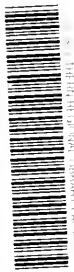


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PAPER
PELLETS

HUMOROUS VERSE

By

JESSIE POPE

ELKIN MATHEWS
VIGO STREET · LONDON
M CM VII



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Another Pair of Sleeves

TIME was, not very long ago,
When Mabel's walking skirt
Trailed half a yard behind to show
How well she swept the dirt.
But "short and sweet" are in again ;
No more the grievance rankles,
For Mabel's now curtailed her train
And shows her dainty ankles.

But Mabel has a thrifty mind
To supplement her charms.
The frills that once she wore behind
She fastens on her arms.
Her sleeves are made in open bags
Like trousers in the navy ;
No more she sweeps the streets, but drags
Her sleeve across the gravy.

April Antidotes

IN the nonage of the year,
When anemones appear,
And the buffets of the breeze are soft as silk,
When each sparrow spars and heckles,
I begin to think of freckles,
And of bi-chloride of mercury and milk.

When the silver slanting shower
Hangs the almond-blossom bower
With a fringe of diamond dew and crystal link,
When the azure brooklet dimples
I begin to think of pimples,
And of benzoin and precipitated zinc.

When beneath the feathered breast
Lie the treasures of the nest,
When the sap begins to turn the birches red ;
When the lambs grow energetic
I apply a new cosmetic
Made of potash, camphor, glycerine and lead.

APRIL ANTIDOTES

Then I care not if it snows,
I've a powder for the nose,
And a veil of chiffon warranted to cling;
While my armour on I buckle,
I acknowledge with a chuckle
I'm hermetically sealed against the Spring.

Motor Martyrdom

I NEVER have clung to a motor car,
Or crouched on a motor bike.
Worry and scurry, clank and jar
I cordially dislike.
I do not care for grimy hair,
For engines that explode,
But of one and all I've the put and call,
For I live on the Ripley Road.

I drank the country breeze at first,
Unsoiled by fetid fumes,
But now I am cursed with a constant thirst
That parches and consumes.
I am choked and hit with smoke and grit
When I venture from my abode ;
My pets are maimed and my eyes inflamed,
For I live on the Ripley Road.

MOTOR MARTYRDOM

I pass my days in a yellow fog,
My nights in a dreadful dream,
Haunted by handlebar, clutch and cog,
And eyes that goggle and gleam.
I am not robust, but I dine on dust
Gratuitously bestowed,
And for twopence I'll sell my house in the dell
By the side of the Ripley Road.

To a Stout Shepherdess

DEAR lady, are you open to a hint

As down our sober pavement you display
A costume reminiscent of a print

Of Valenciennes and shepherdesses gay?
When Watteau, master of Rococo art,

Depicted nymphs in pastoral disguises,
His cunning pencil only could impart
A charm to graceful shapes and slender sizes.

That saucy Watteau hat where rosebuds twine

Is not the sort a florid dame should wear,
Although tip-tilted at the proper line

Upon your own, or someone else's, hair.
Those panniers of Pompadour brocade,
That scanty skirt, although no doubt *de*
rigueur,

That corsage laced, with ruffles overlaid,
Are not, I think, intended for your figure.

TO A STOUT SHEPHERDESS

Go home, dear lady, lay your gauds aside,
Afflict no more your feet with Louis heels,
Wear ample garments, flowing, full and wide—
Take my advice, and see how nice it feels.
Accommodate your features with a veil,
And let your hat be quietly trimmed, and
shady :
Then, though as *shepherdess* you frankly fail,
You may be more successful as a *lady*.

The Call of the Congo

I go as a rule
At the coming of Yule,
To a place where the sunshine's obtrusive ;
At Hydros I'm found,
Where dyspeptics abound,
And massage and physic's inclusive ;
Or a shelter I grace
In some fashion-plate place
Where the giddy and frivolous throng go,
But to Fashion adieu,
If the rumour is true
They're reducing the fares on the Congo.

Each English resort
Will lack my support,
Nor do Cannes or Mentone intrigue me.
I see the same faces
At watering places,
And the places and faces fatigue me.

THE CALL OF THE CONGO

But I now can afford
To career like a lord
To the land of the palm and the mango ;
To the Tropics I'll ship
For a cheap little trip,
A week end at warm Wango-wango.

Eluding the net
Of my usual set
And the hump that it constantly gave me,
The lies and the smirks
Of refinement that irks—
In the Jellala Falls I will lave me.
In a place I will stay
That is called O-go-way,
I will shake by the hand the Obongo,
And with vigour renewed
I shall come back imbued
With the charms that are cheap on the Congo.

Love's Sacrifice

WHEN I asked my dear Edwin to shave
I'd never a thought of denial ;
He'd been such an absolute slave,
I put his devotion on trial.
But his eye threw a sinister dart,
His features grew dogged and grave ;
Still—I hardly expected to part
When I asked him to shave.

He refused, and seemed eager to jest,
Till he saw my determined expression.
A moustache, he said, suited him best,
And helped in his budding profession.
“ What ! Like *yours* ! ” I replied with a sneer.
He smiled when my temper grew hot,
And when I indulged in a tear
He said, “ Certainly not.”

LOVE'S SACRIFICE

'Twas enough, and I said what I felt,
Indignant and adamant-hearted,
On some of his drawbacks I dwelt—
He took up his hat and departed.
I waited and waited in vain.

Disconsolate, haggard and white,
I wrestled each day with my pain
Till Saturday night.

Then I wrote and confessed I was wrong,
My hand with emotion was shaking,
I prayed him to come before long
To the heart that was his and was breaking.
Three terrible hours did I wait ;
He came—and my reason was saved.
Then I saw what had made him so late—
My Edwin had shaved.

Crumbs of Comfort

WHEN Gladys comes a whisper wakes,
A sudden thrill prevails,
She holds the eyes of men, and takes
The wind out of our sails.
In spite of every art we use,
Their bosoms she transfixes,
And yet I'm glad to know her shoes
Are unromantic sixes.

The frocks that Leonora wears
Are absolutely sweet,
She practises such Frenchy airs
It's hopeless to compete.
Her lace is fine, her silks are thick,
Her sables make one sicken ;
And yet, though Leonora's *chic*,
She's certainly no chicken.

CRUMBS OF COMFORT

Diana has a sporting bent
And not a little side,
She's hot upon a screamin' scent
And knows the way to ride.
Her doggy tendencies would please
A print like Mr. Strachey's,
But, though she drops her final g's,
Her father drops his h's.

A Muff

I WANTED a muff
On an up-to-date scale,
Of some soft fluffy stuff,
With a head and a tail ;
So simple and innocent-hearted
I started to go to a sale.

My muscles are tough,
I'm not sickly or pale ;
But that shop was enough
To make Hercules quail.
The ladies were snatching and gripping,
Each using her arm like a flail.

My passage was rough
And as slow as a snail.
In attempting to luff
I was pinned to a bale,
And asked " to mind where I was pushing "
By a frowsy and frenzied female.

A MUFF

They ruined my ruff
And twitched off my veil ;
The shopman was bluff
When I told him my tale,
And I vowed the next time I played football
I would wear a costume of chain mail.

I went home in a huff,
Looking feeble and frail,
Still minus a muff
With a head and a tail—
But my brother politely informed me
I *was* one, to go to a sale.

A Sore Point

It was clear that poor Richard was out of the
running,
His mortification he could not disguise.
She flirted with Edward, the company shunning,
Soul leaping to soul through their eloquent eyes.
Devotion of years had he lavished in vain,
But the luck took a turn when Ted trod on her
train.

There sounded a rip as if stitches were slitting,
The lady herself was brought up with a jerk.
Ted smiled his excuses, facetiously fitting
The little mishap with a humorous quirk.
Poor innocent fool! his smile faded to gloom,
For he read in her look his immutable doom.

Her peach-blossom face wore a look so
malignant
His dexterous epigram faltered and failed,
Her eye scattered lightnings forbidding, in-
dignant,

A SORE POINT

His ardour was quenched and his countenance
 paled,
While she riddled his length with a fire of dis-
 dain
From his head to his foot (on her gossamer
 train).

So she took Dick instead, and their days pass
 serenely,
He watches his feet and is careful to steer ;
She sweeps o'er the carpet majestic and queenly ;
He follows—a yard and a half in the rear.
His duties are heavy, but perfectly plain :
To work for her, love her, and keep off her train.

The Comet

LAST week we started out in glee,
The boys and Bertha, Aunt and me,
Across the village green to see
 The comet;
Some people really must be blind,
Or only give it half their mind,
It isn't difficult to find—
 Far from it.

Jack found one in "The Lady's Chair,"
And Bertha, with her nose in air,
Described a couple in "The Bear"—
 I backed her;
While Auntie, dazzled by the view,
Stepped in the ditch before she knew,
It took us twenty minutes to
 Extract her.

THE COMET

With stars and comets on the brain
Two figures vanished up the lane,
A better view—of course—to gain,
 But whether
It was that Auntie missed her sleep
Or found the lane a trifle steep,
She sulked, because we would not keep
 Together.

We found the others looking black,
But though they made a joint attack,
Their thrusts we managed—back to back—
 To parry ;
They voted finding comets slow,
I found the time too short, I know,
Too short, and much too sweet, and so
 Did Harry.

A Valentine

[From an old Lover.]

ESTELLE, when you and I were rising nine—
Perhaps you'd rather I suppressed the date—
I spent a shilling on a valentine
And left it for you at the garden gate.
Therein my heart was imaged in a bower
Of tinsel roses, with a tender verse on;
I followed it in less than half an hour
Impatient for your gratitude in person.

You ran and kissed my cheek with candied lips,
A habit, by the way, you've since neglected;
You gambolled up and down in little skips,
Yet failed to do the thing that I expected.
It should have been a give-and-take affair;
You had my tinsel heart, while I had not one,
And when I asked for yours, to make it square,
You playfully remarked you hadn't got one.

A VALENTINE

I was appalled—my little bosom heaved—
Such disappointment did not seem correct.
With rising tears I felt myself deceived
And lost my temper at your base neglect.
“I’ll have mine back—I paid for it—it’s mine!”
I cried. We fought—and tore the paper
frilling.
By dint of nail you kept that valentine,
And left me howling for my wasted shilling.
Since then how many years have slipped away?
And time has tamed my temper to submission.
You’re tall and dignified, and yet to-day
I find myself in just the same position.
The heart from out my bosom you’ve decoyed,
Though day by day with strenuous endeavour
I would recall it to its aching void.
I strive in vain—my heart is yours for ever.

A Vain Appeal

[From Edwin.]

Now, Angelina, put it down.
Let me entreat you not to smoke it ;
You dread your Edwin's lightest frown,
Or so you say—well, don't provoke it.
No—No—I'm serious just now,
Great weight to every word attaches ;
What's that you ask me? *Anyhow*
To pass the matches !

You shall have chocolates to eat
Of every possible description ;
Those rosy lips are much too sweet
To soil with Yankee or Egyptian.
Your smiles with trinkets I'll entice
Or silly frillies made of chiffon,
Till once again you say I'm nice
And not a griffon.

A VAIN APPEAL

Among those violet-scented curls
The smell of stale tobacco lingers,
And oh ! to think my best of girls
Should go about with yellow fingers.
Are you aware that stain will spread
Right up your arm and past your shoulder
And ruin What was that you said ?

You'll use a holder!

No, Angelina, I insist—!
Come, darling what, you're surely joking ?

*You are not anxious to be kissed !
You'd sooner give up me than smoking !*
So be it take your cigarette
And smoke it, love and homage scorning,
But suffer me, with much regret,
To say " Good morning " !

The Niggers

WHEN Sibyl sits upon the beach
With Kate and Madeline,
Dick, Tom and Jack, the swain of each,
Loll gloomily between,
With savage glances at the throng
Of stripe-bedizened figures
Who stain the breeze with strident song,
In other words—the Niggers.

In vain the lovers hint or nudge,
Suggest a sail, a walk,
Their promised brides refuse to budge,
And beg them not to talk.
For Sibyl loves the corner man,
Kate drinks the Tenor's tones,
While Madeline, behind her fan,
Beams rapture on the Bones.

THE NIGGERS

They whisper of "romantic eyes,"
Of "teeth like milky pearls,"
Perceiving through a thin disguise
A row of fallen Earls.
Jack loathes the tenor's unctuous smirks,
And Tom the corner-prattle,
And frowns defy the man that works
What Richard calls the rattle.

Their old allurements they rehearse,
Exhaust each manly wile,
But matters go from bad to worse,
They never win a smile ;
Till, hitting on a way by which
To better their condition,
They black their faces, hire a pitch,
And start an opposition.

Snowflakes

A LITTLE curly-headed god
Through asphodel came creeping,
Found Mother Juno on the nod,
And safely slipped her keeping.
Away he frolicked, full of mirth,
Until he glanced in pity
Upon the muddiness of earth,
The squalor of the city.

His flashing pinions forth he spread,
And flew with dart and quiver
To a celestial garden bed
Beside a sapphire river.
To deck the dingy world down there
He stripped each dazzling flower,
And flung through the cerulean air
The petals in a shower.

SNOWFLAKES

His treasured blossoms fluttered down,
He watched them softly falling,
Until, alas! they reached the town
Where men and carts were crawling.
Before the city's fevered fumes
They sank in helpless flutter,
And men came out with spades and brooms
And swept them in the gutter.

A Close Finish

[“ A marriage is arranged between Miss Diana Dashington and Lord Broadacres.”]

THE race of the season is over ;
I've lost and Diana has won ;
She's feasting on Broadacres' clover,
And I am right out of the fun.
Though Di was the one to begin it,
She soon found me making the pace ;
I thought all along I should win it,
And only backed her for a place.

At Ascot Diana was leading,
At Henley I spurted ahead ;
At Cowes side by side we were speeding ;
At Trouville I fancy I led.
Neck to neck we ran, shoulder to shoulder,
The pack was too killing to last—
(If the weather had only been colder !)—
I flagged, and Diana shot past.

A CLOSE FINISH

My heart's not by any means broken ;
I hope I'm not wanting in pluck ;
A tear or two, low be it spoken,
Then I kissed her and wished her good luck.
Di won the race fairly as stated ;
But when her attractions are reckoned,
My own must not be underrated—
I finished a very good second !

Love in a Mist

[The most noteworthy characteristic of a wet summer is the number of proposals made in the rain.]

BENEATH an Ilfracombe machine,
While thunderstorms were raging,
Strephon and Chloe found the scene
Exceedingly engaging ;
Though Mother Earth reproached the skies
With flinging pailfuls at her,
When Strephon looked in Chloe's eyes
The weather didn't matter.

When 'Arry up on 'Ampstead 'Eath
Performed a double shuffle,
The rain above, the mud beneath,
His spirits failed to ruffle ;
For 'Arriet was by his side
In maddened mazes whirling—
And little cared his promised bride
To see her plumes uncurling.

LOVE IN A MIST

For one resplendent Summer morn
Young Edwin fondly waited,
Till Angelina grew forlorn
And quite emaciated.
When Hampton Court was like a sponge,
With mists their way beguiling,
He seized her hand and took the plunge,
And came up—wet and smiling.

A Manx Malady

[Unlimited tails are *de rigueur* on stole, muff and pelerine,
and no woman can consider herself smart without them.]

WHY do I shun the crowded street
And choose the lonely track,
And if a friend I chance to meet,
Why do I turn my back?
Because from sympathy or scorn
My shrinking spirit quails;
Because, disreputably shorn,
I've only seven tails!

Spring's magic madness leaves me cold,
My heart is like a stone,
And preternaturally old,
I slink along alone;
My cry goes up from lonely vales
To the unhearing heaven,
"Why *should* Elaine have nineteen tails
While I have only seven?"

A MANX MALADY

Time was—and that's what breaks my heart
And stabs me through and through—
I was the smartest of the smart,
I'd *chic* enough for two ;
And if, with creditable zest,
I'd grappled at the sales,
I might have purchased, like the rest,
A *magasin* of tails.

A Rough Wooing

WHEN Philip played hockey with Kitty
He was right off his usual game,
For she looked so bewitchingly pretty
As straight for the circle she came.
Philip's never inclined to be chary
Of hitting and harassing too,
But who could be rough with a fairy?
Not he, so he let her go through.

She scored, and they couldn't get equal.
His captain pronounced him a fool,
And the lady herself in the sequel
Grew most unexpectedly cool.
For Phil was a failure, as stated,
He hated the sight of the ball;
She thought him a lot overrated
And wondered they played him at all.

A ROUGH WOOING

But she frankly admired Percy Waters,
Who uses his stick like a flail,
And always impartially slaughters
Both sexes, the strong and the frail.
A mutual friendliness followed,
Phil watched its career in dismay.
Next match day his feelings he swallowed
And hit in the usual way.

He caught her a crunch on the knuckle,
A clip on the knee and the cheek.
She said, with a rapturous chuckle,
“ I see—you weren't *trying* last week.”
Such conduct its cruelty loses
When it brings consolation to both,
For after she'd counted her bruises
That evening—they plighted their troth.

My Motor Cap

A MOTOR car I shall never afford
With a gay vermilion bonnet,
Of course I *might* happen to marry a lord,
But it's no good counting on it.
I have never reclined on the seat behind
And hurtled across the map,
But my days are blest with a mind at rest,
For I wear a motor cap.

I've done with Gainsborough, straw and toque,
My dresses are bound with leather,
I turn up my collar like auto-folk,
And stride through the pitiless weather ;
With a pound of scrag in an old string bag,
In a tram, with a child on my lap,
Wherever I go, to a shop or a show,
I wear a motor cap.

MY MOTOR CAP

I don't know a silencer from a clutch,
A sparking plug from a bearing,
But no one, I think, is in closer touch
With the caps the women are wearing ;
I'm *au fait* with the trim of the tailor-made
brim,
The crown and machine-stitched strap ;
Though I've neither the motor, the sable-lined
coat, nor
The goggles—I wear the cap.

Your Christmas Card

WHEN I was a nice little girl,
And you weren't so very much older,
Ere my locks had forgotten to curl,
Though they only came down to my shoulder,
And you were quite small, with no muscle at all—
I certainly think you were bolder.

To-night your discreetest of cards
To my heap makes the latest accession,
“Best wishes and kindest regards”
Is not an impassioned confession;
Yet your symptoms reveal what you try to
conceal—
That you suffer from over-repression.

The cards that you sent me of old
Were fifty times nicer than this is,
Of “Love to dear Mollie” they told,
And you filled up the spaces with kisses.
Of course it's correct to be more circumspect,
But somehow—there's something one misses.

YOUR CHRISTMAS CARD

Oh ! I *wish* we were children once more,
And candid and frank in our dealings,
We're both of us sulky and sore
With these subtleties, tricks and concealings.
But until *you* speak out, there's no manner of
doubt
I'm bound to dissemble *my* feelings.

An Unfortunate Attachment

I'VE loved you for about a year ;
I can't recall the date precisely
When first I found with sudden fear
You filled my view, nor filled it wisely.
And though in nervous haste I sought
The uninvited flame to smother,
I thought and thought of you, nor thought
Of any other.

Your faults admitted no defence,
You only found them unconvincing ;
The jokes I made at your expense
Delighted you and left me wincing.
How oft you gave yourself away,
How oft you failed whene'er I proved you,
But, hour by hour and day by day
I simply loved you.

AN UNFORTUNATE ATTACHMENT

'Tis not that I am blind, or gaze
Upon you through a rainbow prism ;
I'm economical of praise
And lavish of my criticism ;
And yet hostilities are vain,
There's something magical about you
That makes the future dull and plain
If lived without you.

You see the conquest is complete.
It but remains, if you'll believe it,
To take the heart beneath your feet
Or else to turn aside and leave it.
You'll leave it bruised and very sore—
I don't anticipate you'll break it—
But, just a whisper and no more,
—I hope you'll take it.—

A Schoolboy Memory

WHEN Jones was in the Lower School
And I was in the Upper,
I used to manage as a rule
To confiscate his supper.

An irritating kid was Jones,
Thin, snivelling and surly ;
It was a joy to crack his bones,
For I was strong and burly.

He won a first-rate alley taw
With which he used to dally ;
I fancied it—he tried to jaw—
Enough ! I took that alley.

Time passed ; term followed term, and though
To scholarships elected,
My youthful frame refused to grow
As much as was expected.

A SCHOOLBOY MEMORY

When musing in the Quad one day
Upon dissected cones,
A strapping chap stood in my way
And simply said : " I'm Jones."

He towered above me by a head ;
I felt my face turn yellow—
But smiling cheerily, I said :
" How *do* you do, old fellow ! "

He answered, " Thanks, I'm stronger now."
I sniggered at his sally
Till he remarked with lowering brow :
" I've come to fetch my alley."

In what ensued I must maintain
Jones showed a savage zest.
I think he got his own again
With compound interest.

A Shower

AMANDA wore a scarlet hood,
With ringlets peeping under,
Her gown was satin, stiff and good,
When—sakes!—a clap of thunder!
She caught her skirts and flew amain,
To seek a shelter from the rain.

With broidered flounces all forlorn,
This much-besprinkled maiden
Found refuge in an ancient thorn
With milky blossom laden.
Then blushed and started, for she spied
A youth who sheltered at her side.

Divided by the veil of may,
Yet very close together,
It fell that, circumspectly, they
Discoursed upon the weather.
But, gossips, 'tis the eye that speaks
And finds its sport in glowing cheeks.

A SHOWER

And sure 'twas Cupid kept them there
By magical beguiling,
Until it dawned upon the pair
That all who passed were smiling.
For, lo! outside that hawthorn bower
It had been fine for half an hour.

Tuberoses

[The public statement of a lady that she is allowed to stand when the Tube is crowded because she is young and healthy-looking has naturally annoyed those who have been offered seats.]

WHEN the Tube is replete
And there isn't a seat
Each morn as I travel to town,
Some gallant I find,
Judiciously kind,
Who rises and lets me sit down.
I smile and he raises his hat—
And I publicly certify that
Though a bit over twenty
Of grace I've plenty,
And that's why she's jealous—the cat!

TUBEROSES

It's an error, forsooth,
To imagine that youth
Is the only essential that pays ;
Why, a babe at romance
Stands a very poor chance
When matched with my womanly ways.
It's the charms that are ripest that please,
And I know as I sit at my ease,
In the seats they surrender
With glances so tender,
They're longing to offer their knees.

When Nurse is Cross

WHEN Nurse is cross and sour as gall,
It's very awkward to be small.
Unfair advantage will she take
To find the soap and hide the cake,
Because I'm tiny and she's tall.

When in the park I throw my ball,
"Do come along!" I hear her call.
My shoulder often gets a shake
When Nurse is cross.

She's irritated if I fall ;
And in my cot beside the wall
Confines me when I'm wide awake.
In short, this statement I would make—
A baby gets no chance at all
When Nurse is cross.

Car Coming

THE careful driver pulls his horses round,
And in the press of traffic loses ground ;
He hears a little, palpitating sound—

Car coming !

As if allured by some enchanted thread
He sees her rush where hansoms fear to tread,
And gaining twenty yards shoot on ahead.

Car coming !

Now far behind the din of traffic fades,
She swings discreetly through suburban shades,
Disturbing butcher-boys and nursery-maids—

Car coming !

Shops scatter out, red villas come and go,
The pavement narrows and the gardens grow,
Through dingy hedges fields begin to show—

Car coming !

CAR COMING

The open country lies serene and fair,
A quiver strikes the solitary air,
The cattle, idly browsing, pause and stare—

Car coming !

The trudging rustic hears the throbbing gust,
And watches with a taciturn distrust
The growing speck—the trailing cloud of dust—

Car coming !

The landscape disappears into the night,
A sudden brilliance hurries into sight,
Two radiant orbs of bold, unshrinking light.

Car coming !

Piercing the sombre, unexplored unknown,
A moving flash upon the blackness thrown,
Persistent, self-sufficient and alone.

Car coming !

To the Clerk of the Weather

re HEAT WAVE

Dear Sir, we've had enough.
Do you forget, I think you do, perhaps,
Our temperate position on the maps?
Daily we mourn the collar's swift collapse,
The limp and wrinkled cuff.

Dear Sir, we've got to work.
We cannot all lie idle on the beach,
Or skim, white-winged, the river's limpid reach.
We've got to buy and sell, to talk and teach,
Although we'd like to shirk.

Think of the crowded street,
The roar, the clatter, and the throbbing head
Where shout and clash, and jangle meet and
spread,
And thought is irksome and the brain is lead
And asphalte grills the feet.

TO THE CLERK OF THE WEATHER

Now don't get in a huff.
Pity the pain the stifling town endures,
A bracing rain will work a thousand cures.
Believe me, Sir, obediently yours ——
P.S.—We've had enough.

When Cupid mixed the Drinks

Now why is A in love with B
While B is cold to A,
And only lives for sight of C,
Who looks the other way?
C pines for D with grief and pain,
While D wants A,—in short
The wheel comes round and round again
To give the gods their sport.

Once long ago, fond lovers strove
Outside a beldam's doors,
"Give me a potion for my love,"
Each cried, "and wealth is yours!"
For each she brewed a different draught—
The promised silver chinks—
Then Cupid—while Olympus laughed—
Slipped in and mixed the drinks.

WHEN CUPID MIXED THE DRINKS

The philtres worked the magic charm
The crone had guaranteed,
And, never dreaming aught of harm,
The swains supplied her greed ;
But found too late with bitter sighs
All bootless were their spells ;
The love-light in their dear one's eyes
Was lit for someone else.

So that's why A and B are sore,
That's why they chafe and fret,
And C and D scheme more and more
For what they'll never get.
We take no joy in food or sleep,
Our little lives go wrong,
But while we hide ourselves, and weep,
The gods laugh loud and long.

A Golfer

OH! who would be a golfer
In magic days like these,
When all the spring can offer
Comes tingling on the breeze?
When all around in tender hue
The little buds are showing,
Who but the golfer would pursue
Such fruitless heel and toeing?

He pulls and tops and fozzles
And traipses mile on mile;
In pits and bogs it snoozles,
That ball so full of guile.
The blisters on his hands he rubs,
His patient back he's ricking,
And pieces of his patient clubs
Are from his pocket sticking.

What black enchantment makes him
Push on through swamp and mud?
His kindly heart forsakes him,
He wants his caddie's blood.
From dreams of home and tender wife
He turns, a gloomy scoffer.
He sold his share of joy in life
When he became a golfer.

A Subtle Blend

AH, wandering whiff! Why have you come,
From some fastidious smoker creeping,
To strike my careless jesting dumb
And set these placid pulses leaping?
In vain I stifle back the sigh
And shun the fragrance that invoked it—
On Devon moor, in days gone by,
He smoked it.

Three times before you've spoilt my day—
At Henley, Lord's, and once at skating—
By wandering across my way,
Distinctive, rare, and penetrating.
Like homing birds my fancies fly,
Ere I can pull myself together,
To tumbled rocks, blue summer sky,
And heather.

'Twas summer madness, I allow—
The wisest course was to forget it;
I took the wisest course, and now
Not for one hour do I regret it,
Till Memory's unexpected gust—
A hidden rain of tears within it—
Sweeps pain into my heart for just
A minute.

Celestial Dissension

WHEN gods and goddesses fall out
Then little mortals suffer ;
When Jove and Juno rail and flout
We play the part of buffer,
So now, when she who rules the dew
Scorns him who keeps the showers,
It's hot for me and hot for you,
And dreadful for the flowers.

The wrath of gods is fierce and strong,
All nature droops inertly.
And " *You* were wrong," " No ! *You* were
wrong,"
They cry and answer pertly.
Beneath their hot disdainful glare
We groan and mop our faces,
And maggots dangling in the air
Annex the shady places.

CELESTIAL DISSENSION

Until it happens on a day
 When both are growing weary,
They meet, his face is turned away,
 Her attitude is dreary.
Soft memories begin to throng,
 Love, little Love comes creeping ;
“ Dear, *I* was wrong ! ” “ No, *I* was wrong ! ”
 They fall to happy weeping.

The sudden deluge of their tears
 Sets every runnel racing ;
The copper-hued horizon clears,
 The air grows brisk and bracing.
Though gods may rail and make amends—
 Let mortals heed the moral—
'Tis best for us to keep good friends,
 To kiss and never quarrel.

A Valiant Valentine

THE governess sat in a schoolroom chair,
Reading a schoolroom book ;
Her brow was lined with studious care,
She wore a classical look ;
And she frowned at a sound she had heard
before—
Someone fidgetting at the door.

“ Come in ! ” she cried, in tones severe.

“ Don't fidget there outside.

Now, dear me, James, what brings *you* here ?

Your shoelace is untied.

Head up ! Feet first position, pray.

Hands down ! Now, what have you to say ? ”

The baby eyes were blue and sweet

He lifted to her face.

First, he attended to his feet,

And put his hands in place,

Then said, with stiff and rigid spine,

“ Please, will you be my valentine ? ”

A VALIANT VALENTINE

Small Jimmie conquered in a fray
Where a stalwart man would flee.
The governess pushed her book away
And took him on her knee.
The end of the affair was this—
A wistful sigh, a tender kiss.

The Gossamer Gown

AMANDA awoke with the sun shining high,

Sing hey, sing hey for the gossamer !

And unhooked from the cupboard a piece of the
sky,

Sing ho ! for the gossamer gown !

With shimmering ribbons the bodice was tied--

A queen on her throne could have worn it with
pride,

But 'twas three times as sweet with Amanda
inside.

Sing ho ! for the gossamer gown !

She pulled out her ringlets and fastened her
hood.

Sing hey, sing hey for the gossamer !

Round a mischievous face that was dainty and
good.

Sing ho ! for the gossamer gown !

THE GOSSAMER GOWN

There was no one, *of course*, she intended to
meet—

Good sakes! how the heart in her bosom did
beat

When she saw her big lover close by in the
street.

Sing ho! for the gossamer gown!

'Twould be foolish and weak to exhibit alarm.

Sing hey, sing hey for the gossamer!

So Amanda sedately accepted his arm.

Sing ho! for the gossamer gown!

They walked on the clouds to a magical lane,
When they finished the walk they began it again,
And both were amazed at the first drop of rain,

Alas! for the gossamer gown!

The weather that evening was very unkind,

Ah me! ah me! for the gossamer!

The thunder and lightning in front and behind,

Ah me! for the gossamer gown!

Amanda crept home in a sorrowful state,

With flounces so draggled and ringlets so straight,
That she'd hardly the heart for a kiss at the gate.

Heigho! for the gossamer gown!

The Walk to Pinner

Now, Gwen and I are strong and stout,
And very fond of walking,
So, full of zeal, we started out
—Inspired by recent talking—
To race each other down to Pinner,
A guinea hat to crown the winner.

At first it seemed a perfect day,
And then it got much hotter,
Gwen sputted and went right away,
I felt disposed to potter,
But, deaf to every languid feeling,
I bent my thoughts on toe and heeling.

Till who should meet me in the dell
With swift and springy pacing,
But Harry West, who, strange to tell,
With Dicky North was racing.
Poor Dick was miles behind, he reckoned,
And would most certainly be second.

THE WALK TO PINNER

“ But, *now*, he didn't care,” he said,
“ The sport had lost its savour,
He only longed for tea instead,
He asked it as a favour.”
Alas ! as Harry prayed and pleaded,
Dreams of the guinea hat receded.

I yielded, though 'twas weak and wrong,
One should have held out longer,
My sense of sport was ever strong,
But Harry ever stronger.
And thus, though keen at the beginning,
I threw away my chance of winning.

At tea a wonderful surprise
Our lagging steps awaited,
For there before our very eyes
Were Gwen and Dick instated.
And thus, from mutual sneers defended,
The walking match to Pinner ended.

Flowers—(With Care)

A PARCEL in the early hours
Brings jaded senses to the rally,
What's this? I breathe the breath of flowers,
The fragrance of a Devon valley !
Why, little friends, I know each face,
And each one's special growing place.

Carnations from the croquet ground,
And jasmine where the pathway narrows,
The larkspurs mark the farthest bound
And hob-a-nob with beans and marrows,
Snapdragon, columbine and stocks
Grow underneath the hollyhocks.

I search the scattered flowers in vain,
And shake the box so sweetly scented,
I shake the tablecloth again,
Unreasonably discontented,
Till out a spray of myrtle slips,
I seize—and press it to my lips.

FLOWERS—(WITH CARE)

Why should I kiss the tiny spray
So pale beside the others' glory?
Why is it more desired than they?
It tells the sequel of a story,
That story's mine, I'll say but this—
It was the myrtle's second kiss.

Grannie's Valentine

NURSE could not take me in the square,
The dismal rain was pouring ;
Grannie sat napping in her chair,
Occasionally snoring.
My dolls annoyed me, old and new.
Oh dear, for something nice to do !

I could not reach the mantelshelf
With all its grown-up treasure ;
The twirling music-stool itself
Provided little pleasure.
At last I found an open box,
The one that Grannie always locks.

There lay a queer old valentine
Tied with a faded ribbon,
A fragrant motto—" I am thine "—
" Your loving Archie Gibbon."
Why ! Mr. Gibbon's fat and grey,
He had a fit the other day.

GRANNIE'S VALENTINE

"Oh, *might* I have it, Gran?" I said.

She started from her sleeping.

What do you think? A pretty red

Into her cheek came creeping.

She shut the box up with a snap,

And oh, she gave me *such* a slap!

My Old "Burnt Straw"

[An Episode of Spring Cleaning.]

HOLD! Bustling minion; not so fast—
That old straw hat you count as lumber,
And to the leaping flames would cast,
Among my trustiest friends I number.
You would indeed have roused my ire
Had you consigned it to the fire!

Old straw! I don't forget the day
When, on the tennis ground assembled,
Two Counties came to see the play,
And one pale maiden sighed and trembled—
When big Miss Scarborough and I
Stood facing for the final tie.

For many miles the people came,
Light laughter mingled with their chatter,
But which was going to win the game,
To those gay hearts what did it matter!
Swift as a shaft her service sped,
I lost a sett, and then my head.

MY OLD "BURNT STRAW"

Till other heads began to shake,
I clenched my teeth to see them shaking,
My reputation was at stake,
I knew it, and my heart was breaking.
Then—while I faced a beating sun—
I crushed *thee* on my brow—and won.

Torn, stained and battered ; yes, I know,
Perchance I've neither sense nor reason ;
But never will I let that go
Which crowned me victor for a season.
Take laces, trinkets—what you lack—
But brush the straw and put it back.

The Hard, Hard Frost

WITH bosom heaving in despair,
And chin upon my chest,
I knit my fingers in the hair
That draggles on my crest.

With neither thirst nor appetite,
Expectancy nor dread,
All human ills I here invite
To hover round my head.

Come baleful bore with clammy hand,
Come bills, come thwarted hopes,
Come influenza, German bands,
And black-edged envelopes.

Seek not to wipe these tears away
That rhythmically leak :
Alas! *we cannot hunt to-day,*
And hunting ends this week.

Men I might have Married

1

THE pauseless cawing of the rooks
Fills me with secret agitation,
The murmuring of mountain brooks
Renews in full an old sensation ;
And when in woodlands moist and thin,
Where yesterday the mavis carolled,
I hear the crickets' ceaseless din,
Instinctively I think of Harold.

He was a man of ample views,
Of lofty brain and noble presence ;
Incited by the *Daily News*,
He sifted tariffs to their essence ;
Or in a voice of rolling sound
He thundered out tit-bits of Browning.
On " primal law " he would expound,
Or how to save the nearly drowning.

MEN I MIGHT HAVE MARRIED

The punster's wit he did abhor,
He loathed an atmosphere of laughter,
A waiting hush must fall before
He spoke, and silence follow after.
And so he walked with me apart,
With facts and figures plied and proved me.
Mine was till then a simple heart,
Nor had I nerves till Harold loved me.
I was his choice, when all was said,
And if I ventured to dispute it,
He proved by logic we must wed,
And I was powerless to refute it ;
But ere the wedding day drew near,
My hand in sad farewell extending—
I told him I could hardly hear,
And total deafness was impending.
For once he answered not a word,
Beneath the blow he fairly staggered ;
That he should speak and not be heard,
It was enough to make him haggard.
He conjured up our married days,
The vision made his bosom harden,
When—"What?" "Can't hear you." "What
d'you say?"
Would alternate with "Beg your pardon!"

MEN I MIGHT HAVE MARRIED

So Harold left me with a kiss—

His heart was firm, he did not falter—

And very shortly after this

He led another to the altar.

And though with ill-befitting haste

I cast aside that threatened illness,

It left behind a settled taste

For absolute unbroken stillness.

MEN I MIGHT HAVE MARRIED

II

To Geoffrey I was much attached,
His ardour was unshaken,
Our friends declared us nicely matched,
Nor were our friends mistaken.
Indeed, we never had a spar
Until he bought a motor-car.

At first my joy was unconfined,
The prospect was unclouded.
I wore a coat, chinchilla lined,
A cap with chiffon shrouded.
Diurnal spins with lunch for two
I planned—alas! I little knew!

The carburetter spoilt our fun,
Then something started squeaking,
Or else exploded like a gun.
The tyres were always leaking.
We had a puncture, then a burst,
But Geoffrey's *temper* was the worst.

MEN I MIGHT HAVE MARRIED

He stifled with a muttered growl
Attempts at conversation,
And hurtled over flesh and fowl
To reach his destination.
A look of crime was on his face,
His finger nails were a disgrace.

That car despoiled him of his youth,
He'd brood on her for hours,
And yet he seldom spoke the truth
When bragging of her powers ;
And if the traffic wouldn't clear
His language wasn't fit to hear.

He bought her such expensive things,
And lavished every penny
On hoods and bonnets, belts and rings,
—He never bought me any—
His manner grew absorbed or rough,
Until I said I'd had enough.

I told him frankly to decide—
I spoke without emotion—
Between a motor and a bride,
I'd share no man's devotion.
—The lack of me his life would mar—
He said—*but thought he'd choose the car.*—

Bob was a sympathetic soul,
 His generosity was noted ;
 I can't sufficiently extol
 His courtesy, so often quoted.
 His work achieved a marked success,
 His brain was keen, his nerve perfection,
 And yet at games I must confess
 His clumsiness was past correction.

At golf he'd mutilate the ground,
 His strength was huge, but unadjusted ;
 He'd swing himself completely round,
 And sit upon the tee disgusted.
 He'd hack the bunkers right away
 While club-heads through the air went hissing,
 And after Bob had had a day
 The links themselves were mostly missing.

Though Bob was loved by not a few,
 Yet billiards won him savage strictures ;
 He'd burst the pockets with his cue,
 Or make his ball bombard the pictures.

MEN I MIGHT HAVE MARRIED

Or when with oscillating gun
He aimed at partridges or plover,
He'd make the other sportsmen run
Like rabbits for the nearest cover.

Nor was he different at a dance—
For like a hulk that rolls and pitches,
He cleft a cumbersome advance
Amid the sound of rending stitches.
And when, with innocent intent,
He frolicked as the tune went faster,
And fell—as fall he must—he sent
A baker's dozen to disaster.

So when he vowed with tragic voice,
His heel upon my flounces setting,
I was his one and only choice—
(All former love affairs forgetting)
And on the tray unwisely sat
Where claret-cup and ices mingle,
I gently intimated that
I thought it safer to be single.

MEN I MIGHT HAVE MARRIED

IV

A SENSE of humour is my shield,
My jokes are glib, if humble,
And yet to no man will I yield
My liberty to grumble ;
And Montagu my temper sorely tried
By always looking on the sunny side.

If I anathematized the rain,
My grief he never heeded,
Remarking that to swell the grain
Another inch was needed.
“Of picnics,” he’d observe, “we’d had our share,
And disappointments we must grin and bear.”

Or when at golf I met defeat,
His fortitude was fearful.
He made my misery complete ;
No wonder I was tearful.
“The best must always win in every strife,”
He said—“and patience is the salt of life.”

MEN I MIGHT HAVE MARRIED

When I was grossly overcharged
For frocks that never fitted,
And on my grievances enlarged,
He neither helped nor pitied.
“ Annoyances like that,” he said, “ were small
Some human beings had no clothes at all.”

Or if, when toothache racked me through,
My cheek became inflated,
He always took a Spartan view
Of ills so over-rated.
“ What was my pain ? ” he'd answer with
aplomb,
“ To that of people shattered by a bomb ! ”

I broke my vows, when all was done,
From sheer exasperation.
I really failed to see the fun
Of lifelong resignation.
And when he argued, angry and distrest,
I merely said—“ Whatever is, is best.”

MEN I MIGHT HAVE MARRIED

v

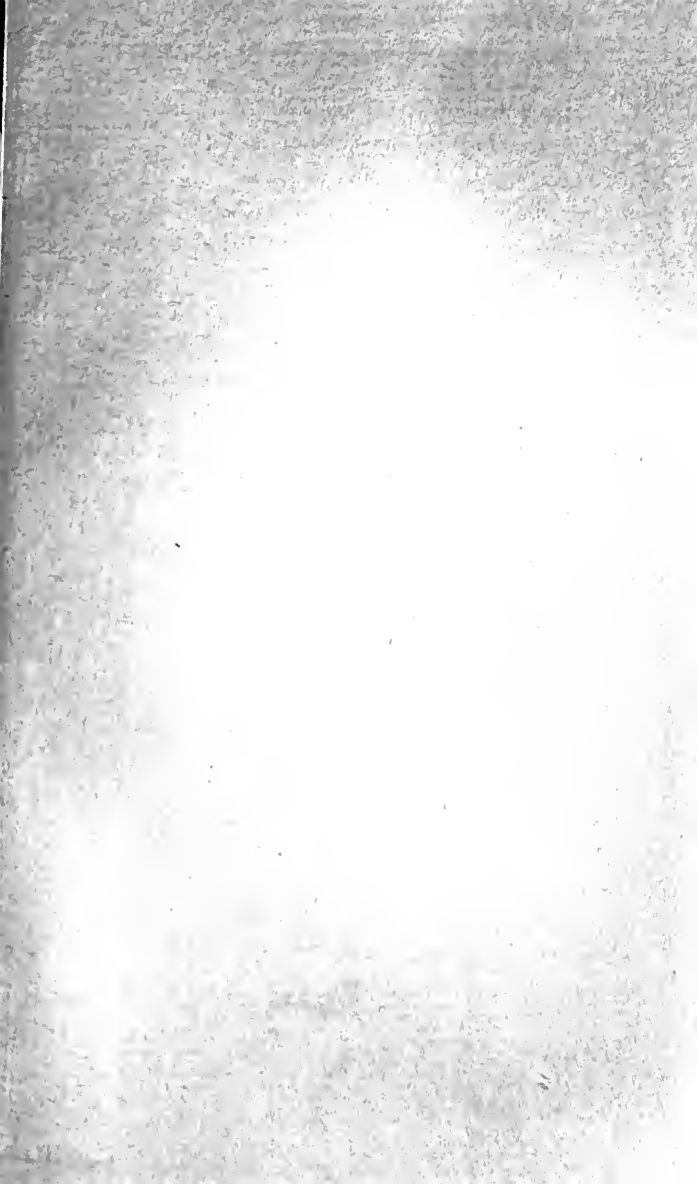
McNEILL was a man I admired,
He'd won International laurels,
But his bosom was easily fired
With a passionate craving for quarrels.
From morning till night he spoiled for a fight,
His hair was aggressively red,
He sneered at a life lacking bloodshed and
strife,
Or a peaceable death in his bed.

If I went a short journey by train
With Mac as my stalwart protector,
With the guard he would wage a campaign,
Or fall foul of the ticket collector.
If the cabby should dare to ask more than his
fare,
Very soon he perceived his mistake ;
And wherever we went, upon pleasure intent,
I was most of the time on the shake.

MEN I MIGHT HAVE MARRIED

I quarrelled with numerous friends,
Or Mac did the quarrelling for me,
And rather than offer amends,
To cut every one, he'd implore me.
Though a challenge he hurled at the rest of the
world,
Dissension with me he would shun.
Till it grew rather tame to be out of the game,
So I entered the lists just for fun.

I forget how the quarrel began ;
I remember quite well how it finished ;
How high personalities ran,
While our tender affection diminished.
With visages flushed to the combat we rushed ;
Of course we said more than we meant ;
Then I told him to go—all was over—and so,
To my utter amazement, he went !



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