


MORE
VERSE
by F.S.

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MORE VERSE

SOME VERSE

By F. S.

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[*Fourth Impression*]

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More Verse

by

F. S.

Author of "Some Verse"

[Frank Sidgwick]

. . . "Odd numbers will stand fast" . . .

The Sergeant,

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TO • THE • ONLIE • BEGETTER • OF
THESE • INSUING • SONNETS
MR. F. S. • ALL • HAPPINESSE
AND • HALF • THE • PROFITS
IF • ANY
WISHETH • THE • WELL-WISHING
ADVENTURER • IN
SETTING • THEM • FORTH

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Ship-Come-In.

A FOOL there was, with his way to win,
And never a sign of a wisdom-tooth,
Who wrote, in the confidence of youth,
Some lines called 'When my Ship Comes In.'
(The morbid may find them buried between
The leaves of a certain magazine
Which I would name, if it were not for
The modesty of its editor.)
But now that he's come to forty year,
With *placens uxor* and *familia*,
Time's wingèd chariot, hurrying near,
Bids him revise his *juvenilia*.
And, looking back, it appears to me
That the Ship that boy's eyes longed to see
Was laden chiefly with L.S.D.,
And his vapourings took—it is sad, but true—
An individualistic view.
That slugabed, with his egoist creed,
His feudal idea of a serf to weed,
And his favourite books on a plain deal shelf—
A *faux maigre* hermit stuffed with Self!

A man of forty smiles, of course,
To think how that centripetal force

Swayed—and sways—the folly and fun
Of feckless lads of twenty-one.

‘ Ho, pretty page, with the dimpled chin,
That never has known a barber’s shear,’

Wait till your Ships start coming in—

Scattered the skittles, and small the beer !

That isn’t quite what I meant to say :

I see I’ve given my secret away.

The fact is, while the Parcae spin,

Ships have never done coming in.

Until he comes to his very last gasp,

A man’s reach *must* exceed his grasp ;

And on the horizon, where high hopes drown,

There’s always another Ship, hull-down.

Was yesterday’s cargo nothing but sorrow ?—

There’s always another Ship, to-morrow. . . .

So follows, for any who feel inclined,

Lloyd’s Register for the undersigned.

Ship Number One, on her quarter-deck,

Bore a miraculous pen-earned cheque ;

But down in the hold there awaited me

A scrap of paper called ‘ Schedule D.’

The next Ship might be called my second,

But didn’t come in, so cannot be reckoned :

Dancing over the waves she came,
And I signalled her—was I much to blame?—
But she gybed, and bore away from the quay :
I suppose I was not the consignee. . . .
But she carried a bit of my heart away
Which didn't come back for many a day—
Until, indeed, I found her in tow
Of a bold sea-rover I happen to know.
Well, well! the curious things we do
When we are Men of twenty-two !
Every helmsman, old or young,
Has heard the song by Sirens sung,
And knows the thrill 'neath Adam's rib
When the eye approves the cut of a jib ;
Then the good lad bites his bullet hard
And glues his eye to the compass-card,
While another lad, unstable as sea,
 Stares at a Legend with glass and comb,
And wonders, ' Can that really be
 Anadyomene, Born-of-Foam ? '

My next Ship came a-sailing in
On a day when I found my blood akin
To a certain piece (some ten square miles)
Of a certain county in these here Isles.
It isn't the Place where I was Born ;

It isn't the Scene of Boyhood's Days ;
Save in the weeks of white hawthorn,
It is clad in browns and greens and greys.
It isn't the Land of Heart's Desire,
It isn't the Land of Lost Delight,
But just a bit of an English shire
Largely composed of haematite.
Wild horses shall not drag its name
From my stern bosom—but all the same
I'll say : it isn't the Downs, but Ups ;
The farms win prizes for Herdwick tups ;
And where contour-lines lie close together
You must be ready for rainy weather. . . .
O if I could, as I am fain,
Walk and climb all day in rain,
And get wet through—wet through—again !

And then a Ship. . . .

O Heart-Alive,

What ichor, when the gods arrive,
Transfuses from their starry way
To inform these drouthy veins of clay !
Though no caress in heaven be warm,
Though ether take the place of form,
Though wraith to wraith may never thrill
The memory of one daffodil—

If spirits, purged by Light and Fire,
May claim of Mercy one desire,
Then—shall I ask a bloodless boon
And crassly crave a glimpse of moon?—
No! but to live, on Heaven's plain,
My March of wooing over again!

Procul este, profani . . . Sic
Benedicat Benedick.

Yea, more than Benedick I am.—
Brother, hast ever pushed a pram,
Stammered small facts to Registrars,
Or screwed in nursery-window-bars?
Then, brother, shake! for we have found
The power that makes the world go round;
And—though the metaphor's wearing thin—
Let me know when your Ships come in!

1919.

Cautionary Rhyme for Young Visitors.

WE all have the habit of taking a look,
Wherever we stay, at the visitors' book ;
If weather be wet, it will while away time
To study past visitors' notions of rhyme.

For it seems that to guests it is vital to state
How cosy they were and what dinners they ate ;
But the species of joke that you find as a rule
Proves nothing except that the guest was a fool.

To the shame that awaits you, you writers seem blind,
If all your ephemeral nonsense is signed ;
And as you get older and wiser, I think
You will cease to exhibit your folly in ink.

Recollect that the jests of which once you were vain
Will cause you to blush if you come there again,
And the book—it's the landlady's property, too—
Is to gratify *her*, and not advertise *you*.

If all has been happy and homely and nice,
A grateful remark to your host will suffice ;
Then make a neat record, on going away,
Of your name and address, and duration of stay.

The Cheerful Chilterns.

[By a remarkable coincidence this lyrical epic appeared in *The Cambridge Magazine* exactly a week after the appearance in the same paper of Mr. John Masefield's *The Cold Cotswolds*, since reprinted in his volume entitled *Lollingdon Downs*.]

OLD man Brown
Lived near Hampden,
He hated the town
And often damned en.

Brown had a son
Who—a boy's habit—
Kept one
Buck rabbit.

Saturday night
Home from Wycombe
Brown rolled tight,
With merry hiccup.

He'd had a wet ;
Reeling and dribbling,
He eyed Tommy's pet,
A lettuce nibbling.

And being far
Gone in strong waters,
Laid his cigar
On the buck's quarters.

It happened so
In remote Chiltern
Not long ago.
But worms will turn.

Tommy was angered,
He could not bear it,
Squared to the drunkard,
And tapped his claret.

Fury seized Brown,
Like sparks in tinder,
He knocked Tommy down,
Kicked the buck outer window.

Tommy took a knife,
Lay ready for supper,
Let the rich life
Out of his papa.

Death is so clean,
Life is so dirty,
Life at eight fifteen,
Death at eight thirty.

From Brown's lips
Drooled a curse,
In last eclipse
He spoke worse
Than ever before.
'Tom, good-bye.
Death opens a door.
O grand to die.'

And Tommy said,
'Life is not fair,
I'll soon be dead,
Dancing on air,
While the horned herds
Crop the sweet vetches,
And slim brown birds
Mouse in the hedges.'

.

Because he failed
 To curb his knife,
Tom got gaoled
 For life.

Dead now the boy,
 Dead his progenitor.
Life has no joy,
 Death is man's mentor.

Dead the buck rabbit
 In remote Bucks.
Life is so vapid,
 Death reconstructs.

The east wind whistles
 Over the high hill.
Nettles, docks, thistles ;
 Praeterea nihil.

1917.

The Glory of Early Rising.

THRICE the crested cock has crowed,
Thrice, and once the lark has sung
His premeditated ode,
Exercising of his lung.

Chanticleere proclaims, and then
Scratches with alternate leg ;
Partlet, mother, wife, and hen,
Thinks of laying one more egg.

In the East a glimmer glows
And a gladsome glamour gleams :
Stops the clamour of the nose,
Flies the fairyland of dreams.

All the world is waking up,
Blinking from its nightlong swoon ;
And beside the breakfast cup
Rattles the electro spoon.

This is the poetic fake
That the poet can compose
Best, when lying half awake,
Snugly underneath the clothes.

My Princess : A Medley.

*P*RINCESS, come tell me, how wouldst thou be
wooed ?

As Paris, Paolo, or Petruchio sued ?

Blank verse or lyrics ? Of a thousand types

Call you the measure, and your servant pipes.

*First your swain will breathe an
Ode Elizabethan.*

Whan I haue gazed (chearefull maugre chiding)
An *Adam* on the *Eden* in thy Face,
Thow stil hast chastis'd me, thy bright Eies hiding
With azure-vainèd *Iuorie's*-disgrace,
Slicke-slender Fingers, deintie Palme,
Distilling nect'rous honie-*Balme* :
But, if thy *Dian* stil thow loue,
Doe not thyne hand remoue ;
Else shal the Fire resplendent in mine eie
That snowie Fastnes, thy faire Bosom, thaw,
And *Cupid* (*Venus' Wagg*) my Pow'r enuie,
To find thee secure from his *Archer's*-lawe.

*Stay, are you Scotch ? My Muse returns
To bonnie braes and Robbie Burns.*

Jean Hamilton, my jo, Jean,
Before we were acquaint,
Wi' roistering and hirpling
About the toun I went ;
I walked wi' Jill and Janet,
And kissed 'em at my will,—
I dried nae dule at a' then,
Philandering my fill !

*Would you have me make the match
As they made them on the Border ?
With my usual despatch
Thus I execute the order :—*

He came to the door, and tirl'd at the pin
(Blithe blinks in a braw blue ee) ;
He courted her butt, he courted her ben
(And the mavis sings sae rarely).

' O will ye be stickt wi' my wee penknife
(Blithe blinks in a braw blue ee),
Or will ye be my bonnie wife ? '
(And the mavis sings sae rarely.)

' I will not be stickt wi' your wee penknife
(Blithe blinks in a braw blue ee),
But I'll luvè ye dearly all my life.'
(And the mavis sings sae rarely.)

He loup on his steed, and carried her hame
(Blithe blinks in a braw blue ee),
But aye she grat for her Sweet William
(And the mavis sings sae rarely).

*Nay, 'tis too rough in rhymes and reasons ;
Let's try the style of Thomson's ' Seasons.'*

What time Amanda on my dubious hopes
And bashful coy desires prelusive glanc'd,
The Sagittarius of love's zodiac,
The mutual flame, if mutual, she conceal'd,
Ingenuous, deep within her guileless breast :
Yet from her eye, presaging confidence,
A beam emergent her disordered cheek
Mantled, with rosy modesty suffus'd.
There stood the oriflamme that thrill'd the swain
Harmonious, and a pensive anguish surg'd
With love's amusive delicacy mixt.

*Once more into the breach, and I will woo
As one who knows the Drama's latest rage,
And emulate the style of writers who
Have given fillips to our British Stage.*

. . . In

This verdurous murmurous garden stammer it out—
What is your starry and euphonious name ?
O you are what the beccafico sings
Into the flushed ear of the roses, quite ;
O perilous thief of dreams, immured beside
The wantoning landward-lurching wash of the wave,
When the tide turns, and when the sole goes home :
Your face leans out at midnight, stung with smiles,
Visible inspiration with pink cheeks !
Tangible phenomenon with flaxen hair !
O and that pinker pink, that flax more flaxen !

1904.

Manners Makyth Money.

[When Lord Rosebery advocated the cultivation of good manners as the high road to success in life.]

CHILD, when Kingsley said you should
Make a song of the Forever,
Just by being sweet and good,
Letting such as can be clever,
He was merely making plain
Morals of Victoria's reign.

Such ideas are out of date—
Tout cela nous avons changé ;
'Tis Success we advocate ;
Virtue gets her long-due *congé ;*
Nowadays 'tis understood
Children aim at *making* good.

Yet, beware, my tender child,
There are still degrees of rightness.
Howsoever bad and wild,
Mind you cultivate politeness ;
Though you be a very knave,
No one minds it if you're suave.

Whether you're at work or play,
Exercise extreme punctilio ;
Courtesy from day to day
Brings success in life like billy-o.
Do as you'd be done by, brothers—
Or you will be ' done ' by others.

Sing a Song of Sixpence (Chaucerian).

LORDINGES, I wol you singen of a grotë,
And of a pouche of reye also by rotë,
And eek of tweyë doseyn birdës blakë,
That weren in a pastee wel y-bakë :
So sonë thilkë pastee corven was,
Tho foulës al gan singen in that cas :
Me thinketh this so delicat it is ;
A ! kingës mowen ete of it, ywis !

The kingë to his countour-hous is goon,
To rekene of his penyes everichoon ;
With-in hir propre bour the quenë setë,
Of breed with hony spraddë for to etë :
And in the gardin was the lavender ¹ fresshë ;
Ther-in she hangeth clothës newe y-wesshë,
Til sodeynly doun fleigh a papejay,
And plukked of hir nosë, weylaway !

¹ *Lavender* is dissyllabic = 'laundress.'

Blankshire.

LONG ere the Spheres were moved to dawn
Or Mother Earth from Ocean rose,
Ere plantigrades, Amoeba's spawn,
Developed rudimentary toes,
When first from Hence the Future Tense
Began to conjugate To-Be,
In crude pot-hook God's Domesday Book
Wrote down this shire for me—for Me.

Let Shropshire boast twelve-winded skies,
Sussex the draughts of her hill-air ;¹
Our stagnant dykes engender flies,
Nor ever wind blows loudly there :
Yet, though the fen be bare of men,
Nor bosky launds mine eyes assuage,
Still can I say (with David) ' Yea,
I have a goodly heritage.'

No sentimental flowers cloak
The pleachèd hedge, the stolchy ditch ;
Fallow and furrow swarm and choke
With spurge and dodder, vetch and twitch :

¹ The original MS. spells this *Hilairc*.

Yet am I gay when I survey

Where rolls and rises, fold on fold,
O'er vale and down the flooded, brown,
Dam goodness of the unwieldy Wold.

Daylong the serf with rheumy eyes

Stares idly o'er the sodden plains
From Devil's Dyke to Charnel Rise,
Where once his forebears swung in chains :
Now (Ichabod !) he hops the clod,
Inhaunts his frigid noontide quart
Of tea, and hoes two crooked rows
Of late potatoes black with wart.

Here clunch-pit warrens breed the bur

That trips to death the shag-haired goat,
And bindweed and dwarf juniper
Trammel the blood-lust of the stoat ;
Dank hellebore her fatal spore
Spreads in the thoughtless leveret's way,
Smelling like dusk in Caer-on-Usk
Or *l'heure d'absinthe* in Paraguay.

A million mouldwarps undermine

Our lichen'd dolmens one and all ;
By thwaite and hanger, tor and chine,
Our cromlechs crumble to their fall :

Of Bretnold's fane that stayed the Dane,
And shrined both saint and buccaneer,
Twelve hugy stones above their bones
Alone through dock and darnel peer.

Let not Imperial Me be shamed
To swallow hard, when I have heard
The mute inglorious parish named,
In which my birth is registered.
Each to his lot : though mine be not
Worthy a true-blue White Man's hire,
Let me presume the Angel of Doom
Erred in allotting me this Shire.

1920.

Beauty at the Helm.

MY Doris bade me buy a car—
A thing I very soon did—
I learnt to start, I learnt to stop,
And how to act when things went pop,
And how to treat the wounded ;
And then we went a splendid ride,
I driving, Doris by my side.

We had a little accident—
It barely cost a fiver—
The magistrate was not polite ;
He said that ladies had no right
To sit beside the driver,
But hinted, with consummate tact,
Doris would any man distract.

'Tis true—this piece of evidence
The court did not discover—
That when I heard the chicken squeal
One manly arm was on the wheel,
And one was round my lover.—
My dear, compared to your caress,
What is a chicken more or less ?

Henceforward in the driver's seat,
My darling Doris, ride you,
And whirl the wheel, the hooter sound,
And turn the little handles round,
And I will sit beside you ;
I'm sure you'll drive no worse than me,
And *both* my arms will then be free !

The Life of Shakespeare.

(In Limericks.)

(1557)

'**T**WAS a tanner of Stratford called John,
Who over to Wilmcote is gone :
'Come kiss me, sweet Mary !'—
'John Shakespeare, how dare ye ?'—
'Faith, chuck, will ye wed me ?'—'Anon !'

(1580)

There was an old knight, Thomas Lucy,
Who asked Master Will, why the deuce he
Had ventured to bag
That unfortunate stag ?—
Will replied, 'I like venison, if juicy.'

(1582)

There was an old couple of Shottery
Who exclaimed, 'Isn't marriage a lottery ?
For here is our Anne
Gone and married a man
Who writes what we think is called Pottery.'

(1585)

Said Will to himself, ' I'm a lown ;
For Anne hath-a-way of her own,
 But i' faith 'tis no joke,
 This connubial yoke ;
So methinks I will run up to Town.'

(1590)

In Town he consorted with men
Who lived by the use of the pen.
 Said Marlowe, ' My friend
 Will Shakespeare's no end ;
We must look to our laurels, rare Ben !'

(1608)

William said, ' I am forty-and-four,
And London shall know me no more ;
 I'm a famous rich man,
 So I'll go back to Anne.—
Heaven send she's less shrewd than of yore !'

(1616)

Now for all his misdeeds he atones,
Lying peacefully under the stones
 In the church by the Avon,
 Whereon is engraven :
' Be he cursèd that moveth my bones.'

(FOR ALL TIME)

So here's to the excellent John,
Who was truly a *sine quâ non* ;
If a marrying whim
Had *not* taken him,
The Avon had wanted her Swan !

[NOTE.—As for those who attribute to Bacon these Works, and leave Shakespeare forsaken, *their* 'Advancement of Learning' is most undiscerning, and, needless to say, they're mistaken.]

1905.

Foundations.

[On hearing that a subsidence beneath the Bank of England
was reported.]

WHEN hand in hand along the Strand,
Those, who consume bananas, travel,
Little they know what lies below—
Whether the subsoil's mud or gravel.

One knows the walls of old St. Paul's
On piles are insecurely founded ;
But when the Bank gives way, with blank
Astonishment we are astounded.

The reverend Board to whom that hoard
Of golden treasure is confided,
One need not doubt, would be ' put out '
If England's Bank one day subsided.

The Stock Exchange would feel quite strange--
They would be ' done ' as they are done to ;
No omnibus could carry us,
Not having anywhere to run to.

Yet stay awhile—forgive the pile
That thus lets down the pride of London,
If nothing sank beneath the Bank,
What could we spend the Sinking Fund on ?

Corinna Goes a-Singing.

(With Grace-Notes.)

SPRING.

THE year's at the spring, and the birds do sing
‘ Hey ding-a-ding-ding ’ all choric,
And lover and lass through green corn pass,
As of yore in the shire of Warwick :
Now under the trees (as Masefield sees)
‘ The delicate deer troop shy-eyed,’
And ‘ half of the world a bridegroom is,
And half ’ (says Watson) ‘ a bri-ide.’

SUMMER.

Rising at five our farmers thrive
Mens sana in corpore sano,
And the glebe new-tilled is drilled and filled
With best Peruvian guano :
O'er pastures new in a mantle of blue
The poet galumpheth free-heeled,
And Summer is i-comen, and bees are a-hummin',
All over the clovery fie-ield.

AUTUMN.

Now the harvest moon is plenilune,
And hares retire at the double,

And close-time ends for Our Feathered Friends,
And spaniels point in the stubble :
Under the star spins the brown eve-jar,
And the moping owl ' tu-whoo ' hoots,
And the poet asks Why, when the grass is dry,
You walk through the fields in boo-oots ?

WINTER.

When sponges freeze at thirty degrees,
And the skater resembles Ole Bill,
The forespent plumber has dreams of summer
And family men of the coal-bill :
Now poor Robin comes to look for crumbs,
And even his bright eyes show woe ;
And the chilblain numbs the housemaid's thumbs,
For the stormy winds do blo-ow.

1919.

A Welsh Holiday.

REMEMBEREST thou, Gelert, my dog,
How once we went a jolly spin,
Starting from Rhosllanerchrugog
To Llanfihangelgeneurglyn ?

Throughout that land of mountain heights
Whence the maligned Attorney hails,
We learned that Wales in rain delights,
As in great waters do the whales.

Do you recall the muddy paste
Through which our feet were forced to squelch,
And how the rabbits that you chased
Were indigestible—and Welsh ?

Along the road and up the hill,
Do you remember, trusty dog,
It rained from Llanfairpwllgwyngyll
To Llanarinosdyffryn-ceiriog ?

The Lady—or the She-Bear ?

[After reading a poem by Mr. Rudyard Kipling in the *Morning Post*, I had a vision, when the night was late, on the EMBANKMENT by WESTMINSTER ; and it seemed that two wraiths met and held converse alone together—alone until a satirical voice spoke from the SAVOY, and a mild jesting voice from STEPHEN'S tower :—]

A. T. **C**OMRADES, give me leave a little, and
 excuse a Poet's ghost ;

When you want me, sound—

R. K. —reveille, not the Last, but Morning
 Post.

A. T. 'Tis the place, and all around it—

R. K. —ghosts of Women shriek and brawl,
 Wakened wisps about the ruins of what once
 was Caxton Hall—

A. T. *Caxton* Hall ?—

R. K. —that by the river overlooks the muddy
 tract,

Where the Parliament of Man was, ere they
 passed the Franchise Act.

A. T. Ere the heavens filled with commerce, argosies
 of magic sail—

R. K. Ere the Female of the Species was superior to
 the Male !

A. T. Then I dipt into the future, far as human eye
 could see,

Saw a vision of the world, with which I think
you will agree.

R. K. Yes, you said you'd wed a savage, who in brain
would be to you

As is moonlight unto gaslight, or as water unto
glue.

'Woman is the lesser man,' she is! You saw
it, I confess,

First, and said so in your muddly—

A. T. —in my Medley, *The Princess*.

For I hoped that thro' the ages a restraining
caucus ran,

Lest the thoughts of Man be widened by the
Mistress of the Man.

R. K. I who only called her deadly, white-hot vivi-
sector wild,

With Conviction for her husband, and Con-
tention for her child ;

I who shouted 'Rule Britannia,'—I'm at
heart a feminist,—

W. S. G. Yet you're put upon the list of those who
never would be missed.

J. K. S. So there yet may come a season which shall
rid us from the curse

That the converse of a poet should be deadlier
than his verse ;

Then shall rudyards cease from kipling—
(pardon if myself I quote)—
And no haggards ride hagridden by the fear
of Woman's Vote.

[*And here I awoke and found my lips repeating :—*]

When a Tennysonian metre meets a Beetle in his pride,
'Down with Reticence, down with Reverence—forward,
naked, let him stride';

For what *should* he know of Reverence, who only went to
school

Where the ferule of the Prooshian was more deadly than
the Rule?

And what should he know of Womankind, who only
Woman knows

In his Gadsbys and his Hauksbees and all Simla folk to
those?

Thus the Mouthpiece of Our Empire ends where Tenny-
son began,

Saying Womankind is diverse, and not undevelop't
Man!

The Scientist's April.

[Statistics for the last thirty years prove April to be
the least rainy month.]

SANG the poet, full of fears,
'April, weep thy girlish tears.'
O you poets, dreamers, mystics,
You had best consult statistics!

Said the poet, 'In April'
(*Re* the Cuckoo) 'come he will.'
Hence with 'cuckoos' Webster classes
Several sorts of silly asses.

Let us never be misled
By the things old poets said :
Scientifically reason
'April is the driest season.'

Next year, at the end of March,
Let us be prepared to parch ;
We shall need no macintoshes,
No umbrellas, no goloshes.

Let our statements all be made
By statistics' artful aid ;
Let us say, *on April Oneth,*
' April is the driest month ! '

Science Progress—II.

A Cradle Song.

[Rocking a baby is said to give it digestive disorders
when it grows up.]

MOTHER, learn the latest hygienic lore,
Bid farewell to all the lullabies of yore,
For the hushaby of mummy
Will upset the baby's tummy,
So you mustn't rock the cradle any more.

You must bow your head to scientific truth,
Though the popsy-wopsy's fractious with a tooth ;
For the adult's indigestion
Seems to be a simple question
Of improper education in its youth.

Therefore, mother, mind you never are beguiled
Into rocking him to sleep, however wild,
For the kid that's cataleptic
Will become a man eupeptic—
But the hand that rocks the cradle spoils the child.

Britannic Salt.

LIFE'S little worries and business stress
Result, as we know, in biliousness ;
Society now corrects this fault
With a couple of glasses of water—salt.

They substitute for wicked wine
Two tumblers full of innocent brine,
Or into H_2O they pour
An ounce and a half of *Sodium Chlor.*

Hence comes a sentiment, rather trite,
'How frequently Instinct guides us right !'
For man in the summer by Neptune's flood
Seeks to get the salt in his blood.

Dyspeptic Britons of every class
Swallow the sea, as a dog eats grass ;
From winds and waves they soak it in,
Down the gullet or through the skin.

O how thankful we ought to be,
We live on an isle surrounded by sea !
For never, oh never shall we be slaves,
As long as we steadily drink the waves.

Two Sonnets—I.

His Hirsute Suit.

A BRISTLING beard was his peculiarity :
He kissed. She thought it smacked of insincerity,
And bridling up remarked with great severity,
' Such misdemeanours are, I trust, a rarity ;
Also your face, besides its angularity,
Is hidden in a razorless asperity :
Were it not so, I call it great temerity—
Our walks in life are not upon a parity.'

Wherefore he shaved, to give his chin the purity
It knew ere he emerged from his minority.
The razor, naked, with no guard's security,
Slipped. Gizzard cut, he joined the great majority.
Where he will pass the æons of futurity—
Above—below—I can't say with authority.

Two Sonnets—II.

The Aeronaut to his Lady.

' I
 Through
 Blue
Sky
Fly
 To
 You.
Why?

Sweet
 Love,
Feet
 Move
 So
 Slow !'

Composite Parodies—I.

By Rudyard Keats.

WHEN deep-browed Homer smote his blooming
lyre,

Full often had he heard the melodies
That men had sung by land or sea—a spire
Of teeming sweets—and went and called them his.
Sweet are his songs, but what he stole, 'tis true,
Is sweeter far. O like the Nightingale,
Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bard,
Thou major poet certified by Tr——ll
(The old trail, our own trail, that's always new),
Thou fust-class singin' man !

Leaving great verse unto a little clan,
Silent (upon a pique) at Portsmouth Hard.

With his pilly willy winky pinky pop ! etc.

We sailors, market-girls, and fishermen

Looked at each other with a wild surmise,
Hearing the old songs turn up once again,
Yet spake not : we were wise—

We never got a 'a'porth's change of 'im—
Yet every single one of us was right :
For palely loitering, like a wretched wight,

To faëry lands forlorn and forests dim,
He winked at us, the unblushful hypocrite,
And we did double, winking back at him.
(Pore beggar ! winking back at him !)

Composite Parodies—II.

By Algernon Charles Wordsworth.

WHEN the world of the weald and the wold is wild,
Streaming the loam and east clouds cold,
When Summer is mingled with Autumn mild,
And the waning West is a glory of gold ;
Lady, come from the eyelid of night,
Twilight shade, iridescent delight,
Come as thou camest when I was a child,
Iris, come when I shall be old.

For rainbows veil the vain regrets
Of a goal once gained when the life begun,
And links of life are the heart's outlets
As the world shall say when dreaming is done ;
The world shall hold when bones are rotten—
The manner of man by the boy begotten
Is son to the child that his sire begets,
And sire to the child of his father's son.

Composite Parodies—III.

By Elizabeth Barrett Hemans.

WHAT was he doing, the small male child,
Down on the deck which was burning ?
Standing alone 'in splendour wild'
Waiting to hear his father say,
'Casabianca, you need not stay,
For the ship, alas, is burning.'

What was he doing, the brave bright boy,
Down on the deck which was burning ?
Shouting 'Papa,' and yelling 'Ahoy !
Fire ! the ship is becoming hot :
May I skedaddle or may I not ?'
But his father was quietly burning.

What was he doing, the Skipper's kid,
Down on the deck which was burning ?
'Father said, Stay ; I must do as I'm bid ;
I mustn't depart without his word.'
(I'm glad that nobody overheard
What the Skipper said, while burning.)

What *was* he doing, the Captain's pup,
Down on the deck which was burning ?

Both were killed when the ship blew up.
The theory now is exploded, too,
That martyrdom is a duty due
 To a father engaged in burning.

All the Air's a Stage.

[To Robert Loraine.]

O PERFECT actor, whom no fright can shake,
Whom once terrestrial theatres did engage,
Retiring 'up,' you hold our eyes and take
A higher stage.

Thus men may rise—on aeroplanes—to grace
Positions which no competition mars ;
You need no limelight, for you find a place
Among the 'stars.'

Once were the 'gods' above you ; in the air
You rule a realm whence you look down on kings.
Prompt as you are, no prompter need be there
Between *those* wings !

Land on the links—but spoil no niblick-shot ;
Land on a moor—but see you slay no grouse ;
Land on my roof—but, histrion, do *not*
Bring down the house.

A Ballad of Randolph Earl of Chester.

[From Cambridge University Library, MS. Tt. 4. 2⁸, folio, vellum, of the XV century, non-existent, ff. 157^b, 158.]

AS hit befel in Averyl
When longë levës spryng,
Our kyng rode forth in fayre foreste,
To here the briddes syngynge.

‘ Erle Warrin greves me,’ seid the kyng ; 5
‘ Evyll so mote he thee !
Nou who wilbe so gude a knyghte
As slou erl Warren for me ? ’

‘ I wil him slou,’ seid erl Randell,
‘ Fful sone and anone ; 10
He is my cosen,’ seid erl Randell,
‘ I know his pathes eche-on.’

‘ God save thee, Chestre,’ said our kyng ;
‘ Ever more well thee bityde !
Take fowre & twenti wight yemen, 15
Well weppynd, bi thy syde.’

‘ Whither be ye awaye ? ’ seid erl Warrin,
‘ Cosyn, with swych meinë ? ’—

‘ I buskyd me to shote the dere
Under the grene wode tre.’ 20

‘ Wher be thi gifotons ? ’ seyde erle Warin,
‘ And thou go to shote the dere ?
But that thou nedës a two hond sworde,
In feith, that I never did here ! ’

His sword upon erle Randell hed 25
Certainly he brake it in too.

‘ The smyth that wrought thee, ’ erl Warrin seide,
‘ I pray God werke him woo ! ’

Then word cam unto our kynge
How that erle Warren was bonde. 30

‘ I was never so mery, ’ seyde the kinge,
‘ To holde that thefe in honde. ’

But when thei cam bifore oure king,
Thei knelid down on their kne.

‘ God thee savë, myne erle Randell ! 35
‘ Thi prisener wold I se. ’

Then erl Randel did off his cosyn his geare,
& baryd his hed agayne.

‘ Thou are none of my cosen, ’ seyde erl Randell,
‘ I tel thee that certayn ! 40

'Thou art non of mi cosyn,' seid erle Randel,
'When I loke thee upon.'—
'Thou spekyst aryght,' the felowe saide,
'My lorde away is gon.

'Thou never wil take my lord,' he seid,
'While he standys on grounde.'—
Oure kyng he lough, & swore an othe,
'I wil give thee .xx. li.'

45

[GLOSSARY.—L. 6, 'may he suffer evil,' a common ballad phrase. L. 8, 'slou' = slay. L. 15, 'wight yemen' = sturdy yeomen. L. 18, 'swych meinë' = such a company. L. 19, 'buskyd' = made ready. L. 21, 'gifotons,'? corrupt. L. 22, And = if. L. 47, 'lough' = laughed. L. 48, 'xx. li.' = twenty pound.]

Blue Dragon II : Valedictory.

[At the outbreak of the War this yacht, whose Skipper is headmaster of the Oxford Preparatory School, was laid up at Christiania, and in 1916 sold to a Norwegian. The school crest is also a Dragon, and its members 'Dragons.']

DEAR *Blue Dragon*, farewell!—
Under an alien hand
Still may you ride the Northern swell,
And add to the tales your lovers tell
To others who understand :
But "Sold—sold?" did they say of you?
Passed, said they, to another control?—
Timber and hemp may pass, 'tis true,
With change of owner and name and crew ;
But no, not *you*, *Dragon Blue*,
Nobody buys your soul.

How shall we sing her praise?
How to make landsmen feel
Half the splendour of cruising days
With leaping tiller and straining stays,
Thrilling from truck to keel,—
Half the glory of sitting tight,
Decks awash in a sudden squall,—

Half the beauty of starlit night
(With never a gleam of a riding-light),
In the lull and lift of the harbour-drift,
Under the harbour-wall ?

Was it the salted air ?
Was it the daily toil ?—
Spinnaker days when winds were fair ;
Days of tacking to who-knows-where,
Fo'c'sle a reek of oil ;
Maelstrom days off an Orkney shore,
Slewed in a tide-roost hither and yon,
Crockery crashing through pantry door,
Crew side-slipping on cabin floor,
But fair or foul, grin or growl,
Always carrying on !

Whence was her magic spun ?
Where was the secret source ?
Who was it made her watchword run—
'The less that's charted, the more the fun'—
Who was it laid her course ?
Aft, look aft, where he sits four-square,
Genial wraith in a cloud of blue !

For whatsoever the course we shape
'Twixt Oban Bay and the far North Cape,
We put our trust, as Dragons must,
Skipper, in you, in you !

Mariner, pedagogue, cook,
Weathered with breeze and brine !—
Who never a threat of peril would brook,
But ' ever with frolic welcome took
Thunder ' or fair sunshine—
Stand by, stand by ! Already afar
Your old *Blue Dragon* is out of hail ;
But though she passes beyond the bar,
Her spirit inhabits beside the Cher,
Where deed and endeavour are hers for ever,
Filling her magic sail.

Skipper and Owner, ahoy !
Over a score of years,
Crews and visitors, man and boy,
Have drunk your health and wished you joy,
And shouted you thrice three cheers.
Steer us still, with the Sun for goal,¹
(Nosing bows to a rainbow scend !)

¹ *Arduus ad solem*: the school motto.

Pilot of Dragons, body and soul,
Past many a rock and many a shoal :
Do we forget ? Not yet, not yet,
Guide, philosopher, friend !

Hark ! on an August morn—
Was it the boom of guns ?
Fluttered a scrap of paper torn,
And Freedom, gathering brows of scorn,
Summoned her myriad sons.
Ah, *Blue Dragon*, you droop to see
Names you loved on the roll of fame ?
Nay, no better a fate could be
For those you lessoned in laws o' the Sea ;
Share our pride that they dared and died,
Playing old Freedom's game.

Yea ! we are bidden believe,
Nothing under the sun,
Nothing that men for their kind achieve,
Time, the eternal thief, can thief,
So it be truly done :
So that our Dragon Ship keep the Law,
Pray God give her a fair landfall ;

So that never we let her yaw
To a rising wind or a sudden flaw,
Home we'll ride on a flowing tide,
Skipper and Shipmates all !

1916.

A Thrush at Bisley (Lewis Guns).

TENDEREST morning breaks across the Lines :
Down in the ditch where peaty rushes grow
Lie small blue pools that yesterday were snow.
Spring, on her virginals amongst the pines,
Plays the old prelude to the season's change,
And all birds listen as her cadence falls. . . .
Meanwhile our Team, in tightish overalls,
Steps out, 'at ease,' for duty on the Range.
It's a fine morning—let us kill some thing.—
A magazine holds forty-seven rounds.—
The Gun itself weighs six-and-twenty pounds.—
What's that bird doing, that he does not sing?
We fire . . . (O golden-throated thrush, in floods
Of fluted music that we cannot drown
With 'short sharp bursts'!) . . .

Importantly we frown
Over our Feed-Pawl-Spring-Retaining-Studs.

1918.

In Memoriam Amici.

GOD, when He moulded our clay,
Wetted the dust with His tears,
Kneading our hopes and fears,
Plastic under His sway ;

That we, when grieved or rejoiced,
Might sweat the tears at His will,
To leave us hardier still,
Lest the clay be ever too moist,

Lest we lose His shape, at a touch
Of the terror that flieth by night ;—
And that you might die in the fight,
He gave me a tear too much.

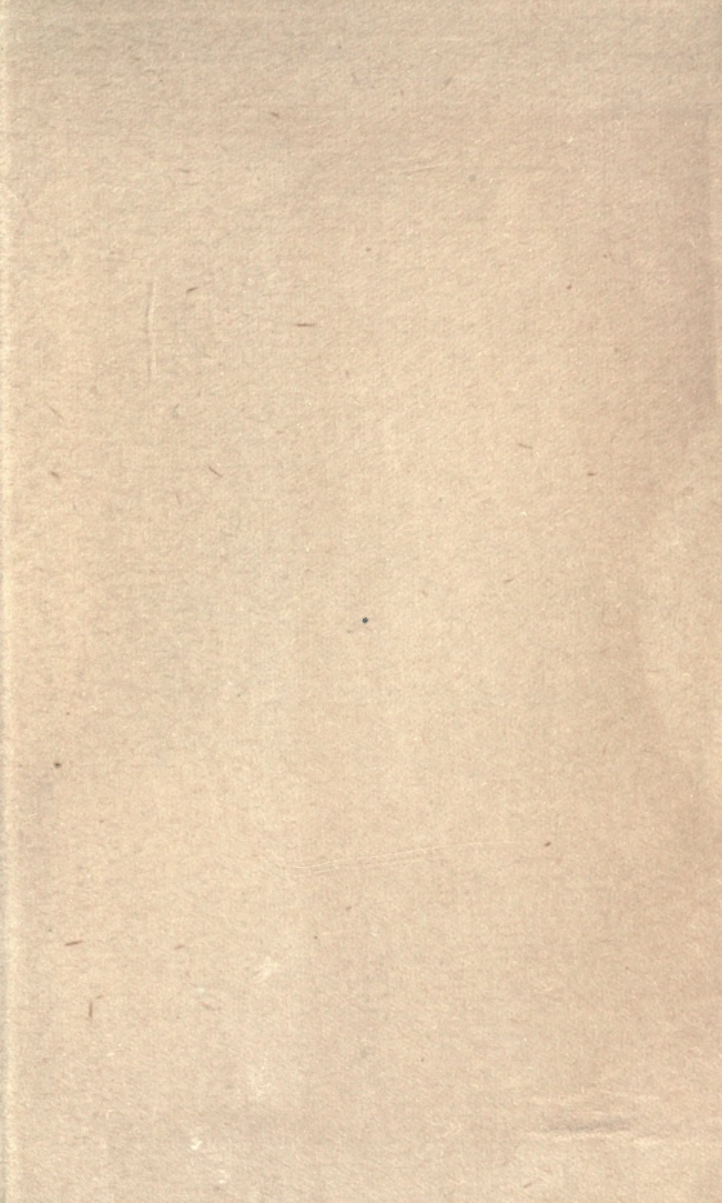
1915.

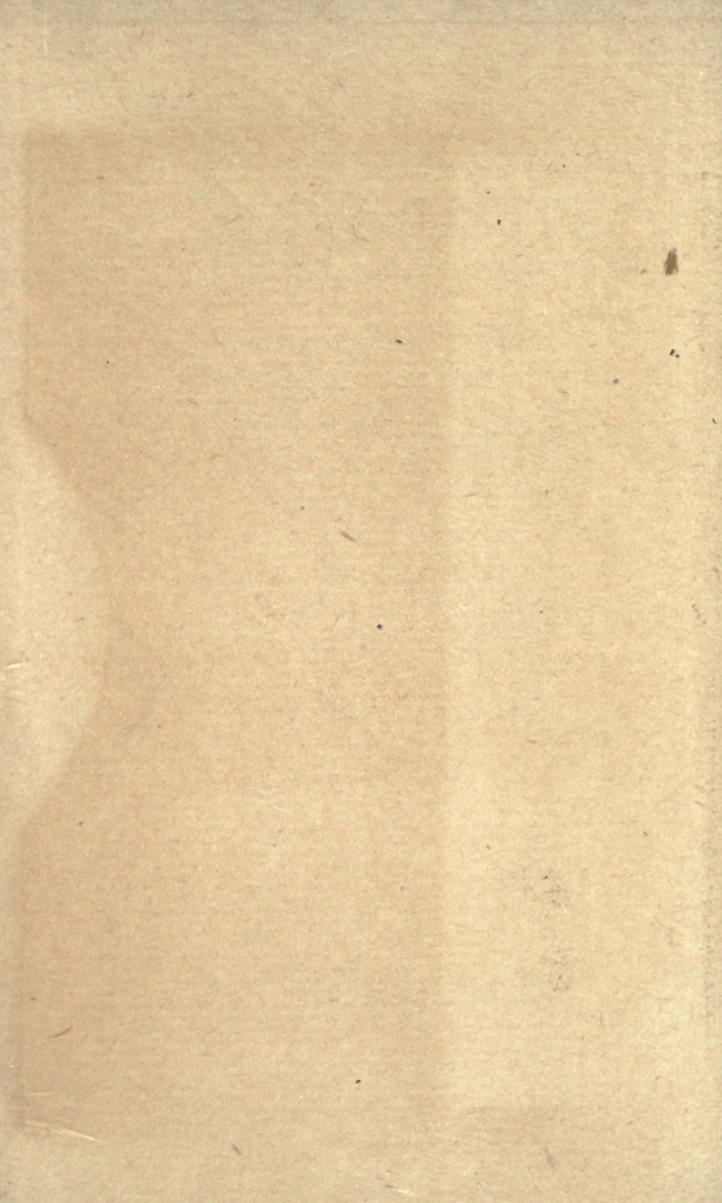
Vision.

IS it because that lad is dead
My eyes are doing a double duty,
And drink, for his sake and in his stead,
Twice their accustomed draught of beauty ;

Or does the intoxicating Earth
Ferment in me with stronger leaven,
Because, for seeing the year's rebirth,
He loans me eyes that look on heaven ?

1919.





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Sidgwick, Frank
More verse

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