too," 'twas Biliousness who spoke—
 "Sir Edward and his clique for many a year
 Contrived the drama in their town to choke,
 And snubbed poor Shakspeare with their frown austere;
 For them, the land whereon the mighty dead
 May walk again, and speak to toiling men
 Their noblest thoughts, seemed little save a bed
 For rearing seeds of vice; their voice and pen
 Conspired to slang fair Thespia, till men came
 To hold her as a nymph of doubtful fame."

Then to the bard there came another form—
 A gentler spirit with a sweet, sad face,
 (She may have been Tobacco) and her warm
 And fragrant breath beatified the place.
 "An old, old man," she murmured, "O my friend,
 Who in his boyhood saw a rough, hard way—
 'The path of Duty'—nearly to the end
 His feet have traced it now, and day by day
 He travels on, the goal grows very near.
 Well, after all, a true, a brave career.

"He may have made mistakes! Wby, even you,
 My gentle poet, have gone wrong at times.
 Go, ask your conscience for a nearer view
 Of *your* array of half-forgotten crimes,
 Let those assist to moderate your zeal.
 Your various villainies should be applied
 To calm your judgment when you come to deal
 With one 'whose failings lean to virtue's side.'"
 This said—she paused—the bard is still in doubt
 Whether she vanished, or—his pipe went out.

TO SIR GEORGE MORRISON, KT., TOWN CLERK OF LEEDS.

DEAR GEORGE,—Excuse the slight familiarity
 Involved in this address, I am aware
 Our hands have never met, that wide disparity
 Exists between us, still I pay a share
 Of thy—forgive me—screw. and therefore, mark,
 To some extent you're mine—my own Town Clerk.

Mine! O the bliss to be thy part proprietor;
 To own some bit of thee, however slight.
 My sorrows fade, my restless soul grows quieter,
 When I regard myself in this glad light.
 Yet here let me repress pride's joyous tear
 To briefly glance at thy unique career.

When first you sought, in youth's unchecked hilarity,
 The post you ably fill, a Council elf,
 To culture strange, remarked with cool barbarity,
 "Well? What have *you* to say, sir, for yourself?"
 "I've much to say," you answered. Well, my lad,
 I'll do you justice, you were right—you had.

You said it well. Your own superiority
 You proved by argument so free from flaw
 That they who heard you bowed to your authority
 As though your merit were a point of law;
 And even Archie let the matter pass,
 Nor set your worth at "happen awf o' t' brass."

Thus then you gained the post. The apt facility
 With which you polish off vexed legal points
 Stands second only to your known ability
 For doing justice to the Mayoral joints.
 The Borough's oracle, the Board's High Priest,
 You grace alike the Council and the feast.

And then a thrill ran through the glad community
 Because the Queen, in pity for its dearth
 Of noble lads, has grasped the opportunity
 To add her tribute to *your* moral worth.
 In waterworks, not war, you took delight,
 And studious days now make a man a knight.

Take, then, my blessing. May thy vast profundity
 Of legal knowledge long remain our stay,
 Long may thy form retain its fair rotundity,
 Thy locks repel Time's envious streaks of grey,
 In brief, dear George, accept a humble bard's
 Sincere good wishes and most kind regards.

TO ARCHIBALD WHITHAM SCARR, Esq.

'Tis strange how frequently the good and great
 Their life's real mission treat with cold neglect,
 How constantly men scorn and underrate
 Their truest title to the world's respect—
 The gentle bard is ever deeply pained
 When heaven-sent genius comes to lose its way
 And in small trivial pathways drifts astray,
 Blind to the summits which it might have gained.

Such, "Archie," is your case. You may opine,
 No doubt you do, that your colossal mind
 Is hardly framed to weave the spells divine
 Of genial humour, which delight mankind.
 "Oh, no," you cry, "be mine a sterner task,
 The noisome drain, the dreary rough highway ;
 My brow is formed not for the jester's bay—
 In Council glories rather let me bask."

But, Archie, there are poets who, although
 Their names on Fame's wide scroll are rarely found,
 Unconsciously, sweet inspiration throw
 (As roses do their scent) on all around.
 And you are one of these—When Fancy flags,
 How oft before the wearied witling's eyes,
 A gentle fairy somehow seems to rise
 With "Frewt o' t' Bible" or with "Lucky Bags."

No pantomime has taken place for years
 In which you have not played a noble part,
 You cheered the downcast, dried the orphan's tears,
 And raised a burden from the widow's heart.
 Yet, still, though nature with the greatest pains
 Has framed you to amuse the human race,
 You roughly hurl her favours in her face,
 And waste your genius, as I said, on drains.

Fan is your mission. Leave all meaner things
 To low ambition, and the pride of Brown,
 Or Smith, or Robinson, and spread your wings
 For nobler flights. A fairer, brighter crown
 Awaits thee ; Come ! exert thy fertile vein,
 If now unconsciously you lend wit aid,
 Surely, by strict attention to the trade,
 As great Joke Causer you in time may reign.

To EDWARD BUTLER, Esq.,

Chairman of the Leeds School Board.

At dead of night, in his accustomed chair,
The poet sits ; a strange unholy glare
Lurks in his eyes : anon, a fiendish smile
Plays on his pallid lips, he grasps the while
His hardest pen ; then in envenomed ink
He drives it fiercely to the hilt, and bends his brows to think.

To think ! for on that morn a voice had said—
“ This night, O minion, take the School Board’s head,
That is, its Chairman ; for a subject write
An ode to that Chief Butler, keen and bright,
And if from virtue’s path he strays one jot,
Drive mercy firmly from thy heart, and let him have it hot ! ”

Thrice happy, then, behold the man of rhyme,
For, steeped himself in every class of crime,
He can detect and with peculiar grace
Set forth the errors of the human race ;
Thus, O my Edward, he proceeds in haste
To scan the lengthy page whereon thy public life is traced.

He gazes long, then a dolorous sigh
Bursts from his lips, and sad tears dim his eye ;
Though in all errandies of thy life he peers,
He finds no subject suitable for sneers ;
Indeed, the bard regretfully must say
Such lives, so far as cynics go, are simply thrown away.

Before that bard uprises an old man
Whose days have passed in peace ; to raise the ban
With which the demons Crime, and Want, and Care
Blacken the souls of men which God made fair,
Is his self-ordered task, and in his eyes,
Truly, to raise one wretched heart is nobler than to rise.

So mild is he, he would not even harm
A licensed victualler, a potent charm
Pervades his ev’ry — Here, stop, hang it all,
The bard forgets his trade, ’tis his to call
Attention to men’s *faults*, so, much depressed,
He seeks once more for motives low, O Edward, in thy breast.

Ha, ha ! Eureka ! Now, at length, ’tis clear
As is the sun at noon-tide. Thy career
Has been, with subtle spite, kept free from stain,
To cheat hard-working bards, and cause them pain.
Ah ! well might Burns exclaim, with bitter wink—
“ Man’s inhumanity to man makes countless thousands drink.”

Cease then, good Chairman, to defraud the muse,
 Pity poor satirists—their slender screws
 Depend on human error ; thou canst still
 Atone for thy past conduct ; prithee kill
One puny stripling, forge *one* little bill,
 Get tight at intervals, and from to-day
 In meekness thy petitioner will ever pray.

ONE DANGER OF PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATURE.

SUGGESTED BY RECENT ELECTIONS.

Frail human nature, all must own,
 Though good in most respects,
 Is somehow generally prone
 To have some slight defects,
 The person's somewhat rare, I guess,
 Whose whole career has been
 One long sweet dream of holiness,
 Unruffled and serene.

The only man, in any sense,
 Who seemed to me to reach
 This standard of true excellence
 Was Hezekiah Leech.
 Yet, stay, with his I ought to link
 The name of Simpson Brown ;
 Yes, he, with Leech, I rather think
 Must share true Virtue's crown.

Both based their lives, this saintly pair,
 On copy books' stern rules,
 And both were deeply loved in their
 Respective Sunday Schools.
 They rarely drank—when jovial souls
 Prayed them dull care to bilk,
 By quaffing punch from flowing bowls,
 They took a glass of milk.

Now here, the cynical may say,
 That friends clasped hand in hand
 May safely tread a thorny way,
 Where *one* would fail to stand ;
 But, though the fact can't be denied,
 That heart may strengthen heart,
 My heroes happened to reside
 A thousand miles apart.

In their respective towns they reigned
 As Virtue's chosen knights,
 And they were both (though deeply pained)
 Included with the sights.
 When noble guests sought either town,
 The kindly mayor of each
 Would take them down to look at Brown,
 And catch a glimpse of Leech.

Thus, worshipped by each looker-on,
 Fast sped the waning years,
 And trouble cast no shade upon
 Their innocent careers.
 But, see, grim Fate begins to frown,
 Two deputations wait,
 One at the door of Simpson Brown,
 And one at Leech's gate.

Our gentle friends were thus beguiled
 (Both acting for the best)
 To leave their homes, where Fortune smiled,
 A borough to contest ;
 (How oft men drift to hidden goals
 Urged by relentless Fates)
 And thus they met, these sinless souls,
 As rival candidates.

In strict accordance with the laws
 Which rule election strife,
 Each party cast about for flaws
 In its opponent's life.
 And each committee let in turn
 (A rare event, indeed)
 The light of playful Faney burn,
 To meet this pressing need.

First, Brown's Committee spread the tal
 (One's sense of right it shocks)
 That Mr. Leech had been in gaol
 For keeping fighting cocks.
 Then Leech's friends stepped forth to state
 How Brown, in early life,
 Had killed a well-known magistrate
 And bolted with his wife.

Thus, day by day our friends amassed
 A frightful load of sin,
 Until election day had past
 (I don't know which got in).

And then the rivals homeward turned
 Their weary footsteps—fain
 To greet the friends they fancied yearned
 To worship them again.

But when to their respective towns
 They came, at length, in glee,
 The people gazed on them with frowns
 Most terrible to see.
 No longer filled with glowing pride,
 The Mayors before them bowed,
 The Councils wrung their hands and sighed,
 The Town Clerks wept aloud.

“We thought,” exclaimed each stricken Mayor,
 In accents faint and low,
 “Your life was blameless, pure, and fair,
 We now know *all*,—pray, go!
 Pray, leave the town your sins degrade,
 Fly! fly to distant climes,
 Ere we call in the hangman’s aid
 To expiate your crimes.”

JOHN JENKINS.

A MUNICIPAL BALLAD.

John Jenkins was a voter free,
 And you would hardly find
 In his municipality
 A man of broader mind
 Or clearer views! The present bard
 For Jenkins had a deep regard.

Now, although sound shrewd common sense
 Seemed linked with Jenkins’s name,
 To lofty moral excellence
 He had the highest claim.
 Black vice—weak mortal’s bitter cup—
 Had practically chucked him up.

Stern principle in Jenkins’ eyes
 Was fair and pleasing too,
 And he adored, without disguise,
 The logically true.
 “The logically true,” said he—
 “Now that’s the kind of thing for me.”

Now, when election time drew near,
 John Jenkins, led by Fate,
 One evening wandered out to hear
 A certain candidate
 Expatiate with modest grace
 On his own fitness for a place.

In moving terms John heard him dwell
 Upon his own unique
 Ability for fitting well
 The post he came to seek.
 (A person framed by Nature's care,
 To save that Ward from black despair.)

"I am," the candidate confessed,
 "A Tory bred and born,
 All Radicals I loathe, detest,
 And gaze upon with scorn."
 (Yet stay, perhaps the speaker said
 He loathed the Tory crew instead.)

(Confound it all, I quite forget
 The real expression used,
 No matter.) He the other set
 Most volubly abused.
 (To save confusion, we'll decide
 The Tories were the lot decried.)

He showed, that gentle candidate,
 How Tories, one and all,
 Lay crushed beneath the chilling weight
 Of Ignorance's thrall.
 How they, politically blind,
 Could do no good of any kind.

He showed how men who failed to see
 Engraved in every line
 Of Gladstone's Foreign Policee
 Unnumbered beauties shine,
Must wildly muddle, mull, or shirk
 All useful Corporation work.

He proved it logically true,
 That men who cherished still
 A wholly wrong perverted view
 Upon the Pigeons Bill
 Could never deal with what pertains
 To Waterworks, Highways, and Drains.

Then, turning to a sunnier view,
 His audience discerned
 What shoals of blessings must accrue
 When *he* should be returned.
 Then—then—indeed, would boons be poured
 Upon the Sou-Sou-Nor-East Ward.

* * * *

As Jenkins slowly went along,
 Upon his way to bed
 (The burden of the speaker's song
 Still rattling in his head),
 He swore no lad should black his shoes
 Who held decided Tory views.

That night John stretched his weary frame
 Upon his couch to rest,
 But gentle slumber never came
 To nestle in his breast ;
 Still—still—in never-ending train,
 The speaker's words passed through his brain.

He tossed about through half the night,
 His pulse at fever-heat,
 Until at length in wild affright
 He started to his feet.
 " A doctor's aid I now must seek,"
 Said he, " before I get too weak."

He staggered o'er his chamber floor
 With heat and fear nigh dead,
 But when he reached the doctor's door
 A taunting spectre said,
 " This person *you* no aid can give,
 He is a staunch Conservative."

The bitter truth John Jenkins saw,
 No Liberal leech was nigh,
 So, yielding to stern logic's law,
 He staggered home to die ;
 But, drawing near, his frenzied gaze
 Perceived his house was in a blaze.

Vast crowds were standing idly near,
 Like senseless blocks of clay,
 When, see ! ten gallant souls appear
 In firemen's array !
 They fix the hose with ready skill—
 The flames may be got under still.

But, lo! a spectre, grim and grey,
 Gripped Jenkins' trembling wrist,
 "These persons must be sent away,
 I'm Principle!" it hissed.
 "Your home must lie in ruins hot,
These men are Tories, all the lot."

Stern Principle, though cold and grim,
 Was Jenkins' guiding star,
 But, somehow, this appeared to him
 To go a bit too far;
 So, gazing on the flame and smoke,
 He shook the spectre off—and woke!

* * * *

Since that same night of dread and awe,
 Be rivals Buff or Blue,
 John Jenkins simply picks them for
 The work they've got to do.
 He thinks those questions out of place
 That have no bearing on the ease.

EUREKA: A FRAGMENT.

SCENE: *Olympus. JUPITER is discovered in a desponding attitude.
 A SATELLITE is in attendance.*

SAT.—Wherefore, dread lord, do black and gloomy clouds
 Gather upon thy forehead? Wherefore doth
 Thy head sink wearily upon thy breast;
 While, ever and anon, a dolorous moan
 'Scapes from thy parted lips?

Say, art thou sad?

JUP.—Ay, sad, indeed, and with grave reason too,
 For wide Olympus is not what it was;
 Existence, now, for gods is flat and dull,
 And lacks the charm of gay variety.
 'Dost thou remember, in the bygone time,
 What jinks we used to play? How we forsook
 These realms sublime, and doffed divinity,
 That we, unknown, might seek the rolling world
 To sport with mortals?

Ay, and when
 We met a giant wandering on the earth,
 A mortal, who, by dint of Intellect,
 Of Wisdom, Goodness, and of all high qualities,
 Did rise from out the common ruck of men,

As doth the cedar rise, in kingly pride,
 Above the tangled brambles ; how we hailed
 Him as a brother ; how we cast aside
 His frail humanity, and bade him come
 To be a god, as we are ?

SAT.— I remember
 The facts you mention, well.

JUP.— Since those glad days
 The race of mortals has all pigmy grown.
 True, Intellect has cropped up here and there—
 As in the case of Shakspeare ; Goodness, too—
 As in the instance of one Dr. Watts ;
 Extreme Fidelity has, too, occurred,
 And Statesmanship, and lofty gifts of speech,
 Have found exponents, now and then, on earth.
 But never have we in these latter days
 Beheld a mortal, who himself contained,
 In his own person, *all* these glorious parts
 In absolute perfection.

SAT.— No, alas !
 Yet, ere, my lord, we yield to black despair,
 I would suggest that I, thy faithful slave,
 With thy authority, do visit earth,
 To make one final search.

JUP.— I have no hope
 That such a quest can aught save bootless prove ;
 Still, if thy soul is bent on futile toils,
 Thou hast my blessing. Hie, thee.

Clad in invisibility, the SATELLITE descends to Earth. Municipal Elections chance to be in progress. Soon he re-appears in Olympus, and approaches JUPITER, bearing a large placard in his hand

SAT.—O, good, my lord, I bear thee glorious news.
 The race of giants is not yet extinct ;
 A man exists whose god-like qualities,
 And many-sided genius, lift him far
 Above the common herd, as hills from vales.
 I prithee list—(*Reads*)—“ Electors, vote for Noggs—
 The glorious Noggs—the Noggs whose wondrous gifts
 Shine star-like in the annals of the world !
 Do ye seek intellect, go ask for Noggs ;
 And see ye get him. Noggs’s mental scope
 Has never yet been equalled. Goodness, too,
 Is Noggs’s special forte. Fidelity—
 Once place your interests in Noggs’s hands,
 And he, forgetting home, and wife, and child,
 Will never sleep again, lest, when he dozed,

Some want of yours might pass unheeded by.
 Then vote for Noggs, and ere the year glides past
 Your incomes shall be doubled ; your grey hairs
 Grow black again ; and joy shall reign supreme.”
 Now, with a shudder, let us turn to Bloggs,
 The rival candidate,—

JUP.— Nay, read no more.
 Where dwells this being ; stay, lend me the scroll.
 Can this be true ? Or are these glowing words
 But the fond tribute of some biassed friend ?

SAT.—At first, my lord, I feared such was the case :
 When, lo, the glorious Noggs himself averred
 This scroll contained but the bare, simple truth,
 Without exaggeration.

JUP.—Ha, say you so ? Then this, indeed, is joy ;
 For such a man must no more grope on earth.
 “ Eureka ! ”—We have found him.

Fetch him up :
 And, hark ye, bring his rival here as well.
 From what I gather from this written scroll,
 We can construct from him a decent fiend.

THE ASSES, THE LION, AND THE COCKATOO.

A FABLE AFTER LA FONTAINE.

A many years ago,
 When all Commercial Street and Woodhouse Lane
 Formed one large grassy plain,
 Some asses, who were wandering to and fro,
 Chanced to discuss the questions of the day
 (For asses, then as now, must have their say).
 Said one, “ My friends, I’ve noticed for some years,
 Despite our noble forms and graceful ears,
 Men, as a rule, refuse in any way
 The slightest homage to our race to pay.
 Nay, more ! Our name, I’m led to understand,
 By man is made a bye-word in the land.
 That we must take some step, ’tis very clear,
 To guard the rights all asses hold most dear.
 I would suggest we forthwith do elect
 Our friend the Lion to protect our cause ;
 He is an animal we all respect,
 Most fit and proper, with good teeth and claws.
 I now propose, ‘The Lion.’ ” Here he bowed,
 The asses drew together in a crowd.

Some shout, "Hurrah, the Lion! See how strong
 His muscles are! His claws, how very long!
 Observe his teeth, all jagged like a saw.
 Look at his head! By Jingo—what a jaw!
 There cannot be the shadow of a doubt
 That Nature cut him out
 To chew up men as cattle chew the cud.
 Nature is very good,
 And as a boon this animal has sent us,
 Especially designed to represent us."

* * * * *

But many of the asses turned aside.
 "The Lion's well," said one, "but as for me,
 I do not like the colour of his hide.
 That Cockatoo, perched upon yonder tree,
 Is much more fair to see.
 Observe, my friends, how his white wings unfold;
 And see upon his head
 That crest as yellow as the brightest gold—
 Let's vote for him, instead."
 So, without more ado,
 The biggest asses chose the Cockatoo;
 The bird in question swearing to redress
 Their grievous wrongs, and help them in distress.

* * * * *

Soon after this, some peasants passing near
 Observed the asses with their chosen chief,
 Yet without sign of fear
 They seized our long-eared friends, and on their backs
 Piled heavy sacks,
 And with strong ropes arrested their career.
 The Cockatoo flew screaming to the wood.
 Then one ass spoke, in tones of bitter grief—
 "Oh, brothers in misfortune, it is plain
 That they who seek defenders of a cause
 Will find mere colour treacherous and vain,
 When what they really need are teeth and claws.
 'Tis very plain, had we the lion here,
 Our tyrants now would welter in their blood;
 And it is also plain,
 In seasons of great strain,
 A Cockatoo is precious little good."

I trust, my friends, you'll see
 This tale applies to you;
 Don't choose your councillors because they're blue
 Or even yellow, as the case may be;
 But choose them for the work they've got to do.

THE REIGN OF MORALITY.

Supposed to be written by a distinguished advocate of Temperance some years hence, and addressed to posterity.

'Tis a saddening reflection for a person who is great
 In all qualities which make a man sublime,
 That shy modesty forbids him on the virtues to dilate
 Which have rendered him the envy of his time.

Were it not for this restriction, I might venture to remark
 That morality has always been with me
 A kind of second nature—shunning doubtful ways and dark ;
 But no, alas ! I fear it cannot be.

Still, my children, I may tell you how a many years ago,
 When surrounded by a small though moral clan,
 A lofty scheme occurred to me, as some of you may know,
 To beatify my sinful fellow-man.

I gazed upon the men of Leeds with bitterness and awe,
 I saw them waste in drink their hard-earned pelf ;
 And I murmured, “ I will take the lot, and, aided by the law,
 I will make them all as holy as myself.”

I knew that all their wickedness arose from liquor's thrall ;
 So, their alcoholic enemy to bilk,
 By an order of the Council I compelled them one and all
 From that moment to exist on bread and milk.

Though I met with opposition, still within a week or so
 I forced the movement's enemies to own
 That the masses of the people, whom the drink-fiend trampled low,
 Were becoming much more moral in their tone.

At first, I own, the bread and milk wrought no decided change,
 In a fretful discontented kind of way
 They assailed me with petitions to extend their diet's range—
 “ Do not curse them ? Think how frail is human clay.”

But as time passed on, we noticed the result became more clear,
 Toil-stained navvies went to work in long black coats,
 And the swart mechanics purchased with the cash once spent in beer
 Snowy chokers to adorn their grimy throats.

As bread and milk morality assumed a wider sway,
 Men abandoned all the grosser forms of vice ;
 On all questions appertaining to their moral status, they
 Grew day by day more critical and nice.

Not contented that their *actions* should be merely free from stain,
 All amusements were desisted from which *might*,
 If carried to undue excess, bring evil in their train,
 And involve a dereliction from the "right."

"For instance, Skittles," argued they, "may seem a harmless game,
 When indulged in on a private parlour floor ;
 But a man with human passions, and a weak and sinful frame,
 May be led by it to depths we all deplore.

"For the wild excitement flowing from the deft and skilful throw
 Which hurls the senseless nine-pin from its place,
 May foster a desire (if you let the passion grow)
 To get bowling at a sentient human race."

Thus clinging to their bread and milk, and freed from liquor's chains,
 They grew good to such a wonderful degree,
 That they positively equalled my dear friend, Sir E——d B——s,
 And the best of them came almost up to *me*.

* * * * * *

And now, alas ! there follows the dim horror of my tale,
 For though virtue is a bright and guiding star,
 I have found that in its worship moderation should prevail,
 And that holiness may go a bit too far.

For these same confounded masses grew so rigid in their view
 That they held a solemn meeting to decide
 If my carriages and horses, and my men in white and blue,
 Were not forms of sinful vanity and pride.

And they passed a resolution, by unanimous assent,
 Which appointed two ex-publicans to wait
 At my residence upon me to induce me to repent,
 And abandon them before it was too late.

Then a change came o'er my spirit in the solemn, silent night,
 I resolved to banish virtue's chilling bans,
 So I stole into a dairy, where the milk lay calm and white,
 And I poured a quart of whisky in the cans.

On the morrow, all the milkmen went on their accustomed round.
 They distributed their sin-diluted store,
 And within about a fortnight all my *protégés* were found
 Just as wicked and as jolly as before.

It had slowly dawned upon me that so strict may be the code
 Of morality which binds the sinless elf,
 That for shutting out the sunshine from humanity's hard road
 You may back it against wickedness itself.

I shall hesitate in future ere I free the human race
 From the evils which arise from liquor's curse,
 Till I'm absolutely certain there will spring not in its place
 A morality which may be rather worse.

THE LEEDS CONSERVATIVE ALDERMAN.

With apologies to Longfellow and "The Skeleton in Armour."

"Speak, speak, thou fearful guest,
 Beating thy hollow breast,
 Still in thy gay robes drest;
 Speak, grim old party.
 Whence comes that look of care,
 Why that dishevelled hair,
 What for that vacant stare?
 Cheer up, my hearty."

Then from that ancient throat
 Uprose a solemn note,
 And wasted hands my coat
 Grasped by the collar.
 "Hear then, O mortal dog,
 Hear why I came incog.—
 Say, pale-faced scallywog,
 Art thou a scholar?"

"'Tis not that I would seek
 One versed in ancient Greek;
 Nay, though thy grammar's weak,
 Shaky thy spelling—
 Thou canst my woes assuage,
 And to the present age,
 My tale in glowing page
 Aid me by telling.

"Know that in days gone by,
 These limbs which greet thine eye,
 Shaking so horribly
 As now you see 'em,

Bereft of human grace,
 Finding no resting place,
 Save in an old glass case
 In a museum—

“ These limbs were once the pride
 Of half a country side,
 All garments failed to hide
 Their noble graces.
 This waist so quaint and rum,
 Here, where I place my thumb,
 Once owned a swelling tum,
Eheu fugaces.

“ I was an Alderman,
 Chief of the Tory clan,
 And my glad race I ran,
 Picked by good luck out.
 Then came an evil day,
 Dark fiends now gained the sway,
 Harshly determined they
 Tories to chuck out.

“ Thus, then, these demons linked
 Hands, as they grinned and winked,
 Thus I became extinct—
 Thus they effaced me!
 Yet, as the coming race
 Might wish to view my face,
 In a museum's case—
 Fast screwed—they placed me.

“ I, in my case so drear,
 Lie till the waning year
 Warns me the time is near
 For the election—
 Then, deftly I unloose
 My prison's guarding serews,
 And by a wary ruse—
 Shunning detection—

“ Once more I seek the place
 (Where, in the days of grace,
 Mine was a well-loved face)—
 Asking admission!
 Still, still, with knuckle sore,
 Bang I the well-known door,
 Then back I go once more,
 Chilled by derision.

“ This, mortal, be thy task,
 As in Fame’s smile you bask,
 Ask—I implore you!—ask,
 Why I am banished?
 Till I admittance win,
 Kick up an awful din,
 Force them to let me in,”
 This said,—he vanished.

HUNTED DOWN.

A PROPHETIC OPERETTA.

By a publican whose licence has been rescinded.

ACT I.

TIME—*Some few years hence.*

SCENE—*A magnificently appointed chamber. The walls are decorated with pewter pots, empty bottles, public-house signs, dried skins of publicans, and similar trophies. Ald. T—T—M, Ald. W—H—E, Mr. W—LL—NS, Mr. H—R D—V—N, Alderman S—R, and other distinguished advocates of temperance are discovered in hunting costume, reclining as though exhausted upon couches. As curtain rises they burst into song.*

OPENING CHORUS.

When wearied with the chase,
 We lovers of humanity
 Seek this our trysting place,
 With unimpaired urbanity;
 And merrily we sing,
 With pardonable vanity,
 In every noble thing
 We’re richer than humanity.

For though poor fallen man
 We gaze upon with tearfulness,
 Our own careers we scan
 With unabated cheerfulness.
 We have escaped the ban
 Which presses on mortality,
 And so, of course, we can
 Dispense with all formality.
 As merrily we sing, &c.

Alderman T—T—M (*coming forward*): Yes, my friends, humanity is indeed a bad, bad egg, but the outlook is not altogether gloomy. Were there no deserts there would be no oases. Had night no darkness the stars would be invisible. If human nature were not deprived where should we be?

ALL: True, true; we should then be nothing very particular.

Alderman T—T—M: But come, tell me what has been the result of the chase. Do you bring fresh trophies with which to decorate our walls?

FIRST TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE: In truth, my liege, the quarry grows rarer day by day. Though from earliest dawn I and a trained pack of detectives have beaten the surrounding coverts, we succeeded in starting one small publican alone from his lair.

To abjure and repel it,
 To denounce, and curse, and quell it,
 And to track the fiends who sell it
 To their lair.
 Will you swear
 To track the fiends who sell it
 To their lair?

ALL (*confidentially to one another*):

Although tea is most delightful,
 Still we only think it rightful
 To regard the same as frightful,
 And to solemnly declare—
 To abjure and repel it,
 To denounce, and curse, and quell it,
 And to track the fiends who sell it
 To their lair,
 To their lair,
 To track the fiends who sell it
 To their lair.

ALDERMAN T—T—M: Perfectly right. Let us be consistent above all things. We are all passionately fond of tea, but still, since the Dean appears to object to it, we must give it up, and swear to hunt down, in the interests of morality, all tea-dealers, as we would rats or publicans. It's rather awkward, but I'm afraid it must be done.

FIRST TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE: Yes. It is one of our greatest principles that men should abandon things they like because other people don't like them. So the Dean has a logical hold upon us. But see, another enthusiast advances.

SECOND ENTHUSIAST: Fools and dolts. Empty chatterers, who prattle and prate of their love of humanity, and who stretch forth no hand to remove the cancer which is eating away its very vitals! Listen to me. But, stay. Perhaps I can control my feelings better in verse.

SONG.

I am a vegetarian. The garbage known as meat
 Is utterly unsuited for a Christian man to eat;
 It shocks potato-nurtured minds to mark the savage feasts
 Where men with souls and intellects devour flesh of beasts.
 Is man a wolf, a grey jackal, a lion, or a bear?
 Has he got tusks, or canine teeth, or claws, or woolly hair?
 Or does he stand erect and free, a proud and God-like thing?
 He does. I'm therefore logical when I proceed to sing—
 Man should confine his ravages
 To radishes and cabbages,

And not degrade his angel form by eating cows and pigs.
 For though the reckless glutton stops
 His appetite with mutton chops ;
 The truly great are they who dine on oatmeal, beans, and figs.

Alderman T—T—M (*aside*): I'm afraid the gentleman is right. Mutton chops are very dear to us, but they must go. Butchers also must be exterminated like rats and—and tea dealers. Oh! inexorable logic; this is indeed hard. But see, more enthusiasts approach.

(*Then follows a host of other fad-mongers—anti-tobacco-nists, anti-snuff-takers, anti-anything and everything; protestors against wall-papers; objectors to window curtains, gas, carpets, &c. Alderman T—T—M and his friends are seen swearing to abandon all the comforts of life, one by one, and to hunt down their providers, as the curtain descends.*)

ACT II.

Some months have elapsed. TIME—Midnight.

SCENE—*A rocky and desolate mountain pass. Airful precipice at end (to be used later on). Enter weary and tattered man, looking furtively from right to left as though fearing pursuit.*

WEARY ONE: Shelter at last! For a time my relentless pursuers are baffled. Ah! my escape was narrow. Even now I can feel the hot breath of the bloodhounds upon my cheek. Oh, to be safe, though only for a time! And how peaceful the scene! It reminds me of the happy days when in my little shop in Kirkgate I sold beef and mutton in the open face of day. The happy time before we were forced to smuggle meat through the streets as though it were dynamite. But, hark! I hear voices as of men singing mournfully. They draw near. I will conceal myself.

[*Conceals himself.*]

MUFFLED CHORUS.

When the bird is in its nest,
 Wretches that we are,
 And the sun sinks in the west,
 Wretches that we are ;
 When the hollow wind is sighing,
 And the gloomy bat is flying,
 We console ourselves by crying,
 Wretches that we are.

WEARY ONE (*aside*): Who can they be? Their voices contain a strange ring of sorrow, and see, they weep and wring their hands. (*Aloud*) *Softly*, My friends.

FIRST SINGER (*trembling*): Friends. Who calls us friends?

WEARY ONE: I. For am I not also wretched?

FIRST SINGER: Truly, you appear so. But stay. You are not a spy Oh, horror! You are not the awful Alderman himself?

WEARY ONE: No. See my beard, although streaked with premature grey, is not white enough. I am a once-prosperous butcher, who rashly endeavoured to conduct his trade secretly after it had been declared illegal by Alderman T—t—m and Mr. W—ll—s, To-day their trained hounds tracked me home. With difficulty I escaped them, and I am here. And you?

FIRST SINGER: We are publicans, tea dealers, tobaceonists, and other outlaws who survived the general massacre and sought refuge here. But hark! horror! The sound of feet. The clash of arms. Oh! the enemy is upon us. To the caves! To the caves! [*All hide hastily.*]

Enter Alderman T—t—m, Mr. H—r D—v—n, Alderman W—ll—e, Alderman S—r, Mr. W—ll—s, and other friends of humanity. They are armed, but advance dejectedly.

Alderman T—t—m (*turning and gazing half regretfully back*):

RECIT.

Farewell, O world, I feel I love you now
That I'm about to leave you. Time gone by
You were to me a disagreeable friend,
A low acquaintance whom I couldn't cut,
But whom I snubbed full many a time and oft,
Seeing your vices through a double glass,
But blind to all your glorious qualities,
Farewell, O world, farewell, a long farewell.

Mr. W—ll—s: Yes; perhaps, after all, the world as originally constituted, had some redeeming features. But they have vanished now. What have we to live for?

ALL: Alas! nothing—nothing whatever.

Alderman T—t—m: Too true. We have, unfortunately, in our laudable desire to be consistent, annihilated all the comforts of life. We have discovered when too late to recall the providers of beefsteaks, bitters, cigars, tea, and the like from their premature tombs that the whole zest of existence is gone. Let us therefore perish together.

ALL: We will; we will. (*All leap despairingly over the precipice and disappear.*)

HUNTED ONES (*who have heard all, peeping cautiously out*): This is, indeed, a joyful circumstance. Our enemies, instead of destroying us, have elected to destroy themselves. Let us now descend to the plains and resume our respective occupations.

CHORUS.

And merrily we'll sing
 With pardonable vanity,
 Old Common-sense is king,
 He rules with true urbanity.
 Joy beams on every face,
 For freed from fad's inanity,
 Our lightsome steps we traec
 To home and glad humanity.
 So merrily, &c.

[*Exeunt omnes, singing.*]

CURTAIN.

 THE QUESTION OF OVER-PRESSURE AGAIN.

Our system of education, some say, has become a curse,
 And the School Boards have been assailed in terms of such fierce abuse,
 That the Bard has decided at last to relate a little anecdote, illustrative of
 the difficulties with which they have to contend, and if his lines have a
 tendency to extend beyond the limits of decent verse,
 His own personal excitement, and the vast importance of the subject with
 which he deals, must plead his excuse.

* * * * *

There were once two babies named Johnson, the elder was christened Sam,
 John was the younger's title, his intimates called him Jack.
 They were both apprehended by the School Board Officer for being
 feloniously at large in their mother's cottage, and were carried away
 to cram.
 The elder one, Samuel, however, escaped to the wilderness, where he
 subsisted upon roots and herbs, and successfully defied the efforts of
 Mr. Butler and all his myrmidons to fetch him back.

The more fortunate John, however, was bent to the School Board's will,
 And he entered without delay on his State-compelled career.
 During the period which extends between weaning and vaccination, he
 became thoroughly grounded in the higher mathematics, use of globes,
 Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Sanscrit, two or three modern languages, law,
 physic, philosophy, political economy (including of course the works of
 Mr. Henry George and of John Stuart Mill);
 Together with a general knowledge of the duties which appertain to the
 naval and military officer, the land surveyor, and the civil engineer.

Time passed away, and the Board observed with a growing pride
 That John's intellectual scope grew wider day by day ;
 They took a great interest in his case, and kept him carefully fastened up
 in a specially constructed cage, feeding him at regular intervals upon
 patent highly spiced food ; and when at the age of five years, just
 when he had qualified to become a Professor of the Yorkshire College,
 unfortunately he died.
 The Board felt seriously annoyed, because they feared that it might be a
 long time before so brilliant an example of the advantages of their
 system came again in their way.

Then they caught younger babies still, and fed them with greater care,
 They kept them in coops like fowls, to develop their mental force.
 And the infants advanced apace in knowledge, and the Board was in time
 delighted by observing that it had succeeded in the difficult task of
 producing the earliest sages on record, and that in the matter of
 rheumatism, gout, wrinkles, failing sight, and even of thin grey hair,
 Not to speak of education, their pupils were considerably in advance of
 many old gentlemen of eighty, which proved at once the utility of their
 scholastic course.

The schools were a great success, but alas, as the years went by,
 A certain draw-back appeared to these plans so wise and great.
 It was discovered, in short, that as soon as the children reached the age of
 five years, or thereabouts, their faculties began to fail them, and they
 stretched out their little decrepit limbs, in the corners of the coops, and
 lay down to die.
 And then, of course, a lot of meddling people, like Dr. Allbutt and Mr.
 Teale, who were always interfering with the advancement of the young,
 began to raise a cry about saving the little ones from what *they* called
 their premature fate.

So the Board was obliged at length (it did it with grief and pain)
 To abandon its lofty scheme for improving our British youth ;
 It was driven to send for Sam (you remember Sam, he was the elder brother
 of John), and to engage him at an enormous salary to lure the surviving
 scholars, by dint of marbles, tops, battledore and shuttlecock, &c., back
 to ignorant and light-hearted childhood again.
 And between you and me (don't let it go any further you know ; because I have
 always been a great friend of School Boards, and I shouldn't like them
 to think I was turning against them now), but between you and me, I
 don't believe that the population of Great Britain will be any worse for
 being children when they are young, and that's the bare truth.

THE VIRTUOUS EDITOR.

Unrivalled mental power, I don't hesitate to state
 (And the fact will be admitted by the wise),
 Has a tendency, at any rate, to make a person great,
 And which, I think, 'tis folly to despise ;
 And when, as an addition, to the highest type of mind,
 One monopolises purity of soul,
 I hold the individual in whom they are combined
 Has reason to be thankful on the whole.

For instance, when an editor, before whose scathing pen
 Kings tremble, and Prime Ministers fall down ;
 When even great town councillors, the haughtiest of men,
 Shrink, shuddering, beneath his awful frown—
 I say, when such an editor relinquishes the reins
 For a season, and beguiles his leisure time
 In daisy-haunted meadows, making dandelion chains,
 The spectacle is touching and sublime.

The adjective I've chosen to define the moral height,
 Of the gentleman, whose face you often see
 On select teetotal platforms, is inadequate and slight,
 He was good in such a wonderful degree.
 Many mortals have existed, it is pleasant to reflect,
 Whose abilities were far from being dim,
 Mr. Shakspeare's mental power is entitled to respect,
 But they, my friends, were fools compared with him.

He was not a stern ascetic ; though the follies of mankind
 (Such as murder or upsetting passing trains)
 Caused a feeling of annoyance to disturb his placid mind,
 True charity would soon resume the reins.
 When a giddy, thoughtless nurse-maid, in the course of idle play,
 Choked a wretched little baby with a string,
 He, though driven to condemn the act, would do it in a way
 Which deprived the cruel censure of its sting.

Now, although these indiscretions, as I think I said before,
 He regarded in a charitable light,
 In the silence of his chamber he would bitterly deplore
 One popular divergence from the "right."

“Shun the play-house, Johnny dearest,” said his good old maiden aunt.
 After thoughtfully inviting him to tea,
 “Better enter the ‘Inferno,’ like the enterprising Dante”
 (Though she might have put an accent on the e).

So, when advertising managers approached him with a prayer
 For a notice, and spread treasure at his feet,
 He would gaze on them with horror and would seize them by the hair,
 And hurl them through the window to the street.
 “Oh the play-house,” he would murmur “is most heartrending, I ween,
 When examined from a ‘speculative height,’
 And from off this coign of vantage (for, of course, I’ve never been),
 I shudder almost daily at the sight.”

Now, it happened when the writer, who knows lords and dukes in scores,
 Was strolling on New Briggate, hand-in-hand
 With the gentleman in question, he observed the open doors
 Of the building which is truly called the “Grand.”
 In this Hall of Education, I (the wily writer) say,
 Mr. Corson made a most undoubted hit,
 And, referring to its beauties in an off-hand sort of way,
I beguiled him to “a bob’s worth in the pit.”

“It is pleasing,” murmured Johnny, when we gained the silent streets,
 “To discover men whose philanthropic views
 Induce them to provide these most improving little treats
 Which instruct the population, yet amuse;
 If the powerful and wealthy, casting off all selfish greed,
 Would come forward in an open-handed way
 To support such institutions, they would no doubt supersede
 The tap-room, and in course of time, *the play.*”

* * * *

In a print whose circulation is unutterably wide,
 Whose opinions are rigid and extreme,
 A modest little notice may be oftentimes deserved
 In the place where lectures erstwhile reigned supreme.
 And perhaps the shrewd observer, with a knowledge-seeking brain,
 Who the reason of this circumstance would trace,
 May find the little incidents I’ve mentioned, in the main,
 Have a certain kind of bearing on the case.

THE FALL OF HUMILITY.

Though dreams of glory and success
Attend all mortals, more or less,
Charles Stickle from the same was free
In an unusual degree.

“ I seek not,” he would often say,
“ The monarch’s crown, the sceptred sway ;
Contented with my present lot,
I like these things yet seek them not.

“ I only ask—when casting down
My wealth before my native town—
When placing at its beck and call
My time, my talents, yea, my all—

“ That it should now and then beguile
My patient labours with a smile,
And that my relatives should be
All smiled upon in some degree.

“ For surely from a life well spent
There should reflect, to some extent,
On every cousin, aunt, and niece
Some ray of honour and of peace.

“ How can I aid my township more
Than as a Guardian of its poor ?
Yes (though a fate to be deplored)
I’ll be the Chairman of the Board.”

Urged on by motives of the most
High-minded kind, he took the post,
Devoting thus a term of years
To dry deserving cases’ tears.

Ah ! Stickle, hadst thou paused awhile,
Ere thus thou sought’st that hoped-for smile
Thou ne’er hadst—ah, well !—none the less—
And yet so soon. But I digress.

At length election time drew nigh,
And Stickle raised his toil-worn eye
And scanned the voters’ ranks and files
To catch their universal smiles.

And as he gazed he saw his name
Emblazoned on a bill of flame
(I here denote the placard's line),
Which shrieked out "VOTERS, IS IT TRUE

" THAT STICKLE comes with might and main
To try to hocus you again ;
That he, with RAPINE-REEKING claw
Still strives to hook your votes ? Oh Lor !

" And IS IT RIGHT that one should seek,
By plundering the poor and weak,
To purchase PARKS and mansions rare—
We ask you, VOTERS, IS IT FAIR ?

" And IS IT RIGHT, that one who could,
Despatch AN UNCLE in cold BLOOD,
Should coolly come and ask once more
The post of Guardian of the poor ?

" We hear, O VOTERS, that his friends
Have ALL met JUST but shocking ends,
CONVICTED all, at divers times,
Of most depraved and FEARFUL CRIMES."

When these stern questions met his gaze
Charles Stickle stood in mute amaze ;
And then he murmured, " Can it be
That these remarks apply to me ?

" An uncle ? Pooh ! when did I kill ?
I never had one ; yah. Yet still,
A man who'd issue bills thus large
Must have some reason for this charge.

" Let me review my life from youth,
And try to test this placard's truth ;
I may, by close observance, find
These crimes, which now escape my mind."

Then, as before his mental eye,
In long review, rose years gone by,
He found, with grief, his earliest days
Appeared involved in mist and haze.

What ! Should he pit his single brain
Against a charge so very plain,
Set forth in such big letters, too ?
Ah, no : he felt it must be true.

When thus cut off, as with a knife,
 From all his long and well-spent life,
 Poor Stickle sought a living tomb
 Within a monastery's gloom.

THE RIVAL'S VENGEANCE.

Dedicated to the Leeds Highway Committee.

O Love, to-day I sing
 Of thee, thou fairy guest,
 And how thy trembling wing
 Once sought a maiden's breast :
 Her name, Matilda Ann,
 And thy soft rosy links
 Fast bound her to a mau
 (One James Elijah Binks).

The path seemed bright and fair,
 And free from sorrow's shade,
 Whereon this guileless pair
 In Love's sweet morning strayed.
 But while James wooed his bride,
 Did no keen eye—alack !—
Observe a serpent glide
Across the lovers' track ?

* * * *

Luke Hugley was a man
 Who felt love's scorching flames
 Burn for Matilda Ann
 Co-equally with James.
 He oft had sworn in pride
 The girl should be his own,
 And tender arts had tried
 To make his passion known.

With supplicating tears
 He asked her twice a day
 For twenty-seven years
 To chase his grief away.
 In trams, in the street,
 In church or busy mart,
 He fell down at her feet
 And offered her his heart.

From these slight, doubtful signs
 Perchance the maid had guessed
 The lover-like designs
 Luke harboured in his breast.
 But when his schemes were planned
 To snare the wished-for prey
 James won the maiden's hand
 And Hugley crept away.

· Revenge!—by day and night,
 A red and lurid stain,
 This word shone fierce and bright
 In Hugley's seething brain.
 When that day's bill of fare
 A waiter brought him—not
 Observing his despair—
 "Revenge!" he muttered, "hot!"

To quench two youthful lives
 Was Hugley's constant thought;
 And pistols, swords, and knives
 In quantities he bought.
 But how to do the deed!
 The task seemed grim and hard;
 So in his pressing need
 He sought the present bard.

The gentle bard reclined
 In his ancestral hall
 (He'd fortunately died
 When Hugley chanced to call).
 He took the proffered gold,
 As Luke with bated breath
 Proceeded to unfold
 His errand fraught with death.

"To offer on this head
 Professional advice
 Is hard," the poet said,
 "The point is somewhat nice.
 To slay these lovers young,
 Without the slightest fear
 Of being tried and hung,
 But stop, *I have it, here.*"

* * * *

Months passed away, and Luke
 (No more the prey of cares)
 An active part now took
 In all the town affairs.

By swearing to remit
 All taxes, when returned,
 He soon the right to sit
 As councillor had earned.

As Chairman of the great
 Committee of Highways,
 This Rupert of debate
 (With skill deserving praise)
 Held all the streets in charge,
 And, 'neath his sway serene,
 The thoroughfares at large
 Were ever fair and clean.

Yet stay, one blighted street
 Knew not the scraper's face ;
 All men who walked on feet
 Fought shy of Alfred Place.
 The mud rose mountains high
 Before each cursed abode,
 And navvies hovered nigh
 To rend and tear the road.

Oft, oft the tenants' prayed
 (In grim and black despair)
 The Corporation's aid
 To pave that thoroughfare.
 But minions only came,
 Urged by their native wit,
 Some new design to frame,
 In mountain or in pit.

Beneath this chilling ban
 The street became at last
 Impassable to man,
 Its dwellers perished fast.
 Hemmed in on every side,
 No food could reach their doors ;
 So wretchedly they died
 (Those ratepayers) in scores.

In one ill-fated room
 A husband and his bride
 (They shared the common doom)
 Were lying side by side.
 There in the twilight grey,
 Defunct as old Stonehenge,
 The monuments they lay,
 Of Hugley's dread revenge.

THE FORCE OF ARGUMENT.

Though I honour a person who braves Fortune's frown,
 And sneering at wealth and mere human renown,
 Refuses to take,
 For his conscience's sake,
 Advantage of any whom vice has cast down.

Still, I love him no less if, when cherishing strong,
 Convictions on any point all his life long.
 I should suddenly find
 He has altered his mind
 And regards those convictions as totally wrong.

For the thoughtful observer, who studies mankind,
 In the course of such studies must frequently find
 Views constantly reel,
 Before Logic's appeal,
 Though their owner for years to the truth has been blind.

To show how a person may sometimes relax
 A stern opposition to Logic's attacks,
 It may be of use
 If I now introduce
 The case of a friend of mine—Mr. Beeswax.

Beeswax had an intellect strikingly clear,
 Except on one subject—the subject of beer;
 In Beeswax's eyes,
 Beer assumed the disguise
 Of a horrible poison—an object of fear.

In vain I expostulate—"Beeswax," I say,
 "Observe I've had many large glasses to-day,
 And still I'm alive,
 You observe I survive
 All this deadly poison which falls in my way.

"Now, think of it, Beeswax; consider the case;
 Let us look at your argument straight in the face;
 If beer poisoned, you see,
 There would speedily be
 A marked falling off in the great human race.

"Remember, O Beeswax, a man may partake
 Of a little strong drink for his stomach its sake,
 Without more offence
 (In a Scriptural sense)
 Than if he should his thirst in sad Zoedone slake."

But, no, this stern zealot would savagely swear
 That beer was a poison, a curse, and a snare,
 And enforce the sweet laws
 Of the Temperance cause,
 By dragging me forcibly out by the hair.

But, as I have stated, we frequently find
 Argumentative seed may be sown in a mind
 To lie dormant, perhaps,
 And long years may elapse
 Ere it blossoms in acts of a definite kind.

Thus Beeswax denounced the strong drink as of yore,
 Until Death's gloomy hand raised the latch of his door,
 Not for *him*, by the bye—
 No, Beeswax didn't die—
 But a certain dear aunt of his, *what* four score.

It may have been trouble—the parting's sad pain—
 Which led him to think of my statements again;
 She had loved Beeswax so
 (She had left him, you know,
 The old Pig and Whistle, in Hunslet Lane).

And thus Logic conquered, and therefore to-day
 Mr. Beeswax's fancies have all passed away,
 Now, a glittering star,
 He presides at his bar,
 And, saving detectives, existence is gay.

LINES TO A MUCH-ESTEEMED LEEDS VICAR

UPON HIS ACCESSION TO A COLONIAL BISHOPRIC.

So, reverend brother, you are going to leave us,
 And all our hearts are wrung,
 To break the threads which now so firmly weave us
 With one so good and young.

You came to us from the "still-vexed Bermudas" *
 (Still vexed because you went),
 And you denounced the drug which would have screwed us
 From many a gospel tent.

* Thou call'dst me up at midnight to fetch dew
 From the still-vexed Bermoothes.—*Tempest*, Act I. Scene 2.

But now you'll pass through pomp's high ceremonial,
 And soon you'll glide away,
 Yet, ere you grasp your Bishopric Colonial,
 I have one word to say.

Will you forgive me, as I sit here musing,
 Watching the fire pale,
 If I should pen, alone for your perusing,
 A true and simple tale?

A bishop once esteemed in his profession,
 And also young like you,
 Went to a distant church to take possession—
 The Church of Rum-ti-Foo.

In his high calling most enthusiastic
 (Though stiffish in his joints),
 This bishop's views were rather too elastic
 On some important points.

He held a man should gain the true affections
 Of these he sought to raise,
 And so forgetting his high-born connections,
 He learnt the heathens' ways.

So when his flock displayed a ruling passion
 For scalps served up in rum,
 The bishop affably joined in the fashion
 So much condemned by some.

One day he noted that some black carousers
 His garments keenly eyed,
 So he resolved to banish coats and trousers
 Lest they should smack of pride.

For fear his church should grieve for the barbarity
 Which to their race belongs,
 He condescended, in the broadest charity,
 To sing them comic songs.

Nay, though obese, and eke a bit rheumatic,
 He on his head would stand
 And entertain them with feats acrobatic,
 Like Griffiths at the "Grand."

Such gentle conduct round each heart entwining,
 His teachings sped apace,
 Till in his See no nigger thought of dining
 Unless our friend said grace.

From dainty morsels ere that flock would take bites,
 They sought their bishop's smile;
 His wink was coveted for healing snake bites,
 His frown for cheeking bile.

So sure they grew that he could smooth life's creases
 And keep them safe from harm,
*They chopped that prelate into little pieces
 And wore him for a charm.*

* * * * *

So, O my friend, when in your distant station
 You rule at length your See,
 Pray train your flock to love in moderation,
 And with humility.

THE OLD CLOCK IN THE TOWER.

(With acknowledgments of a suitably grovelling character to Longfellow.)

In the quaint old town of Loidis stands a structure old and brown,
 Often tinkered and repainted, still it watches o'er the town :

And a clock, all newly gilded, in a meek desponding way,
 Gazes ever from its tower on a fountain's shining spray.

Quaint old clock, though newly gilded, through what ages vast and long
 Hast thou watched the changing city, with its traffic and its throng.

Quaint old clock, as I stand musing on the eyes which once have seen you,
 Memories throng as thickly round you as the men who come to clean you.

Standing here I watch your features, and straightway before my gaze,
 In a long procession moving, are the ghosts of other days.

Once again a sea of faces throng the square from side to side,
 And policemen wrestle vainly with the heaving human tide.

O ! I greet ye, freeborn voters, through the mists of many years,
 With your voice, "Here speyk up, will ye," with your hootings and your
 cheers.

Once again comes John de Morgan, with his army of recruits,
 To denounce the Corporation till it trembles in its boots :

And again in martial order I can see each phalanx stand,
 Urged to deeds of blood and slaughter by the Ingledew Brass Band.

Well, I greet you too, de Morgan, you are far across the sea,
 In a land (perhaps) more glorious, and (possibly) more free.

See, once more the scene is changing ; frantic clamours fill the air,
As a noble fountain rises in the centre of the square ;

And, unawed by execration, see the first bright shower gleams,
Which makes such a marked improvement in the sun's uncertain beams.

Then play on, O gentle fountain ! by harsh critics undismay'd,
For the sun in this dull climate needs *some* artificial aid.

* * * * *

They are gone, my gentle visions of the days which have passed by,
But they leave sweet dreams behind them which can never fade or die.

Dreams which love to hover round us, heeding not time's flying feet,
Dreams, half gentle, half regretful, semi-sorrowful and sweet.

Fancies, O my friends, so tender, they would cloud your eyes and wet 'em,
Could I mould them into rhythm, but I'm sorry I forget 'em.

STRICT ECONOMY.

A very long time ago
(And memory oft will bring
Some theme when the poet's ideas run low)
Occurred the event I sing.

Of course, in this year of grace,
In a land, too, so very free,
The occurrence could never have taken place,
The which is a cause for glee.

In a sad, unenlightened day,
However, the wight did dwell,
To whom (in a very respectful way)
We'll henceforth refer as L.

Now, sent by kind Fortune's hand,
A scholarly person came,
About the same time, to instruct the land,
And Bill was that person's name.

In lofty and classic lore
Bill found all the people weak ;
'Tis said men existed who set no store
On the tongue of the ancient Greek.

So lacked they true learning's ray,
 So dark was the spreading curse ;
 Few infants, 'tis whispered, were taught to say
 The great Mr. Browning's verse.

(Though Bill was a person whom
 I credit with no slight tact,
 I trust he enlarged on their inner gloom
 A little beyond the fact.)

However men saw how black
 And weak were their mental frames,
 And some patted Billy upon the back
 (Though others would call him names).

Then Bill, in seductive tone,
 Informed them that early youth
 Is really the season for making known
 Poetic or classic truth.

"Your infants, though young," said he,
 "May dig in the classic mines,
 They possibly may in the future see
 The meaning of Browning's lines."

Then danced they with joy around,
 And, selling their flocks and herds,
 Built glittering structures to hold the sound
 Of Billy's instructive words.

The walls were of polished gold
 (A metal in much request) ;
 The gems which adorned them, I have been told,
 Were also the very best.

Engaged at a vast expense,
 R.A.'s were employed in scores,
 To paint, in a true and artistic sense,
 The panels of all the doors.

And he of whom (with respect)
 I ventured to speak as I,
 Was pensioned for life to observe, direct,
 And see that they did them well.

These little arrangements made,
 Instruction advanced apace ;
 And infants of every social grade
 Seemed satisfied with their place.

* * * * *

Things went on all right, until
 It came into some one's head
 That (high education apart) they still
 Required a little bread.

Then people were much annoyed
 (Who hadn't a bite or sup)
 To find that their incomes were all employed
 In keeping those structures up.

By spurs of starvation pricked,
 One rose and he said, said he,
 "The time has arrived for observing strict
 And rigid economise.

"These palaces bright and fair,
 And charming in artists' eyes,
 We now must conduct with the nicest care,
 And strive to economise.

"Perchance, if the polished gold,
 Which gleams on each fairy pile,
 Were scraped just a little, we still might hold
 The wolf from the door awhile.

On hearing advice so fell
 With sorrow each eye was dim,
 Till somebody shouted, "I say, there's L,
 Let's take it all out of him."

This counsel, I need not say,
 With wildest delight was heard,
 To economise L in the strictest way,
 Each solemnly pledged his word.

Retrenchment appeared so true,
 A duty which none should shirk,
 With great self-denial they stopped his screw,
 And gave him a lot more work.

And soon they observed with glee,
 By working him day and night,
 Finances appeared in some slight degree
 To stand in a better light.

Yet often I think, Ah! well,
 They may have been rash, but still
 'Twas not *all* the fault of of unlucky L,
 Nor of Education Bill.

A RULING PASSION ;

OR, THE ORIGIN OF THE LEEDS HIGHWAY COMMITTEE.

BY A BRIGGATE TRADESMAN.

'Tis not at all a pleasant task
 For really good and earnest men
 Their fellows' folly to unmask,
 And tales of reckless vice to pen.
 It fills an honest breast with woe
 When tailors get on horses' backs,
 To follow in those tailors' tracks,
 To point out where those tailors go.

But frequently the righteous find
 (At least I've found it many times)
 It is their duty to mask
 To dwell on other peoples' crimes.
 For those who feel an inner light
 Which lifts them far above the host,
 To be a moral finger-post,
 Is only Christian-like and right.

Desire for the public weal,
 Affection for my native land,
 Are leading me to now reveal
 The origin of that dread band.
 Within our midst—of beings dark,
 Those creatures long estranged from grace,
 Whose hatred of the human race
 Just now excites so much remark—

I may not here disclose the name
 By which this band is known on earth :
 Those foes to man, who, dead to shame,
 On every side give Ruin birth.
 Unnumbered terrors rise to daze
 The wielder of too bold a pen,
 So, for the nonce, we'll call these men
 The Leeds Committee of Highways.

They once were young ; their youthful cheek
 Seemed for no brazen end designed,
 And innocence had, so to speak,
 Around each infant brow entwined.
 I may, too, venture to remark,
 Without direct authority,
 They sported round a mother's knee,
 And went to bed soon after dark.

Thus passed their youth in guileless sport,
 Until on one ill-fated day
 They chanced, in play, to dig a sort
 Of pit across a public way.
 And then behind a sheltering wall,
 As night drew nigh, in childish glee
 They clapped their little hands to see
 The British public trip and fall.

As time passed on this boyish taste
 For gazing on the public's woe
 Increased until they soon laid waste
 Most thoroughfares where people go.
 Nor could they, in the end, restrain
 Their wish for those delirious sweets
 Which flow from paving busy streets
 And pulling of them up again.

This passion, with increasing strength,
 Sweeps on with such resistless force,
 That every street will be at length
 Impassable to man or horse.
 And from balloons poised high in air
 The sole survivors soon may note
 Strange shadowy forms which love to gloat
 Upon the wreck and ruin there.

THE CONSCIENTIOUS GROCER.

Although the writer, from his soul,
 Admires Conscience on the whole,
 He's driven to admit that she
 'S by no means what she ought to be.

Her character in some respects
 Is marred by certain grave defects,
 By tendencies, in short, to shirk
 Her great and necessary work.

I know not if false pride has made
 Stern Conscience hold aloof from trade,
 But still 'tis clear she folds her wings,
 And leaves most tradesmen free from stings.

This being so, how sweet to find
 One trader singled from his kind,
 A human grocer, true, and yet
 The monitor's especial pet.

For learn that Mr. Jinks possessed
 A moral nature of the best,
 And even curates have been known
 To deem it equal to their own.

Affection for the true and good
 Appeared to run in Jinks's blood,
 To *take* his very shutters *in*
 To such a man was half a sin.

When thus, in purity arrayed,
 He bought a grocer's stock-in-trade,
 He deemed it wise to ask advice
 Respecting quality and price.

"Well," said his worldly neighbours, "see,
 You take, for instance, this here tea,"
 And then, by way of lending aid,
 They taught him all the tricks of trade.

"No," said the noble grocer, "no ;
 The price is *not* 'absurdly' low,
 Nor does the quality astound
 Humanity the world around.

"And I, despite your sneer and scoff,
 Deny that I am 'selling off
 At awful loss,' nor can I say
 My goods are all to 'give away.'"

Then he revised his stock, at length,
 To test its quality and strength,
 Regarding all, I need not say,
 In a most calm, judicial way.

His sugar, he discovered soon,
 Was not a universal boon ;
 And placards mournfully confessed
 That "Jinks's tea was not the best."

But will great Virtue leave her own
 True worshippers unloved, alone,
 To be Misfortune's prey and sport ?
 By no means ; nothing of the sort !

Jinks soon observed that round his doors
 The populace drew nigh in scores,
 To gaze on nature's latest freak—
 The man whose goods were not unique.

As he who, visiting a shrine,
 Endeared by memories divine,
 Some slight memento seeks to glean
 That may remind him of the scene—

So did that populace with prayers
 Beseech of Jinks to sell his wares ;
 Each leaf of tea, each grain of rice,
 Commanding almost any price.

Before a week away had rolled
 The wealth of Jinks became untold,
 And he, I scarcely need remark,
 Retired to a dual park.

So philanthropic were his deeds
 He soon became M.P. for Leeds ;
 And now, from out his plenteous store,
 Gives fountains daily for the Moor.

NEMESIS.

Oftentimes when disappointment
 Dogs the footsteps of a man,
 Hope applies her balmy ointment,
 Soothing him beneath its ban.
 So thought Blogging (Mr. Blogging
 Really first originated
 The idea which I have stated
 Relative to footstep dogging.)

Blogging too had reason really
 To complain of fortune's spite,
 She appeared to pain him merely
 For her personal delight.
 Though he sent a Press benighted
 Genial poems, by the ton :
 They were stifled, one by one,
 Thus is Genius oft requited.

Editors and all connected
 With a would-be comic Press,
 Met at midnight, unsuspected,
 To defraud him of success.
 Secretly as I have hinted
 Did these envious villains meet
 Blogging's genius to defeat
 (So his poems were not printed).

It was when these fiends obtruded
 Their black shadows on his way
 Hope, to which I have alluded,
 O'er his pathway cast a ray.
 Dreams of vengeance floated o'er him,
 Murder, dainty and refined,
 Occupied his poet-mind,
 Passed in many forms before him.

Yes ; he had resolved to slay them,
 The entire comic press,
 Seeing that no hand could stay them
 In their course of recklessness.
 Pity to his heart appealing
 Might bring salt tears to his eye,
 And he settled they should die,
 More in sorrow than ill-feeling.

Pallid, yet with self-reliance,
 He arose at dead of night,
 With an air of grim defiance,
 Slowly he commenced to write.
 Lest I scare the timid-hearted
 His note's contents I conceal,
 But he sealed it with a seal,
 Stuck a stamp on and departed.

* * * *

Morning broke ! why, Morning, must you
 Always break and let in Day ?
 Why on earth, too, does Day trust you,
 When you act in such a way ?
 Well, it was the morn in question
 That an Editor did see,
 And did read unwittingly,
 A weird note with Blogging's crest on.

All that day wild shrieks of laughter
 Shook his office as averred,
 And for nearly five days after
 Short spasmodic gasps were heard.
 And the bailiffs one day calling,
 Saw, aghast, with bated breath,
 He had laughed himself to death,
 Thus was vengeance quick in falling.

MORAL FOR COMIC PRESS.

If your hate be undiminished,
 Take a warning by his fall,
 For I tell you, one and all,
 Blogging's work is still unfinished.

THE CHRISTIAN ENGLISHMAN.

From the "Heathen Chinese's" point of view.

Which I wish to remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for longings for gain,
The Christian man is peculiar,
Which the same I would rise to explain.

For he sings in his joy,
"I am happy and free,
With no foes to annoy,
And my ships rule the sea,"
And they therefore sail over with opium
To poison the heathen Chinese.

"Their condition is sad
(Which the same is a fact),
They are dying like mad
So I'll send them a tract."
And a smile crumples up his bland features
As he thinks of his Christian act.

So we say to this man ;
"What you state it is true,
We *are* under a ban
(For the good of your screw)
For the trade which means ruin to China
Means very fair profits to you.

Then he smiles a sad smile,
And he winks with his eye ;
"We are making a pile,
He observes with a sigh,
By this traffic. So, though I am sorry,
I fear this poor heathen must die."

Which I wish to remark
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark,
And for longings for gain,
The Christian man is peculiar ;
Which the same I am free to maintain.

HUMILITY.

BY AN ASPIRANT.

From youth profound humility has been my leading trait,
 From anything approaching pride I'm singularly free ;
 But still, in common justice, I feel called upon to say
 That Nature néver framed a man to be compared with me.

Now, when a person like myself is competent to guide
 Perchance a nation's destinies, you'll own it isn't fair
 That Fate should seize upon that man who's Nature's boast and pride,
 And gives him eighteen-pence a day for cutting people's hair.

I take this opportunity most solemnly to charge
 You, O my friends, to execute a plan sublimely high,
 By which the populations of the universe at large
 May definitely settle where my genius seems to lie.

Give Salisbury a holiday, 'mid Hatfield's dales and trees.
 And let me, standing in his place, the robes of office don
 To steer the vessel of the State through home and foreign seas
 For some short given space of time, to see how I go on.

And if within a week or so (the time we may have fixed)
 You think the present Government superior to mine,
 If Britain's Constitution should be getting rather mixed—
 Well, then, you have my word for it—I'll instantly resign.

Then, having found my mental strength lies not in party strife,
 Perhaps good Dr. Benson, he of Caunterbury's see,
 Might be induced to turn his thoughts to other walks in life,
 And hand his haughty bishopric for some brief time to me.

In things ecclesiastical, presuming I am weak,
 Art, letters, science might be found to aid my great design ;
 And if on these I fail to shed the radiance one would seek,
 A transcendental hangman I might ultimately shine.

I just suggest this little plan because I think it right
 The world should know the sentiments which agitate my breast.
 Of course it may turn out, you know, I'm *not* a shining light ;
 But still this little scheme of mine would set the thing at rest.

TO NATURE.

A COMPLAINT.

O, Nature fair, pray take a chair,
 I hail this opportunity
 To greet a dame whose wide-spread fame
 Oft thrills the bard community.

Thy flow'r and field wild raptures yield
 To me no senseless heathen I ;
 I'm certain none thy rising sun
 Observe with purer glee than I.

Thy forests, dales, thy hills and vales,
 The skies, thy broad philactery ;
 Thy clouds, though dark, I may remark
 Are all most satisfactory.

Still, Nature great, I'm bound to state,
 You make some strange mistakes at times,
 With all your force, I think the course
 Is wrong your queenship takes at times.

Now take my ease, why should my face
 So beam with joviality ?
 You know yourself I am an elf
 With slight cause for hilarity.

Most features wear a look of care
 When Fortune bent on riling is,
 But though Fate's frown may crush me down,
 My countenance still smiling is.

Is life's stern task less hard, I ask.
 For me than for my brother man ?
 Don't *my* friends slope, my girls elope,
 Like those of any other man ?

Don't I miss trains ? Don't dental pains
 Gnaw *me* with fierce avidity ?
 Yet still my face shuns sorrow's trace
 With unabashed placidity.

Then look at Jinks, no artful minx
 His wounded feelings jokes about :
 He keeps good wine, goes out to dine,
 With all the county folks about.

Of noble birth, great moral worth
 (Swift hansoms daily driven in),
 And, cause for glee, a house rent free,
 With coals and gas both given in.

Though gratified on every side
 His lightest fancies wholly are,
 His gloomy check would seem to speak
 Of morbid melancholia.

So, Nature dear, 'tis very clear
 That, though *you* never thought of it,
 Jinks has *my* phiz and I have his,
 And that's the long and short of it.

And so, although, of course, I know
 It's too late to transfer again ;
 Still, when you trace a human face
 Please don't let this occur again.

THE ASTUTE HEATHEN.

Alas ! how frequently the Bard
 Is forced, by duty's strangely hard
 Inexorable codes,
 To quit all bright soul-cheering verse,
 And make his jibbing muse rehearse
 Most gloomy episodes.

Yet ever, from his earliest youth,
 The Bard has worshipped abstract truth,
 So for the common weal
 He now sets forth, without disguise,
 This tale of misplaced enterprise,
 And false religious zeal.

Some years ago, from Afric's strand
 A gruesome story came to hand
 About a savage chief,—
 A man whose darkened state had hurled
 The bulk of the religious world
 In agonies of grief.

It seemed this sad old nigger boy
 His leisure moments would employ
 In forcing stalwart braves
 To strive in savage, gory fray,
 Till one or both were borne away
 To premature graves.

The Christian Press received a shock ;
 The *Quiver* shook ; the very *Rock*
 Seemed stricken to its base ;
 The *Sunday Chimes* and *Sabbath Bells*
 Expressed their grief in mournful knells
 At such a lack of grace.

It chanced that good old Bishop B.,
 A priest of High Church views was he,
 Turned Afric-wards his gaze,
 And soon resolved to quit his see,
 To try to teach King M'jeejee
 The error of his ways.

“ King M'jeejee ” (the heathen's name)
 “ I feel has got the strongest claim,”
 The worthy Bishop said ;
 “ Upon my love, I'll go at once
 And show this grievous moral dunce
 The paths he ought to tread.”

And so he sailed across the seas
 With Butler's apt Analogies
 Piled high within the hold ;
 And Paley's works in heaps he took,
 That heathen's sinful goose to cook,
 And bring him to the fold.

One night, when it was growing late,
 He reached the dusky potentate,
 And straightway he began
 To show, with great persuasive tact,
 How Christian people always act
 Towards their fellow-man.

“ Observe,” he cried, “ O savage dark,
 The subtle harmonies which mark
 My land's distinctive creed ;
 We dote upon the human race,
 And fold our foes in fond embrace,
 From hatred's shackles free'd.”

The good old Bishop said his say,
 And long before the break of day
 The monarch holier grew ;
 Indeed the sinner, some assert,
 Was passing easy to convert
 To any point of view.

Still, cheered by moral victory,
 The energetic Bishop B.
 In chasuble and stole,
 Proceeded to at once infuse
 His ultra-Ritualistic views
 Into that native's soul.

Huge candles burned upon the rocks,
 And in a rude unpolished box
 Confession found a home ;
 Though when alone M'jeejee winked,
 Still, day by day, grew more distinct
 His tendencies to Rome.

Now to M'jeejee's land there came
 A new divine—John Gibbs by name ;
 On Christian mission bent
 He, all unlike his reverend pal,
 Was fiercely evangelical—
 Nay, bordered on dissent.

The King received him with a smile ;
 The Reverend John in florid style
 Proceeded to expound
 His doctrines with becoming glee,
 And soon in that dark heathen he
 A willing convert found.

Now when good Bishop B. returned
 To find his sacred symbols burned—
 His artless desert child
 A pervert to a stranger's whim—
 It speedily occurred to him
 To grow distinctly riled.

Between those parsons words arose,
 From words they quickly passed to blows,
 From fists they came to knives ;
 And greatly to the King's delight,
 They never met without a fight
 Which threatened both their lives.

In turn the wily King expressed
 His deep and earnest interest
 In each religious plan,
 This made those shepherds fiercely rave,
 And strive more eagerly to save
 So tractable a man.

But still that savage winked and winked
 Till both the rivals were extinct,
 Worn out by constant frays ;
 And when they neatly were entombed,
 He heaved a sigh, and straight resumed
 His old disgraceful ways.

CONNECTED WITH TRADE.

BY A HEAVY SWELL.

O Fortune, thy favours are oft showered down
 On beings who move in the humblest sphere ;
 While the nobly born are looked on with a frown,
 And seek, sometimes in vain, for a copper for beer.
 Why is it, O Fortune, confound you, explain
 Why the humblest mortals thy darlings are made,
 When I, their superior, woo thee in vain—
 I, a man who was never connected with trade ?

There are radical villains who venture to say
 That I ought to *earn* money, to wear labour's gyves ;
 I, whose ancestors down from the Conqueror's day,
 Never earned a red cent in the whole of their lives.
 And on me all their brilliant honours reflect,
 For theirs is a glory which never can fade,
 And I think I'm entitled at least to respect,
 From the fact they were never connected with trade.

There are some disadvantages, though, in the fact
 That a man, when his ancestors long have been dead
 And have left him no money, is not free to act,
 For their memory hinders him earning his bread.
 And hopes that are brightest are sometimes dashed down
 By the feeling that dead eyes see how he behaves,
 And the dread of incurring those ancestors' frown,
 If they chanced for a moment to peep from their graves.

I can see a fair face in the halo of light.
 In its classical beauty, pale, perfect, divine,
 But Fortune, of course, with her usual spite,
 Draws between us at once an impassable line.
 O, I often can see her, she never grows old,
 But remains like a lily in spring-time arrayed ;
 Ah ! how she might have brightened my life now so cold,
 But her friends were, in some way, connected with trade.

Well, time and misfortune are fast passing by,
 And in lonely old age consolation I'll find
 In remembering how much superior I
 Am compared with the labouring half of mankind ;
 And when life's slaky light flickers down in my lamp,
 They may write on my tombstone when nature is paid —
 " He might be a great fool, an unprincipled scamp,
 But he never had any connection with trade."

DONE IN THE DARKNESS.

*He told how murderers walk the earth
 Beneath the curse of Cain.*

He hurries along, he never heeds
 The cold and bitter wind,
 He never looks to the right or left,
 He never looks behind ;
 To all save the track which lies before
 His staring eyes are blind.

On, on through the black and stormy night,
 As though swift fiends pursue,
 And the gleaming lightning tints his face
 A ghastly leaden hue ;
 On,—for that shadow-like form ere morn
 Has dreadful work to do.

He halts on the brink of a lonely pool,
 Black, and of depth unknown,
 He bends, and with guilty, trembling hands
 He grasps a rugged stone ;
 Then the lightning's sudden flash reveals
That he is not alone.

O shriek not, doomed wretch ! thy cries for help
 Would die in the wind's wild roar ;
 One sudden grapple of blood-stained hands,
 One splash—and then all is o'er ;
 And a murderer murmurs—" *That* ——— owd cat
 Wean't keep me awake no more ! "

CHARLES GEORGE GORDON.

DIED 1885.

A year ago, ere Spring's alchemic vigour
 To gold changed Winter's dross,
 All Europe turned to watch a lonely figure
 Set out from Charing Cross.

A soldier, aye, and yet no drum's gay rattle,
 No warlike pomp and show,
 Attends this warrior on his way to battle,
 Alone he meets the foe.

A strange invader : to those hostile regions
 He brings no sword of flame ;
 He bears alone, to quell vast rebel legions,
 The magic of his name.

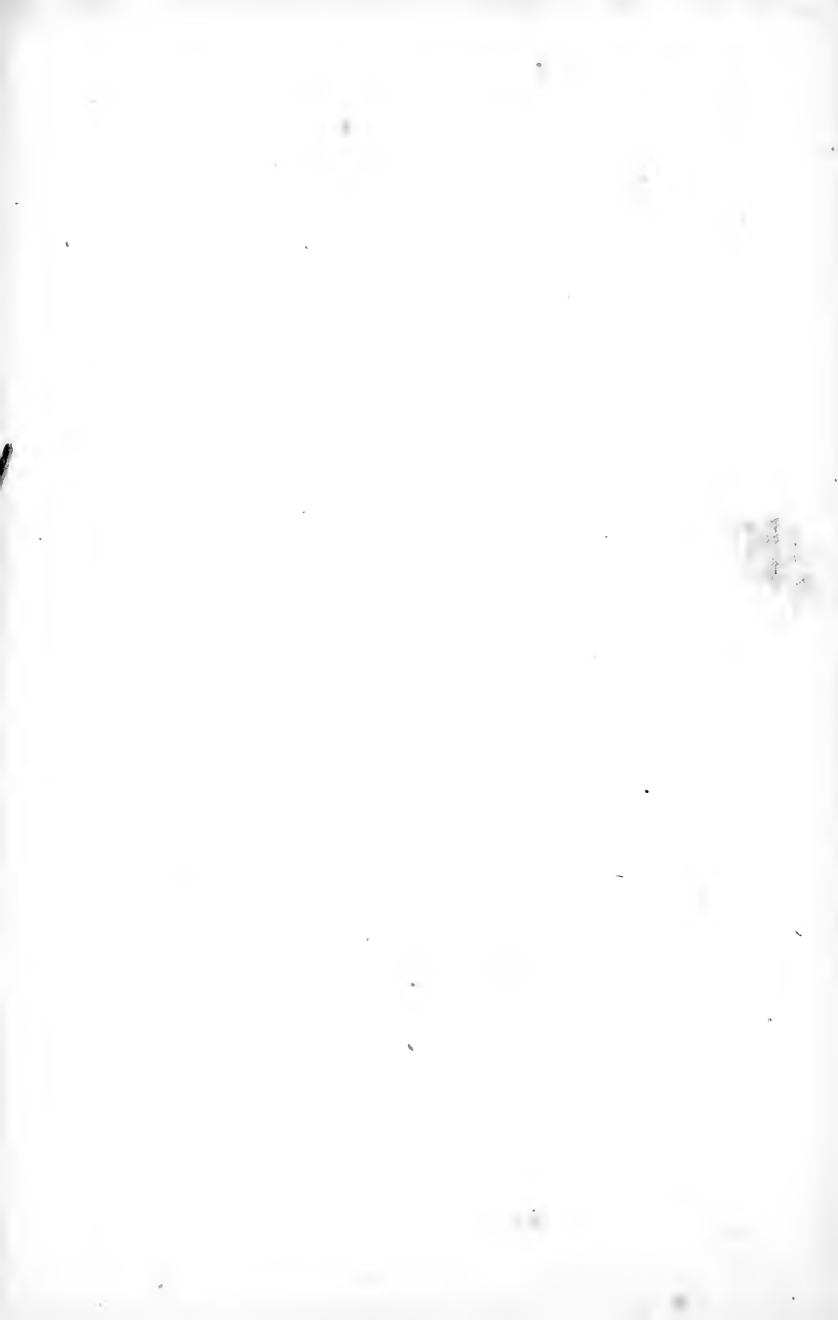
With hated breath and wildly straining vision,
 We watch this man's career ;
 This hero pressing on his god-like mission,
 Unchecked by human fear.

Vain task, for soon in his beleaguered prison
 We see him brought to bay,
 Around the walls ten thousand bayonets glisten
 To bar the hero's way.

And then, but ah, you know the dreary story,
 The help which came too late,
 Came but to find the city red and gory,
 The foe within the gate.

No matter ; he has reached the wished-for haven,
 And on the rock of fame,
 Where British valour is for aye engraven,
 Foremost stands Gordon's name.





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