

WILLIAM ANDREW SPALDING

Collected Poems

BOOK POEMS, MAGAZINE VERSE, AND ARCHIVAL RECORD

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

Extremes and Moderations

Early Southern California Poetry

Extremes and Moderations is a Text-Tech Papers project devoted to recovering poetry written, published, and circulated in Los Angeles and Southern California. Each volume brings neglected books and poems back into view through carefully prepared texts, archival images, biographical context, and a clear record of the surviving sources.

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

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ARCHIVAL IMAGES

Portraits of the poet and the 1935 family gathering



William Andrew Spalding in later life. Frontispiece to Snatches of Song (1921).



The Spalding family at the sixty-fourth wedding-anniversary gathering, Los Angeles, October 13, 1935. Standing: grandsons Volney, Thomas, William, and Richard, with William Andrew Spalding at center; seated: daughter-in-law Marjorie and Mary Ellen Spalding. UCLA Library Digital Collections, CC BY 4.0.

INTRODUCTION

Printer, newspaperman, reformer, civic builder, and poet

Ann Arbor origins

William Andrew Spalding was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on October 3, 1852, the youngest of four children. His father, Ephraim Spalding, had come west from New York and worked successively as shoemaker, hatmaker, county sheriff, hardware merchant, and small farmer. The family house stood within an urban landscape that still kept livestock and gardens. In Spalding's recollection it had also served the Underground Railroad. His parents were Free-Soil Republicans, and the boy remembered the Frémont flag of 1856. From his Scottish Methodist mother he absorbed the Bible and Benjamin Franklin together: moral aphorism, thrift, self-scrutiny, and argument would remain basic habits even after his theology became rationalist and Unitarian.

Kansas City and the printer's world

The family moved to Kansas City in the spring of 1865. Spalding's brother James established a commercial college, where William learned bookkeeping and double-entry accounts. He was more strongly drawn to the sensory and intellectual world of printing. Payne's Job Printing Office fascinated him, and the *Kansas City Journal* hired him as a mailing clerk at fifteen dollars a week. He slept behind the composing room and began work about three in the morning. By sixteen he had responsibility for stock and, temporarily, the books. The newspaper taught him how editorial language, machinery, circulation, advertising, and accounts depended on one another.

The first poem in print

Spalding began verse in adolescence under the influence of Burns, Scott, and the comic poet John Godfrey Saxe. A friend submitted one of his efforts to a local newspaper without his knowledge. In *Snatches of Song* he identified 'The Sophist's Maxim' as the first of his writings to appear in print, composed when he was fourteen or fifteen. His later autobiography also remembered an early political song, 'When Grant's the Ruler of Our Land,'in the *Kansas City Journal*. No verified copy of that text has yet been recovered. The surviving record therefore begins with a characteristic mixture: parody, politics, moral argument, and pleasure in refrains.

A short college career and the road west

Spalding briefly attended the University of Michigan but left when family finances made continued study impractical. He kept books for a dry-goods business and a flour mill, suffered recurrent malaria, and entered adulthood during the Depression of 1873. Reading Charles Nordhoff's accounts of California and following his friend Fred Wood, he borrowed money and joined an emigrant train. The travelers first considered San Diego, found it depressed, and continued north. Spalding reached Los Angeles in March 1874, barely twenty-one years old.

The Plaza editorial

His entrance into Los Angeles journalism became a favorite origin story. Seeking work at the *Herald*, he was invited to demonstrate his ability and wrote an editorial on the neglected Plaza. The paper hired him at twelve dollars a week. Between 1874 and 1881 he rose from reporter to city editor while working for the *Herald* and the *Evening Express*. The work placed him inside a small, violent, multilingual city becoming a modern metropolis. He later remembered its editors, printers, boosters, politicians, saloons, transportation schemes, and feuds with the precision of someone who understood that newspapers were both records and political actors.

Mary Dennison and the household

On October 14, 1875, in St. Louis, Spalding married his childhood schoolmate Mary Ellen Dennison in a simple Baptist ceremony. Their marriage lasted more than sixty years. The couple lost an infant son in September 1876; 'Our Baby Still' preserves that first bereavement. Their children were Hamilton Wood, Jane McCormick, William Dennison, Helen Godfrey, Volney Ayers, Thomas Richard, and Mary Louise. Family life supplied comic domestic poems as well as elegies. The death of Hamilton in 1899 devastated Spalding, produced 'Azrael,'and helped precipitate his withdrawal from daily newspaper work.

Poetry in the newspapers

Spalding wrote newspaper verse under his own name and, at times, the pseudonym 'Pokey.' 'Little Swallow, Flitting' appeared in the *Los Angeles Herald* on June 28, 1874, only months after his arrival. The poems move easily between mock-heroic local satire, children's verse, topical politics, songs for clubs and occasions, and sober memorial writing. Their proper context is the nineteenth-century newspaper page: a place where civic controversy, private joke, advertising language, and literary convention met. *My Vagabonds* later called them 'fugitive verses,'accurately naming both their mobility and the danger that they would disappear.

The rural interlude and *The Orange*

From 1881 to 1885 Spalding interrupted metropolitan journalism for farming and agricultural editing. He worked with the *Rural Californian* and briefly with the *Riverside Press and Horticulturist*. His practical manual *The Orange: Its Culture in California* appeared in 1885. Citrus was never merely pastoral subject matter: it was an industry whose experiments, droughts, pests, transport costs, and marketing structures he knew from experience. The orange poems can therefore be comic or elegiac without becoming ornamental local color.

The *Los Angeles Times*

Spalding joined the *Los Angeles Times* in 1885 and served in editorial and business positions—as city editor, business manager, secretary, vice-president, and stockholder—during the newspaper's decisive expansion under Harrison Gray Otis. He experienced the boom of the late 1880s and the bitter labor struggle of 1890 from inside the institution. *My Vagabonds* was printed by the Times-Mirror house in 1889. Its Southern California landscapes sit beside office jokes and political doggerel, revealing the literary counterpart of the general newspaper he helped produce.

Reform politics and press independence

Spalding's politics changed from inherited Republicanism toward Greenback-Labor, Henry George, Populism, Progressivism, silver, public ownership of utilities, and hostility to concentrated monopoly. He helped draft reform programs and resigned positions when corporate control narrowed the opinions a newspaper could print. Yet he distrusted monopoly by organized labor as well as by capital, a tension visible in his topical verse. His return to the *Herald* from 1897 to 1900 was partly an attempt to restore an independent paper. He later wrote that stockholders found some of his views too extreme.

Citrus cooperation

Spalding became vice-president of the Orange Growers' Union in 1891. In 1893 he helped organize the larger cooperative system that developed into the California Fruit Growers Exchange and, eventually, the Sunkist organization. Cooperative marketing answered the problem of small growers facing railroads, middlemen, gluts, and unstable prices. This institutional work forms an important background to poems such as 'The Dying Orange Tree,' 'The Drouth,'and the Smith hay satires: nature, speculation, and public ethics are never far apart.

Municipal and scientific service

After leaving daily journalism, Spalding accumulated an unusually broad civic record. He served on the Los Angeles library board, the Board of Freeholders, the Civil Service Commission, and the City Planning Commission. He audited accounts connected with the harbor breakwater. He was active in the Los Angeles County Pioneer Society and edited its 1923 historical souvenir. A founder and officer of the Southern California Academy of Sciences, he also helped the movement that produced Los Angeles's Museum of History, Science and Art in 1911. His civic career joined administrative detail to the conviction that knowledge should become public infrastructure.

Science, speculation, and the unseen

Spalding corresponded with figures including Daniel Coit Gilman, George Ellery Hale, David Starr Jordan, and Ellsworth Huntington. He developed theories about spiral forms in nature and earthquakes, pursued invention, and explored mesmerism, thought transference, séances, and spiritualism while trying to preserve a skeptical method. His religious position likewise moved from inherited Protestantism toward Unitarian rationalism. He rejected miracle and providential rescue in favor of moral force, work, and self-reliance, yet he never lost interest in immortality, consciousness, or the boundary between matter and spirit.

The maker at Gates Street

The family's house at 2434 Gates Street contained a third-story retreat whose Hopi-inspired decoration joined study, workshop, and private theater. Spalding gardened, made cabinets, modeled sculpture in unhardened cement, and devised mechanical improvements. Such activity clarifies the craft vocabulary of the poems: songs are made things, arguments are contraptions, and comic narratives depend on timing and assembly. The photograph of the elderly poet reading presents not a secluded man of letters but a civic maker temporarily at rest.

Loss, age, and *Snatches of Song*

Later life brought repeated family loss. Alongside the infant and Hamilton, several adult children died before their parents. Mary died on May 20, 1936. Spalding's elegies refuse one consistent theology; some invoke biblical or fraternal symbols, others imagine nature, memory, or unfinished communal labor. In 1921 he privately issued *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods*. Hamlin Garland praised its American sincerity of emotion. The book is less a late-life selection than an arranged retrospective, moving from songs and children's typography through satire into philosophical and memorial verse.

Historian of the city

Spalding's retrospective labor also produced the three-volume *History and Reminiscences, Los Angeles City and County* in 1931. His autobiography, completed in manuscript and edited by Robert V. Hine for publication in 1961, remains an unusually valuable first-person account of Los Angeles newspaper culture from 1874 to 1900. He was not a neutral chronicler: he organized memory around the ethics of independent journalism and the transformations he had helped accelerate.

Final years and archive

William Andrew Spalding died at the Gates Street house on September 7, 1941. The Huntington Library preserves his papers: approximately 1,493 pieces dated from 1861 to 1941, including correspondence, autobiographical manuscripts, speeches, poems, photographs, business material, and sheet music. That archive confirms how much of his writing circulated outside books. This edition gathers the two poetry volumes complete and adds the one later magazine poem recovered and verified during research. It records, but does not invent texts for, the early and newspaper poems known only by title or testimony.

Three publication stages

The collection separates three stages: early fugitive and newspaper verse gathered in *My Vagabonds* (1889); the retrospective architecture of *Snatches of Song* (1921); and the late magazine afterlife represented by 'Dirge' (1923). These are stages of publication, not sealed aesthetic periods. *Snatches* deliberately reprints and revises earlier poems, while late elegy and early satire coexist throughout the career. Repetition is therefore preserved whenever Spalding placed a poem in both books.

Editorial Note and Sources

The two book sections are complete and retain Spalding's original order, including poems reprinted from the first book in the second. Text is newly read from the original local scans, not copied from the earlier selected-poems PDF. Stanza divisions and clearly intentional verse-line indentations are retained; narrow-page hanging continuations are rejoined because this edition has a wider measure. Scan debris is removed only where the page supplies a clear reading. Em dashes are closed up without surrounding spaces. Book and periodical titles are italicized in the editorial matter and publication records. Poems whose meaning depends on marginal glosses, shaped type, acrostic initials, speaker columns, or stage directions receive an experimental clean typographic reconstruction followed immediately by the source facsimile, which remains authoritative. Word-based spatial resettings are used where the lettering can be read reliably; pages built from pictorial or unusually shaped letters receive a high-contrast typographic trace so that uncertain OCR is never presented as Spalding's text. This treatment is used for 'Rime of the Ancient One-Eyed Man,' 'Her Alphabet,' 'An Operetta,' 'Shooing Out the Hens,' 'Lure of the Hydrant,' 'Hip-e-ty-Hop,' 'Johnny Sees the Circus,'and 'Moving Pictures on the Great White Way.'The early newspaper song 'When Grant's the Ruler of Our Land' and other verse attributed to 'Pokey' are documented but not printed without verified texts.

1. William Andrew Spalding, *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), original local HathiTrust/Google scan.

2. William Andrew Spalding, *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), original local scan.

3. William A. Spalding, 'Dirge,' *The New Age* 31, no. 12 (December 1923): 714, verified from the Google Books page image.

4. William Andrew Spalding, *Los Angeles Newspaperman: An Autobiographical Account*, ed. Robert V. Hine (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1961), local scan.

5. William Andrew Spalding family chronology, local project file; dates checked against Hine's introduction and notes.

6. William Andrew Spalding Papers, 1861–1941, Huntington Library, ArchiveGrid finding aid; 1,493 cataloged pieces.

7. Southern California Academy of Sciences, institutional history; Online Archive of California, California Fruit Growers Exchange/Sunkist records.

8. UCLA Library Digital Collections, Spalding family anniversary photograph, October 13, 1935, local catalog record and image (CC BY 4.0).

BOOK ONE | *MY VAGABONDS*

Stage I | Fugitive newspaper verse gathered in 1889

The complete thirty-four-poem book follows in its original order. Its subtitle is *A Collection of Fugitive Verses*.

Queen of the Angels

Nuestra Señora, Reina de los Angeles.

Our Lady, fair Queen of the Angels,
That rulest the valley of bliss,
The saints and the holy evangels
Salute thee to-night with a kiss.

And legions unnumbered and nameless
Troop forth from the land of the blest,
And even the Anchorite, blameless,
Bestoweth his kiss with the rest.

Most favored of all the immortals,
Lo, what doth Thy Majesty lack?
Saint Peter stands guard at thy portals,
Saint Gabriel waits at thy back.

Saint Monica, child of the ocean,
Most youthful of all and most fair,
Makes the end of her constant devotion
To charm away every care.

And Barbara, blessed hand-maiden,
Stays but for thy royal command,
And the cloud that she sends is rain-laden
To beautify all the land.

Francisco, the friar of gray orders,
    His benison sends from afar,
And the saints that dwell over the borders
    Most faithful of servitors are.

Diego contributes his portion
    To make thy enjoyment complete;
And Buenaventura, good fortune,
    Doth ever repose at thy feet.

Bernardino, the monk of the mountains,
    Makes humble obeisance as well,
And the patron of rivers and fountains
    Hath come to thy valley to dwell.

And I doubt not, fair Queen, if another—
    Saint Benedict—dwelt in this land,
Unable his passion to smother,
    He'd proffer his heart and his hand.

O Queen! I will bow down before thee
    Allegiance unfailing to prove:
'Midst saints and the men who adore thee,
    I offer my tribute of love.

For aye be our Lady Queen regnant
    In this land of the orange and vine,
Where the sun shineth ever benignant,
    And where nature is all but divine;

Where the bee stores its crystalline treasure,
    The mocking-bird pipes the day long,
And where life is as smooth as the measure
    That runs through the poet's song.

And our Lady, fair Queen of the Angels,
    That rulest the valley of bliss,
The saints and the holy evangels
    Salute thee to-night with a kiss.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 3–4.

The Hesperides

Where the sun goeth down in the West,
Where the spirits of earth find rest—
In the occident-land of the blest,—
There dwell the Hesperides.

They are daughters of Erebus—night,
In vestments of shadow bedight,
And they know not the day with its light—
Those Sisters Hesperides.

They are guarding the apples of gold—
Earth's gift to fond Hera of old,
And their vigils forever they hold
O'er the fruit-laden trees.

And the spirits of earth and air
Know not that the Sisters are there,
Or the trees with their fruitage so rare
In that occident-land of peace,

For darkness is over them thrown:
Night claimeth the fruit for his own;—
Well he guardeth the Great Unknown,
With his shades, the Hesperides.

* * *

O glorious land of the West!
O land I hold dearest and best,
Elysium is not then possesst
Of fruits so enchanting as these.

Thy groves that are ever in sight
Bear apples of gold not less bright,
And their guardians are angels of light,
        Obeying the Day's decrees.
Blest mortals who there do abide!
Of the fruit that no shadows hide
They may eat and be satisfied,
        Nor fear the Hesperides.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 5–6.

My Sunset Land

Beyond the desert's fiery breath,
    Beyond its dreary waste of sand,
Beyond its toil and pain and death,
    There is my glorious sunset land!

There do the living waters flow,
    There sing the birds in sweet attune;
There do the flowers in winter blow,
    There it seems always afternoon.

Abide with me in that sunset land;
    Come, dearest one, and abide with me,
And Heaven shall then be close at hand,
    And time shall but merge in eternity.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), p. 7.

The Newsboy

Compliments of the "Times" Carriers to its Patrons.

NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1885.

I like the little waif that runs the streets,
Bearing, 'neath bended arm, his stock in trade;
I like to hear his shout, and see anon
The eager face upturned. Ragged and rough
May be this urchin of the gutter bred—
Ragged and rough, in manners as in dress;
But, for the better self—the heart within
That man may never read—I like him still.
"Morning papers! Times and Herald!
Two for a dime!"

Who knows the dire necessity that waits
Upon the proceeds of the newsboy's trade?
The mother, mayhap, with her babe at breast—
The ragged little brothers, sisters, all
Deserted by the sot that dragged them down.
But for the burden lightly taken up
By this young Arab, hunger would be theirs.

"Morning papers! Daily Times, sir?
Only five cents."

Astir betimes, ere half the town's awake—
Rising from scanty bed to scanty fare—
Prompt at his post of duty, come what may,
And serving through all weathers—satisfied
If only by his toil he gather in
A meager pittance—who will dare to say
There is not true nobility of soul
In such endeavor? Honor, then, the lad!

"Daily Times, sir? Only a nickel,
Daily Times!"
Quick in his rivalry, an eye for gain,
Shrewd as the shrewdest, ever glib of speech,
These his accomplishments so early gained,
So oft reviewed in his one school, the street.
What wonder, then, that pupil apt as he,
Cast on the world before his time, should learn
Too much of sin? Behold the reflex here
Of public morals; satire on us all!

"Times or Herald? Daily papers!
Five cents apiece!"

And still I praise him, for the good is most—
His faults, the faults of others; but his own
The manly virtues of his rugged life.
Thus, ever strong of will and light of heart,
He plies his humble calling, honors it,
And giveth promise of the future man,
Ho, newsboy! kneel and thou shalt knighted be,
The Lord Lieutenant of the Daily Press.

"Daily papers! Morning Herald!
Two for five cents!"

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 8–9.

To a Swallow

Little swallow, flitting
To and fro,
Innocent, unwitting
Aught of woe,
Could I be as light of heart and free,
Would I were a swallow, too, with thee,
Flitting,
Flitting,
Flitting to and fro,
Innocent, unwitting aught of woe.

Mud-daubed nest dependent
From the wall,
Where the sun resplendent
Makes his call;
Man might imitate thy simple art,
Letting sunshine into his home and heart;
Humble,
Happy,
Pattern for us all—
Mud-daubed nest dependent from the wall.

Sober coat and homely,
Brown and white—
Other birds more comely
To the sight;
For thy garb I prize thee not the less;
Birds nor men are better for their dress.
Plain,
Or gay,
Unchanged is thy delight—
Sober coat and homely—brown and white.
Lowly is thy station,
Daubing clay;
Artizan and mason

In a way,
Pattern aye of industry and thrift,
Fortune favors those who earn her gift.
Toiling,
Delving,
Through the livelong day—
Lowly is thy station, daubing clay.

Sweeter song and fitter
Others' note;
Thine a plaintive twitter
From the throat;
Envy thou the fulsome, merry song,
While thy plaintive note thou dost prolong?
Peace,
Content!
Ambitionless thy lot—
Thine a simple twitter;—envy not

Every want provided,
Frugal care!
Duties all divided
By the pair;
Sharing each in turn the toil and rest,
Side by side at night upon the nest—
Love

And labor—
Equal joy and care—
Duties all divided by the pair.

Slight thy wealth and pleasure
Seems at best;
Five small eggs thy treasure
In the nest.
Skimming swiftly through the upper air,
Such thy recreation, past compare.
Wealth
And joy!
Oh, swallow, truly blest!
Five small eggs thy treasure in the nest.

Careless of the morrow
Evermore,
Know'st thou what a sorrow
Is in store?
Ruthless hands this evil day will come
Making desolate thy happy home—
Ruined,
Desolate,—
A home no more;
Know'st thou what a sorrow is in store?

Nest all torn and tattered,
Ruin done;
Five small eggs all shattered,
Every one;
Wilt thy heart within thee fail at last,
Looking at the ruin of the past?
Cheerless,
Homeless,
Hopelessly undone—
Five small eggs all shattered, every one.

Scarcely worth regretting
Mischief done;
Ere the sun's next setting
Work begun:
Soon another nest with precious store—
Other five within it as before.
Brave,
Courageous,
Noble little one!
Ere the sun's next setting, work begun.

Now in joy unceasing,
And in peace,
May thy tribe increasing,
Still increase!
And thy humble home aye happy be,
From the spoiler's hands henceforward free.
Careless,
Busy,
Living aye in peace—
May thy tribe increasing, still increase!

Little swallow, flitting
To and fro,
Innocent, unwitting
Aught of woe,
Could I be as light of heart and free,
Would I were a swallow, too, with thee,
Flitting,
Flitting,
Flitting to and fro,
Innocent, unwitting aught of woe.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 10–13.

To a Sierra Pine

I love thy restful shade, Sierra Pine,
    Thy drooping boughs and feathery knots of green
That net a fretted canopy above
And let the welcome sunshine glimmer through.

Nor glare nor gloom beseem thy cunning skill,
That, over rocky ledge and steep and crag,
Weaveth a tracery of brown and gold
To deck with arabesques the mountain side.

Low, nestling at thy foot as if to crave
An equal share of tenderness, behold
The fronded bracken and the plumes of fern
That hold their meager lodgment in the cleft;
And lichens gray, o'erspanning all the rocks,
And flowers of modest hue and mosses old,
Creeping and creeping till thy massive trunk
Is halt-encircled. See the furzy coat!
How it o'erlaps the tree against the north,
As if to shield it from the chilly blast—
Protecting and protected. Nor the less
Of fond affection seemeth in the vine
Weaving its tendrils round the lofty trunk—
Climbing to kiss the sunshine at the top.

Beyond the angle of yon beetling cliff
A mountain stream pours down with tireless plash,
Now stealing round a boulder in its path,
Now dallying and now speeding on its way,
And leaping madly from the battled rock
To plunge in frothing eddy at its base.

Perchance, between the foliage of the pine,
There drop the sun's bright lances all unseen,
And, striking full athwart the waterfall,
They shiver in a thousand sparks of light.
A droning murmur rises from the stream
(As 'twere the distant clang and clash of arms),
And there, amidst the mimic scene of strife,
A rainbow banner hangs upon the spray,

Anon the scene is changed, and in the west
The sun goes down behind a neighbor peak,
Lost to my vision ere his time; and yet
A halo of his glory still surmounts
The craggy height, and crowns the mountain King.

And now the peaceful twilight creepeth on
And Nature for an instant seems to hear
The confines of that Aiden-land beyond,
Where neither echo wakes nor shadow falls.

And then the night, the ever glorious night,
With white stars floating in the ether space.
'Tis then, Sierra Pine, I love thee best;
For, though I find a deeper solitude
Beneath thy somber branches, still I know
However dark my life may seem to me,
It hath been flecked with sunshine all along
Like to the noontide shadow on the rock.

Oh, peaceful rest, oh blest surcease of care,
That falls upon the heart aweary grown!
Sierra Pine, I come to thee and claim
A breath of balm to fan my fevered brow,
And dreamy odors lulling to repose;
And lo! a miracle! Straightway I rise,
And, like the widow's son of Nain, I find
My pulses leaping into life once more.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 14–15.

The Ahkoond of Swat

What!
The Ahkoond of Swat!
That robust and virile despot!
You do not
Know the Ahkoond of Swat?

My dear fellah! despite
An unvarying rule (which no doubt
You've observed in my conduct throughout)
I'm obliged to indite—
Maugre the wish to be always polite—
That your statement's diaphanous—quite.

Why, the Ahkoond's masculine name
Is proclaimed on the outposts of fame.
Wherever human conceit

Feels a bigness it cannot repeat;—
Wherever the diaphragm swells
With the thought that true greatness impels—
No name titillating the world's epiglottis
Is mentioned so oft as the Ahkoond of Swat is.

On this coign of vantage he stands
And commands,
With a flamboyant wave of the hands,
That all shall acknowledge his reign.
And this proposition is plain,
That whatever may chance his domain,
Monsieur Tonson is come again.

So I hope you'll no longer gainsay
The sway
Of this versatile Prince of Cathay,
Whose aplomb is unique in a way.
Let his enemies all go to pot
With their polysyllabic rot!
All hail to the Ahkoond of Swat!

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), p. 16.

A Load of Wood

To My Friend Fred upon His Wedding Day.

Accept my offering—a farmer's load—
The gnarled roots of mesquite and of sage,
And boles of mountain oak, torn from the soil
With many a blow of mattock and of axe.

Such uncouth cordwood is in vogue with us
Who dwell upon the mountain side, where erst
The scrubby chapperal was all the growth
That Nature in a niggard humor gave.

And so, in clearing off my foothills farm,
To plant thereon the orange and the vine,
That better grace this sunny clime of ours,
My stock of fuel grew. And I have come,
With wagon clattering down the rugged way,
And I have brought my offering, as the rest,
To grace your wedding feast.

Doubt not, my friend,
That you shall find the fuel sound and good;
Quick to the spark and ready in the blaze,
To boil the pot and make the kettle sing.
'Tis likewise fairly suited to the grate
(Now the long evenings are a little cool),
Yielding its store of sunshine to the room,

For every use
That men require, in reason, of a fire
I do commend this wood. But know you that,
Beyond the uses here enumerate,
There's magic in it? Wonders, like to which
The sorcerers of the East did never work,
Shall it perform for you.

The time is come
When to yourself you take the heart's best choice,
An honored wife. And you have chosen well;
For she, not lacking in the gentle grace
That Nature but bestows on womankind,
Has yet the subtler charm that is vouchsafed
To those alone of true and generous heart.

Equipped with gown and slippers, sit you down
(Your love beside you), and this magic blaze
Shall send a thrill of rapture through your soul
That kings and emperors have vainly sought.

Anon, the simple meal
Her hand prepares above this witching flame
Unto your palate shall approve itself
Than nectar and ambrosia sweeter far.
Into the embers of this mystic fire
Gaze you, the while the night is growing old,
And (still your wife beside you) there shall be
Most wondrous visions to you both revealed.

So, pondering on these things, it seemed most fit
That I, your boyhood's chosen friend, and still
The boon companion of maturer years,
Should your Prometheus be; bringing the fire
To consecrate your home. God bless you, Fred!
God bless your hearthstone! May its flame of joy
Burn on unceasing, like the Aztec fires.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 17–18.

That Wonderful Diplomat

Have you heard of the wonderful diplomat,
(Let his praises be everywhere sounded!)
Who puzzled one half of the civilized world
And the other half dumfounded?

His methods confusing human kind,
His purposes past invention,
The wisest could never fathom his mind
Or guess at his intention.

No other so subtle in matters of state,
No other so crafty and wary,
He juggled with prince and potentate
And plenipotentiary.

And when this diplomat came to die,
By loving friends surrounded,
He solved at last the mystery
That had all the world confounded;

And the secret of his art, forsooth,
Left them ever the more astounded:
He had always told the simple truth
And thus had the world confounded.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), p. 19.

The Sophist's Maxim

"Gold, Gold, Gold, Gold."—Hood.

Who seeks to win poetic fame,
Who would immortalize his name,
Who'd win with ease life's doubtful game,
Should think of this; nor scornful pass it—
"Pecunia equam ire facit."

Who would forsake his humble nook,
Upon the busy world to look,
To see her sights and read her book,
Should study this; nor idly pass it—
"Pecunia equam ire facit."

Who seeks for friends to bend the knee—
Be constant in prosperity,
And when misfortune comes, to flee—
Should ponder this; nor ever pass it—
"Pecunia equam ire facit."

And he who'd go where Christians meet,
Their prayers and sermons to repeat,
If he would occupy a seat
'Mongst wealth, and those who do amass it,
Should heed this truth; nor rashly pass it—
"Pecunia equam ire facit."

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), p. 20.

The Bard's Appeal

When knaves and fools assume poetic sway,
When Mammon rules, o'er Poesy, the day,
While stupid blockheads soar to skies unknown,
And scribble lover's ditties, all their own,
What marvel that we turn with deep disgust
From where the Muse lies prostrate in the dust!

A Scott once sung the patriot's worth; but now
His words are changed to suit some passing show.
Moore breathed of love; at last the deathless line
Corrupted, stands upon a merchant's sign.
The star of Young that pinned the mantle round
The earth in slumber wrapt, is gladly found
To be naught else but just a clothing store
Where pins, indeed, are sold and many more
Delightful things that Adam never wore.
At night some coxcomb gains a hungry kiss;
The morning papers herald forth his bliss;
In limping couplets all the world descry
His passion beaming from the lover's eye.
'Tis thus disgrace is brought and open shame
Upon the poet's once refulgent name.

Then spare the Muse, ye senseless scribblers all,
Who, by your rank abuses, cause her fall,
Who seek to gain a kingdom not your own,
And reign from Poesy's unspotted throne!
Degrade her not! but when ye fain would wield
The pen that Byron, Southey, Gray have held,
Think well upon the greatness of the feat,
Unthought, unprompted save by vain conceit.
Spare, too, the Muse's modesty, ye men,
Who, for a baser motive, wield the pen.
Let ribald jests and vulgar tale be told
In other than th' impassioned strains of old
That mounted as a bright, unsullied fire
From Homer's first inspired, first honored lyre.

The snow so pure that falls from fleecy cloud,
When 'tis down-trodden by the thronging crowd,
Becomes, beneath their all-corrupting feet,
The foulest rubbish on the dirty street.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 21–22.

The Skeleton Monitor

From its niche in the wall
    Grins a whitened skull,
  Ever so mournfully, mournfully.
Day after day
Holds the specter his sway,
  Ever so mournfully, mournfully.

And the crumbling head,
Like a ghost from the dead,
  Peers out from its covert so mournfully;
While the visionless eye
Seems unceasingly by,
As some terrible omen it fain would descry,
  In its glance cast so mournfully.

At scenes of sorrow, or revel, or mirth,
At the pall of death, at the cradle of birth,
Still gleams the grim specter forbodingly forth,
  Ever so mournfully—
And a life of woe to the young is foretold,
And a terrible future revealed to the old;
To the widow and orphan there's hunger and cold—
To all a last sleep in the churchyard mold,
And a dismal tale by the specter is told,
  Ever so mournfully, mournfully.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), p. 23.

Days of Yore

We wants a re-horganization of things
In our own particular way—
A bargain of muscle for money as brings
Our reg'lar two dollars a day,
And roast beef as of yore,
Sighs Alfred Moore.

We wants, us laboring sons of the soil,
Who sells auction goods and wares—
Who sanctifies capital with toil—
We wants our equal shares;
And roast beef as of yore,
Sighs Alfred Moore.

We wants—Mr. Woodrough and me—we wants
No millionaire swelling hisself
And putting on airs o'er us laboring poor
Without a division of pelf;
And roast beef as of yore,
Sighs Alfred Moore.

We wants nomination for office; we wants
A hand in the public store—
A reformation in public trusts
And justice to the poor,
And roast beef as of yore,
Sighs Alfred Moore.

We wants a political meeting ourselves—
Woodrough, Leittull and me—
Where we can 'ave our share of say
Like any nominee,
    And roast beef as of yore,
    Sighs Alfred Moore.
We wants no Chinamen in ours,
  To take our coin away;
We wants to dig and delve ourselves
  At two dollars a day;
    And roast beef as of yore,
    Sighs Alfred Moore.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 24–25.

An Allegorical Ditty

Respectfully Inscribed to the Southern Pacific Railroad.

I knew an old fellow a long time ago—
A nicer old fellow one never may know—
Who had, in the valley, a fine piece of soil,
And made it productive by generous toil.

He spared not the labor of head or of hand,
But developed his water and harrowed his land,
And he prodded about with his spade and his hoe,
And induced every planting to get up and grow.

Then the autumn came round and the labor was o'er,
And the corn and the pumpkins were gathered in store;
With a rasher of bacon, a barrel of beer,
This jolly old fellow had plenty of cheer.

Now this lucky old fellow, he says with a wink,
"I've more than enough for my own meat and drink,
So I'll harness my mule to the cart and drive down
And dispose of this truck to the folks of the town."

Thus he goes to the village and stops at the store;
He barters his load for provisions galore—
Flour, sugar and tea and a dollar or two,
And a nip of Old Rye when his trading is through.

So he lived and he flourished year in and year out—
Grew heavy in pocket, in body grew stout;
What he had in excess—what he happened to lack
The mule always carried to market or back.

There came a fine stranger, accomplished of tongue,
And the song of the siren the stranger he sung;
He told the old fellow his mule was too slow,
And such "countryfied" ways wouldn't do—not for Joe.

Said the stranger at last, after arguin' and arguin',
"You give me your mule and I'll give you a barg-u-ain:
You shall ride to the town when you will in my shay,
And there won't be much trouble, I guess 'bout the pay."

"But before we accomplish this beautiful trade
(And a better, I bet you, you never have made),
To prevent any mayhap from breaking the charm
You just give me your note with a lien on your farm."

Then this silly old fellow relinquished his mule,
And mortgaged his farm—very like a big fool,
And he got not a thing in the world he could brag on
But a ride now and then in the stranger's fine wagon.

And that wasn't the worst; for before very long
The stranger was singing a different song;
And he grumbled and growled and demanded big pay
Every time the old fellow would ride in his shay."

The corn and the pumpkins all went to the share
Of the man who demanded their value in fare,
And the old fellow lamented in anguish and pain,
And wished in his heart for his mule back again.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 26–27.

A Fair Idyl

THE Fair is over and gone;
And he of the wide open mouth
And inquisitive turn of the eye
No longer perambulates
Through its halls.

The beau

That erst did arrogate
Himself, with damsel, clinging
Like a faithful mustard plaster
Unto his side—the twain

Exciting the jeer of derision
As they munched the succulent ball
Of pop-corn—the beau and his glory
Are past.

The man of transcendent beauty
Hath taken his leather medal,
And doth hide his diminished head
Neath his wing of drooping pin-feathers.

He of the swelling larynx,
With an inborn desire to proclaim
His gift of oratory,
Hath spoken. And lo! the trees
Propped in their boxes and tubs,
The mellow fruit on the tables,
The stoves with their pots and kettles,
The displays of agriculture
And the milliner's hats and bonnets—
Stood still and listened.

The member of the Committee
Hath come, puffed up with importance,
To domineer as he listed

O'er the unresisting hen-coop.
The turkey cock and the rooster
He hath outdone in strutting;
And, fired by a sense of justice,
Awarded the scarlet ribbon

Unto himself.

Even so,
The judges of wines and brandies
Stopped not at fulfilling their duty—
But tasted the unctuous liquids,
And gave to their friends to sample,
And drained the reluctant bottles
Till their parched and arid stomachs
O'erflowed with premium nectar.

The man with the soda fountain

Stood up with unblushing candor
And mulcted the public with wind;
For silver of intrinsic value

(Ten cents was the sum he exacted)
Giving a fizz of vanilla.

The ancient malevolent dauber

Devoted to Art and to humbug,
Whose eye hath a cast obliquely
And whose hand is devoid of cunning—
With the taste of an alligator,
And discrimination no better

Than the anvil-eating ostrich—
He whose legitimate calling
Might be the knitting of stockings
Or the spanking of education
Into public school children—
This antiquated duffer
Hath no compunctions of conscience
In placing before the public
The result of his frenzied fancy
With wildly-protesting shoe-brush
On agonizing canvas,
And calling the blotch a picture.

This the art critic
Beholds with emotions of wonder
And awardeth a diploma.

And the fat and toothless babies,
Squeezed to infantile pomatum
In the crowd of wild spectators
Who trample on each other
In the vain attempt to see them—
Oh! the babies, the dear babies,
Gone to swell the angel chorus,
Nevermore on earth to suffer,
Crushed and jammed to baby butter!
Only one from all that concourse—
He the plump José Maria—
Left to tell the mournful story
And to occupy the buggy!

Join me then, oh, suffering brother;
In my song of loud rejoicing—
In my shout of exultation—
In my chuckled satisfaction—
That, at last, the Fair is over.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 28–30.

A Prophecy

THE white bear is out on the mountain,
The hedgehog is out on the plain;
They both are knowing creatures,
And—it's going to rain.

There's something about the heavens
That wasn't put there in vain;
The clouds all look portentous,
And—it's going to rain.

The atmospheric pressure
Is something we can't explain;
The barometer touches bottom,
And—it's going to rain.

The wells, the brooks, the rivers
And the springs are spouting amain;
There's a meeting of the waters,
And—it's going to rain.

The birds and the chipmunks and gophers
Are storing their winter's grain;
They know pretty well what's coming,
For—it's going to rain.

The geese are flying southward
In many a trooping train;
They haste to tropic countries,
For—it's going to rain.

The anglers are all rejoicing,
And they every one maintain
That the fish bite well this weather,
For—it's going to rain.
We brush with desperation
At the fly that won't refrain
From pestering night and morning,
For—it's going to rain.

We've waited nine months and over—
Can't wait much longer, that's plain—
For something is bound to happen,
And—it's going to rain.

And Jupiter P., the mighty,
Will smile on his people again,
And the land will bloom in beauty
For—it's going to rain;

And the grass upon the hillside
And the corn upon the plain
Will leap to the light of the sunshine,
For—it's going to rain.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 31–32.

The Drouth

THERE came a long rainless season,
When it seemed that the land was accurs'd,
And the streets of the town were sere and brown,
And the earth was agape with thirst.

The acres of wheat and barley
That had promised a bountiful yield,
Were shriveled and dry when only half high,
For all a-drouth was the field.

The grass, erst so bright and verdant,
Skirting the valley round,
Grew crisp and dead beneath the tread,
And matted upon the ground.

The cattle that browsed on the hillside—
The flocks that covered the plain—
Fell lank and lean with starvation,
And perished for want of rain.

The springs that gushed from the mountain
Were failing, one by one;
And the river that ran down the valley
Could scarcely longer run.

The fervid sun in the heavens
Looked down with pitiless glare,
Drinking the remnant of moisture,
Heating the pulseless air.

The earth along the roadway,
Beneath the rumbling tire
Was ground to the finest powder,
Like ashes from a fire.
There was dust on each passing zephyr,
And dust in every breath—
Dust covered the whole land over,
Like an ashen pall of death.

And there came a wind from the desert,
Hot as a furnace blast,
That whispered of desolation
As it hurried, scorching, past.

Men gazed in each other's faces,
And troubled looks they wore,
For they felt that a land so stricken
Had naught but want in store.

THE RAIN.

One morning the sunshine came not
Up through the eastern sky,
And all the heavens were darkened,
And succor came from on high;

For behold! the rain fell down,
    Pattering on roof and steeple,
And a shout of exultation
Went up from all the people;

And they said, as the drops descended
Upon the parchéd plain,
"All hail to the cloud that brought it!
God's blessing on the rain!"

Oct. 29, 1877.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 33–34.

"Persiflage"

I KNOW a man—an editor—who quotes
    Instant in season, instant out of season;
Quotes with a vile persistency, and quotes,
With or without a reason.

He sees no need of multiplying lore,
Or with ideas making innovations,
But just revamps his literary store,
And multiplies quotations.

Thus up the hill of fame he thinks to ride,
And we who stand aside, the chance behulders,
Laugh at the figure that he cuts, bestride
Another fellow's shoulders.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), p. 35.

Too Hay

A Story of Chinese Love.

THE festive Ah Goo
And Too Hay, the fair—
They met, and the two
Made a loving pair.

They "spooned" in the way
That most lovers do,
And Ah Goo kissed Too Hay,
And Too Hay kissed Ah Goo.

Said the festive Ah Goo,
As his heart swelled with pride,
"Me heap likee you—
You heap be my blide."

And she, looking down
All so modest and pretty,
'Twixt a smile and a frown
Gently murmured "You betee."

Then, no sooner thought
Than the matter was done;
A Justice they sought
And the twain were made one;

And the festive Ah Goo
And the charming Toe Hay
Swore to love and be true,
Cherish, honor, obey.

They sought out a home—
This newly-wed pair—
And the angel of peace
Went and dwelt with them there.
But alas, for the man
Who bets on a sure thing—
One sunshiny day
The angel took wing;

For there came in the way
    The wily How Gee,
Who induced fair Too Hay
    To get up and flee.

And the false hearted spouse,
    Making off with the thief,
Left her own true Ah Goo
    The gaunt victim of grief,

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 36–37.

Smith's Corner in Hay

He looked about one summer day,
Did this Mr. Smith of San José,
And he saw that the weather was warm and dry
(The barometer ranging tolerably high),
And never a sign of rain in the sky.

The people he found in very ill grace—
Short of pocket and long of face—
Horribly grumpy—wretchedly blue,
Bewailing the drouth they had just gone through,
And preparing themselves for drouth in view.

The alfilerilla, rank and tall,
In times that were past beyond recall,
Had made a most unfortunate fall

First to very short grass, then to no grass at all,
And the fact no longer could be ignored
That the ground was about as bare as a board.

"Hence," said Mr. Smith of San José,
"I think there might be something in hay."

The weather continued warm and dry,
And the drouth in prospect was drawing nigh,
And things that were bad enough before
Got worse and worse, and ever the more
Increased the want and diminished the store.

Smith saw that cattle were greatly in need
Of a little green grass or a little dry feed,
And the sheep—all starved and scrawny and poor—
Were dropping dead by the dozen and score;
And he pondered these matters o'er and o'er.
And it all appeared to him very plain
That, in continued absence of rain,
The farmers' stacks couldn't stand the strain,
And he thought it would come about by and by,
The supply would run low and the price would run high.

"Hence," said Mr. Smith of San José,
"I think there must be something in hay."

And so, when Smith had made it appear
There would certainly come another dry year,
And had settled it all to his own satisfaction,
The hay speculation had such an attraction
That he backed his opinion by vigorous action.

He went into market without more delay
And devoted himself to the purchase of hay;
Invited the farmers to give him a call,
And, with money in hand, bought from each and from all;
The granger who'd sell, Smith did never turn back,
But asked him his price and called it a whack,
And gathered in hay by the load and the stack.

There was never a check when once he'd begun,
And the volume of fodder increased like fun,
To eighteen hundred and some odd ton—
Between what he'd bought and what he'd engaged—
And Smith's great ambition was fully assuaged.

"And now," said Smith of San José,
"I think I've got a good thing in hay."

Then he turned in and prayed with might and main
That the Lord in his goodness would not send rain;
That the drouth might prevail, and the year again
Bring naught but want and woe in its train,
And shattered prospects and hopes that were vain,
That the general loss might be his gain.
"Because," said Smith of San José,
"I think I've got a dead thing in hay."

But alas for the man who ever depends
On fickle weather to work his ends!
Alas for the man who would seek to prey
On his fellows' misfortunes—even in hay!
The end he sought was never attained,
The profit he coveted never was gained,
For, just at the critical moment—it rained.

The rain was followed by many rains,
And the feed all over the hills and plains,
Grew up and flourished, rank and tall,
And the cattle were fed and grew fat withal,
And the people laughed and were jolly at that,
And Smith's great hay speculation fell flat.

And then said Smith of San José,
"I think the very devil's in hay."

Feb. 2, 1878.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 38–40.

Epigrams

TO REV. J. D. W—S.

You say, my reverend sir, there is no hell;
That, live we here however good or ill,
A gracious God at last will count it well,
And cast us into Paradise pell-mell,
Forgiven.
But if this be the case, you'll please to say
Who then will save us from your Unitarian heaven?

TO REV. GEO. S. H——Y

Lo, as we hear your words of holy wrath,
We scent the fire and brimstone on your breath;
We see the burning sinner in the glare,
Behold the devils dancing on the air;
Thus pandemonium, that men fear so much,
Looms up responsive to your magic touch.
Now when we die and all to hell repair
I fear, my reverend sir, we'll need you there;
For, on that direful day of woe and worrit
What use of brimstone with no one to stir it?

TO J. Y—LL.

They tell me you have signed the pledge—
Have joined the Murphyites;
That wearing a blue-ribbon badge
Is one of your delights.
Now, Jess, my boy, pray have a care
In your new rank and station,
Lest you should somehow, unaware,
Disgrace the Irish nation.

TO DR. N. P. R———N.

You ask me whether I could learn to love,
And feel the flame so tender and so true.
Well, yes; I think I'd love to see myself
Caught loving such a mastodon as you.

TO JUDGE B. L. P——L.

Ill fares the man who breaks the law
And comes within your clutches;
Hard lines of punishment you draw
On all the luckless wretches;
The misery which your words entail
Is far beyond conjecture,
For he who isn't sent to jail
Must fall before your lecture.

Ye gods forefend us when a bumpkin prates
Of law and commerce and the need of States;
For, ere the ill we more than half suspect,
A stable somewhere suffers from neglect.

Ah Sang, thou art wed to the beauty Loo Yow,
To love and to cherish you solemnly vow;
To love and to cherish for ever and aye,
Nor let aught but a Court put the woman away;
You'll be true to your vow, Sang, I'm confident of it,
And not sell till you're sure of a reasonable profit.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 41–42.

The Wonderful Little Italian Man

A Legend in Verse, Illustrative of Unappreciated Genius and Retributive Justice.

It is a curious tale, if the tale be true;
As 'twas told to me, I will tell it to you.

THE GRINDER.

The story ran
Of a wonderful little Italian man—
A genius who played
An organ by trade,
And sang (or at least essayed,
For his voice was appalling)
And gathered in dimes from the public, and made
A very good thing from his calling.

HIS ORGAN.

It would play
In its proper, mechanical way—
Always true, needing no apology—
Sixteen tunes and the doxology.
And when all of the airs and the sacred refrain
Had been ground by the grinder again and again,
They were still as sweet, as tender and true
And as good as new.

HIS MONKEY.

There followed close at the grinder's heels,
With an endless succession of jigs and reels,
A monkey trim,
Supple of limb,
In color, dun,
And full of fun,
And the boys were exceedingly fond of him.
Wherever the grinder went to grind,
The monkey always appeared behind,
And whenever he opened his mouth to sing,
The monkey danced at the end of his string.

HIS MUSIC.

In a stoical way
Early and late the grinder would play,
Never skipping a tune, never losing a day;
And 'twas said,
Thus he had played
For at least a decade;
Yet there wasn't a sign
Of any decline,
And after a time folks fell into a doubt
Whether organ or grinder would ever wear out.

HIS WAYS.

Whenever you'd open your window or blind,
He'd come and he'd grind and he'd grind and he'd grind;
His harrowing songs he shouted amain,
Keeping time with the organ's mellifluous strain,
And the monkey, inspired, began cutting his antic,
And then you were frantic.
With your nerves at a tension beyond your command,
You seized upon anything ready at hand,
And through window or door
At the wretched bore
You flung it—and swore!

HIS PERQUISITES.

Then the grinder stood in the meekest attitude,
Dodging both
Missile and oath,
And expressing the while his deepest gratitude,
Gracefully bent,
Laid hold of the article—and went.

HIS THRIFT,

Thus he passed through the town—
Back and forth, up and down—
Gathering goods and renown,
And from all of the missiles dispatched at his head
Reaped a handsome reward—and still wasn't dead.

HIS MISHAP.

But it chanced at length, I am pained to relate,
That even the grinder met his fate.
One ill-omened day,
The legends say,
He came to a stop
In front of the shop
Of a savage old Dutchman, a slayer by trade,
And then the Italian he played!

Now, these Dutchmen,
Butchers and such men,
Don't care a straw
For life, limb or law;
And the one that I mention,
With savage intention,
Laid hold of a saw.

HIS FATE,

With no more ado

Than you'd think he would make
In cutting a steak,
Or cleaving through
A rib or a stew,
He sawed the poor grinder in two.
Boo-hoo!
He sawed the poor grinder in two.

Then a policeman came down on a canter,
And arrested the murderous butcher instanter.

THE LAW.

In durance vile
He languished awhile,
And at length, in quite the regular way,
The culprit appeared in court, one day,
And a sad looking spectacle truly was he,
For murder arraigned, in the first degree.

THE DEFENSE.

When the time for defense came on in the trial,
The butcher's attorney arose with a smi-l,
And he said, "Please your Honor, my client's insane;
That's plain!
Such a horrid grind
Would unsettle the mind

Of the devil, your Honor (not being profane)."

THE ARGUMENT.

I need not detail how he twisted the laws,
Picking code and indictment full of flaws,
Or how he worked himself into a fury,
And made it appear
That the butcher was queer
Up here,
And, by dint of this argument, carried the jury.

THE RETRIBUTION,

Though the butcher walked forth from the court a free man,
Yet a terrible ban

Was set by the Fates upon him;
And wherever he comes and wherever he goes
He is troubled in conscience and robbed of repose—
His old acquaintances shun him—
And from far and near

There sounds in his ear
The dolorous tones of an organ ground,
And haunts him forever the ghost of a sound.
Midst a grinding and groaning and screeching and scoffing,
Stands out full before him an organ-shaped coffin;
And his wild-gleaming eye-balls still in vain turn away
From a monkey that dances forever and aye.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 43–46.

A Hundred Years Ago

TURN me the glass in thy hand, O Fancy, thou fond necromancer;
Turn, and the sands shall run backward, recalling a time long departed!
Turn me the glass, and disclose this land by the placid Pacific
Ere a century mighty in deeds had considered and worked transformation.

Backward an hundred years, and, lo! there stretches before me
Landscape as wild as e'er came from the hand of the Master—
Mountains whose cavernous sides are the haunt of the bear and coyote,
Echoing cañons and glens where the deer seeks its chaparral covert,
Purposeless rivers that flow but to sink in the sands of the valley,
Deserts of verdureless sand, all white with an alkaline hoar-frost.

Hither the Pioneer Fathers were led by the good Junipero;
Came they with crozier and sword, in the name of the Church and
King Carlos,
Gaining a province the while they were saving the souls of the heathen.
Then, with frugality born of their mission of peace and salvation,
Listing their new-made recruits to conquer the fastness of Nature.

Here, on the shores of the bays and in valleys that skirted the rivers,
Builded the Fathers their missions, and called the rude people to worship,
Taught them that idleness ever breeds poverty, mischief and sorrow—
Planted the olive and vine, and admonished their converts to tend them.
Years sped away like galloping steeds, and the good Junipero,
Gathered at last to the arms of the saints, with the Pioneer
Fathers,
Left others as fervent and faithful to teach and command in their places.
Peace came and dwelt in the province; peace and contentment together,
And the valleys were rich with their harvests, the plains with their cattle.

Then it was that a galleon sailing for cargo of tallow and peltry,
Brought news of a warfare that raged on the shores of the distant Atlantic—
A warfare 'twas said that was greater than that of the Mexican conquest.
The colonies, banded together, had issued pronunciamiento
Dissolving their bond of allegiance, proclaiming their freedom forever.

Great Britain, enraged at the petty defiance, had sent forth her armies
To punish the arrogant rebels and bring them again to subjection.
The conflict had waged long and fierce, and yet gave no sign of abatement,
While the fortunes of war hung between them in uncertain balance.

Thus they spake, and the galleon sailed with her cargo of tallow and peltry,
But the men of the province remembered the tale and long pondered upon it,
And whenever a vessel dropped anchor to trade for the goods of the country
They asked of the warfare that waged on the shores of the distant
Atlantic.
Years glided by, and once more into port came the galleon sailing,
With tidings at last that the warfare of which they had spoken was ended;
That the colonists who had rebelled and issued pronunciamiento
Had victory won in the fight, and their land was now free from oppression.

Strange seemed the story—so strange that the sober old dons of the province
Pondered and pondered upon it, yet guessed not its wonderful import,
Little they recked that the freedom proclaimed on the distant
Atlantic
Westward should sweep like a flood, not stop till it gained the
Pacific;
Little they recked there was coming a day in the far-distant future,
When the men of a new generation and race, who should stand in their places,
Would rejoice o'er that victory won and bless that pronunciamiento!

O land that hath slumbered and slept through the matin of liberty's dawning,
Waken and shake from thine eyelids the sloth that hath fallen upon them,
Waken and stretch forth thy hands for the toil of a noble endeavor!
Waken and rouse thee to action; a glorious destiny calleth.
So shalt thou eat of the fruit that for thee hath another planted;
So shalt thou ever be free, my honored, my blest California.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 47–49.

Rime of the Anciént One-Ryed [Pan.

IN TWO PARTS.

Requies-cat in pace. —Virgil,

PARTL.

An ancient one-eyed man mecteth me on my way to the free lunch and detain-eth me.

"T is an ancient one-eyed man,
f And calleth loudly he.
By thy red, red nose and one small eye,
What wouldst thou have with me?

"In yon saloon I know eftsoon
Some hungry souls are met,
And lo! they munch the cold free lunch,
And their arid throats they wet."

Tam constrained by the button le to hear the tale of the ancient: Poly phe-mus,

He holds me by the button-hole :
"There was a cat," quoth he.
"Oh, shoot the cat, thou one-eyed man "—
Said the one-eyed man, 'Shoot me,

"If Ido not to thee unfold
This wondrous tale of mine;
Thou can'st not aye my tale gainsay,
Nor foil my dark design."

I sat me down upon a rock,
Upon a rock sat he;
I could not choose but list to him,
And hear his poetrie.

The ancient one-eyed man explain'th how hesle astil-ly nigare

""The night was still, the night was long,
Upon my couch I lay,
And I slept and slept, as I should sleep
Unto the judgment day.

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Rime of the Ancient One-Eyed Man—reconstructed typography—2/4

usr)

And how the moon stood sentinel over his shambers

"cry
"Then up behind the snoring hills
Arose the purple moon—"
I groaned and fell, for I caught the smell
From out that far saloon.

I saw six men or more stand up
Along the polished rail,
And stir the gin and sugar in
The savory cock-tail.

I attempt to leave the ancient man and seek the companie.

I struggled hard to rise and go,
To join the merry clan ;
But I could not choose but list to him,
That ancient one-eyed man.

And he continueth his tale.

"And as I slept and slumbered long
Into the peaceful night,
Up jumpéd I six-fathom high
Allin a dreadful fright.

The ancient one eyed man owas greatly agitated

"A nameless terror shook my limbs,
My face was blanched with fear,
As a dreadful cry of agoni
Fell on my startled car.

He explaineth the nature of the strange interruption

"Upon the moonlit tence without
A dark'ning figure sat,
And as it lifted up its voice
I marked it for a cat.

"
With archéd back and gleaming eyes
And wildly flying tail,
It spat and clawed at vacancy
And raised a dreadful wail.

'And all around on fence and ground,
On tree and shrub and vine,
Cold and bright with its ghostly light
Glimmered the white moonshine."

Rime of the Ancient One-Eyed Man—reconstructed typography—3/4

(52)

The ancient man impiously killed the ominous cat

"God save thee, ancient one-eyed man,
From the devils that thee gat—""
"With my boot-jack I hit it whack,
And killed the loud-voiced cat."

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"The night was still, the night was long,
And far from break of day ;
Advanc'd full soon the green-cheese moon
Across the milky whey.

The ancient man vreatly vexed in Spirit.

"All quivering in my every limb
(For I was troubled sore)
I squat me down, half in a swoun,
Upon my chamber floor.

His conscience reproacheth him

"An' Thad done a hellish thing
To slay the wailing cat ;
With wo opprest I beat my breast
And mourned the loud-voiced cat ;
Some vengeful sprite would sure requite
The basely slaughtered cat.

But he casteth off his dolour and findeth comfort in a ray of light,

"Then quick uprist, with my clench'd fist,
I drove the phantom back,
And a ray of bright fell on my sight,
Sent by the muon down through the night,
Upon the silvered track.

And justifieth his conduct.

"And peace then stole into my soul
Like to the silver'd ray;
An' I had done most righteously
The wretched cat to slay.

He sleepeth.

"Oh, sleep it is a blessed thing,
For weary mortals sent ;
My peace restored, I slept, I snored,
And straight to dreamland went.

Rime of the Ancient One-Eyed Man—reconstructed typography—4/4

(83)

And dreameth a frightful dream.

"But here again the phantom came—
A horrid, gibbering sprite—
And with fiendish glee perch'd on my knee
And laughed at my affright ;
And perked his wither'd lips again
And scoffed at my affright.

He seeth the ghost of the cat.

**And I looked into the night, and lo!
An hundred leagues in air
The ghost of the slaughtered cat stood up,
And it was dancing there.

Which is of a shining white coulor, and seemeth happy.

"No more a darksome, crouching form,
No longer grim and black ;
But white as the very moonshine white,
It danced and danced for sheer delight,
But else it looked just as it looked
When slain by my boot-jack.

The ancient man concludeth his tale with sage counsel,

"Oh, mortal," said the one-eyed man,
"Thou hast the tale I wist;
I prithee heed my punishment,
And if 'tis ever thy intent
To slay a dark-hued cat, relent!
I prithee, man, desist."

He turns, he moves, his shape is gone—
Evanished from my sight.
A hungrier and a wiser man
I went to bed that night.

Rime of the Ancient One-Eyed Man

In Two Parts.

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Rime of the Ancient One-Eyed Man.

IN TWO PARTS.

Requies-cat in pace.—*Virgil.*

PART I.

An ancient one-eyed man meeteth me on my way to the free lunch and detaineth me.

IT is an ancient one-eyed man,
  And calleth loudly he.
"By thy red, red nose and one small eye,
  What wouldst thou have with me?

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  Some hungry souls are met,
And lo! they munch the cold free lunch,
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  This wondrous tale of mine;
Thou can'st not aye my tale gainsay,
  Nor foil my dark design."

I sat me down upon a rock,
  Upon a rock sat he;
I could not choose but list to him,
  And hear his poetrie.

The ancient one-eyed man explain'th how he slept upon a stilly night.

"The night was still, the night was long,
  Upon my couch I lay,
And I slept and slept, as I should sleep
  Unto the judgment day.



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And how the moon stood sentinel over his slumbers.

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Arose the purple moon—"
I groaned and fell, for I caught the smell
From out that far saloon.

I saw six men or more stand up
Along the polished rail,
And stir the gin and sugar in
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(For I was troubled sore)
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Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 50–53.

Ten Little Pink Stockings

Reminiscence of a Ballet.

TEN little Pink Stockings sitting in a line;
One lost her garter and then there were nine.
Nine little Pink Stockings up very late;
One fell asleep and then there were eight.
Eight little Pink Stockings—just a glimpse of heaven;
One dropped a court'sey and then there were seven.
Seven little Pink Stockings playing funny tricks;
One fell to laughing and then there were six.
Six little Pink Stockings only survive;
One had a pain and then there were five.
Five little Pink Stockings—not any more;
One crushed her bustle and then there were four.
Four little Pink Stockings up to the knee;
One slipped down and then there were three.
Three little Pink Stockings looking pretty blue;
One commenced crying and then there were two.
Two little Pink Stockings—not a bit of fun;
One took the mollygrubs and then there was one.
One little Pink Stocking without a blessed penny;
Down came the sheriff and then there wasn't any.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), p. 54.

The Girl with the Pillow

Two maidens are seated one summer day
    In the shade of a spreading willow,
And one is making a case for herself,
    The other a case for a pillow.

The bright needles fly over and through,
    The thread it goes skipping after,
And the maidens the while their time beguile
    In merriment and laughter.

But alack for the hands and alas for the heads!
    While plying their art so bewitching,
They are running amain on another train,
    And are playing the deuce with their stitching.

"There, I vum!" says the girl with the nameless attire,
    "I have broken my needle; the torment!
Some fortunate end will surely attend—
    There's good luck in store for this garment.

"It's a sign, all agree, true as ever can be,
    That one's certain of catching her fellow;
I'll be wed in a year." "We shall see, my dear,"
    Replies the girl with the pillow.

So the bright needles fly over and through,
    And the thread goes after skipping;
But the one on the pillow-case stitching away
    Keeps snarling, and catching and tripping.

"Oh, Sue! I'm afraid you must die an old maid,
    For it seems by the Fates so allotted;
Just look at your thread, dear, just look at your thread,
    And see how it's tangled and knotted."

But the girl with the thread all knotted and snarled
    Says, "There may be a hope for me still, oh!
In good time, never fear, we shall see, my dear,"
    And works away at her pillow.

Now, a year has gone by, and the world to-night
    Still tosses on Time's fitful billow,
And I'll wager my life that a husband's head
    Is at rest on one-half of that pillow;

While the maiden who stitched on the nameless attire—
    To whom the promising charm went,
Is in a maidenly sleep, on her maidenly couch,
    Wrapped in her maidenly garment.

So the one who divines by symbols and signs
    Never knows what fortune may will, oh!
For better or worse, most omens reverse,
    As they did with the girl and her pillow.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 55–56.

Thou Dollar of Our Dad

Oh, come, thou bright new Dollar,
    Thou Dollar of our Dad,
We have waited longing for thee,
    And our hearts are growing sad;
And from all the tons of bullion
    That the mints are running through,
It seems but fair to reason
    We should capture one or two.

Oh, thou bright new silver Dollar,
    Thou Dollar of our Dad,
We think we need thee with us,
    And we think we need thee bad;
All our homely halves and quarters
    At a wretched discount stay,
We never liked the greenback,
    And our gold is hid away.

Oh, thou Dollar of our Daddy,
    We are waiting still for you;
Our taxes stand delinquent,
    And our notes are falling due;
Our credit's all exhausted—
    They are cutting down on trust—
And, there's just one way about it,
    We must either pay or bust.

Oh, thou Dollar of our Daddy,
    Thou art ugly, yea, as sin;
But only come and see us
    And we'll try to take thee in;
We could love thy iron-jawed woman,
    And thy scrawny eagle too,
But the worst of all our trouble
    Is to get a sight of you.

Come then, oh, coy new Dollar,
    Ere our star of fortune wanes,
And we'll never raise a quibble
    On the twelve or twenty grains;
And we'll chink thee in our pockets—
    Such a chink thou never had—
And we'll all rise up and bless thee,
    Oh, bright Dollar of our Dad.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 57–58.

An Ague and an Earthquake

And it shook him, shook him, shook him;
    Shook his coat and pantaloons off;
Shook him down upon his pallet;
Shook his teeth out; shook his eye-balls
Till they jiggled from their sockets;
Shook the nails from toes and fingers;
Shook his hair and whiskers from him;
Shook his very eyebrows also;
And his ears it shook asunder;
Shook the breath from out his body;
Shook the body in its coffin;
Shook the coffin and the grave clothes;
Shook them all, and shook the sexton
Who essayed to put him under;
Shook the very hole he dropped in;
Shook the earth that fell upon him;
Shook him, shook him, shook him, shook him!

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), p. 59.

Lay of Ye Calithumpians

Set Downe in Ye Lingo of Ye Moste Ancient Order.

PROLOGUE.

YE Calithumpians attende—
Give me an eare eache man and frende,
The whyle I singe as singe I may
Ye halting measures of my lay,
To laude ye Independence Day.

Moste glorious time, alle hail to thee,
Whych art ye birthday of ye free!
I glory in ye land and race
Which gave to Liberty a place,
I magnify ye patriot hoste,
I singe ye praise, I shout ye boaste,
Ye Calithumpians love moste.

FYTTE I.

Whilom there dwelt a man of high degree,
Such service did unto our faire countree

That alle ye folk rose up and called him blest
And held him Father in theire heartes confest—
A valient Calithumpian withal,
He loved and served his people, greate and smalle;
Full deare to maid and matron, sire and son,
Yclepéd was this man George Washington!
To him while yett a ladde of tender yeares
His worthy fathere gave with hoaps and feares
Eke many cautiones and advisance sage,
A lytle hatchett with a sharpened edge.

Puff'd up with pride and vain pleasaunce was he,
And chopp'd eftsoone his father's cherrie tree.
Quoth father Washington unto ye ladde
When on ye choppéd tree he look'd, full madde,
"Dost know who marr'd ye bush, thou young galoot?"
Quoth George, "My honor'd sire, I didn't do 't!"

Then loude and fierce ye angered father swore,
Upon his knee ye strippling doubled owre,
And on his nether ende with force fulle store
Dispon'd a whaling that was longe and sore!

Ye Calithumpian youth made wild outcry
And promis'd nevermore to telle a lie.
Wherefore unto ye present day of grace
Ye men who follow of this noble race,
Whilkever good or evil ende betide,
Not one of alle ye race hath ever lied.

FYTTE II.

Albeit there was a King most haughtilie
Did sit his throne; and ever fain was he
To lay upon ye provinces their backs
Ye grievous burden of his royal tax.
His tribute tooke he with a greedy hande
From alle ye goods that were in alle ye lande;
Likewise his claim he made to equal share
Of all that boughten was from other where,
And eke he gathered store of revenue
From aught ye people digged or wrought, or grew.

Ne was he yett content to work this ill,
That overbrimming did his coffers fill,
And made ye people discontented be,
The while they gnawed ye bread of povertie.

Grown arrogant and proude with his despoil
Of alle ye wealth and alle ye faithful toil,
He yett was fain to work a worser woe,
And make ye hapless people slaves allsoe.

Then up arose ye Calithumpian bande
And such a worde was sent through alle ye lande
That every man his sworde and gun should bring
And join together to resist ye King.

Erstwhile ye clang of arms and war went out
Ye soldiers came and joined in deadly bout,
Mars stoode aloft ye ruler of ye day
And bid ye struggling nations fight away.

And as ye battle waxed on every hande,
Assembled then ye Calithumpian bande,
And with each other counsell took as how

They might ye King his subjects disallow.

Long time ye weighty matter held their thought,
Long time they pondered what they could and ought,
Long time they brooded o'er their every wronge
And then they wrote a paper fierce and longe;
Ye fourth day of ye month July, so please it,
Word went unto ye hateful King to cheese it.

EPILOGUE

This daye an hundred yeare and more have sped
And alle ye ancient men forsooth are dead,
But haply now ye freedom that they won
Is ownd by every Calithumpian son.

What erste ye struggling provinces gave birth
Is now a mighty nation of ye earth,
And here no odious ruler doth hold sway
(Ye officers are Godly men alway),
The while ye people, glorious and free,
Pay not a cent of tax and happy be,
Now boasts each Calithumpian he has won
Ye grandest government beneathe ye sun,
And, leste ye world should faile to see ye same,
He shoots a cannon and makes loud acclaim.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 60–62.

Santa Monica Gossip

THERE is M., do you see him?
He waits on Miss D.
He's the butt of the campers
Down by the sea.

With airs the most lordly,
And language to match,
He's as ugly and mean as
The very Old Scratch.

He would have you believe him
A Flood or O'Brien,
When, in fact, he is poorer
Than Pharaoh's lean kine.

Now this arrogant fellow's
A dandy, you know,
And a dandy is nothing
Unless he's a beau.

But the beau and the dandy
Beyond all compare,
Like Miss Flora McFlimsey,
Had nothing to wear.

Said the destitute fellow,
"I don't see the hurt
Of a little amusement—
I'll borrow a shirt."

And when he had borrowed
A shirt that would suit,
He borrowed a necktie
And collar to boot.
"Now I see," said the coxcomb,
"I'm fixed for a swell,
While I'm at it, I'll borrow
A hat and umbrel."

Then, with shirt and with collar,
Umbrella and hat,
To the beach he meandered
And on it he sat.

And he ogled and flattered
Poor little Miss D.
Till he won her affections
Down by the sea.

And the worst of the business
(Twas meaner than dirt!)
He cut out the fellow
Who loaned him the shirt.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 63–64.

Quantum Suf.

I KNEW a great booby at school—
A coward he was and half fool—
And he hadn't the sense,
When a rumpus commenced,
Either to fight or to run;
So the boys used to whip him for fun.

Whenever a boy felt inclined
To belabor the booby behind,
The fool stood his ground
To the very last round,
And then he would bellow with pain,
"T dare you to do it again."

There's a fellow engaged on the Star
Who stands with the booby at par.
When I kick him about

Till my venom gives out,
He howls "Ouch, by Jimeny Hokey!
Let us have some more poetry, Pokey."

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), p. 65.

Two Soldiers

I KNEW a man of brave and generous deeds,
Who, nerved with courage and a righteous cause,
Went forth to battle. Fought he well and long—
Fought for his country and for those he loved,
Nor turned aside the measure of a span
When in his path he met the giant Death
Disputing passage. Where he fought he fell,
And there, unsuccored by a friendly hand,
Breathed out his life. It was a glorious deed,
And well the world may call him hero; well
May sound his praises far and near, and wreathe
His tomb with laurels. Yet, methinks, there is
Another heroism, grander still,
Which, all too oft, the world forgets to praise.

The soldier felt the martial thrill of strife;
Midst beat of drum and tramp of thousand feet
He marched to battle, taking equal chance
Of life and death with foe who met him there.
And thus to strive and thus to dare and die
Were worth the tribute of a patriot's life.

Another one I knew—
A frail, weak woman, but with iron heart,
Who, in the quiet of a loving home,
Waged battle that might make the hardy quail.

Alone, with unnerved arm, with sinking hope,
She fought with Fate, and ever knew defeat,
Yet fought and fought again, with stubborn will,
Denying to her foe the victory.
Nor blanched her cheek with fear, nor from her lips
Escaped a single outcry of despair.
Her life, the field of conflict, yielded she,
But inch by inch, as driven back amain,
Until the utmost boundary was reached.
'Twas no surrender, but a long retreat
To death—and Fate was master of the day.

Which was the better soldier, he or she?
Which of the twain possessed the stouter heart?
The world may give unequal meed of praise
And glorify the one who fell in strife.
God saw the noble conflicts; He will judge,
And not the less award to that brave soul

Who battled with a more than mortal foe,
And at the last snatched victory from defeat.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), pp. 66–67.

As Told to Mrs. McShaughnessy

IT'S not with a taydious long sthory Oi'll throuble you,
Och, hone! Mrs. McShaughnessy,
It's about a gossoon that was called Robert W.
Och, hone! Mrs. McShaughnessy.

This gallus young b'y was as foine as a fiddle,
Och, hone! Mrs. McShaughnessy,
So foine that he parted his name in the middle,
Och, hone! Mrs. McShaughnessy.

And parting his name was the layst of his follies,
Och, hone! Mrs. McShaughnessy,
Whin he wrote himself down in the fashion R. Wallace,
Och, hone! Mrs. McShaughnessy.

With an oi to advancing his fortunes and shtation,
Och, hone! Mrs. McShaughnessy,
As the plain Robert Wallace he got nomination,
Och, hone! Mrs. McShaughnessy.

But politics wasn't at all to his liking,
Och, hone! Mrs. McShaughnessy,
And he left in a way that was novel and shtriking,
Och, hone! Mrs. McShaughnessy.

It's a sorrowful tale as was iver related,
Och, hone! Mrs. McShaughnessy,
Robert Wallace was drowned; Wallace Laich emigrated,
Och, hone! Mrs. McShaughnessy.

Oct. 30, 1880.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), p. 68.

A Song

DROPS and drops of water
From the slanting rain;
Two little drops of water
Trickling down the pane;
Now are their ways divided,
Now they closer run,
Now they stop—now they start—
Now the two are one.

Drops and drops a-many
From the driving rain,
And the biggest drop of any
Goes skurrying off the pane.

Life, my dear, is only
A spattered pane of glass:
Our loves come down from heaven,
And over the pane they pass:
They are ever hurrying onward—
Hastening past recall—
And some go singly downward,
While some commingling fall;
And those that are fondly mated,
In the space of a fleeting breath,
Must pass, like the drops that are fated,
To fall o'er the sill of death.

Publication. *My Vagabonds: A Collection of Fugitive Verses* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889), p. 69.

BOOK TWO | *SNATCHES OF SONG*

Stage II | Retrospective collection and late arrangement, 1921

The complete 1921 book follows in its original order and four-part architecture. Repeated poems are retained as distinct book witnesses. The two typographically visual sequences are reproduced in facsimile.

I Said to My Verse

Prefatory Poem.

Oh, little Verse,
I did complain,
How sets thy course,
Child of my brain?

I fear the jaunt
That's just begun,
Ends just beyond;—
In oblivion.

Then saith my Verse,
In fancy free,
Think of thyself,
And not of me.

For thou art mortal;
I am thought;
I am remembered;—
Thou'rt forgot.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 11–14.

The Mocking-Bird

Songs.

To the topmost branch of my cedar tree
Comes a Mocking-bird and sings to me,
And he sways and swings and pipes with glee,
On the topmost twig of my cedar tree.

He comes at night, does my piper gay,
When sounds are muffled and far away,
When the air is still and the earth is grey,—
He comes at night, does my piper gay.

So full of music, so full of mirth,
He mocks the meaner things of earth,
And sound itself has another birth,
And is filled with music and filled with mirth.

To the raucous cry of the barnyard fowl—
To the wail of the cat, to the hoot of the owl,—
To all that hide and skulk and prowl—
A musical quip for their screech and howl

On the topmost branch of my cedar tree
He swings in the night and sings to me;
He mocks the meaner things of earth,
And my soul itself has another birth.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 15.

The Canyon Wren

Trim little, pert little warbler,
Far on the mountain height,
Taking his daily lesson,
Singing with all his might,—
Do,
Si,
La,
Sol,
Think you I do it right?

Yes, little flitting singer,
Up in the big pine tree,
Partly your notes are warbled
True as true can be;—
Do,
Si,
La,
Sol,—
Then you astonish me.

Bright little, brisk little pupil
Singing above the trail,
Why should you try so aptly,
Why should you try and fail?
Do,
Si,
La,
Sol,
Do not complete the scale.
Then sang a wren from the canyon,
(Sweetest that ever I heard)
And the notes were rippling laughter
At critic so absurd;—
Do,

Si
La,
Sol,
Four are enough for a bird.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 16.

To the Ostrich

Thou freak uncouth, with supercilious air,—
A beast with plumage and a bird with hair,—
To class thee with thy kind I do despair,
    For all analogies so strangely fail;
Folly of all the beasts and birds assumed
In one huge carcass, billed and toed and plumed,
The fads of Fashion thou hast well disclosed,
To skimp thy legs, (indecently exposed),
    And over-decorate thy useless wings and tail.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 17.

To an English Sparrow

My sturdy little Britisher,
Late comer to our city,
That you're an uncongenial guest
Is something of a pity.

I like you for your pep and go,
I like you for your daring;
But I am told with other birds
You're somewhat overbearing.

Industrious and quarrelsome,
Ill-natured at your leisure,
You whip another bird, 'tis said,
That's more than twice your measure.

So, while your multiplying tribe
Seems destined to endure,
The others of our whilom guests
Are growing few and fewer.

I much regret, my British friend,
While you are bolder, wiser,
Your real merits fail to shine
As such a colonizer.

So I commit thee, here and now,—
In durance vile thou sittest-—
For trial under martial law;—
Survival of the Fittest.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 18.

Oh, Cheer Up!

A poor little bird sat on a limb,
    Singing: Chirrup, cheer up, chirrup,
And nobody took any thought of him,
    Singing: Chirrup,
But whether his singing was right or wrong,
He sang from an innate love of song,
And he perked and twittered the whole day long,
    Singing: Chirrup.

'Twas a poor little bird with a plain little way,
    Singing: Chirrup, cheer up, chirrup,
And simple indeed was his roundelay,
    Singing: Chirrup,
But he bent his will to the singing o't,
As he swelled and quavered his little throat,
And poured out his soul with every note,
    Singing: Chirrup.

A sad little maiden happened near
    Chirrup, cheer up, chirrup,
Wiping away a briny tear,
    Chirrup.
And she heard the song of the little bird,
And it warmed her heart with its cheery word:
'Tis the sweetest song that ever I've heard,
    This Cheer up."
A passing lad was grumpy and blue,
    Chirrup, cheer up, chirrup,
And he didn't know just what to do;
    Cheer up.
But his gloomy mood did the song beguile,
And he staid his step to listen a while;—
He saw the maid and caught her smile,
    Oh, cheer up.

And now I can't begin to say
Chirrup, cheer up, chirrup,
How happy they were as they walked away,
Oh, cheer up,
But the little bird sat on the self-same tree,
The happiest one of all the three,
As a dear little peace-maker ought to be,
Singing: Chirrup, cheer up, chirrup.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 19.

The Mourning Dove

When the benign Creator sent his birds
    To cheer Man's rugged pathway and sojourn with him,
Giving them songs with meanings more than words,
To match his joy, his hope, his toil, his love,
Then also came the dove,
    To mourn with him.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 20.

Little Swallow, Flitting

Little Swallow, flitting
To and fro,
Innocent, unwitting
Aught of woe,
Could I be as light of heart and free,
Would I were a swallow too, with thee,
Flitting,
Flitting,
Flitting to and fro,
Innocent, unwitting aught of woe.

Mud-daubed nest dependent
From the wall,
Where the sun resplendent
Makes his call;
Man might imitate thy simple art,
Letting sunshine into home and heart;
Humble,
Happy,
Pattern for us all—
Mud-daubed nest dependent from the wall.

Sober coat and homely,
Brown and white,—
Other birds more comely
To the sight;
For thy garb I prize thee not the less;.
Birds nor men are better for their dress.
Plain,
Or gay,
Unchanged is thy delight,—
Sober coat and homely—brown and white.
Lowly is thy station,
Daubing clay,
Artisan and mason
In a way,
Pattern still of industry and thrift;—
Fortune favors those who earn her gift.
Toiling,

Delving,
Through the livelong day;—
Lowly is thy station, daubing clay.

Sweeter song and fitter
Other's note;
Thine a simple twitter
From the throat.
Envy thou the fulsome, merry song,
While thy plaintive note thou dost prolong?
Peace,
Content,
Ambitionless thy lot,—
Thine a simple twitter;—envy not!

Every want provided,
Frugal care!
Duties all divided
By the pair;
Sharing each in turn the toil and rest,
Side by side at night upon the nest;—
Love
And labor,—
Equal joy and care—
Duties all divided by the pair!
Slight thy wealth and pleasure
Seems at best;
Five small eggs thy treasure
In the nest.
Skimming swiftly through the upper air,
Such thy recreation, past compare.
Wealth
And joy!
Oh, swallow, truly blest!
Five small eggs thy treasure in the nest.

Careless of the morrow
Evermore,
Know'st thou what a sorrow
Is in store?
Ruthless hands this evil day will come
Making desolate thy happy home;—
Ruined,
Desolate,—
A home no more;
Know'st thou what a sorrow is in store?

Nest all torn and tattered,
Ruin done;
Five small eggs all shattered,
Every one!
Will the heart within thee fail at last,
Looking at the ruin of the past?
Cheerless,
Homeless,
Hopelessly undone;—
Five small eggs all shattered, every one!
Scarcely worth regretting
Mischief done;
Ere the sun's next setting
Work begun:
Soon another nest with precious store,—
Other five within it as before.
Brave,
Undaunted,
Noble little one!
Ere the sun's next setting work begun.

Now in joy unceasing
And in peace, 7
May thy tribe increasing
Still increase!
And thy humble home aye happy be,
From the spoiler's hand forever free.
Careless,
Busy,
Living aye in peace,
May thy tribe increasing, still increase!

Little Swallow, flitting
To and fro,
Innocent, unwitting
Aught of woe,
Could I be as light of heart and free,
Would I were a swallow, too, with thee,
Flitting,
Flitting,
Flitting to and fro,
Innocent, unwitting aught of woe!

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 21–24.

The Flyer Flies

The Flyer flies
Like bird a-wing,
And, like the lark,
Flies caroling.

The flyer flies
From farthest west,
And, like the thrush,
Flies from his nest.

Like bird of passage,
Wild and free;—
Like water-fowl,
From sea to sea;

And when he finds
Atlantic's tide,
He'll wheel and turn,
And sail and glide;

He'll wheel and turn,
Like carrier-dove,
And seek the cote
That holds his love.

He'll skim the earth,
He'll cleave the sky,
And, like the swan,
He'll sing and die.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 25.

Creel Club Song

Here's a song to our mountain sport, boys;
Here's a toast to the rod and reel;
We have stolen away for a week and a day,
And we're whooping it up at the Creel.
Good-bye to all worry and strife, boys,
Good-bye to the office and den;
Pass the flagon along and join in a song
To the little log house in the glen.

Creel, creel, crickety-creel,
Nothing to worry about.
Up and away at peep o' day,
And back with a creel full of trout.

The river runs brawling below, boys,
And the fish are a hungry set;
We'll go down by and by and drop them a fly,
And take them in out of the wet.

It's a pleasure to wade in the stream, boys,
And tramping's the angler's delight;
Our trousers all damp, we will come back to camp
With a cannibal's appetite.

And then, when the table is spread, boys,
We rally about with a will,
And every man Jack has a load to pack,
When he waddles away from the grill.
And then come the pipes and tobac', boys,—
And maybe a bottle or two,
And the stories we tell—they just beat—well,
Singing tooral-ti-looral to Lou.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 26.

As Night Awaits Upon Morning

As Night awaits upon Morning,
    And welcomes the dawn of Day;
As the somnolent earth reviving
    Responds to the showers of May;

As Winter rolls his blankets,
    And ties them up with a string,
When he catches a whiff of the blossoms

    That herald the coming Spring;

As sorrow reacts in gladness,
    And surcease follows pain;
As an old man turns to a young man
    For the frolic of living again;

So, boy, I send a greeting
    To your birthday from mine:
May the light and hope of the Morning,
    And the joy of Spring be thine.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 27.

Florence, with the Laughing Eyes

Florence, with the laughing eyes,
I am in a dark brown study;
Mystery of mysteries!
(It would puzzle anybody—
Even Prophet or Mahatma)
Whether you are laughing with,
Or laughing at me.

Florence, with the dancing eyes,
'Tis the very joy of being;—
(Eyes were made for courtesies,
Not the less than made for seeing,)
But, dear Florence, won't you tell, oh,
Whether they're to dance with me,
Or 't'other fellow?

Florence, with the liquid eyes,
Sweeter far than mountain daisies,
Surely where such frolic lies
There are also tender phases.
So, dear Florence, will you duly
Keep some tenderness in store
For yours truly?

Florence, with the glorious eyes,
Laughing, dancing, sighing, weeping,
Here's my heart in either-wise,
Always surely in your keeping;
For my fond devotion's due you,
And, dear Florence, let me be
—A brother to you.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 28.

The Girl with a Pillow

Two maidens were sitting one summer day
In the shade of a spreading willow,
And one was making a shift for herself,
The other a shift for a pillow.

The bright needles flew over and through,
The thread went gliding after.
And the maidens beguile their time the while
With merriment and laughter.

But alack for the hands, and alas for the heads
That ply their art so bewitching.
They are running amain on another train
And playing the deuce with their stitching.

"There, I vum," says the girl with the nameless attire,
"I have broken my needle, the torment!
Some fortunate end will surely attend;
There's good luck in store for this garment;

"It's a sign all agree, true as ever can be,
That you're sure of catching your fellow;
I'm to wed in a year." "We shall see, my dear,"
Replies the girl with the pillow.

So the bright needles flew over and through,
And the thread went after skipping;
But that on the pillow-shift making its seam
Kept snarling and catching and tripping.

"Oh, Sue, I'm afraid you must die an old maid,
For it seems by the fates so allotted;
Just look at your thread, dear, just look at your thread,
And see how it's tangled and knotted."

But the girl with the thread all tangled and snarled
Says: "There may be a hope for me still, oh,
In time, never fear, we shall see, my dear."
And worked away at her pillow.

Now a year has gone by, and the world tonight
Still tosses on Time's fitful billow,
And I'll wager my bed that a husband's head
Is at rest on one-half of that pillow;

While the maiden that stitched on the nameless attire,
To whom the promising charm went,
Is in maidenly sleep on her maidenly couch,
Wrapped in her maidenly garment.

So the one who divines by symbols and signs
Never knows what fortune may will, oh,
For better or worse, most omens reverse,
As they did with the girl and her pillow.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 29–30.

Hoover, Heaver, Hoover

All Gaul it was divided
When Caesar saw and came;
And it gave the many-sided
Roman general his fame;—
The Belgae on the northward,
The Franks upon the west,
The Germans in the middle,
And wanting all the rest.
All Gaul took what he gave her,
With his Romanesque behaviour;—
Saltpeter couldn't-save her
When Caesar saw and came.

All Gaul was whipped and humbled
When Caesar saw and came;
And of late the Hun he tumbled
To Caesar's little game;
So he moved upon the Belgae,
But the Franks upon the west
Were the ones marked out for conquest,—
The objects of his quest.
But the Belgae didn't waver,—
They fought for France, to save her,
And died without a quaver,
When the ruthless Germans came.

Oh, Britain was an island
When Caesar saw and came;—
A rugged bit of highland,—
A race without a name;
But a mighty change was strident
With the march of centuries;—
Now Britain holds the trident,
And is mistress of the seas.
And Britain, a good neighbor,
Beholding France at labor,
Got out her gun and saber,
And mingled in the game.

America was nowhere
When Caesar saw and came;
And Caesar couldn't find her
For conquest or for fame;
But Uncle Sam's now husky
For such a youthful chap,
And has gained some scraps of knowledge,
And a place upon the map.
And Uncle Sam went over,
With Pershing and with Hoover,
As correcter and improver,
To make the Germans tame.

And with Pershing
Rehearsing
And snicker-snees a-carving,
And Hoover's
Manoeuvers
For all the wrecked and starving,
We put a little bee
In the Hun's sagacity,
Till Fritz just had to see,
And he got the lesson that he was deserving.
Oh, Heaver, oh, Hoover,
The saver and improver,
Who helped to put it over,
This Hoover, Heaver, Hoover,
No longer is a rover;—
Let's put him now in clover,
This Hoover, Heaver, Hoover.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 31–32.

My Sunset Land

Beyond the desert's fiery breath,
    Beyond its dreary waste of sand,
Beyond its toil and pain and death,
    There is my glorious Sunset Land.

There do the living waters flow,
    There sing the birds in sweet attune;
There do the flowers in winter blow,
    There it seems always afternoon.

Abide with me in that sunset land;
    Come, dearest one, and abide with me,
And Heaven shall then be close at hand,
    And time shall but merge in eternity.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 33.

Mrs. McShaughnessy

If ye sthep tro' th' door ye're as wilcome as iver,
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy;
And to make ye fail aisy shall be my endiver,
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy.

And Oi'll chant ye a tale with a different chune,
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy.
About this same fellow ye call the gossoon,
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy.

It's not with a tayd'ous narration Oi'll throuble you;
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy,
Whin we knew him the b'y was just plain Robert W.
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy.

And this gallus young chap was as foine as a fiddle
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy,
Till he started to parting his name in the middle:
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy.

And parting his name was th' layst iv his follies,
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy,
Whin he wrote himself down in the fashion R. Wallace;
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy.

And wearying thin of his plain occupation
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy,
He married a gurrul of fortune and station;
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy.
And thin into politics he gallivanted;
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy,
And wint aff campaigning and argued and ranted;
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy.

But politics wasn't at last to his liking;
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy,
And he lift in a way that was novel and sthriking;
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy.

And thin for a sayson he niver was seen;
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy;
And how many wives did ye say? The spahlpeen.
Och, hone, Mrs. Mc Shaughnessy.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 34.

To a Very Large Man

You ask me whether I could learn to love,
    And feel the flame so tender and so true.
Well, yes; I think I'd love to see myself
    Caught loving such a mastodon as you.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 35.

Sinn Fein

O,
Donnybrook Fair is a dandy,
And symbol of Oireland's might;
The shillalah that iver comes handy
Is what we adore in a fight;
And an Oirishman houlds himself ridy
To take a spahlpeen b' th' t'roat,
And give him what Bruin gave Teddy,
If you tread on th' tail av his coat.
That's plain
Hit 'm again,
Larry O'Lane.

Theer

Sodgers we always are sthrifin',
And law is a deadly disgrace;
So the Oirish are slily conthrivin'
To have none at all in its place.
We don't mooch incloine to recruitin'
Or drillin'—contimptible wark,—
But we're overmuch fonder of shootin'
A Bobby or two in the park.
Again,
Sinn Fein,
Larry O'Lane.
Coom
Fighting th' Hun in his helling,
No rigiment Dublin sinds;
For I make it no secret in telling,
His Allness is one av our fr'ends;
And wheer is th' use av a shindy
So far from th' Imerald Isle,
Whin Ulster is aisy and handy,
And out f'r a schrap all th' whoile?
Come again,
Sinn Fein,
Larry O'Lane.

Aff
Voting and riprisentation
    No Oirishman cares a baubee;
We prafir to consthruct our own nation,
    And sind it far over th' sea.
It's freer and freer from bother
    Th' furder and furder we go,
And our cousins beyant th' big wather
    Are willin' to pay for th' show.
        Ach, hane,
        That's plain,
        Hit'm again,
        Sinn Fein,
        Larry O'Lane.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 36–37.

Larry O'Lane

And are ye belaiv'n, me hearty,
And wud ye be-loikely applaud,
Whin Oi tell ye our Prisident's party
Is mostly conjaynial abroad?
Ach, hane,
Larry O'Lane.

This Misther (whut is't?) de la Mallery
(It's a foine combination of name,
And wort th' full price av his salary
To say nothing else of the game.)
Ach, hane,
Larry O'Lane.

And whin he sthands up in a meetin'
Wuth Mayors and Gov'rners all,
Wuth bowin' and schrapin' and greetin'
For sure he's the belle av th' ball.
That's plain,
Larry O'Lane.

And ivery political party
That plays for the Oirish vote
Is well riprisented and hearty
And pipes a rispictible note.
Sinn Fein,
Larry O'Lane.
And whin it comes round to th' spaykin',
There's not an unoccupied bench,
And th' jaw av th' spayker is breakin'
Wuth utterin' Otrish and Frinch.
Hit 'im again,
Larry O'Lane.

And if iver it comes to a mocker,
That raises his v'ice over loud;—
There's a bundle av sthicks in th' locker,
And just laive th' rist to th' crowd.
Ach, hane,
Larry O'Lane,
Sinn Fein.

And if iver a Hall is denied us,
(Bad 'cess, it's a barn av a place)
There's a barrel av sulphur beside us;
And th' shanty goes up in disgrace.
Ach, hane,
Sinn Fein,
Larry O'Lane,
That's plain,
Come again.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 38–39.

A Spattered Pane of Glass

Drops and drops of water
From the slanting rain;
Two little drops of water
Trickling down the pane;
Now are their ways divided,
Now they closer run,
Now they stop—now they start—
Now the two are one.
Drops and drops a-many
From the driving rain,
And the largest drop of any
Goes skurrying off the pane.

Life, my dear, is only
A spattered pane of glass;
Our lives come down from heaven,
And over the pane they pass;
They are ever hurrying onward—
Hastening past recall—
And some go singly downward,
While some commingling fall;
And those that are fondly mated,
In the space of a fleeting breath,
Must pass, like the drops that are fated,
To fall o'er the sill of death.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 40.

Uncle Peter

A song and a shout to my old Uncle Peter;—
The jolliest cooper—the jolliest task,—
Who hammers away with a rollicking meter,
And sings to the tune on his barrel or cask.

Oh, Roundabout, Roundabout, why do you tarry?
There's beef and molasses and rum for to carry;
From early in May to the last of October
You're bound to be tight, and I'm bound to keep sober.

A rusty old shop on the bank of the river;—
I see it today with the eyes of a boy;—
Fond memory lingers upon it and ever
Brings visions of merry employment and joy.

There are barrels in stacks; there are barrels a-making,
Of cleanest and soundest and rosiest oak;
There are headings and staves close at hand for the taking,
And plenty of hickory hoop-poles a-soak.

The floor is all covered with shavings and litter;
There's spice of fresh wood, and there's spice of fresh mirth,
And my old Uncle Peter, he works in short meter,
The busiest, merriest cooper on earth.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 41.

Song of the Yacht Royal

We're away from the shore with its burden of care,
We're out for a nip of the jolly salt air,
We're tacking to lee and we're tacking to port,
And every man Jack is a nautical sport.

Royal, ahoy, ahoy; Royal ahoy!
Aye, aye, Sir!
Yachting's a joy, a joy, a joy,
We shall try, Sir.

Skipper Dan in command, Cox'n Bill at the wheel,
We are gliding along on a slippery keel;
Our course is Sou'west—for the island we're bound,
(Look out for your head when the boom comes round).

The wind it blows fresh from the Nor'-nor'-east,
The salt water foams at her prow like yeast,
And the spray dashes in, just to show, by the bye,
That nautical sports have no call to be dry.

The Doctor is stowed just abaft of the waist,
For a sea-faring life is not up to his taste,
And the crew heave-a-ho with a bang and a slam;
But the Doctor heaves nothing—he don't care a damn.

Seaman Frank, on the word, takes his trick at the mast,
In loosing and hauling, and then making fast;
Like a seasoned old tar he is chipper and glib,
And, by way of diversion, he straddles the jib.
Sailor Tom, in a steady and sailor-like way,
Stands by at the stays to let go and belay,
And Swashbuckler Doodle, with nothing to do,
Is the soberest landsman of all the crew.

Royal, ahoy.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 42.

To the Peacock

Bird of flamboyant dress and airs sublime—
    Becoming neither prince nor varlet—
If vanity were counted as a crime,
    Thy sins were scarlet.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 43.

Snake, He Make

Snake he make a hoe-cake,
    Set a frog to tend it;
Frog he eat de hoe-cake,
    Think it's splendid;
Snake eat frog and hoe-cake,
    As he fust intended.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 43.

It's Going to Rain

The black bear is out in the mountains,
The hedgehog is out on the plain;
They both are knowing creatures,
And—it's going to rain.

The birds and the chipmunks and gophers
Are storing their winter grain;
They know pretty well what's coming,
For—it's going to rain.

The geese are flying southward,
In many a trooping train;
They hasten to tropical countries
For—it's going to rain.

The anglers are rejoicing,
And one and all maintain
That the fish bite well this weather
For—it's going to rain.

We brush with desperation
At the fly that won't refrain,
From pestering night and morning,
For—it's going to rain.

There's something in the heavens
That wasn't put there in vain;
The clouds all look portentous,
And—it's going to rain.
The atmospheric pressure
Is something we can't explain;
The barometer touches bottom,
And—it's going to rain.

And Jupiter P., the mighty,
Will smile on his people again,
And the land will bloom in beauty,
For—it's going to rain.

And the grass upon the hillside,
    And the corn upon the plain
Will leap to the warmth of the sunshine,
    For—it's going to rain.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 44–45.

Our Lady

Our Lady, fair Queen of the Angels,
That ruleth the valley of bliss,
The saints and the holy evangels
Salute thee to-day with a kiss!

And legions unnumbered and nameless
Troop forth from the land of the blest,
And even the anchorite, blameless,
Bestoweth his kiss with the rest.

Most favored of all the immortals,
Lo, what doth Thy Majesty lack?
Saint Peter stands guard at thy portals,
Saint Gabriel waits at thy back.

Saint Monica, child of the ocean,
Most youthful of all and most fair,
Makes the end of her every devotion
To charm away thy care.

And Barbara, blessed hand-maiden,
Stays but for thy royal command,
And the cloud that she sends is rain-laden
To beautify all the land.

Francisco, the friar of Grey Orders,
His benison sends from afar,
And the saints that dwell over the borders
Most faithful of servitors are.
Diego contributes his portion
To make thy enjoyment complete;
And Buenaventura, good fortune,
Doth ever repose at thy feet.

Bernardino, the monk of the mountains,
Makes humble obeisance as well,
And the patron of rivers and fountains
Hath come to thy valley to dwell.

And I doubt not, fair Queen, if another,—
Saint Benedict—dwelt in this land,
Unable his passion to smother,
He'd proffer his heart and his hand.

Oh, Queen! I bow down before thee,
Allegiance unfailing to prove;
Midst the saints and the men who adore thee,
I offer my tribute of love.

For aye be our Lady, Queen regnant
In this land of the orange and vine,
Where the sun shineth ever benignant,
And where nature is all but divine;

Where the bee stores her crystalline treasure,
The mocking-bird pipes the night long,
And where life is as smooth as the measure
That runs through the poet's song.

And our Lady, fair Queen of the Angels,
That rulest the valley of bliss,
The saints and the holy evangels
Salute thee to-day with a kiss.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 46–47.

Song of the Aeroplane

I fly, I fly!
With wings outstretched that never tire,—
Of woven web and thews of wire—
And with a throbbing heart of fire,
I fly, I fly!

I sail, I soar!
Over the land and over the sea,
And like a Brobdingnagian bee,
My paddles whir a threnody;
I sail and roar.

I circle wide,
Out from the busy marts of men,
O'er field and forest, hill and glen,—
O'er all the country side, and then
I dip and glide.

I journey far,
Like bird of passage, sent by Time
To carry in its flight sublime
A message of Spring to every clime;
I journey far.

I veer and climb,
Like eagle wheeling in his flight
To pierce the empyrean's height,
The air outmastered by my might;
I veer and climb.
Afar, afar,
Where the void enwraps and the earth grows dim,—
Beyond the cloud with a purple rim,—
I wheel and dive and loop and skim;
Afar, afar.

Like bird of prey,
I fight with my kind aloft, as I fly,
And the death that I deal is a bolt from the sky,
That only the bravest dares to die;
Like bird of prey.

Like bird a-wing,
I seek the pathless fields of space,
And tread the air, and leave no trace,
But not a bird shall keep my pace,—
No bird a-wing.

In eager quest,—
O'er fields of green and hills of brown,
With rivers winding and weaving down,
And landscapes spotted with city and town,
I make my quest.

I soar and sing,
Over the desert's shifting bed,—
Over a land that is sere and dead,
Over the Colorado red,
I cleave the void.
My way is free;—
Beyond the mountains wreathed with snow,
Where broad Pacific waters flow,
In the flowery fields of the after-glow,
I claim mine own.

From shore to shore
I span a continent, and ride
The winds of heaven far and wide
Across old ocean's stormy tide,
To claim mine own.

The air is mine.
And thus, behold I issue forth
Another Puck, of modern birth,
To put a girdle round the earth.
The air is mine!
Echo
I fly, I fly,
I sail, I soar;
I circle wide,
And journey far;

I veer and climb,
    Like bird a-wing,
In eager quest,
    I soar and sing.

The air is mine;
    My way is free
From shore to shore,
    From sea to sea!

FOR CHILDREN

AND GROWN-UPS

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 48–52.

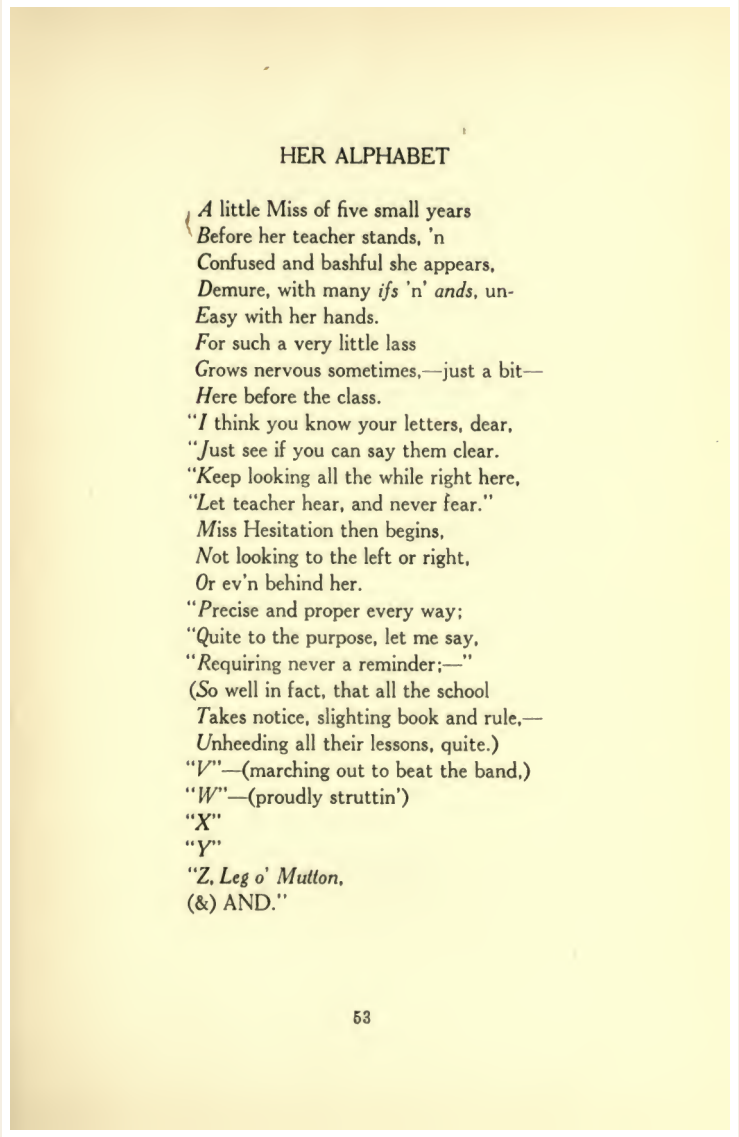
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HER ALPHABET

(A little Miss of five small years
Before her teacher stands, 'n
Confused and bashful she appears,
Demure, with many ifs 'n' ands, un-
Easy with her hands.
For such a very little lass
Grows nervous sometimes,—just a bit—
Here before the class.
"I think you know your letters, dear,
"Just see if you can say them clear.
"Keep looking all the while right here,
"Let teacher hear, and never fear."
Miss Hesitation then begins,
Not looking to the left or right,
Or ev'n behind her.
"Precise and proper every way;
"Quite to the purpose, let me say,
"Requiring never a reminder;—"
(So well in fact, that all the school
Takes notice, slighting book and rule,—
Unheeding all their lessons, quite.)
"Y"'—(marching out to beat the band,)
"W"—(proudly struttin')
"yn
"yr
'Z, Leg o' Mutton,
(&) AND."

Her Alphabet

Source facsimile. The original page remains the textual and spatial authority.



HER ALPHABET

A little Miss of five small years
*B*efore her teacher stands, 'n
*C*onfused and bashful she appears,
*D*emure, with many *ifs* 'n' *ands*, un-
*E*asy with her hands.
*F*or such a very little lass
*G*rows nervous sometimes,—just a bit—
*H*ere before the class.
"*I* think you know your letters, dear,
"*J*ust see if you can say them clear.
"*K*eep looking all the while right here,
"*L*et teacher hear, and never fear."
*M*iss Hesitation then begins,
*N*ot looking to the left or right,
*O*r ev'n behind her.
"*P*recise and proper every way;
"*Q*uite to the purpose, let me say,
"*R*equiring never a reminder;—"
(*S*o well in fact, that all the school
*T*akes notice, slighting book and rule,—
*U*nheeding all their lessons, quite.)
"*V*"—(marching out to beat the band,)
"*W*"—(proudly struttin')
"*X*"
"*Y*"
"*Z*, *Leg o' Mutton*,
(&) AND."

53

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 53.

TO BARBARA

A Saint, a City and a Girl! All three
Begin the spelling of their names with

The City, mistress of a noble bay,
Seconds the motion with the letter

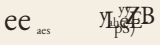
The Girl I'm now saluting from afar
Joins the procession with the letter

The Saint beginning with the letter
A virgin-martyr shines in history;

The City, second with the letter A,
Is always bright, and beautiful and gay;

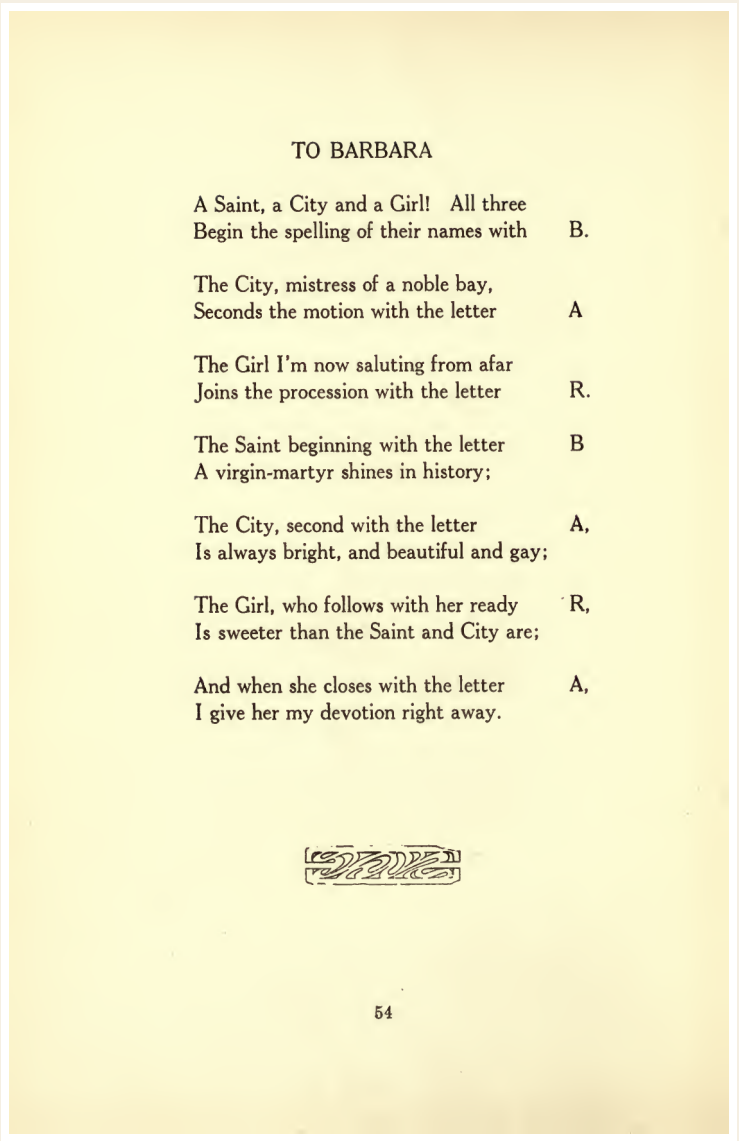
The Girl, who follows with her ready R,
Is sweeter than the Saint and City are;

And when she closes with the letter A,
I give her my devotion right away.



To Barbara

Source facsimile. The original page remains the textual and spatial authority.



TO BARBARA

A Saint, a City and a Girl! All three
Begin the spelling of their names with B.

The City, mistress of a noble bay,
Seconds the motion with the letter A

The Girl I'm now saluting from afar
Joins the procession with the letter R.

The Saint beginning with the letter B
A virgin-martyr shines in history;

The City, second with the letter A,
Is always bright, and beautiful and gay;

The Girl, who follows with her ready R,
Is sweeter than the Saint and City are;

And when she closes with the letter A,
I give her my devotion right away.

54

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 54.

Dorothy Dix

Dorothy Dix,
With her manners and tricks,
Was surely an elegant creature;
But she went at a gait
That I hate to relate,
When she wouldn't marry the preacher.

"Oh, Dorothy Dix!
"Oh, Dorothy Dix!"
But no persuasion could reach her;
He might chortle and pray
The live-long day,
But she just wouldn't marry the preacher.

Now, the man of her choice
Has a very fine voice
(But Dorothy Dix is a screecher)
She would sing in the choir
If it was our desire,
But she never would marry the preacher.

Now Dorothy Dix
Kept her manners and tricks,
(She was surely an elegant creature)
And powdered her face
Till it was a disgrace
And shocked the disconsolate preacher.
Now, the man of her choice,
With the very fine voice
Didn't fancy this elegant creature
She might mantle her hair
To the dandiest flare,
But he wouldn't come up like the preacher.

And Dorothy Dix,
In a deuce of a fix
Concluded to go for a teacher,
But she paddled the boys
Till they made a big noise,
And that was the ultimate feature.

Now Dorothy Dix
Went for any old sticks,
(She was still quite an elegant creature)
But the men of the town
Would never come down;—
No stick ever stuck like the preacher.

And Dorothy Dix,
With her frazzled old tricks
Is now a disconsolate creature,
For the man she forbid
Has a wife and a kid,
And she cannot marry the preacher.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 55–56.

AN OPERETTA,

Illuminating Sentiment, Romance, Music, The Arts, Crime,
Intemperance, Grief, Joy, The Law, Justice and
Retribution

A Sentimental Barber

I love to steal awhile away; (Opening
To steal, to steal a-whay: Solo—
I lo-hove to ste-heal a-whay. Tenor.)

He Plays His Guitar

Oh, what in the world care I (tum-tum,) (Solo—
For the triumphs of love or war? Instrumental
(tum-a-tum) Obligato.)
I'll pass the baubles by, (tum-tum)
And strike my light guitar. (tum-a-tum,
Tum-tum, tum-tum-a-tum-tum; oh, tummy-tum-tum.)

But Duty Calls

The pleasures of life are vain; (Solo—
Our moments quickly flee; Mezzo-
I must go to the shop again, Soprano.)
And wield my snick-er-snee.

(In the Barber's absence, a thirsty Troubadour appro-
priates the instrument; and with the proceeds thereof,
indulges his propensities.)

The Troubadour Sings

Give me (a-hic) sweet solace, dearest;
Whizzer shweet words (hic) into m' ear; (Solo—
Call me your blezzerest angel, dearest, Tenor.)
Si (hic) sittin' on a keg of beer.

(The Barber discovers his loss, and bewails it.)

57

His Wail

The lute that once through my barber-shop
The soul of music shed, (Solo—
Is stol'n and gone, and I sadly feel Baritone.)
As if my soul were dead.

(The Barber appeals to the Law for redress.)

His Appeal

Oh, Stars, shine on thy pathway.
Catch me this thief, I prithee, (Solo—
And may the blessings of my grateful spirit Basso
Dwell ever after with thee. Profundo.)

Chorus of Stars

We shine alike for all; (Chorus—
We search the depths of night; Male
Yon Troubadour shall fall Voices.)
Within our grip so tight. (Repeat Chorus
Five Times.)

(Stirring chase through the forest and elsewhere for the Troubadour.)

Chorus Again

Sleep hath enchained him, (Encore for
With her subtle bands;— Preceding
Now we have obtained him; Chorus.)
Hold his legs and hands.

Another Chorus

Slowly and sadly they laid him down,
So fresh from his field of glory: (Female
Perhaps in the morning he'll sober be, Voices.)
And tell a lugubrious story.

The Search

We search the misty ways (Duet—
Of the shadows that move by night;— Male.)
The game that Isaac plays (Atmosphere
Will yield the loot all right. of Searching.)

Recovery

The favor of heaven our noble cause hath gained,
And it is now our solace and our joy; (Response in
We gathered it, and Isaac hath explained; Staccato.)
So here's your lost pianner, barber-boy.

The Barber's Joy

Ka-lump, ko-lump, ki-ling,
Pi-r-r-r-r-uten-te-toot-te-too,
Tum-tummy, tum-tum, te-tum, (Instrumental)
Oh, whack, fa-loo-ral-loo!

The Culprit's Tale

I'm a Pilgrim and I'm a Stranger,
I have tarried, I have tarried, but a night; (Solo,
Do not detain me, oh, please, your Honor, De-
And I'll vanish very quickly from your sight. pressed)

Retribution

A pick, a rake, a hoe, (Grand finale. All
And a ball and chain to boot; on Stage. Solo by
Oh, this is dreadful woe, Heavy Villain.
Oh, this is a dire pursuit! Ball and Chain
I would that I were dead Accompaniment.)
Ere this wretched thing befell;
I would the guitar were sunk
In the uttermost depths of hell.

An Operetta

Source facsimile. The original page remains the textual and spatial authority.

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The Barber's Joy

Ka-lump, ko-lump, ki-ling,
Pi-r-r-r-r-uten-te-toot-te-too,
Tum-tummy, tum-tum, te-tum, (Instrumental)
Oh, whack, fa-loo-ral-loo!

The Culprit's Tale

I'm a Pilgrim and I'm a Stranger,
I have tarried, I have tarried, but a night; (Solo,
Do not detain me, oh, please, your Honor, De-
And I'll vanish very quickly from your sight. pressed)

Retribution

A pick, a rake, a hoe, (Grand finale. All
And a ball and chain to boot; on Stage. Solo by
Oh, this is dreadful woe, Heavy Villain.
Oh, this is a dire pursuit! Ball and Chain
I would that I were dead Accompaniment.)
Ere this wretched thing befell;
I would the guitar were sunk
In the uttermost depths of hell.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 57–59.

Shooing Out the Hens—reconstructed typography—1/2

SHOOING OUT THE HENS

Friday

Oh, Pap is in the stable,
Hitching up the filly;
Mam is in the kitchen,
Making apple jelly;
Johnny's in the orchard,
Talking to his fr'ens
And Sis is in the garden,
Shooing out the hens.
Shoo, shoo, shoo, shoo!
And
Shoo, shoo, shoo, shoo!
Shooing out the hens.

Saturday

Oh, Pap has gone to market,
With a tub of butter;
Mam is in the dining-room,
In a reg'lar splutter;
Sis is in the parlor
Talking to her beau,
And Johnny's in the garden,
Trying for to shoo.
Shoo, shoo, shoo, shoo!
(Spoken) Get out o' here, gol-dern ye! (Throws)
Shoo, shoo, shoo, shoo!
(Spoken) Everlastingly consarn ye! (Throws)

Shooing Out the Hens—reconstructed typography—2/2

Sunday

Oh, Pap has gone to meetin'
For his Bible study;
Sis has gone a-walkin'
With her little buddy,
Johnny hasn't come yet
From his Sunday School,
And Mam is in the garden,
Acting like a fool.
Shoo, shoo, shoo, shoo!
And (Acting it.)
Shoo, shoo, shoo, shoo!!

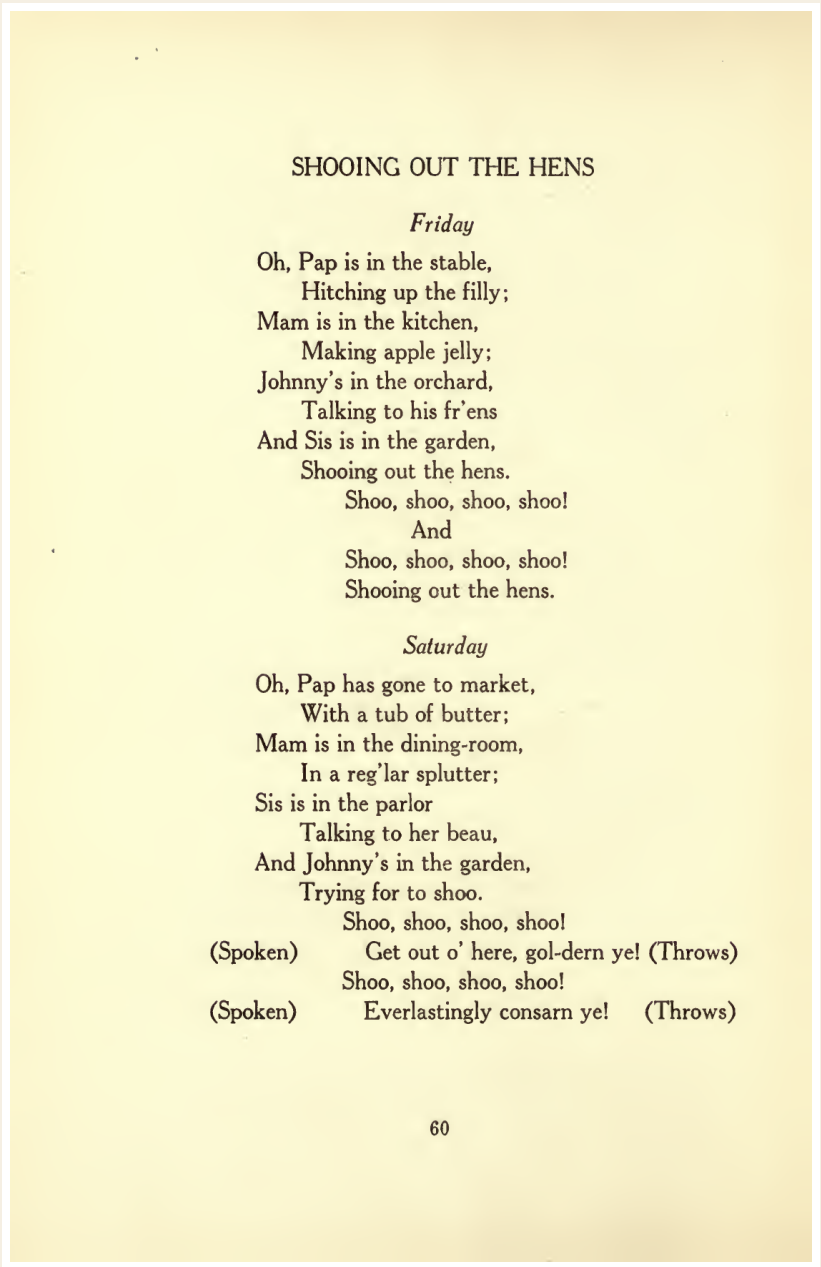
Monday

Oh, Mam has gone a-callin'
On our nearest neighbor;
Sis is in the pantry
Doing useful labor;
Johnny-boy is restin'
For a little spell,
And Dad is in the garden,
Raising merry hell.
Shoo, shoo, shoo, shoo!
(Spoken) You damn infernal measly set!! (Raising
Shoo, shoo, shoo, shoo!!! it.)
Raising merry hell.

ees

Shooing Out the Hens

Source facsimile. The original page remains the textual and spatial authority.



SHOOING OUT THE HENS

Friday

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Hitching up the filly;
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Johnny's in the orchard,
Talking to his fr'ens
And Sis is in the garden,
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Shoo, shoo, shoo, shoo!
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Sis is in the parlor
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And Johnny's in the garden,
Trying for to shoo.
Shoo, shoo, shoo, shoo!
(Spoken) Get out o' here, gol-dern ye! (Throws)
Shoo, shoo, shoo, shoo!
(Spoken) Everlastingly consarn ye! (Throws)

60

Sunday

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For his Bible study;
Sis has gone a-walkin'
With her little buddy,
Johnny hasn't come yet
From his Sunday School,
And Mam is in the garden,
Acting like a fool.
Shoo, shoo, shoo, shoo!
And (Acting it.)
Shoo, shoo, shoo, shoo!!

Monday

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On our nearest neighbor;
Sis is in the pantry
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Shoo, shoo, shoo, shoo!!! it.)
Raising merry hell.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 60–61.

A Wonderful Little Italian Man

'Tis a curious tale, if the tale be true;
As 'twas told to me I tell it to you.

The Grinder
The story ran
Of a wonderful little Italian man,
A genius who played
An organ by trade,
And sang, (or at least essayed,
For his voice was appalling,)
And gathered in dimes from the public, and made
A very good thing from his calling.

His Organ
It would play

In its very proper mechanical way,—
Always true, needing no apology—
Sixteen tunes and the doxology.
And when all of its airs and the sacred refrain
Had been ground by the grinder again and again,
They were still as sweet, as tender and true
And as good as new.

His Monkey

There followed close at the grinder's heels,
With a tireless succession of jigs and reels,
A monkey, trim,
Supple of limb,
In color dun,
And full of fun,
And the boys were exceedingly fond of him.
Wherever the grinder went to grind,
The monkey always appeared behind,
And whenever he opened his mouth to sing,
The monkey danced at the end of his string.

His Music
In a stoical way

Early and late the grinder would play,
Never skipping a tune, never losing a day;
And 'twas said thus he had played
For at least a decade;
Yet there wasn't a sign
Of any decline,
And after all this, folks fell into a doubt
Whether organ or grinder would ever wear out.

His Ways

Whenever you opened your window or blind,
He'd come and he'd grind and he'd grind and he'd grind;
His rummy old songs he would warble amain,
Keeping time to the organ's mellifluous strain,
And the monkey enthused, began cutting his antic,
And then you were frantic.
With nerves at a tension beyond your command,
You seized upon anything ready at hand,
And through window or door,
At the wretched bore
You flung it—and swore.

His Perquisites

Then the grinder stood in the meekest attitude,
Dodging both
Missile and oath,
And, expressing by sign his deepest gratitude,
Gracefully bent,
Laid hold of the article—and went.

His Thrift

Thus he passed through the town,
Gathering goods and renown,
And from all of the missiles dispatched at his head,
Reaped a handsome reward,—and still wasn't dead.

His Mischance

But it happened one time I am pained to relate
He tried once too often, and met his fate.
One ill-omened day,
The legends say,
He came to a stop
In front of the shop
Of a savage old Dutchman of sinister trade,
And then the Italian he played.

Now these Dutchmen,—
Butchers and such men—
Do not care a straw
For life, limb or law;
And the one that I mention,
With savage intention,
Laid hold of a saw.
His Fate
With no more ado
Than such craftsmen make
In cutting a steak,
Or cleaving through
A rib or stew,
He sawed the poor grinder in two.
Then a policeman came down on a canter
And arrested the villainous butcher instanter.
The Law
In durance vile
He languished a while,
And at length in quite the regular way,
The culprit appeared in court one day,
And a sad looking spectacle truly was he,
Arraigned for murder, the first degree.
The Defense
When the time for defense came on in the trial,
The butcher's attorney arose with a smile,
And he said, "Please your Honor, my client's insane;
That's plain
Such a horrid grind
Would unsettle the mind
Of the devil, your Honor, (not being profane)."

The Argument

I need not detail how he twisted the laws,
Picking code and indictment full of flaws,
Or how he worked himself into a fury,
    And made it appear
    That the butcher was queer
    Up here,
And by dint of his eloquence, carried the jury.

Retribution

The butcher walked forth a free man,
    Yet a terrible ban
    Was set by the fates upon him;
And wherever he comes and wherever he goes
He is troubled in conscience, and robbed of repose,—
His former friends all shun him,
    And from far and near
    There sounds in his ear
The dolorous tone of an organ ground,—
And haunts him forever the ghost of a sound.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 62–65.

The Time o' Day

What is the hour, little Mary?
Tell me the time, my pet,
The wise little minx, she looks, and she thinks;—
"It's twenty minutes past yet."

But that's not the hour, little Mary,—
Neither morning nor night nor noon.
And looking again, says the oracle, "Then
"It's a quarter to pretty soon."

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 66.

Lure of the Hydrant—reconstructed typography—1/6

LURE OF THE HYDRANT

The
wa-

ter
from

the
hy-

drant
drips,
Dripping away and dripping,
In many merry hops and skips,
Skipping away and skipping.

I
hear

the
fun-

ny
drops

at
play,
Playing away and playing,
As once upon a childhood day,
Running away and staying.

67

Now
like

a
rat-

tling
drum

it
goes,
Going away and going;
The merry music onward flows,
Flowing away and flowing.

Now
like

a
ban-

jo's
tink-

a-
tink
Tinking away and tinking,
And ev'ry tinkle brings a think,
Thinking away and thinking.

But
still

the
ban-

jo
tink-

les
there
Hopping away and tearing,
And tinks and tinks and doesn't care,
Caring away and caring.

And
now

there
comes

a
round-

e-
lay,
Rounding away and rounding,
The music seems to be so gay,
Bounding away and bounding.

69

Lure of the Hydrant—reconstructed typography—4/6

Now
like

a
lit-

tle
boy

at
play,
Playing away and playing,
Who knows he hadn't ought to stay,
Staying away and staying.

Now
as

an
or-

gan
whee-

zy
blows,
Wheezy it is and wheezy,
The little boy uneasy grows,
Uneasy and uneasy.

But
still

he
hears

the
mer-

ry
din,
A-rattling and a-striking;
I think I'd better now begin
To do a little hiking.

If
this

con-
found-

ed
or-

ches-
tra
Would quit its fiddle-faddling.
(You know that only yesterday
You got an awful paddling!)

71

I
think

I
bet-

ter
go

a-
way,
A-going and a-going,
And come again another day,
And hear the water flowing.

There!
now

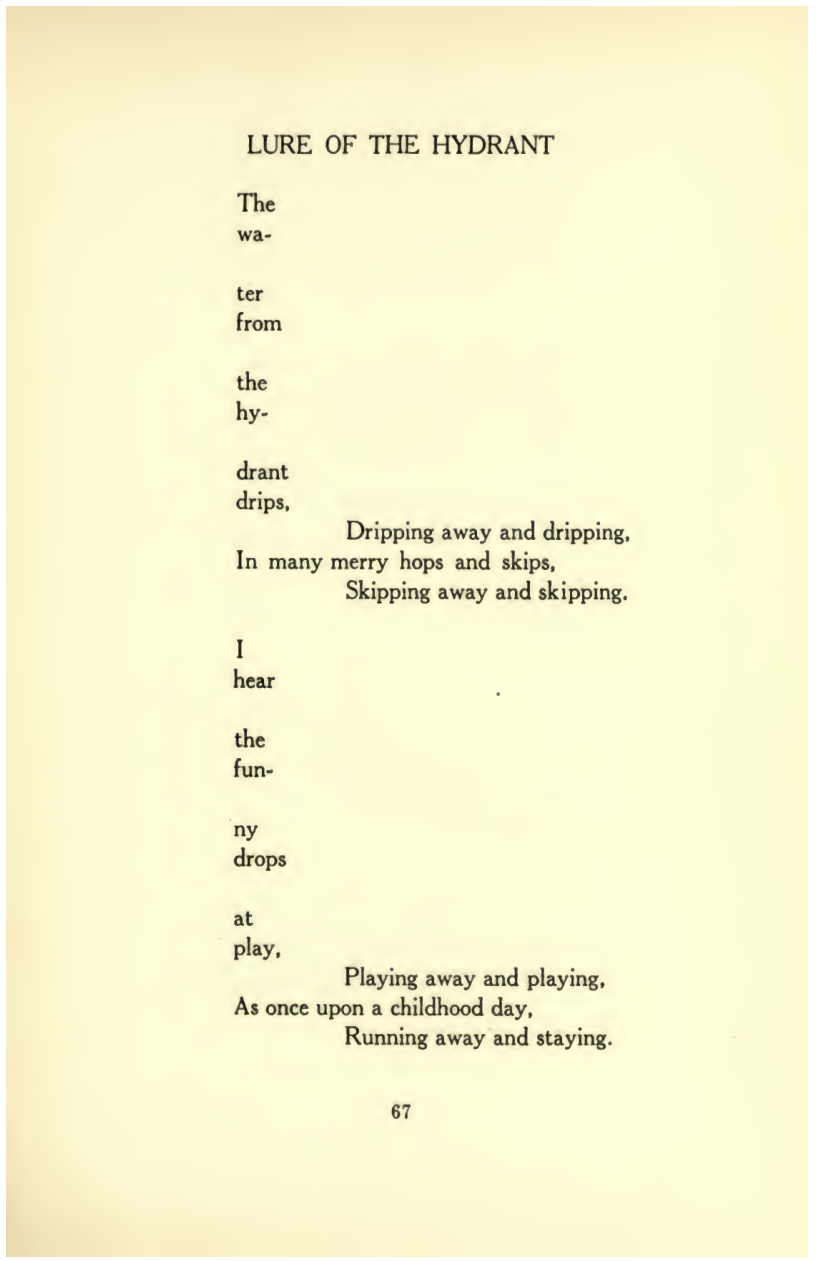
I
hear

a
lit-

tle
bell
A-ringing and a-ringing,
A song o' sixpence, I can tell
I'll pretty soon be singing.

Lure of the Hydrant

Source facsimile. The original page remains the textual and spatial authority.



LURE OF THE HYDRANT

The
wa-

ter
from

the
hy-

drant
drips,
Dripping away and dripping,
In many merry hops and skips,
Skipping away and skipping.

I
hear

the
fun-

ny
drops

at
play,
Playing away and playing,
As once upon a childhood day,
Running away and staying.

67

Now
like

a
rat-

tling
drum

it
goes,
Going away and going;
The merry music onward flows,
Flowing away and flowing.

Now
like

a
ban-

jo's
tink-

a-
tink
Tinking away and tinking,
And ev'ry tinkle brings a think,
Thinking away and thinking.

68

But
still

the
ban-

jo
tink-

les
there
Hopping away and tearing,
And tinks and tinks and doesn't care,
Caring away and caring.

And
now

there
comes

a
round-

e-
lay,
Rounding away and rounding,
The music seems to be so gay,
Bounding away and bounding.

Now
like

a
lit-

tle
boy

at
play,
Playing away and playing,
Who knows he hadn't ought to stay,
Staying away and staying.

Now
as

an
or-

gan
whee-

zy
blows,
Wheezy it is and wheezy,
The little boy uneasy grows,
Uneasy and uneasy.

70

But
still

he
hears

the
mer-

ry
din,
A-rattling and a-striking;
I think I'd better now begin
To do a little hiking.

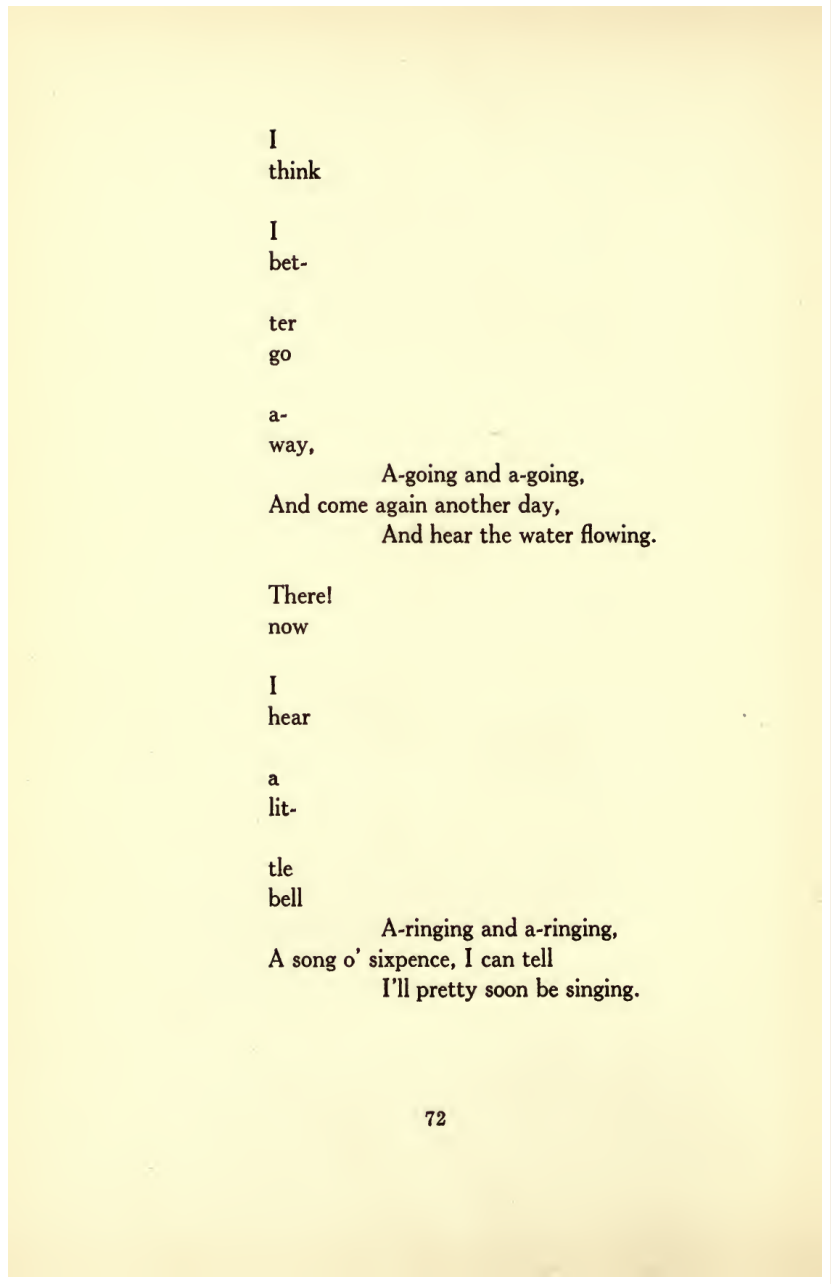
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con-
found-

ed
or-

ches-
tra
Would quit its fiddle-faddling.
(You know that only yesterday
You got an awful paddling!)

71



I
think

I
bet-

ter
go

a-
way,
A-going and a-going,
And come again another day,
And hear the water flowing.

There!
now

I
hear

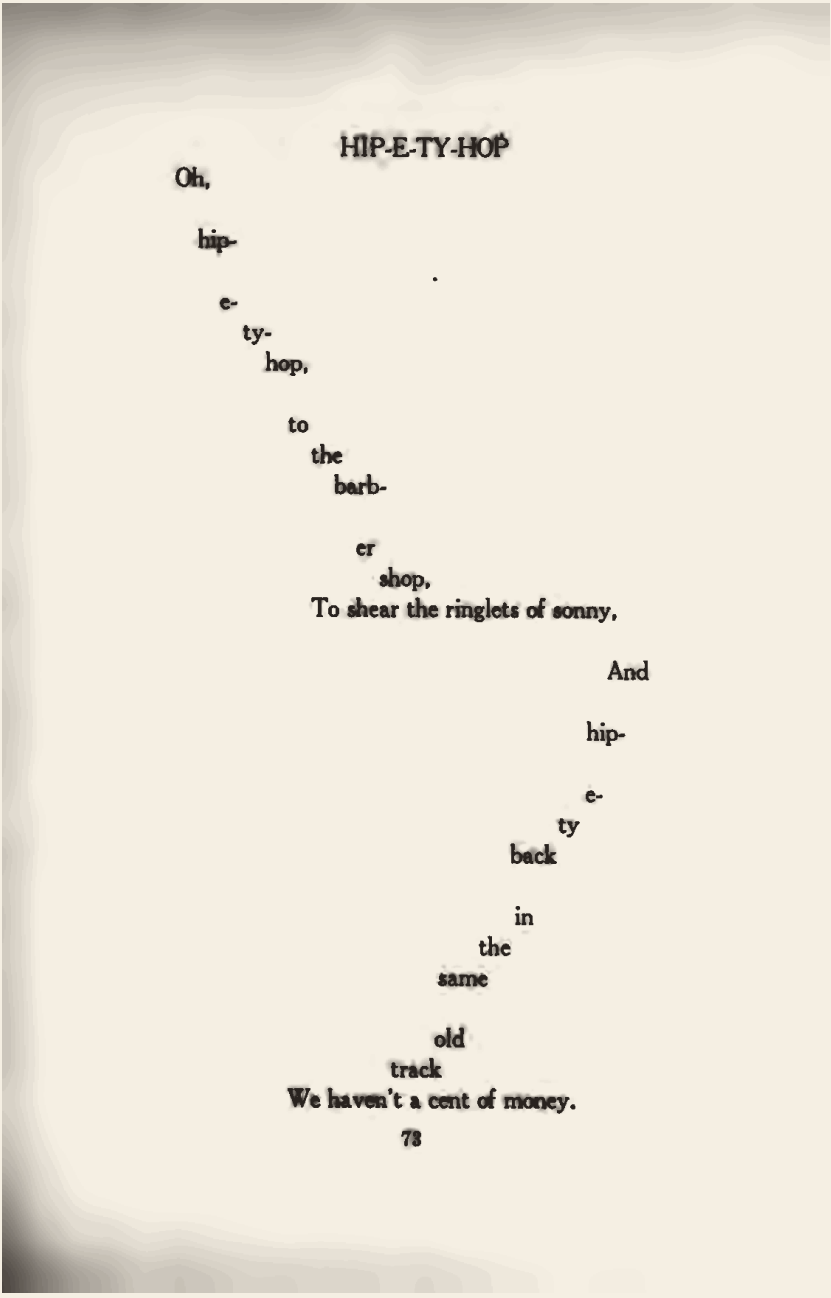
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lit-

tle
bell
A-ringing and a-ringing,
A song o' sixpence, I can tell
I'll pretty soon be singing.

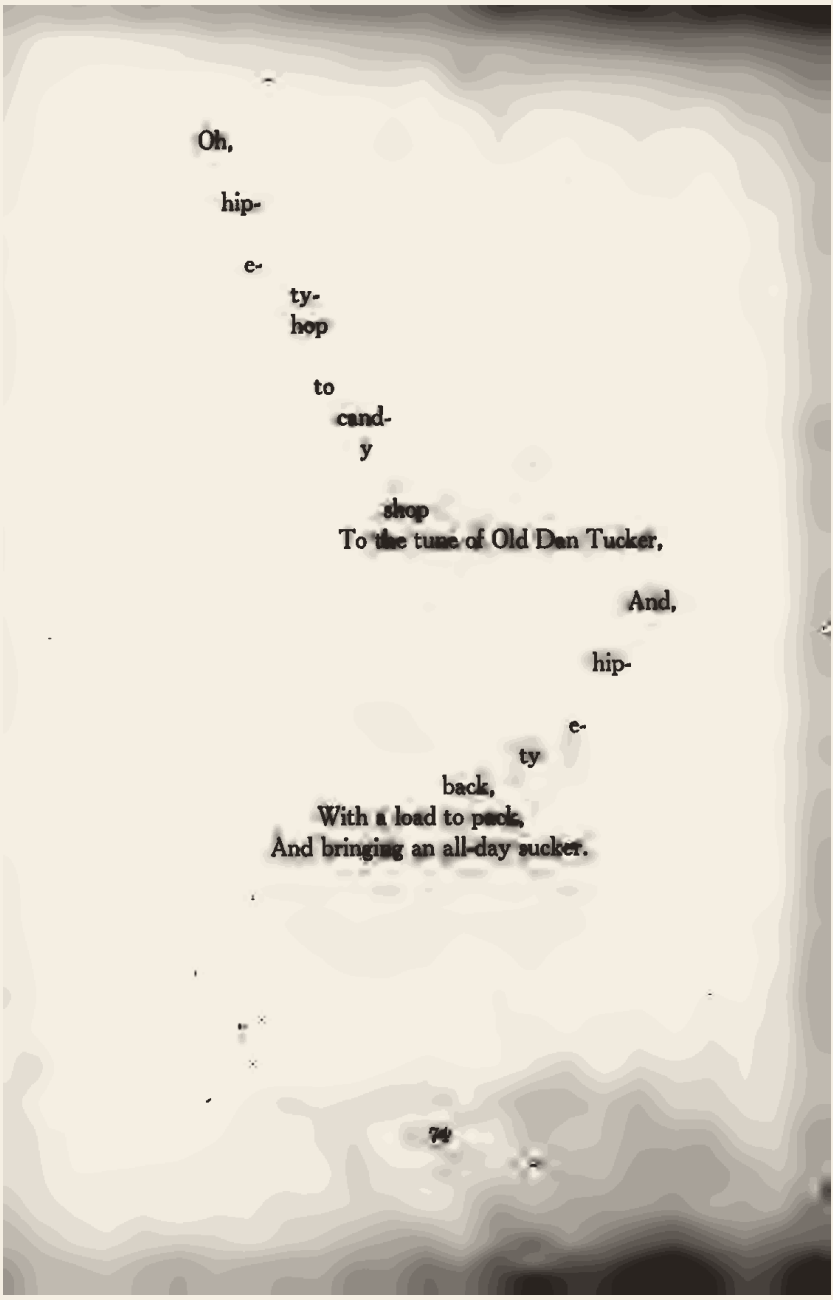
72

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 67–72.

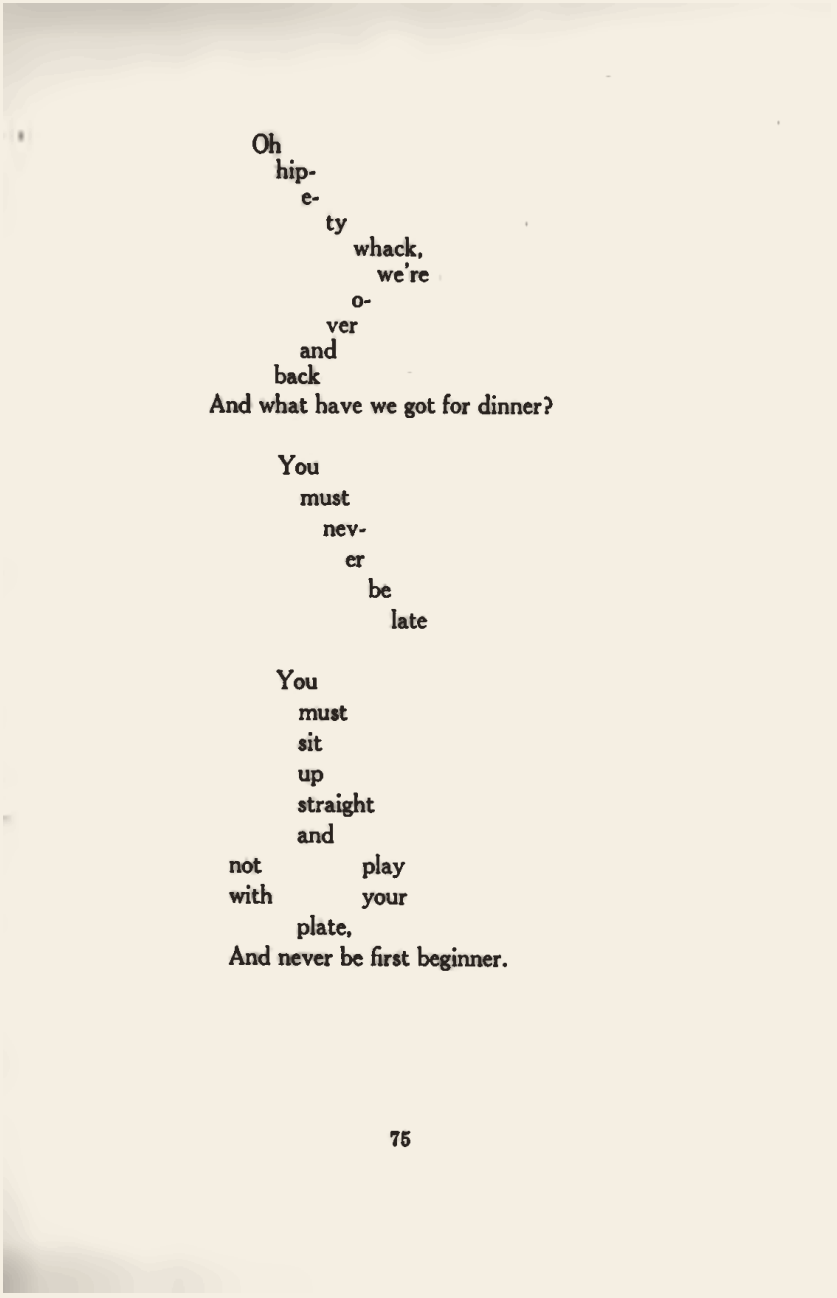
Hip-e-ty-Hop—reconstructed typography—1/4



Hip-e-ty-Hop—reconstructed typography—2/4



Hip-e-ty-Hop—reconstructed typography—3/4

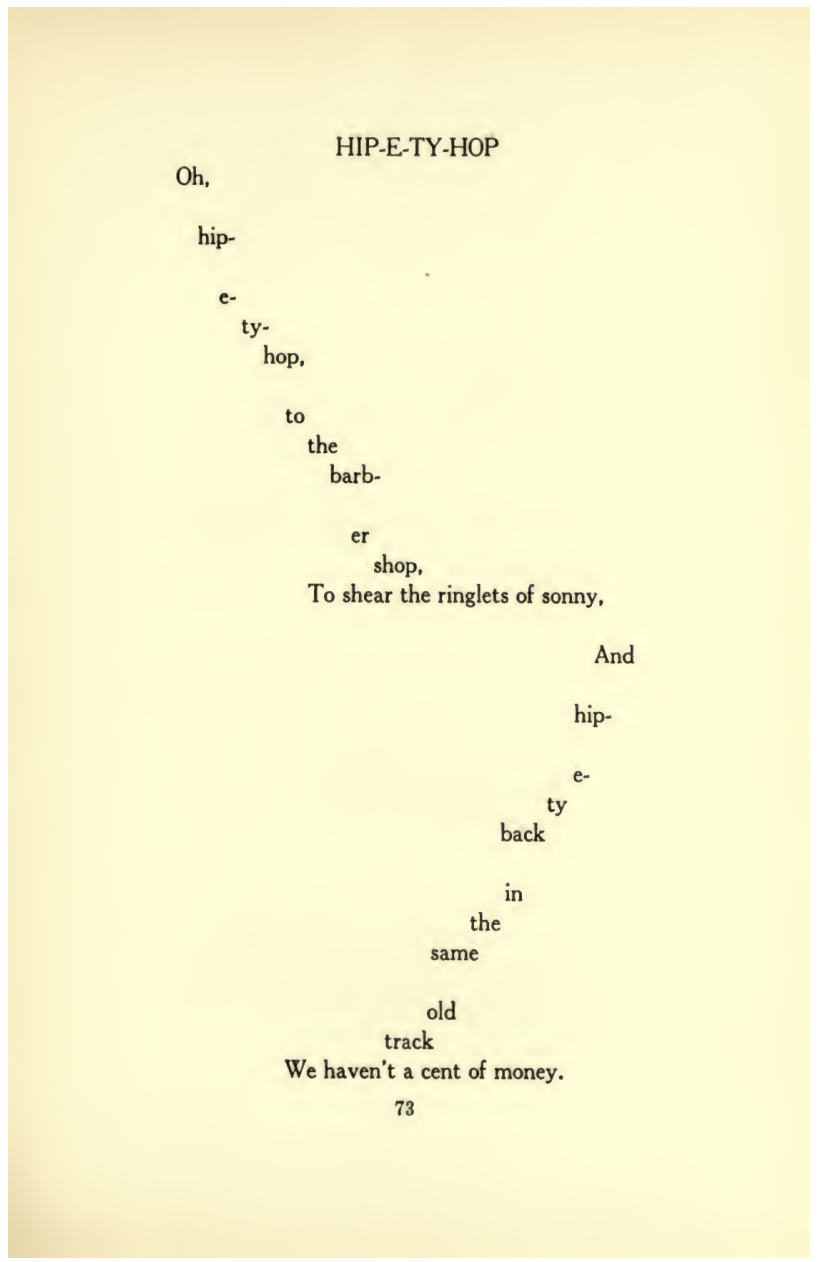


Oh, hipety hop,
With Aunty and Pop
To see the big show in the Rink, come
hur-
ry
o
a-
long, and
he'll
sing
you
a
song,
that
won-
der-
ful
Rhi-
nos-
er-
ink-
tum.



Hip-e-ty-Hop

Source facsimile. The original page remains the textual and spatial authority.



HIP-E-TY-HOP

Oh,

hip-

e-
ty-
hop,

to
the
barb-

er
shop,
To shear the ringlets of sonny,

And

hip-

e-
ty
back

in
the
same

old
track
We haven't a cent of money.

73

Oh,

hip-

e-

ty-
hop

to
cand-
y

shop
To the tune of Old Dan Tucker,

And,

hip-

e-

ty

back,
With a load to pack,
And bringing an all-day sucker.

74

Oh
hip-
e-
ty
whack,
we're
o-
ver
and
back
And what have we got for dinner?

You
must
nev-
er
be
late

You
must
sit
up
straight
and
not play
with your
plate,
And never be first beginner.

75

Oh, hipety hop,
With Aunty and Pop
To see the big show in the Rink, come
hur-
ry
O
a-
long, and
he'll
sing
you
a
song,
that
won-
der-
ful
Rhi-
nos-
er-
ink-
tum.

76

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 73–76.

JOHNNY SEES THE CIRCUS

Oh, say! Johnny Jones,
Come, rattle your bones
And hurry! Just j o
u v
m e
p r f
e
t n
h c
e e and come
O
v e r
h
e
r
e

A-
r
u
n
n
i
n
g
!
For the Circus has come,
And I hear the big Drum;

77

I got F

h I
o
p F
e

T

Y

Y C

O E

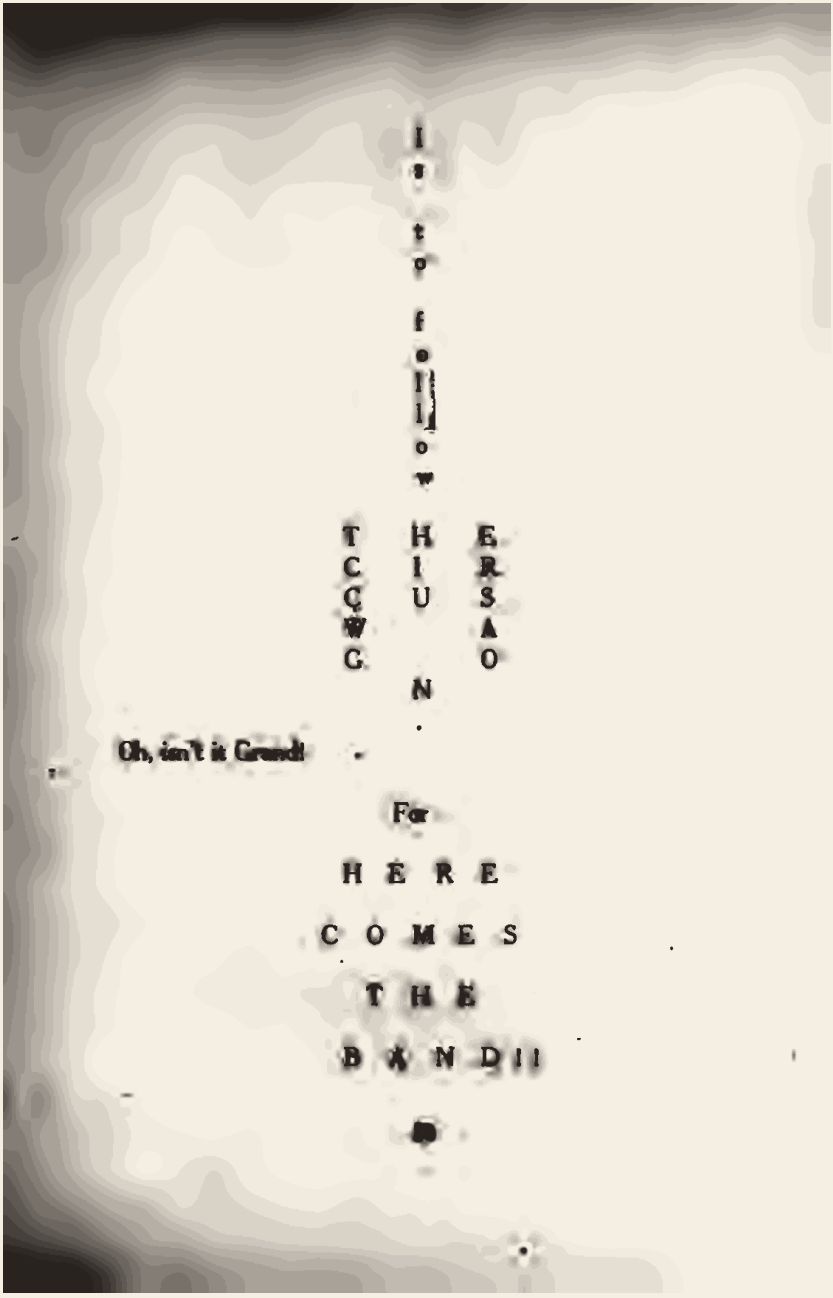
U have N T S !

* * * * * * * *

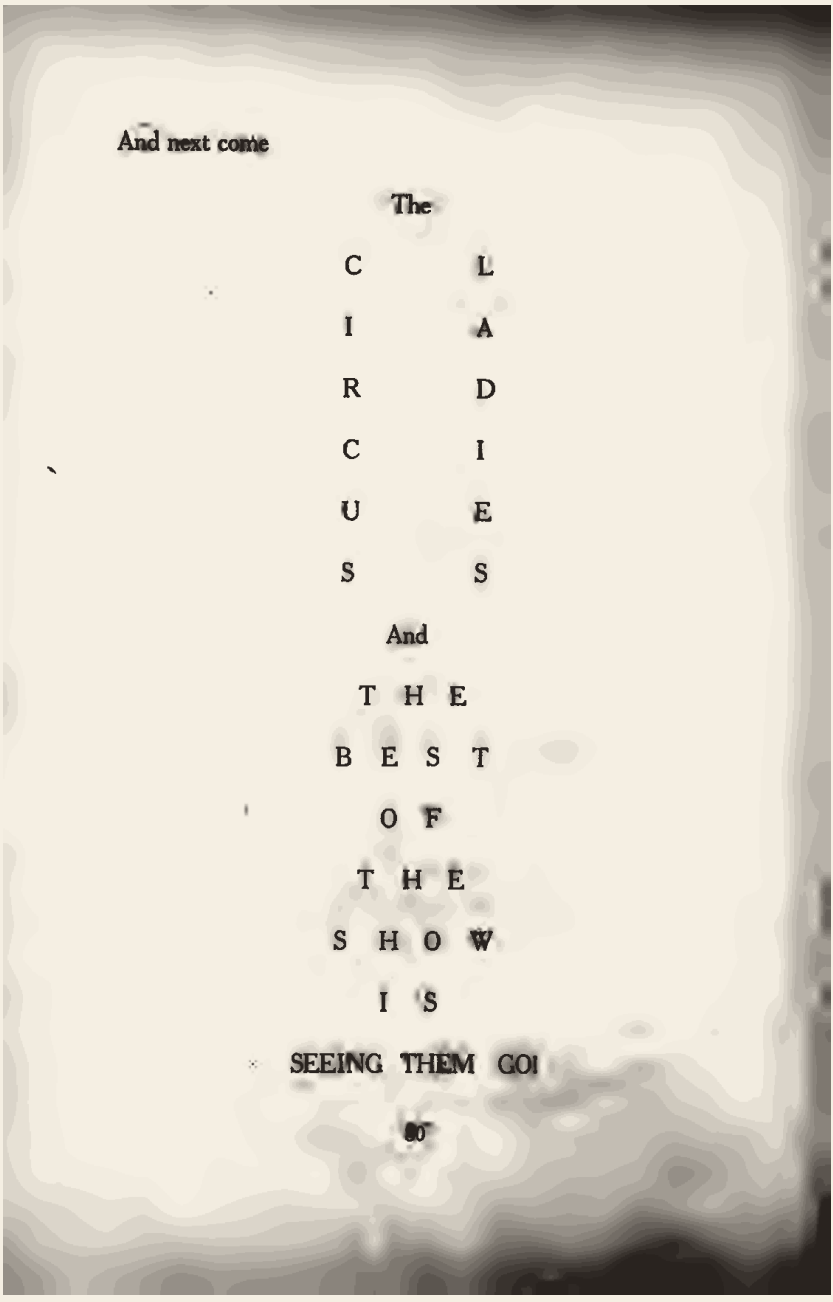
No matter for that,
We can both stand pat,
For I haven't got much to brag on,
And the best we can do
To see this thing through,

78

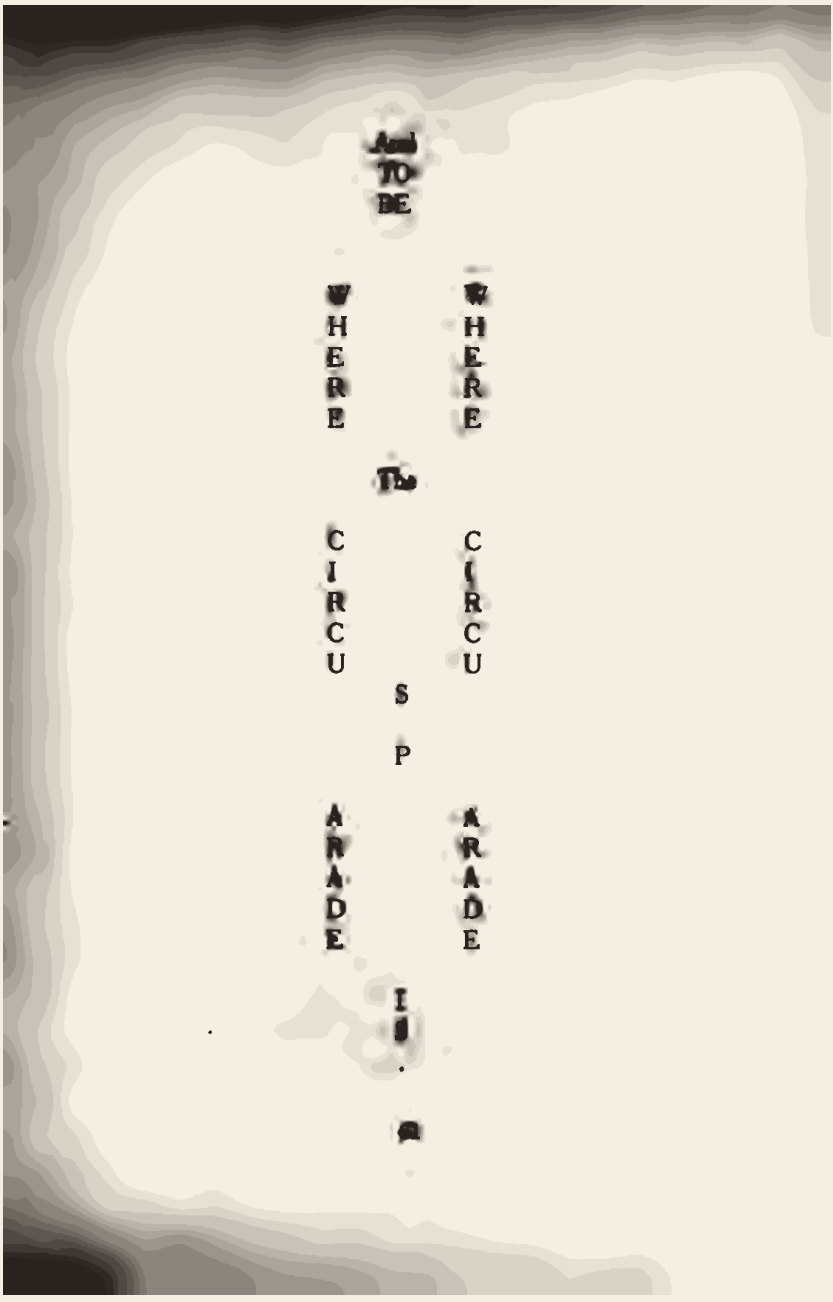
Johnny Sees the Circus—reconstructed typography—3/10



Johnny Sees the Circus—reconstructed typography—4/10



Johnny Sees the Circus—reconstructed typography—5/10



And

H
E
R
E

Comes
THE
CLOWN :

GEE WHIZ!

F a l l-
i
n
g

D
O
W
N
!

And ain't HE the FUNNIEST EVER?
HE JOSHES
'EM ALL.
HE'S THE BELLE of
the
BALL!
And GEE! ain't He WITTY and CLEVER!

82

Johnny Sees the Circus—reconstructed typography—7/10



Johnny Sees the Circus—reconstructed typography—8/10

And
Here's the HyE-
NA in his Van;
I bet that HE
HAS ET A MAN!

And
Here's
The
L-I-O-N!

HEAR

H
I
M
R-O-A-R!!

I
Bet
That
HE

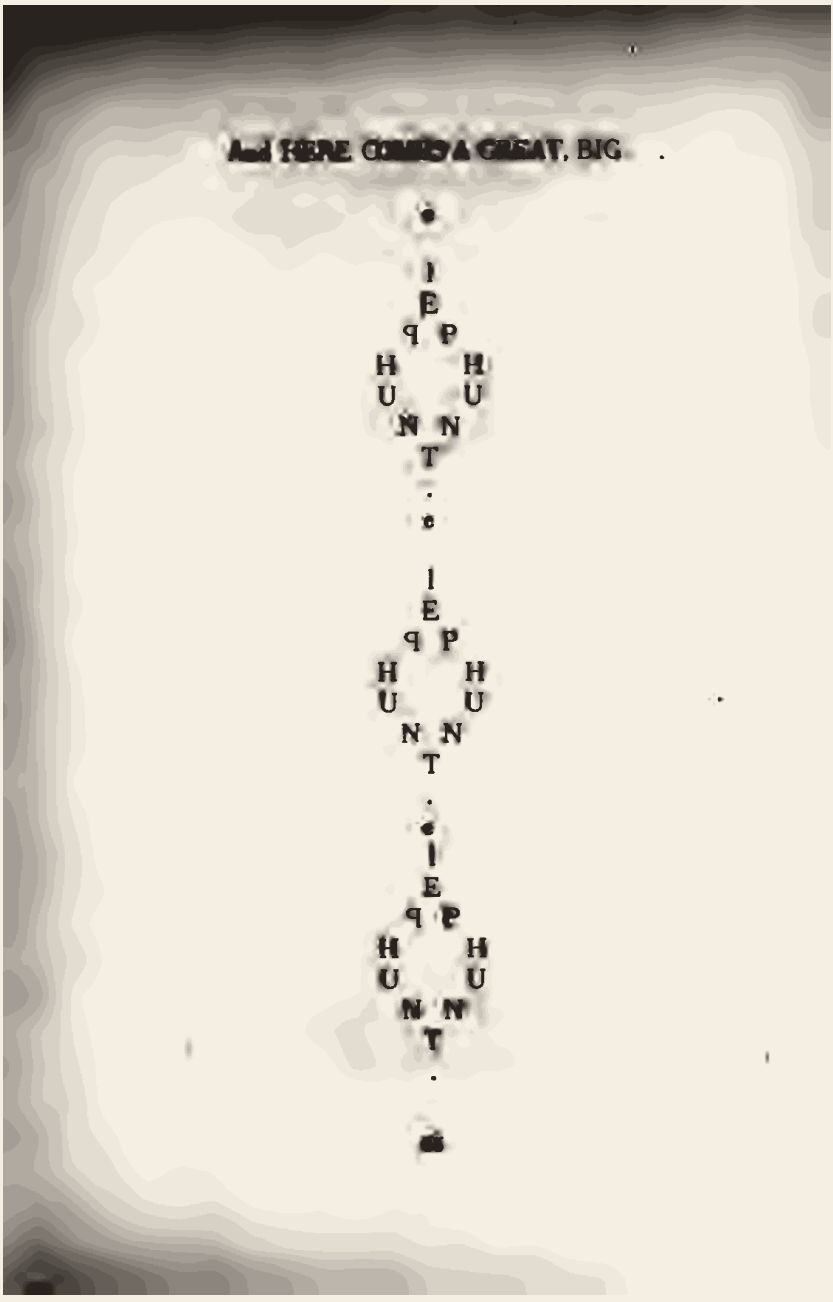
Has ET Some More!

And
Here's The
H-I-P-P-O.

Hear
HIM
G - R - U - N - T !

84

Johnny Sees the Circus—reconstructed typography—9/10



And, Johnny, say!
Don't cher know they eat hay—
And stuff—and everything—by the bale?
And they're marching along,

PONG,
PONG;
PONG,
PONG;

And holding theirselves by the tail!

JOHNNY SEES THE CIRCUS

[The same as foregoing in plain verse]

Oh, say! Johnny Jones!
Come rattle your bones!
And hurry! Jump over the fence!
And come over here a-running;
For the Circus has come,
And I hear the big Drum;—
I hope you have got fifty cents!

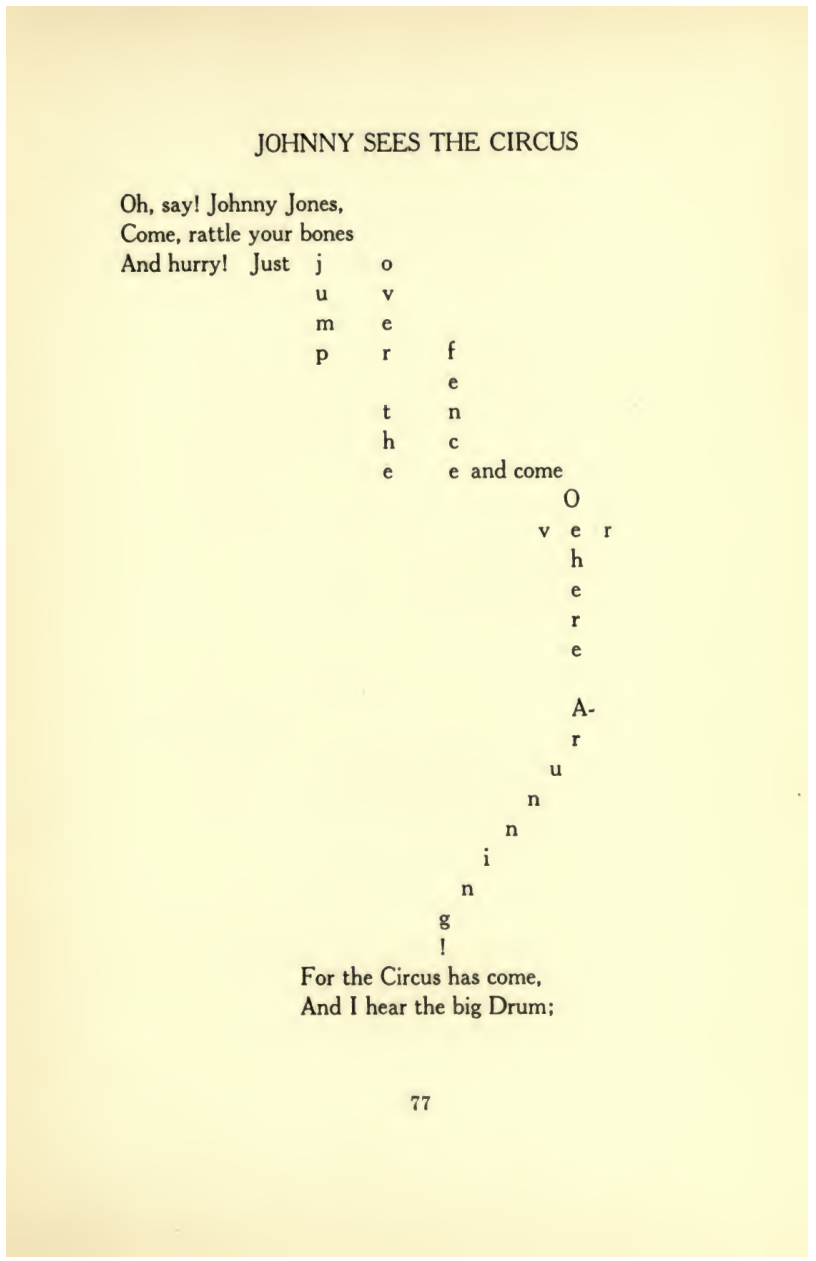
* * * * * * * * *

No matter for that!
We can both stand pat;
For I haven't got any to brag on;
And the best we can do
To see this thing through,
Is to follow the Circus Wagon.

* * * * * * * * *

Johnny Sees the Circus

Source facsimile. The original page remains the textual and spatial authority.



JOHNNY SEES THE CIRCUS

Oh, say! Johnny Jones,
Come, rattle your bones
And hurry! Just j o
u v
m e
p r f
e
t n
h c
e e and come
O
v e r
h
e
r
e
A-
r
u
n
n
i
n
g
!
For the Circus has come,
And I hear the big Drum;

77

I got F

h I
o
p F
e

T

Y

Y C

O E

U have N T S !

* * * * * * * *

No matter for that,
We can both stand pat,
For I haven't got much to brag on,
And the best we can do
To see this thing through,

78

I
s

t
o

f
o
l
l
o
w

T H E
C I R
C U S
W A
G O
N
.

Oh, isn't it Grand!

For

H E R E

C O M E S

T H E

B A N D ! !

79

And next come

The

C L

I A

R D

C I

U E

S S

And

T H E

B E S T

O F

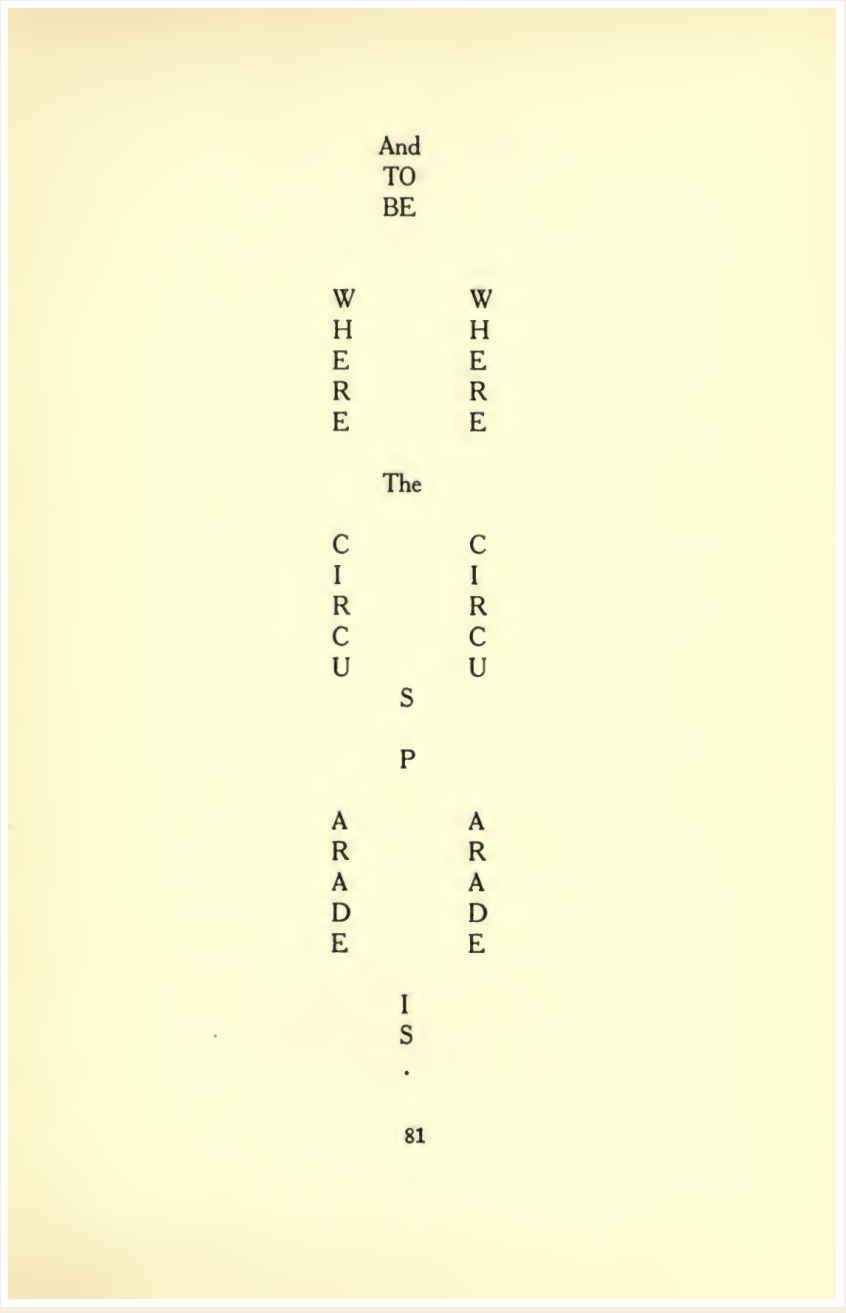
T H E

S H O W

I S

SEEING THEM GO!

80


And
TO
BE
W
H
E
R
E
W
H
E
R
E
The
C
I
R
C
U
C
I
R
C
U
S
P
A
R
A
D
E
A
R
A
D
E
I
S
.
81

And

H
E
R
E

Comes
THE
CLOWN :

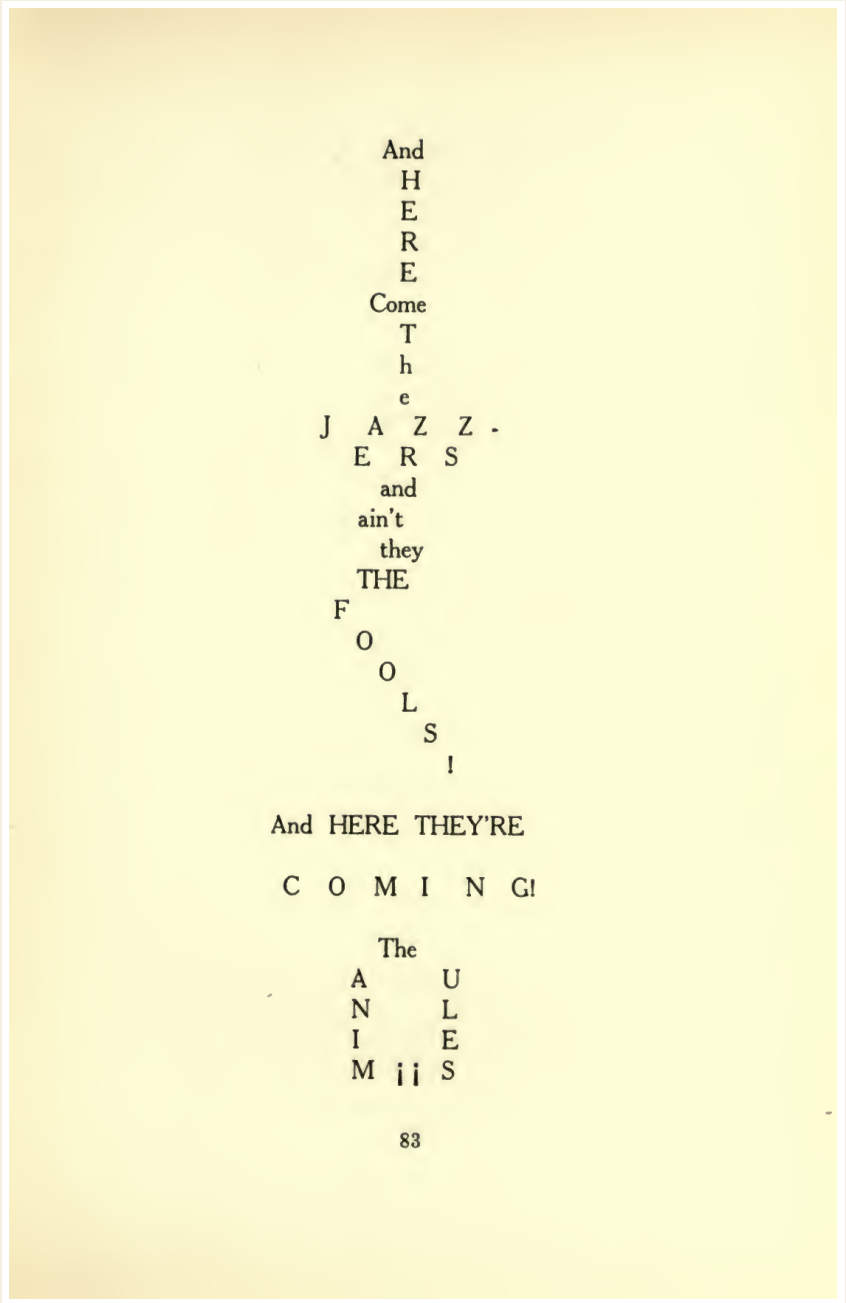
GEE WHIZ!

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!

And ain't HE the FUNNIEST EVER?
HE JOSHES
'EM ALL.
HE'S THE BELLE of
the
BALL!
And GEE! ain't He WITTY and CLEVER!

82


And
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J A Z Z -
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and
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And HERE THEY'RE
C O M I N G!
The
A U
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83

And
Here's the HyE-
NA in his Van;
I bet that HE
HAS ET A MAN!

And
Here's
The
L-I-O-N!

HEAR

H
I
M
R-O-A-R!!

I
Bet
That
HE

Has ET Some More!

And
Here's The
H-I-P-P-O.

Hear
HIM
G - R - U - N - T !

84

And HERE COMES A GREAT, BIG .

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85

And, Johnny, say!
Don't cher know they eat hay—
And stuff—and everything—by the bale?
And they're marching along,

PONG,
PONG;
PONG,
PONG;

And holding theirselves by the tail!

JOHNNY SEES THE CIRCUS

[The same as foregoing in plain verse]

Oh, say! Johnny Jones!
Come rattle your bones!
And hurry! Jump over the fence!
And come over here a-running;
For the Circus has come,
And I hear the big Drum;—
I hope you have got fifty cents!

* * * * * * * * *

No matter for that!
We can both stand pat;
For I haven't got any to brag on;
And the best we can do
To see this thing through,
Is to follow the Circus Wagon.

* * * * * * * * *

86

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 77–86.

Ah Get and You Bet

In Lighter Vein.

The thrifty N' Goon loved the nifty You Bet,
And he followed the fashion his countrymen set,—
Not of simpering, smiling and making goo-goo,
As lovers Caucasian think they must do,—
But the way that appealed to N' Goon, the thrifty
Was cash on the counter,—two hundred and fifty.

And the happy N' Goon, with Mongolian art,
Took the nifty You Bet to his home and his heart.

Now party the third in this business transaction
Had a mind of her own,—or rather, a fraction;
(As much, Oriental scholars agree,
As is good for a maid of the heathen Chinee.)
And You Bet had a glimmering shade of a thought
That she (in plain English) didn't like to be bought.

* * *

The shifty Ah Get was a grocer's clerk;—
Or call him fac-totum—a man of all work;—
And he served out dried fish and lizards' tails,
And punk-sticks, ginger and bottled snails,
And Chinese herbs, and bumble-bees' wings,
And many other delectable things
That the Chinese hold in such high esteem,
And enter into the grocer's scheme.
    And the shifty Ah Get had an intellect
    That commanded the Boss's highest respect,
    For he worked all the time, and was keen in trade,
    Kept track of the dollars the business made,
    And wrote the books, (or say the scroll)
    And knew the stock in part and whole.

And the shifty Ah Get did not tarry there,
For he went, every Sunday, to praise and prayer
In the Chinese Mission, down the street;
(And a lot of verses he could repeat)
And he studied of nights, and odd times days,
To learn Amelican words and ways.

* * *

When the thrifty N' Goon took home his bride,
To love and honor, to cook and abide,
He knew that a treasure so dearly bought
Should be kept and guarded with every thought.
So he locked the door and kept the key,
And his was the only face she could see.

But the nifty You Bet, in durance held,
Against such surveillance rebelled,
And she thought and thought of the shifty Ah Get,
(On whom her little heart was set)
And she started her glimmering shade of a mind,
As she was inclined, a way to find.
And how she did it I cannot disclose,
But she slipped from N' Goon—right under his nose—
And straight to the Mission You Bet flew,
Before all Chinatown's startled view.

And the Mission Matron, (bless her heart!)
Knew how to take a China girl's part.
When the thrifty N' Goon, in a deuce of a fret,
Came down to claim his little pet,
She wasn't obtainable,—not just yet—
And the Matron told N' Goon to get.

Now the thrifty N' Goon knew a thing or two
About the way that 'Melicans do,
And he went to a lawyer of Chinese fame,
And put him wise to the little game.
And the lawyer drew a formal charge
Against a China girl at large,
For the crime of petty larceny;
(And gracefully pocketed his fee).

The stolen chattels were not set down
In the lawyer's complaint that was done so brown,
But he knew, as plain as white and black,
That they meant the clothes on the China girl's back.

* * *

Now the shifty Ah Get knew a thing as well,
(But what he knew he wouldn't tell)
And he slipped up town when the fuss began,
And bought a paper from a man,
And the paper mentioned the name of Ah Get,
And another just after it, You Bet.
This straight to the Mission House he bore,
And went around to the kitchen door,
And skipped up stairs, two steps at a jump,
And into her room with a bang and thump.

And next we find the pair up town,
In the office of City Justice Brown,
And the Wedding March has been duly played,
(When they marched up here without fuss or parade)
And, looking as stern as he possibly can,
The Justice is there to pronounce the bann,
And the Bailiff acts as groom's best man.

* * *

Now, when that complaint had been duly filed,
And the Law's formalities reconciled,
An Officer, armed with warrant and gun,
Bore down the Mission House upon,
And with haughty words and peremptory air,
Demanded the criminal harbored there.
But no hidden criminal does he find;
(He is just a little bit behind)
For the girl he seeks is now Mrs. Ah Get,
Not a slave or criminal, You Bet.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 91–94.

The Ahkoond of Swat

What!
The Ahkoond of Swat!
That august and virile des-pot!
You do not
Know the Ahkoond of Swat?

My dear fellah, despite
An unvarying rule (which no doubt
You've observed in my conduct throughout)
I'm obliged to indite—
Maugre the wish to be always polite—
That your statement's diaphanous—quite.

Why, the Ahkoond's illustrious name
Is proclaimed on the outposts of fame.
Wherever human conceit
Feels a bigness it cannot repeat;—
Wherever the diaphragm swells
With the sense that true greatness impels—
No name titillating the world's epiglottis
Is mentioned so oft as the Ahkoond of Swat is.

On this coign of vantage he stands
And commands,
With a flamboyant wave of the hands,
And this proposition is plain,
That whatever may chance his domain,
Monsieur Tonson is come again.
So I hope you'll no longer gainsay
The sway
Of this versatile Prince of Cathay,
Whose aplomb is unique in a way!
Let his enemies all go to pot
With their polysyllabic rot!
All hail to the Ahkoond of Swat!

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 95.

An Allegorical Ditty

Respectfully Dedicated to a Great Railroad Corporation.

I knew an old fellow a long time ago,—
A finer old fellow one never may know—
Who owned in this valley a good piece of soil,
And made it productive by generous toil.

He spared not the labor of head or of hand
And developed his water and harrowed his land,
And he prodded about with his spade and his hoe,
And induced every planting to get up and grow.

Then the autumn came round, and his labor was o'er,
His corn and his pumpkins all gathered in store;
With his rasher of bacon, his barrel of beer,
This jolly old fellow had plenty of cheer.

Now this well-to-do farmer, he says with a wink,
"I've more than enough for my own meat and drink,
So I'll harness my mule to the cart and drive down,
And dispose of this truck to the folks of the town."
Then he goes to the village and stops at the store;
He barters his load for provisions galore—
Flour, sugar and tea and a dollar or two,
And a nip of Old Rye when his trading is through.

So he lived and he flourished year in and year out,—
Grew heavy in pocket, in body grew stout;
What he had in excess, what he happened to lack,
The mule always carried to market or back.

* * *

There came a fine stranger, accomplished of tongue,
And the song of a siren the stranger he sung;
He told the old fellow his mule was too slow,
And such "countrified" ways wouldn't do—not for Joe.

Said the stranger at last, after arguin' and arguin',
"Let me have your mule, and I'll give you a barg-u-ain:
You shall ride to the town when you will in my shay,
And there won't be much trouble, I guess, 'bout the pay.

"But before we accomplish this elegant trade,
(And a better I bet that you never have made),
To prevent any mishap from breaking the charm,
You just give me your note, with a lien on your farm."

Then the silly old fellow relinquished his mule,
And mortgaged his farm,—very like a big fool,
And he got not a thing in the world he could brag on
But a ride now and then in the stranger's fine wagon.
And thus matters went; but before very long
The stranger was singing a different song;
He grumbled and growled and demanded big pay
Every time the old fellow would ride in his shay.

The corn and the pumpkins all went to the share
Of the man who demanded their value in fare,
And the farmer lamented in anguish and pain,
And wished in his heart for his mule back again.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 96–97.

A Barmecidal Feast

Ah there, my demagogic friend, I note
With unassumed distress, sir,
Your newest scheme to catch the wary vote
And its possessor.

Although I own the method is beset
With some slight incongruity,
It takes the cake o'er every method yet
For ingenuity.

Behold a Barmecidal feast is spread,
And beamed on by the Mayor,
While you bring intellectual meat and bread,
As chief purveyor.

And, not content to serve a simple bill
Of bread and meat nutritious,
The board with sweets of platitude you fill,—
All quite delicious.
While on the festal gathering you bestow
Obsequious devotion,
A grim confederate is loitering below
With deadly potion.

You spread the jam just thick and smooth enough—
A worthy occupation,—
While he deals out the poison, quantum suf,
And spikes the ration.

You work together with sublime accord,
And as the feast advances,
You take for virtue the assured reward,—
He takes his chances.

And what between the goodies you bestow
And his conserves unerring,
You catch the voters as they come and go,
As dead as herring.

You talk of loyalty and human rights,
Society upholding,
While he in anarchistic plot delights,
His scheme unfolding:

Down with the rights of property and men!
Down with the nation!
We'll revolutionize society, and then
Unmake creation!

Our nihilistic banner we unfurl
The while we are recruiting,
Then blood and fire shall start the merry whirl,
And bring the looting!
Alas, my demagogic friend, I fear
Your pard is too outspoken;
The double game you play is made so clear
The charm is broken.

We care not for your Barmecidal show,
No matter how you spread it;
The anarchist and demagogue must go;-—
The fates have said it.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 98–99.

At a Christmas Jinks

To Judge Enoch Knight, with a Garter

This item of female attire,
    And insignia of station,
That every good man doth inspire
    With true veneration,
We pass to the head of the board,
    By way of a starter,
And dub our good chairman a Lord,
    And a Knight of the Garter.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 100.

My Flowing Bowl

A Bowl of any color or kind,
    Provided it's open and flaring;
A Spoon, conveniently shaped and designed,
    And one that keeps bright in the wearing;
A crust of bread or a cracker or two,
    And a pint of milk from the cellar;—
Here is a dinner that's good for you,
    And for me, and for Mr. Rock'feller.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 100.

To F. A. G.

With a Pencil.

When times get most distressing,—
    When financial needs are pressing,
        And we tell our doleful story
            At the bank,
                Bank,
                Bank,
    With suaviter unbroken,
    You will take this little token,
        And you'll make a memorandum,
            Won't you, Frank,
                Frank,
                Frank?

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 101.

To F. W. W.

Street Railway Manager, with a Brother-in-Law.

Hear the mellow, tinkling bells—
    Nickel bells.
What a world of secret joy
    The brother-in-law foretells.
Through the car by day and night,
Keeping coyly out of sight,
Knocking down the nickels bright;
While the tinkle-tankles float
From beneath the buttoned coat,—
And the spotter's taking note
    Of the bells, bells, bells,—
    Of the rhyming, chiming bells.
      Oh, pshaw.
    What is life without the jingle
      Of a brother-in-law?

*NOTE: A false device, with a bell concealed beneath the conductor's coat, to rob the company of fares, and delude the public into the belief that the fares were regularly rung up.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 101.

Enigma

In sea and sky and under ground
I'm everywhere, yet nowhere found.
I'm older than the Sanscrit text,
Yet born this second, gone the next;
A prisoner oft held, but still
Through bolts and bars I pass at will.
Unlighted rambling round the earth,
My path obstructed, light has birth.
A faithful friend I am to man,
But turn and rend him when I can.
I soothe his aches and ease his pain,
Then twist him into knots again.
I come to bless his house and town,
And tear his stoutest buildings down.
Sans hands I hold, sans feet I go,
With messages for friend and foe.
I bear man's burdens, share his woes,
And vanish,—whither no man knows.
*NOTE: Electricity.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 102.

A Fair Idyl

The Fair is ended and gone;
And he of the wide open mouth
And inquisitive turn of the eye
No longer perambulates
Through its halls.

The beau,
That erst did arrogate
Himself, with damsel clinging,
Like faithful mustard-plaster
Unto his side—the twain
Exciting the look of derision
As they munched the succulent ball
Of pop-corn—the beau and his glory
Are past.

The man of transcendent beauty
Hath taken his leather medal,
And doth hide his diminished head
Neath his drooping wing.

*NOTE: These lines were written and published in 1877;
—many years before free verse was dreamed of as a poetic fad or that designation had entered the thought of easygoing writers. In the absence of some prior claim these lines must stand, therefore, as the premier effort in a very indifferent sort of versification.

    He of the swelling larynx,
    With inborn desire to proclaim
    His gift of oratory,
Hath spoken. And lo! the trees
Standing in boxes and tubs;—
The mellow fruit on the tables,
The stoves with their pots and kettles,
The displays of agriculture,
And the milliners' hats and bonnets

Were overawed as they listened.

The constituted committee

Hath come, puffed up with importance,
To domineer as they listed
    O'er the coops all saw-dust littered.
The turkey-cocks and the roosters
They did outdo in strutting,
And, moved by a sense of justice,
Awarded the wide blue ribbon
Unto themselves.

Even so,
The judges of wines and brandies
With fortitude amazing,
Tasted the unctuous samples,
And passed to their friends for judgment,
And drained the dark colored bottles,
And forgot to award the prizes.
And the fat and fretful babies,
Squeezed to infantile pomatum
In the crowd of fierce spectators,
Who trampled on each other
In a vain attempt to see them;—
Oh, the babies, the dear babies,
Gone to swell the angel chorus,
Crushed and jammed to baby-butter!
Only one from all that concourse—
He the plump Jose Maria,—
Left to tell the mournful story,
And to occupy the buggy.

Join me, then, oh, suffering brother,
In my chuckled satisfaction,—
In my song of loud rejoicing,—
In my shout of exultation,
That at last the Fair is over.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 103–104.

Chinese Wedlock

Ah Sang, thou art wed to the beauty, Loo Yow;—
To love and to cherish you solemnly vow;
To love and to cherish forever and aye,
Nor let aught but a Court put the woman away.
You'll be true to this vow, Sang, I'm confident of it;—
And not sell till you're sure of a reasonable profit.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 105.

Lines to Major E. W.

As a Tribute to His Free Verse Proclivities.

Oh, Poetaster by the swashing sea,
I can't help thinking about your poetry,
And how you sit in the Flying Fish
Cottage by the swashing-swish,
And devote your leisure moments to
Writing fanciful too-ral-loo;
While the people who read it are far away,—
Twenty miles, or perhaps a fraction over, from
Long Beach Bay.

Oh, swashing Poetaster by the swish,
I laugh me in my sleeve, and often wish
That you could see the writhing multitude
That flout your fullograms in angry mood;—
And they are twenty miles away. It tickles
My fancy to think of it. Pickles!

Oh, virile rhymster of the vasty slush,
It calms my troubled soul to hear the gush
Of the Pacific Ocean at Long Beach
Go sousing through your metricated speech,
And salting it most effectually;—
Like pork in the barrel. Actually,
It does. While the flying fish on top
Of your cottage is utterly oblivious. (Full stop.)
Oh, earnest trifler of the tum-te-tum,
A weary pilgrim to thy shrine I come,
And pull me off the shoes from off my feet,
And go barefooted up and down the street,
And walk upon the sands in my bathing suit
And feel very melancholy to boot!
I can't very well describe my unfortunate condition,
So I think I'll go to live at San Gabriel Mission!

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 106.

La Grippe

I've got a most distressing cold,
Or something in my head, Sir;
My misery simply can't be told,—
I ought to be in bed, Sir;
And if it lasts another day,
Without some sort of check, Sir,
I'll sneeze my blasted brains away,
Or dislocate my neck, Sir.

This Russian influenza
Will drive us all to frenzy;—
Ah-chee, ah-choo! Ah-ch,—ach-chee!
This Russian influenza!

It's something like neuralgia,
And something like bronchitis:—
Like asthma, whooping-cough, catarrh,—
A touch of laryngitis.
It's everything that's bad, by turns,
And nothing very nice, Sir;—
All down my spinal cord it burns,
And then it's cold as ice, Sir.
I swallowed forty quinine pills,
But got no better fast, Sir;—
Tried physic, ipecac and squills,
And then a mustard plaster.
I've soaked my feet in scalding lye,
And taken a hot toddy,
And yet the pains shoot constantly
All through my head and body.

My wife is troubled just the same,
And likewise my wife's mother;
And all the people in the house
Are sneezing at each other.
It's spreading 'mongst the neighbors, too,
And sadly twill afflict 'em,
Don't laugh at me, (Ah-chee, ah-choo,)
For you're a coming victim!

This Russian influenza.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 107.

Premeditated Poverty

Hiram's trousers had a recent rent
Yawning wide athwart the starboard knee.
Sarah offered aid with good intent,
But the yawn continued still to be;
"For," said Hiram, "Don't you see
"If I wear a patch across my knee,
"Neighbors all will think that it's a pre-
"Meditated sign of poverty?
"While, with just a rip across my knee,
"They will only notice it to see
"That the thing has recently been rent;—
"Think it but the moment's accident."
So the aid that Sarah would have lent
To the jagged gape on Hiram's knee,
Went for naught;—her kindness was misspent;—
And the neighbors now all clearly see
Ample cause for Hiram's discontent;
For the gossips, one and all, agree
That the frazzled tear across his knee
Is mark of Sarah's laziness, and he
Were even glad,—just suited to a T—
If Sarah would throw up the job and flee
To mend some other fellow's ragged knee.

Next time he had a rent across the knee,
He wore a patch with due humility;
Then all his kindly neighbors did agree
That he was going straight to bankruptcy;
And that the burden of his blasted life
Was having such a worthless, lazy wife.

Moral

He who seeks to steer his barque
In any wise
By others' eyes,
Is very apt to miss his mark.

Who goes in shabby coat or hat
    On false pretense,
Is apt to do his antic at
    His wife's expense.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 108–109.

Plain Language from Truthful Walter

Which I wish to re-say,
As I said it before,
That, for giving away
His cash to the poor,
Friend Walter is summat peculiar;—
Peculiar he is, and no more.

This 'ere man, Robert Stokes,—
Familiar called Bob,—
Is the fellow that folks
Says was into the job.
(And I rise to explain that this Robert
Is only a darkey called Bob.)

It was fruit for the kid,
In a basket he took;—
When the favor he did,
There was guile in his look;
And he 'lowed that the circus was coming,
In a way that could not be mistook.

This 'ere Robert, you know,
Is from Old Alabam,
And Friend Walter also;—
They both hail from the same—
And the ties existing between them
I'm bashful to name.
And when Robert implied
His fond wish for the show,
(Which it can't be denied
Meant a purpose to go,)
Friend Walter just pulled out two dollars
Without any further to-do.

And he said: "Robert, yes;
It's a-coming, that's true;
And I'm bound to confess
I've a liking for you;
But mind, Bob, there is an election,
And that's coming, too."

Which I wish to re-say,
    As I said it before,
That, for giving away
    His cash to the poor,
Friend Walter is summat peculiar;—
    Peculiar he is—and no more.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 110.

Quips and Epigrams

To Gyp, a Singing Dog

All hail, sweet singer, dog of happy mood,
That hath the soul of oriole or lark,
Yet warblest not within the leafy wood,
But in the bark.

To a Unitarian Pastor

You say, my reverend sir, there is no hell;
That, live we here however good or ill,
A gracious God at last will count it well,
And take us into Paradise pell-mell,
Forgiven.
Now if this be the case, you'll please to say
Who then will save us from your Unitarian Heaven.

To an Old Style Preacher

Lo, as we hear your words of holy wrath,
We scent the fire and brimstone on your breath;—
We see the burning sinner in the glare;—
Behold your devils dancing on the air;—
Thus pandemonium which men fear so much,
Looms forth, responsive to your magic touch.
Now, when we die, and all to hell repair,
I think, my reverend sir, we'll need you there;
For, on that day of threatened woe and worrit,
What use for brimstone, with no one to stir it?

To a Justice of the Peace

Ill fares the man who breaks the law,
And comes within your clutches;
Hard lines of punishment you draw
On all the luckless wretches;
The misery which your words entail
Is far beyond conjecture;
For he who isn't sent to jail
Must fall before your lecture.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 111–112.

Smith's Profiteering

He looked about one summer day,
Did Mr. Smith of San Jose,
And he noted the weather warm and dry,
(The barometer standing tolerably high,)
And never a sign of rain in the sky.

He found the people in very ill grace,—
Short in pocket and long of face—
Horribly grumpy—wretchedly blue,
Bewailing the drouth they had just come through,
And looking askance at more drouth in view.

The alfillerilla, rank and tall
In times gone past without recall,
Had made a most unfortunate fall
First to very short grass, then to no grass at all,
And the fact no longer could be ignored
That the ground was about as bare as a board.

"Hence," said Mr. Smith of San Jose,
"I think there's a good speculation in hay."

The weather continued warm and dry,
And the second drouth was drawing nigh,
And things that were bad enough before
Grew worse and worse, and ever more
Increased the want and diminished the store.
Smith saw that cattle were greatly in need
Of the new season's grass or the old season's feed,
And the sheep, all starved and ragged and poor,
Were dropping dead by the dozen and score;
And he pondered these matters o'er and o'er.

And it all appeared to him most plain
That with the certain failure of rain,
The farmers' stacks couldn't stand the strain;
He was sure it would come about by and by,
The supply would run low and the price would run high.

"Hence," said Mr. Smith of San Jose,
"I'm sure there's a fine speculation in hay."

And when Mr. Smith thus made it appear
That the people were in for another dry year,
And had settled it all to his own satisfaction,
The hay speculation had such an attraction
That he backed his opinions with vigorous action.

He went into market without more delay
And devoted himself to the purchase of hay;
Invited all holders to give him a call,
And with money in hand bought from each and from all.
The farmer who'd sell, Smith did never turn back,
But asked him his price, and called it a whack,
And gathered in hay by the bale and the stack.
There was no hesitation when once he'd begun,
And his volume of fodder increased like fun,
To eighteen hundred and some odd ton,—
Between what he'd bought and what he'd engaged,
And Smith's fond ambition at last was assuaged.

"And now," said Smith of San Jose,
"I've got a lead-pipe cinch on hay."

Then he turned to and hoped with might and main
That the Lord in his mercy would not send rain;
That the drouth might prevail, and the year again
Bring naught but want and woe in its train,
And shattered fortunes and hopes all in vain,
That the general loss might be his gain.

"Because," said Smith of San Jose,
"I've simply got them all euchered on hay."

But alas! for the man who sometimes depends
On fickle Nature to work his ends.
Alas! for the man who seeks to prey
On his fellows' misfortune,—even in hay.
The purpose he sought was not attained,
The profits he coveted never were gained,
For lo! on a fateful day,—it rained.

And that rain was followed by many rains,
And feed all over the hills and plains
Sprang up and flourished, rank and tall,
And the cattle were fed and grew fat withal,
And the people laughed and were hearty at that,
And Smith's great hay speculation fell flat.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 113–115.

The Sophist's Maxim

Who seeks to win poetic fame,
Who would immortalize his name,
Who'd gain with ease life's doubtful game,
Should think of this; nor scornful pass it—
Pecunia equam ire facit.

Who would forsake his humble nook,
Upon the busy world to look,
To see her sights and read her book,
Should study this, nor-idly pass it:—
Pecunia equam ire facit.

Who seeks for friends to bend the knee,—
Be constant in prosperity,
And when misfortune comes, to flee—
Should ponder this nor ever pass it:—
Pecunia equam ire facit.

And he who'd go where Christians meet,
Their prayers and sermons to repeat,
If he would occupy a seat
'Mongst wealth and those who do amass it,
Should heed this truth, nor rashly pass it,
Pecunia equam ire facit:

*NOTE: This was the first writing of the author's to see the light of print. It was written and published when he was about fourteen or fifteen years of age, having been given to the editor of a local newspaper by a young friend, without the writer's knowledge. The refrain should read, "Money makes the mare go," but the Latin is not vouched for.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 116.

The Wonderful Diplomat

Have you heard of the wonderful Diplomat
(Let his praises be everywhere sounded)
Who puzzled one-half of the civilized world,
And the other half dumbfounded?

His methods confusing human kind,
His purposes past invention;
The wisest could never fathom his mind,
Or guess at his intention.

No other so subtle in matters of state,
No other so crafty and wary,
He juggled with prince and potentate,
And plenipotentiary.

And when this Diplomat came to die,
By loving friends surrounded,
He solved at last the mystery
That had all the world confounded;

And the secret of his art, forsooth,
Left them all the more astounded;
He had always told the simple truth,
And thus had the world confounded.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 117.

Reform—A Ballad

There was old Grove Jackson,—we knew him first-rate
When the Southern Pacific was taking the freight,
And paying its cohorts to manage the State.

A faithful old servitor truly was Grove,
Obeying the orders that came from above,
-And working for lucre as well as for love;—

A faithful old henchman as ever was seen,
In season and out, and sometimes between,
A-serving the Southern Pacific machine.

But the time came at last when the great Collis P.
Found that business and politics didn't agree;
"And I think we had better get out," said he;—

"Out of business or politics,—one or the other—
While the hauling pays well, the machine it is rather
Expensive, and always a drag and a bother."

But how to get out;—it wasn't so plain,
With an army of henchmen still to maintain,
And a balance of loss, maybe, over the gain.

For 'twas clear to the mind of the very astute
That politics being their favorite suite,
They might play t' other way, if sorely put to 't.

Thus, turning the problem abaft and abeam,
And finding no other way sure, it would seem,
Collis hit on this very ingenious scheme:
Maybe Herrin proposed it;—I sure cannot say,
But they turned it about to approach t' other way,
And left the trump card for the people to play.

"There is Hiram,—Grove's son;—he is simply a charmer,
Tricked out with his sword and his buckler and armor;
Knight Errant is he, and a noble reformer.

"What's the matter with Hiram? We'll let him march out
With banner and bugle and fanfare and shout,
And put our discomfited army to rout;

'Tis the only safe way: when the fracas is o'er
We'll be better protected than ever before,
And our troublesome army will trouble no more."

So Hiram marched forth to a victory sure,
And marshalled his forces, the good and the pure,
And led them right into Boss Herrin's fine lure.

And the army that Collis was troubled about,
Horse, foot and dragoons, suffered panic and rout;
For Hiram, the Noble, he sure kicked them out.

And Hiram, installed in the Governor's chair,
Fixed things so the railroad was sure of its share,
And built a machine of his own past compare.

And the burden was shifted, 'tis fair to relate;—
The machine moves along at its merry old gait,
With the odds in its favor: The State pays the freight.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 118–122.

The Hesperides

In Sober Verse.

Where the sun goeth down in the West,
Where the spirits of earth find rest,
In the Occident-land of the blest,
    There dwell the Hesperides.
They are daughters of Erebus, Night,
In vestments of shadow bedight,
And they know not the Day with his light—
    The Sisters Hesperides.
They are guarding the apples of gold—
Earth's gift to fond Hera of old,
And their vigils forever they hold
    O'er the fruit-laden trees.
And the spirits of Earth and Air
Know not that the Sisters are there
Or the trees with their fruitage so rare
    In that Occident-land of Peace.

For darkness is over them thrown;
Night claimeth the fruit for his own;—
Well he guardeth the Great Unknown,
    With his shades, the Hesperides.

Oh, glorious land of the west!
Oh, land I hold dearest and best!
Elysium is not then possesst
    Of fruits so enchanting as these.
  Thy groves that are ever in sight
    Bear apples of gold not less bright,
  And their guardians are angels of light,
      Obeying the day's decrees.

Blest mortals who there do abide!
  Of the fruit that no shadows hide
They may eat and be satisfied,
    Nor fear the Hesperides.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 123.

The Newsboy

Compliments of The "Times" Carriers to its Patrons, New Years' Day, 1885.

I like the little Waif that runs the streets,
Bearing, 'neath bended arm his stock in trade.
I like to hear his shout, and see anon
The eager face upturned. Ragged and rough
May be this urchin of the gutter bred;—
Ragged and rough, in manners as in dress;
But, for the better self,—the heart within,
That one doth seldom read,—I like him still.

Morning papers. Times and Herald;
Two for a dime.
Who knows the dire necessity that waits
Upon the proceeds of the newsboy's trade?
The mother, mayhap, with her babe at breast;—
The ragged little brothers, sisters,—all
Deserted by the sot that dragged them down.
But for the burden lightly taken up
By this young Arab, hunger might be theirs.

Morning papers. Daily Times, Sir?
Only five cents.

Astir betimes, ere half the town's awake,—
Rising from scanty bed to scanty fare;—
Prompt at his post of duty, come what may,
And serving through all weathers,—satisfied
If only by his toil he gather in
A meager pittance,—Who shall dare to say
There is not true nobility of soul
In such endeavor? Honor then the lad.

Quick in his rivalry,—an eye for gain—
Shrewd as the shrewdest—ever glib of speech—
These his accomplishments so early gained,
So oft reviewed in his one school,—the street.
What wonder then, that pupil apt as he,
Cast on the world before his time, should learn
Too much of ill! Behold the reflex here
Of public morals. Satire on us all!

Times or Herald. Morning papers.

Only five cents,
And still I praise him, for the good is more.
His faults the faults of others; but his own
The manly virtues of his struggling life.
Thus, ever strong of will and light of heart,
He plies his humble calling;—honors it,
And giveth promise for the future man.
Ho! Newsboy, kneel, and thou shalt knighted be,
My Lord Lieutenant of the Daily Press.

Daily papers.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 124–125.

The Bard's Appeal

When scribbling fools assume poetic sway,
When Mammon rules o'er Poesy the day,
When stupid blockheads soar to skies unknown,
And scribble lovers' ditties all their own,
What marvel that we turn with sore disgust
From where the Muse lies prostrate in the dust!

A Scott once sang the patriot's worth; but now
His words are used in burlesque at the show.
Moore breathed of love; and now his deathless line,
Corrupted, glares upon a merchant's sign.
The star of Young that pinned the mantle 'round
The earth in slumber wrapt, is gaily found
In plodding service of a notion store
Where pins, indeed, are sold and many more
Delightful things that Adam never wore.

*NOTE: Verses of boyhood.
Oh, spare the Muse, ye senseless mongers all
Who seek your petty profits in her fall.
And spare her modesty, ye groveling men
Who for a baser motive wield the pen.
Let ribald jest and vulgar tale be told
In other than the impassioned strains of old
That mounted with a bright unsullied fire
From Homer's first inspired, first honored lyre.

The snow so pure that falls from fleecy cloud,
When 'tis downtrodden by the thronging crowd,
Becomes, beneath their all-corrupting feet,
The foulest rubbish on the dirty street.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 126.

A Pillow-Fight

It was a merry rout. The little ones,
Robed in their nighties, scurried into bed,
And cuddled down, as if to sleep addressed;
But scarce they had the covers snugly drawn,
When up an imp of mischief popped his head,
And, to his challenge (all in pantomime)
Another and another. With half an eye
For bed-time pranks of children, one could see
Trouble was brewing;—mayhap not for these,
But for the tired mother, who must come,
And with asperity, command the peace.
It was a pillow-fight, and back and forth
The harmless missiles flew. Waxing warm,
In thickest of the fray, a warrior bold
Crept to a close engagement, and with might
Belabored his antagonist. Alack!
That pillows were not made for such a strife!
The parting stitches cried peccavi first;—
Then marshalled forth a million flags of truce.
Patron of all the geese untimely plucked
To furnish men a guerdon of repose,
How is thy spirit troubled! Lo, the air
Is thick with feathers, fluttering in dismay!

A reckless fight and frolic, fashioned forth
True to the life and action. How is this?
All an illusion? Saw we not the act?
Only a picture? The kinetoscope?
Oh, Wizard, Edison! And is it thus
Thou playest on our senses to impose
The conjured antics of a modern Puck?

Behold, we look again, and to our eyes
The scene of turmoil comes, the feathers fly;
But, by reversal of the strange device,
The downy cloud resolves; the air is cleared,
And in its proper place each feather drops;
The rended stitches mend; the pillow's whole;
And tracing back the conflict to the first,

The impish heads fall back, and are at rest.
Oh, Edison, thou Wizard, truly called,
Twice o'er thou dost confound and mystify;
For Puck, in all his wanderings on the earth,
Could ne'er undo the mischief he had wrought!
Now, we implore thee (if within thee lies,)
Make this illusion real for us all;
Give us reversal of the trend of time;—
Return our precious hopes that flew away,
Rebind the sundered stitches of our lives,
And bring our heads anon to childhood's rest.

August 18, 1899.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 127–128.

To the Senate

How long, oh, Conscript Fathers, will you stand,
In partisan contention, blinded, strife,
The world awaiting anxiously at hand
And Human Freedom gasping for its life?

Was't all in vain we poured our billions in
To meet the waste of tyranny and greed?
Was't just a joke we sent two million men
To stay a bloody tyrant from his deed?

Was it for this our brothers and our sons,
That heard the call and took the patriot's chance,
Fought the stern issue through and left their bones
Beneath the hell-blown wastes of northern France?
What serves it then that they have nobly wrought
If craven cowards, sitting in command,
May desecrate the flag for which they fought,
And snatch the trophy from the victor's hand?

Oh, Conscript Fathers, hesitate no more;
Confirm the pledge we gave the world when we
Sent out our armies to the farther shore,
And sent our ships to clear the troubled sea.

Make good the pledge we gave in tears and blood,
And save the nation from this dire disgrace.
Make good the pledge we gave our friends who stood
Beside us in that awful slaughter place.

Give to the peoples perishing afar
The guerdon we have cherished from our birth;
Give them surcease from tyranny and war,
That freedom may not perish from the earth.

December 30, 1919

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 129.

The Dying Orange Tree

Sore wounded at its root, and sensing near
That dissolution, or that change of form
That men call death, the orange tree puts forth
A wealth of bloom. Self-shrouded all in white,
It looks in beauty on the passing world,
Flinging its censored perfume to the air;
And, with this benediction, yields its life.
It must be sweet to die so graciously.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 130.

Mary to Dode

Through the rift of five-and-forty years,
    Look thine eyes benignantly on me,
And the lengthened absence but endears
    All my tender memories of thee.

Little of the girlish mood I trace,
    Little of the drollery and fun,
But a sober, love-enhallowed face
    Speaks the task of duty nobly done.

Ah, the magic of that long ago!
    Ah, the fancies of a youth sublime!
Can it be the years have passed us so,
    And our fortunes have been told by Time?

Burdens brought he, fraught with joy and pain,
    Cares and sorrows brought he, but to bless;
I a mother with her happy train,
    You a mother to the motherless.

Even so our portions are assigned;
    Each her destiny to meet apart;
And the ties of youth must also bind
    Riper treasures of the mother's heart.

So, while near a lifetime's sped away,
    Since we parted lightly on the road,
So, when both our heads are grown full grey,
    Mary I am still, and you are Dode.
When we stood upon the farther side,
    And our paths divided up the slope,
Little thought we then to sunder wide,
    Meeting only in the vale of Hope.

Be that happy valley far or near,—
'Neath the hill, or past the sunset West,
Both must journey thither year by year;
Shall we meet again?—God knoweth best.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 131.

The Drouth

There came a long rainless season,
    When it seemed that the land was accurst,
And the streets of the town were sere and brown,
    And the earth was agape with thirst.

The acres of wheat and of barley
    That had promised a bounteous yield,
Were shriveled and dry when only half high,
    And all a-drouth was the field.

The grass erst so lush and verdant,
    Skirting the valley round,
Was crisp and dead beneath the tread,
    And matted upon the ground.

The cattle that fed on the hillside,
    The flocks that roamed the plain,
Fell lank and lean with starvation,
    And perished for want of rain.
The springs that had gushed from the mountain
    Were failing one by one,
And the river that ran down the valley
    Could scarcely longer run.

A fervid sun from the heavens
    Looked down with pitiless glare,
Drinking the remnant of moisture,
    Heating the pulseless air.

The earth upon the roadway,
    Beneath the furrowing tire
Was ground and winnowed to powder,
    Like ashes from a fire.

There was dust in the passing zephyr,
    And dust in every breath,—
Dust covered the whole land over,
    Like an ashen pall of death.

And there came a wind from the desert,
    Hot as a furnace blast,
That told of desolation,
    As it hurried, scorching past.

Men stared in each others' faces,
    And troubled looks they wore,
For the people all were stricken,—
    There was want and woe before.

* * *

One morning the sunshine came not
    Athwart the eastern sky,
And all the heavens were darkened,
    And succor came from on high;
And the blessed rain descended,
    Pattering on roof and steeple,
And a shout of exultation
    Went up from all the people;

And they said, as the living waters,
    Came to the parched plain,
"All hail the cloud that brings it,—
    God's mercy in the rain."

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 132–133.

In Evil Brass

London, Jan. 10, 1920.—An Exch Telegraph dispatch from Genoa today said the liner Princess Mafalda from America, had struck a mine and sunk. An unconfirmed report said 700 were lost.

"Men's evil manners live in brass." 'Tis sad
    The words of poet-prophet are fulfilled,
    And poison for the chalice is distilled.
For evil genius of a race gone mad,
And blind to right or wrong or good or bad,
    Hath brewed this deadly potion, and hath willed
    That enemy and friend alike be killed,
Now and in time to come; and then it seeks to add
The malediction of blind chance, that they
    Marked for destruction shall themselves invite
Their untoward fate, and even then obey
    The mandate of their murderers. Such ghoulish spite
Hath nowhere parallel. In evil day
    And evil dark they wait with fiend's delight.
"Men's evil manners live in brass.'Behold
    This blind destroyer, filled and primed and charged
    With fierce explosive and projectiles gorged,—
Freighted with terror and with woe untold
For innocent and helpless, young and old.
    (In furnaces of hell the shell was forged,
    And by the devil's hand 'twill be discharged.)
This hath the maniac set, in easy hold
Of anchored cable, and with cunning skill
    Brought just below the surface, out of sight,
And left;—a blind reminder of the German will.
    This hath he planted in the roadstead, quite
In line with passing ships, and it is still
    In evil-mannered brass, and deadly—bright.

"Men's evil manners live in brass." And lo!
    A good ship sailing from another shore,
    With thousand precious lives and precious store
Of succor for the starving people who
Hold out their hands, imploring. Ah, 'twould do
    A world of good, this cargo carried o'er

To such; and with the will to carry more,
This ship returning all the season through.
'Twould do a world of good,—to whom? Ah, well,
To any needing succor; for the war,
With all its million hates, is past. And let us tell
The Germans that we hold no grudge,—no bar
To future friendship. May—The hounds of hell
Have struck!—we sink!—And is this peace or war?

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 134–135.

Ingersoll

By the old women of the twirling flax
Another task is done; the thread is clipt,
The distaff spent;—and Ingersoll is dead.
Say that the ancient servitors of Fate
Have wrought exquisitely; and that mankind,
With hands uplifted, hold the noble skein.

Twice happy,—in his life and in his death.
Unflecked by age, unflawed by waning powers,
His work is ended as it was begun,
And stands to human freedom consecrate;—
Freedom from hoary tyrants of the past;
Freedom from superstition and blind creed;
Freedom from bigotry and "Christian" hate;
Freedom from rack and fagot of the mind.
And for this freedom millions call him blest»—
Millions will bless in ages yet to come.

Ingersoll is dead. But what is death to him?
Only the closing of a well-read book,
Filled with good thoughts and pleasant memories.
Mayhap he takes another from the shelf,
And in a fresher and a happier mood,
Pursues the theme beyond. Mayhap he
Has read enough already; (who can tell?)
And, in his cushioned ease, sublime repose,
He sleeps and sleeps forever. Either wise
'Tis well; for at the last he hath the better part.

Los Angeles, August 3, 1899.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 136.

In Memoriam

Thomas L. O'Brien.

What freak of Fate to send our soldier back,
Safe from war's hazards and its fierce alarms!
What freak to follow in our soldier's track,
And snatch him after from our very arms!

Ah, but this game is hard to understand—
This hide-and-seek with Death, the elfish shade—
For when we seek we find him not at hand,
And when he seeks we may not then evade.

At duty's earliest call he answered "Aye,"
And when the need was greatest he was there;
Fighting that human freedom should not die,
Daring the storm as only freemen dare.

Steady he held his course through shot and shell,
Over the top and through the tangled wire,
Meeting the gas of hate, the flames of hell,
That hissed and roared the deadly German ire.

In every need he grandly bore his part,
To duty where he found it reconciled;
In camp and hospital a woman's heart,
And ways as gentle as a little child.

Oh, the sublimity of such a life!
Not less the hero for his virtues all.
Stern and undaunted on the field of strife,
Yet ready aye to answer Mercy's call.
And through ten thousand dangers unafraid
Comes back our soldier to his happy home,
Seeking the peace his noble deeds have made,
Seeking the rest and comfort that should come.

Ah, but this scheme is hard to understand!
The hand that throws the shuttle over, under,
Weaving our lives together strand on strand,
Then rudely tears the woven web asunder.

But what the Weaver's purpose who shall tell?
    Perchance a better pattern He would gain.
Register joy, for He hath woven well;*
    Register joy, our hero's free from pain.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 137.

Little Messenger of Love and Death

Oh, little messenger of Love and Death,—
    Oh, Babe, thy mother's bitter, bitter-sweet,
Whose soul went out upon her parting breath,
    Thy soul to meet;

Born of an agony without assuage,—
    Born to the anguish of our bitter tears;—
Oh, little one, is this thy heritage,—
    The burden of thy years?
Where is the heart that yearned for mother-right?
    The breast that throbbed to greet thy natal day?
The hands outstretched, appealing in the night?
    Oh, Baby, where are they?

What knoweth thou of grief or pain or care?
    What knowest thou of either help or harm?
Ah, helpless little stranger, nestling there
    Upon thy nurse's arm!

Still art thou held in ever fond embrace;—
    Still art thou compassed by her mother-thought;
The fleecy draperies of thy nesting place
    Her loving fingers wrought.

Sleep, Baby, sleep within thy cozy nest;—
    Thine the long, dreamless sleep of babyhood;—
And never know the heart-aches and the rest,
    But only know the good.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 138.

A Load of Wood

Accept my offering—a farmer's load—
The gnarled roots of mesquite and of sage,
And boles of mountain oak, torn from the soil
With many a blow of mattock and of axe.

Such uncouth cordwood is in vogue with us
Who dwell upon the mountain side, where erst
The scrubby chaparral was all the growth
That Nature in a niggard humor gave.
And so, in clearing off my foothills farm,
To plant thereon the orange and the vine,
That better grace this sunny clime of ours,
My stock of fuel grew. And I have come,
With wagon clattering down the rugged way,
And I have brought my offering as the rest,
To grace your wedding day.

Doubt not, my friend,
That you shall find the fuel sound and good;
Quick to the spark and ready in the blaze,
To boil the pot and make the kettle sing.
'Tis likewise fairly suited for the grate
(Now the long evenings are a little cool),
Yielding its store of sunshine to the room.

For every use
That men require, in reason, of a fire
I do commend this wood. But know you that,
Beyond the values here enumerate,
There's magic in it? Wonders like to which
The sorcerers of the East did never work,
Shall it perform for you.

The time is come
When to yourself you take the heart's best choice,
An honored wife. And you have chosen well;
For she, not lacking in the gentle grace
That kindly Nature gives to womankind,
Has yet the subtler charm that is vouchsafed
To those alone of true and generous heart.
Bedight with gown and slippers, sit you down
(Your love beside you), and this magic blaze
Shall send a thrill of rapture through your soul
That kings and emperors have vainly sought.

Anon the simple meal
Her hand prepares above this witching flame
Upon your palate shall approve itself
Than nectar and ambrosia sweeter far.

Into the embers of this mystic fire
Gaze you, the while the night is growing old,
And (still your wife beside you) there shall be
Most wondrous visions to you both revealed.

So, pondering on these things, it seemed most fit
That I, your boyhood's chosen friend, and still
The boon companion of maturer years,
Should your Prometheus be; bringing the fire
To consecrate your home. God bless you, Fred!
God bless your hearthstone! May its flame of joy
Burn on unceasing, like the Aztec fires!

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 139–140.

Pomona

And now Pomona stretches forth her hand
To bless the blossoms of our sunny land,
And they are fruitful, lo! an hundred fold;—
The orange, yellow as the minted gold,
The lemon, hinting of a wealth untold;
The prune, the fig; the olive and the vine,
Yielding their treasury of oil and wine;
And every fruit of every fertile zone
The fair Pomona gives us for our own.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 141.

On the Philippine War

My country, (must I say the bitter word?)
Invader, robber, spoiler of the weak!
Would that mine eyes had closed on earthly sights,
Would that mine ears were dead to earthly sounds,—
Would that my light had flickered and gone out,
Ere I, thy lover, uttered this reproach!

My country, under what malignant star
That overrules the good intents of men,—
That stifles Charity with hands of greed,—
Turns former brother-love to hate, and o'er
The altar-stone incites the crime of Cain,—
Under what poison Upas hath thou slept,
That all thy better purpose is o'erthrown,
And all thy fond traditions sunk in sin?

My country, when thy sword was girded on
To fight for the oppressed of other lands,—
When thou went forth to champion the right,
And bade the tyrant stay his hand and end
The cursed reign of slaughter and despair;—
When thou essayed to snatch the weak and old
From blood and flame and torture,—thou wert strong;-
Strong in thy purpose, strong in thought and deed;
And all the nations wondered at thy feats.

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My country, in the tyrant's name and stead,
With mocking pretext of his purchased right,
Against the weak thou art thyself arrayed!
The half-clad native fights with bow and spear;—
Or mayhap with the gun thou gavest him
When yesterday thy purposes he served!
The woman fighting, sinks beside her mate!
A rabble of affrighted island-folk,
They fall like swaths of barley in the field,
Mown by machines of war! In hopeless strife
They shrink before thy tempest-blast of hell,
And set the torch to that they call their home,

And fly to swamp and jungle fastnesses.

My country, oh, the cruel, cruel wrong
That slays for conquest and a larger mart!
What base perversion of thy giant strength!
What prostitution of thy Christian creed!
Is this thy boasted doctrine that upholds
The right of man, self-governed, to be free?
Is this the heritage thou did'st receive
From those that toiled and bled for Freedom's sake?
Is this the legacy from sire to son,—
This beggar's remnant of a brave estate?
Powerless to crush a foe that will not mass,
Powerless to follow where a rabble flies,
Powerless to wreak a ruin ready wrought,
Powerless to burn the ashes of dead fires;—
At bay before a wretched, scattered horde,
Beset by tropic heat, besieged by Death,
That draws his cordon with a fever-touch,
And posts a guard of Pestilence by night;—
How is our giant shrunk since yesterday!
How is our mighty champion defied,
And set at naught before a gaping world!

Whose hand, bethink you, champions their cause?
Who interposes now to stay the wrong?
Is it a Power that exalts the weak,
And sets them up the mighty to confound?
Oh, Nation, halting on the fateful verge
Of time and circumstance, beware! Beware!
They who would forge the links of servitude,
E'en for the poorest of God's wandering tribes,
Make fetters for themselves and for their kind.

July 22, 1899.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 142–144.

Pasadena

Fair Pasadena, Crown of the Valley,
Diadem set on the brow of the hills,
Bright was the promise thy christening gave thee,
And Fate, thy handmaiden, fulfills.

Fond Pasadena, never another
Hath such.a circlet as thine;—
The green of thy groves and the gold of thy poppies,
Wrought by a Maker divine.

Loved Pasadena, rich are thy treasures;—
Amethyst, garnet and ruby so red;—
Thus doth thy handmaid, the Noonday, bedeck thee,
Showering the gems on thy head.

Sweet Pasadena, evening approaches;—
Topaz and agate thy crown shall beset.
Night cometh after, with jewels of sorrow,—
Jewels of onyx and jet.

Sad Pasadena, this admonition
Teacheth the lesson of mortals to thee;—
Lo! there is never a crown so beseeming
As crown of humility.

Bright Pasadena, yet cometh after
Morning in diamonds bedight;
Cometh the Noonday with ruby and garnet,
Cometh the onyx Night.

*NOTE: Pasadena, an Indian word signifying Crown of the Valley.
Blest Pasadena, still shall a glory
Crown thee and bless thee alway,
Jewels unnumbered are ever thy portion
Brought by thy servant, Day.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 145.

The German "U"

It sinks;—and sinking leaves no trace
Upon the ocean's placid face.
Down in the middle reaches far
Swims the leviathan of War,
Seeking its prey; and if it rise
To use its periscopic eyes,
Like some black monster of the deep,
    It tarries but a breathing rest,
Then back within the ocean-keep
    It dives to follow up the quest.

This grotesque Brobdignagian fish hath scales
    Of bolted steel; and fins indeed
Beyond the wont of fishes' fins and tails,
    With million times their speed;
And power titanic hath it, demon-made
    By engines, fiery-pulsed, at play;
And all the whirling dervishes arrayed
    Could not so whirl as they.
And in the fish's belly there is pent
    A score of Jonahs;—not impelled
To mission of the Lord when recreant,
    But rather by the Devil held
In leash to execute his cunning plan,
    And, bondsmen in a service strict,
Inflict a fate o'er dire for fiend or man,
  And tempt the fate that they inflict.

For there, within the close-drawn hold, like case
    That's water-buried—(it would seem
No part of earth or sea or air or space—
  The nightmare of a waking dream)
These wretched serfs, in reeking sweat and grime,
    Toil without surcease, knowing well
That one mischance in action or in time
  Brings death with agonies of hell.

Yet toil they on, as driven toilers can,
  With grim determination bent

To wreak such death upon their fellow-man
Ere they to Pluto's realm are sent.
O, God, is this thy handiwork? Is't then
A balance 'twixt our gain and loss
Since thy Peace Messenger was sent to men,
And nailed by them upon the cross?
It sinks,—The fiend incarnate hath espied,
By his devices clever, Argus-eyed,
A noble ship that rides in sea and air,
Unconscious of the peril skulking there;—
A noble ship, replete with joy and life,
Betimes by Charity and Mercy sent
To soothe the carking miseries of strife,
And save a wretched people, famine-spent.

It sinks;—and from its evil maw spits out
A missile deadly, sent with speed and force
Of chainéd lightning.—Panic, fear and rout
Possess the good ship yonder, and her course
Is not to harbor, with her precious freight,
For rescue of the suffering that wait;
But, with a gaping cavern in her side,
All open to a fierce insetting tide,
She plunges downward with her precious hoard;—
She plunges down to death with all on board.

Oh, evil genius, cast in human form,
That sees the wreck thy dastard will hath made;
That sees the panic and the wild alarm,
And hears the cry of children, and thine aid
Is not stretched forth to succor;—evil one,
Thou who hath murdered Mercy, thinkest thou
One drop shall ever cool thy parched tongue,—
One touch of kindness ease thy fevered brow?

It sinks;—and may the God of Pity send
The craft and crew to their appointed end.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 146–148.

To a Sierra Pine

I love thy restful shade, Sierra Pine,
Thy drooping boughs and feathery knots of green
That net a fretted canopy above,
And let the welcome sunshine glimmer through.

Nor glare nor gloom beseem thy cunning skill,
That, over rocky ledge and steep and crag,
Weaveth a tracery of brown and gold
To deck with arabesques the mountain side.

Low, nestling at thy foot as if to crave
An equal share of tenderness, behold
The fronded bracken and the plumes of fern
That hold their meager lodgment in the cleft;
And lichens gray, o'erspanning all the rocks,
And flowers of modest hue and mosses old,
Creeping and creeping till thy massive trunk
Is half encircled. See the furzy coat!
How it o'erlaps the tree against the north,
Protecting and protected! Nor the less
Of fond devotion seemeth in the vine,
Weaving its tendrils round thy lofty trunk,
Climbing to kiss the sunshine at the top.

Beyond the angle of yon beetling cliff
A mountain stream pours down with tireless plash,
Now stealing round a boulder in its path,
Now dallying and now speeding on its way,
And leaping madly from the battled rock
To plunge in frothing eddy at its base.
Perchance, between the foliage of the pine,
There drop the sun's bright lances all unseen,
And, striking full athwart the waterfall,
They shiver in a thousand sparks of light.

A droning murmur rises from the stream
(As 'twere the distant clang and clash of arms,)
And there, amidst the mimic scene of strife,
A rainbow-banner hangs upon the spray.

Anon the scene is changed, and in the west
The sun goes down behind a neighbor peak,
Lost to my vision ere his time; and yet
A halo of his glory still surmounts
The craggy height, and crowns the mountain king.

And now the peaceful twilight creepeth on
And Nature for an instant seems to near

The confines of that Aiden-land beyond,
Where neither echo wakes nor shadow falls.

And then the night, the ever glorious night,
With white stars floating in the ether-space!
'Tis then, Sierra Pine, I love thee best;
For, though I find a deeper solitude
Beneath thy somber branches, still I know
However dark my life may seem to me,
It hath been flecked with sunshine all along
Like to the noon-tide shadow on the rock.
Oh, welcome rest, oh, blest surcease of care,
That falls upon the heart a-weary grown!
Sierra Pine, I come to thee and claim
A breath of balm to fan my fevered brow,
And dreamy odors, lulling to repose;
And lo! a miracle! Straightway I rise,
And, like the widow's son of Nain, I find
My pulses leaping into life once more.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 149–150.

Whence Cometh Thought?

Whence cometh thought? Oh, learned Doctor, whence
This something-nothing,—this strange paradox,
More transient than the firefly's stroke of wing,
And more enduring than an age of brass?

Is it within the brain, of friction born,
As steel and flint opposed bring forth a spark?
And doth our good grey matter strike a light,
To urge an impulse and invoke a will?
Or comes it like the lightning flash aloft,
Dropped from a lowering cloud of mystery,
And sending through the nerves its ready thrill,—
The shock of being and of consciousness?

Whence cometh thought, oh, learned Doctor, whence?
What is the subtle bond 'twixt mind and man?
Where doth the impulse start, and when and how?
Tell me, oh, wise man, how a thought is born.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 151.

The Years Are Five-and-Forty

So, Dear, the years are five and forty. Now
The shadows lengthen on the far-spent path,
And ere the night falls, let'us rest and talk.
Perchance we may trudge on another day
And still another down a gentle slope;
And mayhap, if the fates are kind, anon
Together reach the golden jubilee.
Who knows the goal? But they who ply the skein
Are niggard of its length beyond a knot
That marks three score and ten. Full soon the dame
That holds the shears with stern solicitude
Will clip a thread; and whether yours or mine
We know not, and 'tis better so. But one
Will sit with folded hands, and think and think,
(Ah, then there'll be no further tasks to do,)
And it will seem so little time we had,
And life so full of duties and of cares,
That there was left for us no breathing space
To know each others' thoughts. Ah, then, be sure
There will be time enough to think and think,
With folded hands!
How falls it dear, that I,
Urged by some vagrant fancy or conceit
That ebbs and flows defiant of the will,
Have celebrated in my random way
Full many a hap and circumstance of life,
But never sang of love? Is it because
I loved but once, and that love blessed in youth
And blessed through all the happy years of life
Was self-sufficing? Even so; and hence
My wanton self commanded, "Peace; be still."
But now that we together have o'erpassed
The long ascending way, and from the top
Behold, set out against the farther sky,
The glimmer of an eventide of peace,
My gypsy mood comes back unsatisfied,
And whispers, "Sing." "Sing of a happy life,
Filled to the brim with love and sweet content;

Sing of the darling wife whose ripened years
Yield thee the harvest of domestic joy;
Sing of the sturdy boys and winsome girls
That cluster round thy hearthstone. Sing of these
And, in the fulness of thy long-pent song
Proclaim how good a thing it is to love."

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 152.

Why Sing of Love to Thee?

Light of my life?
Love passeth minstrelsy,
Darling, my wife,
Why not the spoken word,—
Old and yet new,
Treasured as oft as heard,
Leal and true?

Ah, but the word and will
Pass with a breath;
Soon must the voice be still,
Silenced in death.
Song's an immortal thing,
Treasured above;
Angels will ever sing
Anthems of love.
So will I sing to thee,
Dearest of earth,
Poor though the minstrelsy
And little worth;
Then, when the shadows fall
Ending my day,
This shall my love recall,
Singing alway.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 153.

I Mind a Little House

O'erlooking all the village and beyond;
And it was such a cozy little house,
And it was such a spacious little house,
And it was such a grand affair, all told,
Because it was our own;—our very own.
And there was room to spare, (for surely two
Did not require so large a place) and so
We took a lodger—Happiness—to stay;
And he brought friends enough betimes
To fill the little home chock-full. E'en then,
As time winged on, there still seemed ample room
To bring another guest;—and then the baby came.

Ah, well, my dear, it seems but yesterday,
And what a sweet, brief day it was! Again
I seem to stand within that sacred room
And move with muffled step and bated breath;
I see the fond girl-mother lying there,
Her white, wan face illumined with a smile
That God vouchsafes alone to motherhood
And angels. In the nurse's arms behold
Wonder of all the ages!—a new life.
But came another guest one day, unbid,
A somber guest—and set his mark upon
The lintel of our door, and entered in;
And we were poor indeed and desolate,
And all our merry company was gone.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 154.

Our Baby Still

Our first-born is our baby still;
For he shall never older grow,
Nor any suffering nor any ill
Shall baby know.

And he shall always with us bide,
In calm and restful sleep
And we shall always by his side
Our vigils keep.

The others born to us are dear,
(But one is gone afar)
And those about the hearth-stone here
Our joy and solace are;

And now our task is nearly done
(The sun sets o'er the hill)
We turn again to the little one
Who is our baby still.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 155.

A Little Bird

Dead at the coming of Spring,
    Dead at the dawning of day,
With head tucked under its wing, -
    And folded away.

Dead on the lawn at my feet,
    Midst dew-gemmed grass and flowers,
While the air is vibrant and sweet
    In the waking hours.

Dead while the world is rife
    With hope and joy sublime,
Dead in the heyday of life,
    At nesting time.

Dead while the songster aloft
    Is tuning his roundelay,
And a bird from hither bush
    Flies mourning away.

Oh, little one there on the lawn,
    So fragile, so fond, so young!
Thou goest as others have gone,
    With song unsung;

And the Master who noteth thy fall,
    The Master alone can tell
Why the summons must come to us all,
    And why it is well.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 156.

A Legend of the East

A worthy Fellahan of Chilminar,
(So runs an ancient legend of the East)
Bereft of one he held most dear of earth,
And sorrowing greatly, sought the Prophet out,
And begged a potion for his malady.
"Go," said the Sage. "Search out a house
Whose door has ne'er been darkened by such loss,
And of the master ask a drachma-cup
Of salt; and may thy journey find thee whole."
The Fellahan pursued his quest betimes,
And fared through all the valley of Cathay,
And sought in every village, house to house,
But found no home without a sorrow marked.

Perhaps, my dear, there is a subtle thread
Athwart the convolutions of our tale.
Perhaps its inner meaning may avail
The one who sorrows greatly for his dead,
And long refuses to be comforted.
'Twas not the salt the mourner sought for dole,
It was the journey made the mourner whole.
And ever thus the lesson's to be read:
In sodden sorrow there is selfishness;
And he who wards away the Comforter
Hugs to his bosom only dire Distress.
A stricken heart yields soonest to the stir
Of fellow-feeling;—sympathy, no less
For others than for self; and in the whir
Of life, an Angel comes to heal and bless.
So, in the fulness of allotted time,
We filled our stations and found work at hand,
That claimed an earnest effort and gave joy
In doing with our might. Small faith have I
In that old legend of the primal curse
Sent as a punishment to sinful man.
I hail it, rather, God's good gift, conferred
Upon his own that they may nobly claim
His attributes, and be themselves, in turn,

Creators. Work is divine, and wisely done
It leads to loftiest heights and opens wide
The largess of the world—God's treasure house—
That proves at last our true inheritance.

And as we loved and toiled our duties grew,
And they were ever welcome. Round our hearth
Came prattling children—ruddy girls and boys—
And, standing all a-row in dress parade,
One might have noted how the steps went up,
Each taller by a head than his next mate.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 157.

If Love Were but a Holiday

If love were but a holiday,
All brightness and all pleasure;
If love were but the flowers of May
And gladness without measure,
Why then 'twere but a slender reed
And useless altogether;
For love is what we mostly need
In dark and stormy weather.
If love were just a butterfly
Disporting in the garden,
It wouldn't be worth while to try
To carry any burden.
Since life is mostly made, my dear,
Of care and burden-bearing,
Love's highest service doth appear
In care and burden-sharing.

If love were just a beaming smile
And merry word and greeting,
It wouldn't serve us all the while,
Or bear so much repeating.
For life is made of many moods
And many haps and chances;
And love must have similitudes
For varying circumstances.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 158.

Upon the Eldest of Our Little Band

Mayhap we set our hearts too much; for he
As consolation for the baby gone, had held
Two measures of our fond solicitude;
And then you know how partial parents are
To turn unto the eldest for their stay,
And center hopes in him betimes beyond
Their proper metes. Ah, well, we could not know
He was a consolation only loaned,
Not given, and that a strict account was kept
Up there, and payment would be asked in full
When due, by a stern creditor. But say it not
So harshly.
Rather say the Master gave
Within the closure of our paradise,
A plant for our especial care and joy,
And that we tended it so faithfully,
And digged and watered like true husbandmen,
And cherished every little twig that grew
And joyed to see it bourgeon, stem and leaf.
Say that the Master, with approving thought,
Reached forth and plucked the earliest bud of all
And afterward a flower full-blown. And say
The Master claimed but tribute of his own;
'Tis not for us to question or repine.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 159.

Azrael

O Azrael, saw thou not a youth
Passing this way and faring o'er the hills
Toward the land of shadows and the Night?
Alone he hastened forth, as one that bears
From Love a precious message and a gift.
And he is tall and strong, and in his face
Beams the clear light of hope and loyalty.
Saw thou not the youth, O Azrael?
He is our son, and he hath gone afar.

Then said the Angel, Death: J saw the youth,
And marked him tall and strong, bearing himself
As one upon a joyous mission bent.
Unquestioning, unafraid, he journeyed forth
To seek the vast Unknown. I spake him fair,
And with him walked beyond the shadowy hills,
And gave commission to the Aiden land.
O, Azrael, our son is young and fair;
In memory he comes a babe in arms;—
A little toddler prattling by our side;—
A sturdy lad at school,—and then a youth
Whose manly promise was our sweetest thought.
What need for such a messenger hadst thou
And such a gift? My heart misgiveth me
That they who take thy benison away
Return no more forever. Now, alas,
Our arms stretched forth for greeting, do enfold
Naught but a memory and a carking grief,
And we are desolate. O Azrael,
Thou hast so many, yet hath taken ours.

Then said the Angel, Death: Be comforted;
The young, the beautiful, the pure have gone
Upon this journey and must ever go.
If, since the dawn of time, 'tis ordered thus,
"Dost thou not see't is ordered well? Think not
A kindly Nature that bestoweth life
And all that makes life gracious hath ordained
Its end but for creation's good. Think not
That aught in all this universe of change
Shall live in vain or perish utterly.

O Azrael, he was but Nature's child;
Life came, he knew not whence, he asked not why,
But, with the steadfast faith of innocence,
He lived it well and aye was just and true.
Unawed, unhampered by the primal curse,
Or by vicarious sin or sacrifice,
He sought nor creed nor craft to know the will
Of his Creator.
When the summons came

He yielded up the sacred trust imposed
And, smiling, went his way. Is there for him
A place within the Aiden land? For him
Doth kindly Nature have a care? Say'st thou
That such a life is not bestowed in vain,
And such a death is not the wage of sin?

Then said the Angel, Death: Dismiss thy fears;
He that doth note the sparrow's fall and holds,
Within the hollow of His hand the fate
Of all created things, is just and good.
'Tis not for man to fathom all His ways,
But be thou satisfied; the end is Peace.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 160–161.

To Maida

Come, dear one, walk with me a little way
Along the quiet river, for it flows
So strong, so sure, so tranquil to the bay,
It bids my troubled spirit seek repose.

Perchance, in parting from its canyon home,
Within the fastness of yon mountains hoar,
Its waters lashed themselves in angry foam
And chafed and fretted on the rocky shore.

But, after all the turmoil and the strife,
And after all their struggle for release,
With chastened spirit, and instinct with life,
The waters come to us and whisper Peace.
So walk with me, dear girl, along the shore,
And we will learn the lesson of the stream;
And talk as we have never talked before

Upon an old, a sadly-sacred theme.

And take my hand in thine, my dear, and be
My child, my loving daughter, just to-day,
For I would know thy filial sympathy
While sorrow's shadow overspreads the way.

A hallowed message comes to you and me
From out the tredden vale of yesteryears:
We read the words but dimly, mistily,
As they who look through lashes wet with tears.

Dear Maida, I am stricken; none can tell
How sorely; but I'm not afraid to die.
Whatever be the outcome, it is well.
I write this little note to say good-bye.

And this was all his message, dear, to you
When, hand in hand we lingered o'er his bier;
And this you gave me when our grief was new,
And it is blurred with many a bitter tear.

Ah, had his life been spared, my noble boy!
And budding love had flowered and fruited, then
My daughter I had hailed you in my joy.
Ah, dear, it might have been, it might have been.

So Maida, we will walk a little way
Along the quiet river; for it flows
So strong, so sure, so placid, to the bay,
It bids my troubled spirit find repose.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 162–163.

In Memory of a Friend

Lo, the tense bowstring, long o'erdrawn and frayed,
Hath snapped asunder! Here the arrow falls,
Spoiled of its wonted flight, and the spent bow
Lies nerveless and discarded on the ground.

Now let the tired hunter stay his hand.
Now let the weary feet and brain and heart
Find surcease from the travail of the day.
Now let him throw his heavy burden down,
And rest, and rest, and rest forevermore.

Friend of my boyhood, friend of halcyon days,
Friend of the ripening years, and aye my friend
Through every changing circumstance of life,
I speak thee endless peace. Hail and farewell!
May friendship such as thine, on brighter shores,
In happier climes abide, and may it bring
The guerdon of a perfect love to thee.

Ah, friend, when I recall the long ago,
We shared our schoolboy joys and troubles all,
And searched the woods and roamed the hills and vales
That stretched about our rugged western home;—
When I review with scarce regretful thought
The follies and the foibles of our youth;
When I recall the many happy days
We read the Scottish bards, and dreamed our dreams,
And wove into the pattern of our lives
The threads of Highland romance and of song;
When I am minded of the plans we laid
And how, through darkened glass, we sought to peer
Into the mysteries of the coming time;
'Tis hard to feel that more than thirty years
Have sped away, and that at last for thee
The story's told, the closing canto sung.

And how has life fulfilled our boyish dreams?
In sooth, I know not, for the busy day
Dispels the slumberous fancies of the morn.
But this I know: Wherever Duty called

No lagging step betrayed an irksome charge;
Thine was an instant service and a free.
Oh, earnest one! What found thy hand to do
That didst thou with thy might, and ever sought
Some further, harder task to make complete
The measure of thy usefulness. To thee
Came summons for a busy life, full charged
With heavy undertakings, ceaseless care,
Amidst the whirring wheels of industry,
Amidst the madding turmoil of affairs
Fraught with grave import to thy fellow-man.
And as thy duties multiplied apace
Came strength and courage for the greater need,
While every task completed but inspired.
Had nature given thee a giant's strength
That strength had been employed to uttermost
To fill the promptings of thy giant will.
Quick to discern the justice of a cause,
Ready to draw the proper metes and bounds
'Twixt might and right; considerate and kind
To all with whom thy daily life was cast,
What wonder that the ready plaudit comes:
Here was a man the world is better for.

Upon thy inner life, the sacred shrine
Of home and of domestic tenderness,
Look not unhallowed eyes! It is enough
If all that human hearts may know and feel
Responsive to the magic chord of love
In Husband, Father, Son, is felt by those
Whose lives were blest and glorified by thine.

Again farewell. If I could give to these
And to the world the lesson of thy life,
'Twould be a charge to duty. I would say
He serves his maker best who serves his kind.
'Tis not in blind subservience to forms,
'Tis not in protestations and long prayers,
'Tis not in cloistered vigils of the night,
Or brooding o'er a host of hapless ills,
But in the world's activities are formed

The hopes, the happiness, the lives of men,
That bring a better era to the race.

And as I say farewell there comes to me
The whisper of a thought but half expressed,
The echo of a song that ne'er was sung;
But, from the inner chambers of my heart,
I hear it still. Mayhap the song was thine.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 164–166.

For a Summer's Cruise

I will sail at the ides of Spring,
And my day of parting shall be the day
Of my welcoming.

I will sail away to placid seas;
I will sail to the South, I will sail to the West,
And, far from the world's perplexities,
I shall find rest.

I will sail in a craft that is all mine own,
With none to challenge whither or why,
And the waves shall cradle, the breezes drone
My lullaby.

I will sail past the sunset's amber glow
To the isles of palms, the isles of peace,
And naught shall hinder and none forego
My soul's release.

I will sail to the land of my longing heart—
The land of balsam and fragrant airs—
Where nature doeth her perfect part
And man forbears.

Then say not farewell. In God's own time
Thou too shalt be free for a season's rest;
We shall meet, we shall meet on those shores sublime,
In the isles of the blest.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 167.

Our Riddle

Friend of my early day,—
Boy of all boys mine own;
Man among men, and gone
Thy farther way,

Sing as I must betimes,
Craving thy distant thought,
I bring, as in youth I brought
My halting rhymes.

Friend in the heyday time,
Friend when the shadows fell,
Tell me, at last is it well?
Is the future sublime?

Tell me, is memory held
OF all this earthly life,—
Of its joys and sorrows and strife,
And nothing dispelled?

Do the friends of earthly days
Renew their friendships there?
And dost thou still have a care
For my thoughts and ways?

Are those that continue here

In the moil and struggle and din,—
Are they, thy lost friends, still within
Thy larger sphere?
Dost thou watch with kindly thought
The petty lives we lead?
And canst thou then take heed
Of what is wrought?

Oh, Friend, doth consciousness,—
The knowledge that I am I
Persist in that by-and-by
To keep and bless?

Or is it a dreamless sleep,—
The sleep of eternity,
And the sleepers forever free
In Oblivion's deep?

Oh, Friend, let thy soul and mine
For a little hour commune;—
The riddle is solved full soon;—
The riddle of mine and thine.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 168.

Whither Away?

Where are our friends of yesteryear?—our best
Who passed beyond our ken, encompassed all
In one vast mystery? Where do they rest
Beyond the shadowy pall?

We grope to find, through darkening faith and creed,
Some other door than death to lead us thence,
And not a door is opened to our need
But charlatan pretense.
For they who claim communion with that bourne
Of parted spirits—who themselves invoke
By dancing table and suspiring horn,
Bring fol-de-rol. It is a joke.

Where are our own, our dearest loved and lost,
All passed to that sequestered hiding-place?
Where the vast multitude, the countless host
From ages of the race?

Where are the hosts from other worlds than this,—
Uncounted millions in unbounded space?
Is there for all of these a state of bliss,
An universe of grace?

Or, shall we grope with Oriental seers,
And solve this Sphinx's riddle of the soul,
That all the million lives of million years
Are merged in one great whole?

Shall every drop in this soul-ocean poured
Know 'tis a drop—a fix'd reality
In consciousness,—and feel the hope secured
In immortality?

Or, if we say the Master pours again
This life into another for a span,
The thrifty scheme brings other life, 'tis plain,
In animal or man.

'Tis but a fancy,—bald and commonplace,
That brings no solace to the hungering soul;
'Tis but the maundering of a morbid race;—
A part is not the whole.
Then let us sit with Socrates; the while
He holds the cup, and with his parting breath,
Speaks words of wondrous import that beguile
His waiting friends,—and death.

Some say the after life to which we tend
Is but a long and dreamless sleep; if so,
It must be pleasant. To that happy end,
If thus ordained, I go.

And yet 'tis hard to give the matter up
With mere equivocation for a hope;—
If this be so, why then:—and drink the cup—
Thus also do we grope.

Perchance in modern science we may find
Some filmy thread to hang our hopes upon;
For any hope appealing to the mind
Is better far than none.

'Tis held—alas, who holds it?—only men—
And postulate and reason both it brings;
'Tis not a matter of the soul again,
But of material things;

That every atom circling in its orb,
Within the confines of its molecule,
And all the force these particles absorb
Are under law and rule;
That matter changes ever in its form,
Nor questions what the individual cost,
But Force and Matter never suffer harm;—
No particle is lost.

Ah, then, it were a sorry hope, my friend,
For this poor atom in a breath of law,—
Tossed, and converted to some other end,
As wind-tossed straw.

But such an airy nothingness we hail,
As worthy better argument, or none;
For if the great Constructor doth prevail,
To hold unspent, his own,

Why not, in this all-comprehending scheme,
A plan provided which we cannot scan,
To save—what's more than Atom's hope or dream—
The soul of man?

Ah, then, it is a filmy thread indeed,—
A slender cable for our tossing ship,—
But hope is hope, and we're in sorest need
Of something on this trip.

Then let us hope, and ever hoping, live
To fill our destiny, whate'er it be,
And not o'erquestion what the Giver give
In time or in eternity.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 169–172.

The After-Glow

As the sun drops o'er yon western hill;
As the Day, departing, lingers still,
    And nods and smiles as if loath to go;
Comes a light on tree and grass and flower
That glorifies the passing hour;—
    And we call that light the after-glow.

Then the sky puts on a deeper blue,
Then the rose is dyed a brighter hue,
    Then a sense of beauty and sweet repose
Fills me and thrills me through and through,
And then, my dearest, I think of you;
    For you are all of my after-glows.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 173.

When the Grim Reaper Comes

When the grim reaper comes, as come he must,
To gather in Dame Nature's harvest-store,
Swinging his scythe right lustily before,
May he not find me prone upon the dust,
A blighted thing of parasite or rust,
But waving full and free, and looking o'er
A field that yields an hundred fold and more,—
Just recompense to husbandman full just.
And when he swings across the little space
Whereon, to make a sheaf, I am but one,
May I be found upstanding in my place
And sturdy for the blade to sweep upon;—
A ripened stem to fall with ready grace
In last obeisance to the setting sun.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 173.

Two Soldiers

I knew a man of brave and generous deeds,
Who, nerved with courage and a righteous cause,
Went forth to battle. Fought he well and long—
Fought for his country and for those he loved,
Nor turned aside the measure of a span
When in his path he met the giant Death
Disputing passage. Where he fought he fell,
And there, unsuccored by a friendly hand,
Breathed out his life. It was a glorious deed,
And well the world may call him hero; well
May sound his praises far and near, and wreathe
His tomb with laurels. Yet, methinks, there is
Another heroism, grander still,
Which, all too oft, the world forgets to praise.

The soldier felt the martial thrill of strife;
Midst beat of drum and tramp of thousand feet
He marched to battle, taking equal chance
Of life and death with foe who met him there.

And thus to strive and thus to dare and die
Were worth the tribute of a patriot's life.

Another one I knew—
A frail, weak woman, but with iron heart,
Who, in the quiet of a loving home,
Waged battle that might make the hardy quail.
Alone, with unnerved arm, with sinking hope,
She fought with Fate, and ever knew defeat,
Yet fought and fought again, with stubborn will,
Denying to her foe the victory.
Nor blanched her cheek with fear, nor from her lips
Escaped a single outcry of despair.
Her life, the field of conflict, yielded she,
But inch by inch, as driven back amain,
Until the utmost boundary was reached.
'Twas no surrender, but a long retreat
To death—and Fate was master of the day.

Which was the better soldier, he or she?
Which of the twain possessed the stouter heart?
The world may give unequal meed of praise
And glorify the one who fell in strife.
God saw the noble conflicts; He will judge,
And not the less award to that brave soul

Who battled with a more than mortal foe,
And at the last snatched victory from defeat.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 174–175.

A Hundred Years Ago

Turn me the glass in thy hand, O Fancy, thou fond necromancer;
Turn, and the sands shall run backward, recalling a time long departed!
Turn me the glass, and disclose this land by the placid Pacific
Ere a century mighty in deeds had considered and worked transformation.

Backward a hundred years, and, lo! there stretches before me
Landscape as wild as e'er came from the hand of the Master—
Mountains whose cavernous sides are the haunt of the bear and coyote,
Echoing canyons and glens where the deer seeks its chaparral cover,
Purposeless rivers that flow but to sink in the sands of the valley,
Deserts of verdureless sand, white with an alkaline hoar-frost.

Hither Junipero came, Father of Pioneer Fathers,
Marching with crozier and sword, in the name of the Church and King Carlos,
Gaining a province the while he was saving the souls of the heathen.
Then, with frugality born of a mission of peace and salvation,
Listing the new-made recruits to conquer the fastness of
Nature.
Here on the shores of the bays and in valleys that skirted the rivers,
Builded the Fathers their missions, and called the rude people to worship,
Taught them that idleness ever breeds poverty, mischief and sorrow—
Planted the olive and vine, and admonished their converts to tend them.

Gathered at last to the arms of the saints, the Pioneer Fathers,
Left others as fervent and faithful to teach and command in their places.
Peace came and dwelt in the province; peace and contentment together,
And the valleys were rich with their harvests, the plains with their cattle.

Then it was that a galleon sailing for cargo of tallow and peltry,
Brought news of a warfare that raged on the shores of the distant Atlantic—
A warfare 'twas said that was greater than that of the Mexican conquest.
The colonies, banded together, had issued pronunciamiento
Dissolving their bond of allegiance, proclaiming their freedom forever.

Great Britain, enraged at the petty defiance, had sent forth her armies
To punish the arrogant rebels and bring them again to subjection.
The conflict had waged long and fierce, and yet gave no sign of abatement,
While the fortunes of war hung between them in uncertain balance.

Thus they spake, and the galleon sailed with her cargo of tallow and peltry,
But the men of the province remembered the tale and long pondered upon it,
And whenever a vessel dropped anchor to trade for the goods of the country
They asked of the warfare that waged on the shores of the distant Atlantic.

Years glided by, and once more into port came the galleon sailing,
With tidings at last that the warfare of which they had spoken was ended;
That the colonists who had rebelled and issued pronunciamiento

Had victory won in the fight, and their land was now free from oppression.

Strange seemed the story—so strange that the sober old dons of the province
Pondered and pondered upon it, yet guessed not its wonderful import.
Little they recked that the freedom proclaimed on the distant Atlantic

Westward should sweep like a flood, nor stop till it gained the Pacific;
Little they recked there was coming a day in the far-distant future,
When the men of a new generation and race, who should stand in their places,
Would rejoice o'er that victory won and bless that pronunciamiento!

O land that hath slumbered and slept through the matin of liberty's dawning,
Waken and shake from thine eyelids the sloth that hath fallen upon them,
Waken and stretch forth thy hands for the toil of a noble endeavor!
Waken and rouse thee to action; a glorious destiny calleth.
So shalt thou eat of the fruit that for thee hath another planted;
So shalt thou ever be free, my honored, my blest California.

Centennial Celebration, 1876

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 176–179.

The Black Star

In retrospect I see a race bound down.
Made in God's image, ask you? Why—then—yes,
If God be black. And can he see distress
So abject on the earth, and not a frown
Darken his visage? Cares He for his own
But lightly, as we oft so ill profess,
This race of men to curse, and that to bless?
And on the one made black, the thorny crown
Of martyrdom to place, and rest his hand?
Oh, ye of little faith and lesser claim
To justice, that ye hold divine command
Is thus fulfilled, and sanctioned in his name!
Oh, ye of senile creed and craft, who stand
For prayer in market-place, for shame, for shame!

I see a race 'neath tropic skies, that dwells
In jungle fastness and on desert sands,
By Art and Craft untaught in head and hands;—
Children of Nature, made as she compels,
All in the rough, like gems or shells
Whose polished glint the craftsman's skill demands.
Unground, uncouth; but ground, in beauty stands
Her handicraft revealed. Thus she compels
Man's service to complete the whole design,
And show what God hath wrought. How then shall we
Withhold from man the helping hand benign
We give to shells and rocks, and fail to see
That all the roughness covers up the fine?
The Grinder shirks; who is at fault but he?
I see a race deep sunk in barbarous ways,
Coping with club and spear as best they can
In wilds with savage beast and savage man,
Tribe against tribe, and all within a haze
Of fear. As ever, since the primal days,—
As ever since the ceaseless strife began,
With things that stung, or struck, or crawled, or ran,
The savage stands transfixed with frightened gaze.
And this poor, trembling wretch is set upon

By savage e'en beyond his wont or ken;
Another reign of terror is begun;—
By whom? Ah, friend, let's hide our shame again.
The deed by men full civilized was done.
Is then our boasted culture all in vain?

A race of naked savages I see;—
Naked and afraid, and to and fro they run,
As from some enemy, a fearsome One
That threatens all. And snugly hidden away,
Within the shelter of yon placid bay,
A monster of the deep, all set upon
With leafless trees and vines;—a monster none
Have seen the like before. In strange array,
Men with white faces, all behaired, come forth
And slay, and slay again, and still pursue,
And those they capture and deem better worth
Into the monster's belly go. The few
They leave are scattered far, in caves of earth
Or jungle hiding;—a piteous thing to view.
I see a mass of wretched human-kind,
Like beasts ensnared and sobered of their rage,
Cowed, dumb and hopeless in a cage.
Cowed, deaf and dumb, these creatures all,—
Of every sense appealing to the mind
From outer world bereft;—naught to assuage
Their terror, or their vague, wild thoughts engage
Save horrid mystery. And they who bind
This suffering, sodden mass, and take them hence,
Are civilized, we said a while agone;—
Are civilized mayhap, and make pretense
Of some religion;—be it one or none,
They call each other Christians, reasoning hence,
In some way followers of the Lowly One.

I see the remnant of that sodden mass,
Starved, gaunt and bleary-eyed, that issues forth
From stinking hold;—most abject of the earth;
Chained each to his fellow, as they slowly pass
Along the plank to land all strange. Alas!
The lot of those that died were better worth;—

(Why were they punished by the fate of birth?)
Or, eaten with disease and poison-gas,
Pitched overboard in passage. Here they are,
Good men and brothers all, my Christian friends,
A lucky cargo;—the fat chance of war.
A kindly Providence conserves our ends;
For we have brought from heathen lands afar
Choice goods to buy for him that hath, and spends.
I see a race bowed down in servitude,
Bearing full patiently the yoke that galls;
Bearing with fortitude the lash that falls;
In service hopeless, under drivers rude
And pitiless; and no vicissitude
Can change this hateful lot, that calls
For all their dauntless courage, and appalls
The hearts of them and all their hopeless brood.
I see the fields of cotton and of rice
Yielding the wealth their masters take and hold;
I see of sweat and blood the minted price,
In plundered silver and unhallowed gold,
Given to luxury and unhindered vice;—
The whole scheme followed till it's worn and old.

I see a slave in punishment condign,—
A being born to this from shameful bed,—
Master and slave, unmatched, unloved, unwed,—
A being snatched by ravishing rapine,—
A being, Master, not her son, but thine,—
Snatched from the mother's womb, and on his head
The curses of his mother's lot are shed,
The profit going to the father's line.
I see this being sold for further pelf,
And from the mother snatched a second time.
I see the Master selling,—what?—himself,
To swell his hoard. The grizzly scheme is prime
And pregnant of ill-gotten sin, and Sin himself
Holding the scale of justice. How sublime!
I see this being of unhallowed birth,
The son of infamy and crime and shame,
Robbed of himself, his birthright and his name;—

I see this hapless creature issue forth
And prostrate fall upon the lap of earth.
Ah! But he rises, for his heart's aflame
With courage and undaunted will. His no tame
Submission to the wrongs imposed. His worth
Transcends the color of his skin accursed,
And stands he forth full measure of God's span.
And he shall face his fate, and dare the worst,
As heroes dare it since the world began;
And his own bonds of slavery shall burst;
His name is Douglass;—Now behold the man.

I see another of that prostrate race,
In which the mother breeds, the father owns:—
Enough of this sad theme.—Let's talk of stones.
I see a mighty rubbish-pile in place
Dumped willy-nilly high, and without grace
Of this poor aftermath of trash and bones
And human things discarded. No one owns
The wretched mess; let's talk of this a space.
And from this pile a little stone rolls out
(Set going, mayhap, as some heedless one,
Indifferent to pebbles, moves about)
And this small stone, its travels once begun,
Gains as it goes, and far the pile without,
Is now a polished gem,—a Washington.
I see a people ever making plea
For succor from the bonds that hold them sore;
I hear their plaint for freedom o'er and o'er.
I see a Nation, claiming to be free,
(And offering to the world this pleasantry)
Holding the gyves upon its suffering poor,
And shutting tight the very prison door
It claims to open for all men. I see
This perverse Nation given a warning due
By God's own messenger, who to and fro,
Moves o'er the land, and searching through and through,
Proclaims the threat that he was sent to show;—
Leaves marks upon the lintels, fell and true.
I see the warning filled;—God's heavy blow!

I see a Nation plunged in deadly strife,—
    Friend against friend, and brother holding forth
    Hand against brother; and o'er all the earth
There's carnage and destruction. Pillage rife
Takes vengeance, loss for loss, and life for life;—
    Lays waste the fields and homes, and South and North,
    Drinks up the treasure it were better worth
To sink in sea—without the bloody knife.
I see this Nation whelmed beneath a flood
    Of fell destruction, with its double flow
From right and left, on evil and on good,
    A red engulfment do the surges show,
And all the meaning now is understood;—
Perverse and stubborn, let my people go.
I see a race in tears and blood set free;
        Empty of hands and cowering in affright
        Left to their own between a day and night;
And on them cast a hard perplexity
To live or die, whichever it might be,
        With slight consideration for their plight
        From those who'd lost their whilom master's right;—
(Or wrong, 'twere better said). And now I see
        This race courageous bending to the load
Of their deliverance, and meeting fate
        As struggling freemen do and ever should;
And with the Law to give an open gate,
        They pass, to claim at last their share of good,
And Freedom comes to them full consecrate.

I see a people made of good and bad,
        As other peoples are; if they were worse,
        What wonder, coming from the age-long curse
Of slavery? Ah, reasoning friend, 'tis sad,
From vicious systems vicious men are had.
        "We burned the nigger-fiend; why, yes, of course,
        But then he well deserved it." 'Tis a verse
Oft quoted; you have heard it. But, my lad,
        The Law is made to meet such cases. Hold
Thy hand till it is proven; even then
        Withhold and let the Law prevail. Untold

The rank injustice, cruel suffering, when
Thy hasty hand goes wrong, avenger bold.
"Vengeance is mine," saith One who speaks again.
"Vengeance is mine," saith God; and if thy hand
Would wrest from His this dire prerogative,
Stop for a moment, angry friend, and give
This matter some reflection. The command

Goes e'en beyond this word if closely scanned,
And it is ominous and positive.
"For I will repay." And all His sons that live
Should harken to this warning, stern and grand.
Think of thy mother, sister, wife, with child,
To whom the impress of this day descends;
Think of proclivities so fierce and wild
For which no afterthought can make amends;
Think of the vengeance, all unreconciled,
That God on thine for generations sends.

I see a people struggling ever on
'Midst all the trials of a strict regime;
Struggling with hope and confidence sublime.
Their long-time shackles, it is true, are gone,
But in their hands, and in their hands alone,
(Soiled, mayhap, with the muck and grime
Of toil) their fate for this and future time
Is solely placed. And in this mighty struggle I'm
Disposed to grant them just as much acclaim
As granted others, likely better fit
And entering fuller-handed in the game.
Room for the colored brother! Lots of it!
And wholesome air to breathe;—the very same
That we have. Give him hope and wealth and fame.
I see a new-built ship slide from her berth,
And dip into the waters of the bay.
I see, upon her masts a proud array
Of bunting; and there, grandly waving forth
The Stars and Stripes. Another, emblem of its birth,
Is just a little somber, yet 'tis gay—
A lissome flag with which the breezes play—
With Star that's Black;—proclaiming to the earth

That Hope has risen for this long-held race.
And on her deck the officers and crew
Are ranged, in seamen's garb and proper place,
As orderly as one would ask to view,
And all these sailor-men are black of face;—
And here I find my prophecy come true.

Oh, Ship that bears the freedmen's flag a-mast,
Sail on across the sea and carry far
The word that's emblemed in thy glistening star!
That opportunity has come at last,
In place of gyves and shackles of the past:
That to a race of workers further bar
Shall not be suffered; and proclaim afar
That in all lands, and o'er the oceans vast
Freedom shall reign for all the sons of men;
And be they white or yellow, black or brown,
The God of Justice gave a message when
He called them all his children. Carry down
To future ages God's decree again.

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 180–188.

Moving Pictures on the Great White Way—reconstructed typography—1/26

MOVING PICTURES
ON THE GREAT WHITE WAY

Oh, Little Girl, in woman's plumes full-fledged,—
Child of mine own and child of Passion fell,
Endowed with all the graces that compel
Willing devotion,—plighted oft and pledged
By arrant son of man, whose unassuaged,
Inherent instincts, lettered all, doth spell
His ardent love,—and slavery as well;
Oh, Little Girl, his birthright is engaged
That he may leave all else and follow thee,
O'er hill and dale,—to meet thine every whim!
Hold forth the suppliant hand and bend the knee;
Hang on thy changing mood, or gay or grim,—
Thy servitor most humble e'er to be;—
How hath thou charmed this man, and mastered
him?

Ah, well, it is an age-long story; and to tell
Its deeper import man should need to know
The scheme of human being, through and through,
The plan of his Creator; and 'tis well
We know not everything; for what befel
Those in the Garden, when the race was new,
Who ate of fruit forbidden, in their view?
Was 't not the curse of toil and death and hell?
And yet the fruit was most alluring, and the Snake
Knew well of human instincts when he held
In tempting reach, and urged them then to take
The fruit of knowledge. And 'twas self-impelled
That sin of Eve and Adam. For their sake
All of their sons and daughters have rebelled.

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Moving Pictures on the Great White Way—reconstructed typography—2/26

So Little Girl, if from the Tempter now
You take this luscious apple, and hold forth
To Adam,—with all the sweetness of the earth
And hopes of heaven combined,—pray tell me how
He can refuse thee, and himself avow
A Super-man, above the claims of birth
And all tradition since the new-made race
In Eden set example! Adam ate;
His son eats also, following the plan
That Nature gives, (or cursed or consecrate)
For her chief handiwork, her creature, man;
Saying that in this act, to procreate
Is her supreme decree;—and not her ban.

Ah, Little Girl, but hear me not amiss;
I said 'tis Nature's plan; but pray observe
Plan for a purpose;—plan that doth subserve
The Law of Being, in that age and this;
And, willy-nilly, what the pretext is,
Not to be trifled with; and when you swerve
From Nature's fruitful law, and only serve
Your pleasure for the passing hour amiss,
You help to bring another curse, more dire
Than that upon our parents, fall'n from grace,—
Than that which brought the stern Creator's ire,
With maledictions on the coming race.
This means Extinction;—not a threat of fire.

Moving Pictures on the Great White Way—reconstructed typography—3/26

For, Little Girl, you have a part to play
Along with men and women, creatures all
Of Nature. If they rise or fall,
Survive or perish, it is theirs to say.
And shall this gift be lightly thrown away?
Life, with its hopes and purposes, and all,—
The bauble of a moment's hasty call,—
Discarded plaything of a child so gay?
Ah, Little Girl, a moment stop and think!
You are but one;—if all of woman-kind
Were like to you, and all the men would drink
The cup of wanton pleasure that you give,
The race would soon be hovering on the brink
Of sheer destruction. Shall it die——or live?

But some were born for mothers, some were not;
I think I hear the petulant retort;
And some for serious things, and some for sport
Mayhap; and for the concubine, I wot,
Some valued service consecrates the lot,
By reasoning of this easy-going sort,
And makes it all conveniently comport
With Nature's plan. And yet I like it not.
For Nature makes her creatures fruitful; then
Determines the survival for her use
And leaves no trifling option open when
Her precious gifts are squandered by abuse.
'Twere better far to say her gifts to men
Are not for them to frivol or refuse.

And if she place on some the hapless seal
Of barrenness, perchance it is her sign
That, at a station just adown the line
Her gift was scorned; and thus doth she reveal
Her mandate, signed and shut; and no appeal
Shall mitigation give from her design;—
The punishment's conclusive and condign:
Weighed in the balance, and found wanting; thine
The end appointed for this rank offense.
And no contrition serves,—no faith can give
For thee a smug, vicarious pretence.
Thine executioner is sure and positive;—
He is thyself; and for thy untoward vice
The line that waited on thee shall not live.

So, Little Girl, if barrenness thy claim,
'Tis not a license given thee by Fate
For pleasant dalliance. Through the gate
Thou may'st be passing, for another's blame,
To such foredoomed extinction. If it came
Through thy misdeeds, 'twere sad enough; but wait,—
Not jeering at thy sister's doleful strait;
Nor ev'n pretending 'tis a merry game;—
Nor seek to gather others in thy train,
And swell the ribald throng. But bow thy head,
My girl, in contrite spirit, for the vain
Hilarity's unseeming; and instead
The March in Saul were better played again,
For those who might have been, and now are dead.

Moving Pictures on the Great White Way—reconstructed typography—5/26

Oh, Little Spider, with thy filmy net
Athwart the tree's outreaching branches here,
With parts concealed, and others that appear;—
All cunningly devised, and neatly set
To catch the ever-vagrant roamer; yet
Not too obtrusive; lest, or far or near,
The danger of the trap should be too clear,
And warn the stranger it is made to get;—
Oh, little huntress, crouching in thy den,
To satisfy thy appetite and greed,
And sally forth upon the victim when
His wings are snarled; and then in eager speed
Enwind him more and more, and wind again,
And at thy pleasant leisure do the deed;

Oh, Crafty Trapper, ever is thy skill
Too subtle for the roaming gnat or fly,
And for the beetle, swiftly shooting by,
Or even for the sluggish worm that still
Wiggles in hopeless bondage at thy lure.
For all are subject to thy scheming will,
And all thy studied torture must endure.
And e'en the mate that seeks thee thou shalt kill,
After the nuptials only,—to make sure.

Oh, Plotting Female, of the demon-kind,
How fares it that thy gossamer device,—
So infamous, so deadly and so nice,—
Withstands the winds that blow where e'er inclined,—
The winds of heaven, just but ever blind
To thy misdeeds? And can it be that vice
Must always stay, to take its wonted price?
And hold we still that Providence is kind?
Oh, small exemplar of the Devil's hold
Upon the hapless human-kind afield,
His luring traps unrecognized, untold;—
The pleasure only, not the pain, revealed;—
Why is it that his schemes, so sly, so bold,
Are not by Heaven sundered, shut and sealed?

Oh, Motherhood! And is it just a bane,—
Part of the primal curse, with toil and death,
Sent as a penalty? And doth the breath
Of new-born babe wail out the woe and pain
Of punishment, inflicted once again,
To satisfy an angry God? So saith
The preacher, mayhap; sadly blinded with
Too close a scrutiny of myth inane,
And book and text construed with thought severe,
To find some pretext for his endless hell.
And heaven is far away, and hell right here
If all be true we hear the preacher tell.
But Nature makes both pain and joy appear;—
And Nature knoweth her own purpose well.

Moving Pictures on the Great White Way—reconstructed typography—7/26

And she that holds the right of motherhood,
And prizes not the blessing, though disguised
With suffering and constraint, and penalized,
Mayhap, with endless care and toil, hath understood
But ill her mission; knowing not the good
Outweighs the travail and the pain. Unprized
God's gift most precious; and unrecognized
Her debt to Nature. Think you, then, she could
Allay the lingering qualm by act so base
As taking to her arms a fawning beast,—
A little dog, let's say,—and in the place
Of Baby, hold it to her breast,
And call this Mother-love, by act of grace,
And satisfy her being's first request?

A lady with her little dog in arms!
(And Solomon, in most exalted hour,
Was not arrayed like one of these!) Our
Deference to her! We proclaim her charms,
And tip the hat, and bow; for sure it harms
None to defer somewhat to wealth and power!
But do you know?>—There now; no gossip! Bower
So ornate and so sacred, nothing harms!
A husband? Well,—I think so;—yes—somewhere,
In fond retirement of his own device!
(Such gorgeous creatures cannot live on air.)
And, do you know, a husband's really nice,
(If he be nice,) to make a handsome pair,
And pay the bills;—and sometimes give advice?

A Gorgeous Creature, in her limousine!
With all that luxury and wealth can give,
And living as the rich alone can live,
And free to go, (whatever that may mean;—
The easy import you can catch between
My random words,) as she elects; and give
Her time to pomp and show. I'm positive
In high society she is the Queen.
And of what service to-herself and kind?
You ask. It is a useless question, quite.
Of all the foibles that possess her mind,
That is the very slightest to invite
Her fond attention, or her life to bind
In narrow groove. She's just a pretty sprite!

And hath the Maker use for such fine birds,
To flit about the world, and sing and dance,
And preen their plumage? Yes, by happy chance,
He hath,—for birds. But can his solemn words
To Man be thus construed? And how accords
Such life with earnest aim He doth advance
For human being? How shall it enhance
The sum of all? Alas! it but affords
Another instance of a life gone wrong,
And flung in face of Giver. 'Tis defeat
Of purposes benign;—a dance and song,
When labor is commanded to complete
The beauteous plan He gave to help along
The mighty Structure for the Mercy Seat.

Moving Pictures on the Great White Way—reconstructed typography—9/26

And will the Giver treasure such as this,
Tendered as service mete for beings here;—
Brought to his altar with a trifling leer?
And, think you, there's reserved a state of bliss
For those in pandered idling, not of his
Commanding? Would it not, instead, appear,
For earnest mission a return so queer
Demands both like and equal offices?
Ah, here's a garment made of wondrous cloth,
With laces, flowers and jewels set thereon,—
A thing so beautiful and useless both,
Yet out of fashion, and completely gone
For service in the after-life, forsooth;—
'Twere better laid away, as food for moth
Of all eternity to feed upon.

How of the Man, thou caviler? I hear
In querulous complaint against this strain
Of evil conduct, charged and charged again,
Against the Female of the species. Dear
And mischievous they are, it would appear,
Therefore more deadly. And, my friend, 'tis plain
That courtesy's fair sequence in this train
Should grant the woman first. The man is near
You may be sure; and in our modern way,
He comes full soon;—but generally behind.
And so, in war, in peace, in work, in play,
In conquests of the heart and soul and mind,
They are together, following the way
That Nature points for all of human kind.

And if a frailty lies in one of these,
Shall we not look to find it in the mate?
Where's the philosopher to estimate
The difference in their fault; or set at ease
The quibble of so many, (hard to please,)
Of who's the greater sinner? Let them prate
And put the matter, proof and predicate,
But it shall ne'er be settled. Cavilers like these
Are hard to reconcile. I mind the flow
Of old Castilian humor: "Man is Fire:
"'And Woman (fine and fluffy creature), Tow:
"The Devil, (coming at their fond desire,
In stertorous breath) goes whiff,—and gives a blow!"
(The Devil is a friend I oft admire.)

And, of the man who owns the limousine,
And finds the Gorgeous Creature and her pet,
And the free manners of her social set
Much to his liking, (haply in between
Matters of greater interest): What is seen
In him to give us better thought? Or yet
A higher estimate, in gross or net,
Upon his value to the race, I ween?
For his chief purpose is to scatter gold,
That others digged and earned, and to maintain
For gaping throng of strangers to behold,
A pomp and circumstance as idly vain
As hers. The dog, her pet, is all he hath to hold;—
His name, his line aborted;—and what gain?

Moving Pictures on the Great White Way—reconstructed typography—11/26

I see a youth, just stepping on the sill
Of Manhood. O'er the way is grandly placed
A word, let's hope, shall never be erased,
The legend Opportunity. With will
And courage all his part to fill,
The future of this Lad's already traced;
And, let us hope, 'twill never be disgraced
By act unworthy of this day. And still
I see beside the road, on either hand,
In beauteous foliage, and full well disguised,
A million cobwebs, and each filmy band
A trap for him, full cunningly devised,
For his destruction. Can he move and stand
*"Mongst fruit and flowers—the cobwebs recognized?
Find pleasant rest, when worn by travel long,
And in his hours of pleasure and of ease,
Enjoy the beauty only, and the song
Of innocence,—and be content with these?

I see this youth,—is he your son, or mine?
His face a-smile, in confidence sublime,
Take to the road, and dare the test of time;—
Dare as the hero dares who answers call divine
To action;—with no time to falter or repine,—
And up the hill of conquest he would climb.
Now can'st thou say, in reason or in rhyme,
Why he should not attain his goal, and shine
As conqueror, upon its lofty crown?
And yet, this son of yours or mine, my friend,
Hath many chances now to him unknown.
For, at beginning, who foresees the end?
Life tells her tale in chapters; and not shown
Too soon the fate the Author minds to send.

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This youth of ours is born to good estate,
With circumstance bespoken in his cause,
And every needful aid around him draws
For his achievement. Faithful friends await
To help him on, and keep him in the straight
And hobbled path of virtue. Here let's pause
To say that he is Nature's child, by laws
Immutable and urgent;—just as great
As ties of kin, religion, duty;—all
The moral virtues;—bring them all, enlist
In common cause to master or forestall
The pull of Nature. If the boy resist
That pull by all these aids, then we may call
Him hero, and his name shall head the list.

For Nature hath her way throughout the earth,
With beast and bird and reptile; fish and all
Her creatures animate. To Nature's call
The trees and shrubs and flowers respond, in birth
From seed all fertilized; and prove their worth
By yielding seed again. Or great or small
In Nature's plenteous lap they fall,
And pay her tribute. Thus she holdeth forth
From age to age, and life perpetuate
Is granted in return for service done:
And every kind and species animate
Is charged with its own duty,—one by one,—
To save its own;—to serve the ranks that wait
A-down the centuries, from sire to son.

Moving Pictures on the Great White Way—reconstructed typography—13/26

And Nature calls for tribute when 'tis due;—
Not at convenience of the life in bond;—
Not leaving option open, to respond
Or send regrets; but, preparation through,
And full equipped;—why, that's the thing to do:
Pay tribute: And the urge is all around
In Nature's realm;—in sea and air and ground!
Pay tribute: high and low and through and through!
Think you, my friend, our boy doth hear this call?
Oh, yes;—of course;—but then the boy must wait;
There's yet four years of college;—after all
The discipline is good; he'll get his gait
When fitted well for life; there's Virtue's wall—
But, friend, will Nature halt or hesitate?

My Christian friend, you know just what we do;
I shut my eyes and fondly trust to fate;
You shut your eyes and fondly pray and prate;
And both are hypocrites! In heart we two
Are hoping that the boy will struggle through,
And with his instincts just procrastinate;—
Keep out of trouble, and at any rate
Avoid a scandal; be discreet; from view
Of family and friends keep closely hid
His little peccadilloes, if they come;
And not get tangled with some Bowery kid,
And after marriage bring the hussy home.
(That heinous sin we strictly now forbid.)—
And thus we turn our hero out to roam.

If he gets through his college course quite free,
We are devoutly thankful, and we say
He's had his trial, and has learned the way
To dodge such mischief; and we straight agree
He knows a thing or two; and can be trusted free
To play the game as other dodgers play,
And hold Dan Cupid further still at bay,
Until his Mother and his Dad agree
It's time to marry. This depends, of course,
On business or profession. Further years
For this, and further still to gain a source
Of income;—for this youngster, it appears,
Must furnish home of elegance,—no worse
Than that She lives in. Thus the sequel nears.

Oh, Superficial Planners of the day!
Oh, Purblind Parents, thinking you can bend
The laws of Nature to conserve your end,
And sweep her sovereign edicts all away,
To satisfy your fond ambition! Stay
To see the evil that your plans portend;—
The punishment that Nature's wont to send
In retribution; for there blocks the way
Ten thousand chances of a sore defeat
At some unguarded angle. Soon or late
The boy may break from such an indiscreet
And irksome tutelage; and then your great
Air-castle tumbles. Should you ev'n complete—
Unhappiness, divorce and wreck await.

Moving Pictures on the Great White Way—reconstructed typography—15/26

A I saw your daughter, Madam, on the street.
A winsome girl indeed, and I would say
Favors her father in a certain way,
With all her mother's graces; and complete
In every detail was her costume;—mete
For ball-room, or for other gorgeous-gay
Society affair;—that is, mean to say,—
She looked most grandly elegant and sweet!
(I am so awkward in descriptive phrase
Of woman's dress and finery and style!)
A simple walking costume?—yes; the praise
Is due her mother I am sure! Her smile
Was so bewitching! Her unconscious ways
Disclosed her innocence! No thought of guile
Belongs to her in these most guileful days;—
With others on the street I gazed a while.

Her bodice, I am certain, was cut square,
And low;—just reasonably, you know, and fine
To show a bust with grace in every line,
So far as it was shown, for with a wondrous care
The line was drawn;—yes, certainly,—just therel
A graceful compromise, as I opine
Between your stricter notions, ma'am, and mine;
Not quite so low, perhaps, as she would dare.
There must be something undisclosed, I know
To whet the fancy, else no witching charm
Invests the draperies that coyly flow
Against the tempting bust or leg or arm.
Her hose, I'm sure, could little farther go;—
Pink and diaphanous,—transparent,—warm.

I saw your daughter, Madam, at the show.
It was a vaudeville;—the common mix
Of movies, dancing, music, circus tricks
And so forth. I was seated in the row
Assigned to men of sober years who grow
But little hair a-top; and five or six
Rows back, as I remember—if I fix
The place aright, the two were there, you know;—
She and my son. Oh, well, 'twas good enough;—
The same old story;—something pretty raw
Worked in between the music, and the stuff
That lovers want; and ever there we saw
The villain still pursuing,—coarse and rough—
Pursuing what? The Maiden? Yes; oh, pshaw!

I saw the pair anon down in the grill,
In flush of light and glare of grand array;
And they were there the gayest of the gay.
To see the throng disport in merry mill
Would charm the gloom of anchorite, and fill
His head with antics. Feasting and the play
Of all the senses in one grand array ;—
Women, wine and song, as suits the will
Of those already surfeited, who seek
To add to surfeit yet another thrill!
And girls with painted lips and painted cheek
Were mingling in the throng at will,
With men of painted eyes and painted beak,
The garish painted programme to fulfill.

Moving Pictures on the Great White Way—reconstructed typography—17/26

I saw your daughter, Madam, much enthused;—
My son, I thought, was just a bit blase;
For, though at times affecting to be gay,
His gayety seemed forced;—as if 'twere used
To stronger spice than this, and felt abused
At so much fol-de-rol for merest play.
And then I thought perhaps in other way
His fervor had been sated. If refused
By her beside him in this merry mock
Why there are others, surely, that invite
To amplest satisfaction;—and that stock
Is never far to seek for one who's quite
In tune for revel. Now let's stop the clock
For our fell ghost has risen,—wan and white.

You know we chuckled when we found our boy
Had dodged the mischief of the plotting crew;
And then concluded that the lad would do
To face the world, and ever be our joy
In strict propriety. But morals cloy
With over-worked command. Remember, too,—
And never let this fact escape your view,—
That Nature pulls the other way: Ahoy!
And heave, ho! And the pull she doth engage
Warps our good ship leeward, far away,
From course we're steering, and from anchorage
That we selected. Say to Nature, Nay,
Thy course is wrong; then vainly curb thy rage!
O This "thing or two" the boy hath learned at play.

Moving Pictures on the Great White Way—reconstructed typography—18/26

And if I thought ine yadigeee somewhat cold,
When merrily was running all the play,
And she beside him was so very gay,
Perchance the reason now is plainly told,
And any further moral to unfold
Were quite superfluous; but still we may
Hold just a little moment more to say
The trick of female charms so very bold
We also noted, is the female urge
Prompted by Nature, to allure the coy,
Elusive lover running still at large;—
And all the scenes of revelry and joy;—
And song and dance and story, charge on charge,
Are Nature pulling at the girl and boy.

But, this, our boy who "knows a thing or two,"
Finds just a mere diversion, mainly meant
To keep his fancy flowing; his intent
Is marriage sometime,—yes, of course; but who
Wants marriage, with the splurge it means in view,
Unless he has the cash? If this be sent
Together with the girl, it's easy spent
And he is ready both to dare and do.
But, for your daughter, Madam, who, he knows,
Hath not the wherewithal, it's not so clear.
He couldn't earn enough to buy her clothes,—
Say nothing of the other things, so dear,
So necessary for herself and those
She loves;—and breach-of-promise suits are queer!

Moving Pictures on the Great White Way—reconstructed typography—19/26

I see a youth arraigned for grave offense
Against the laws, made and provided all
To safeguard what we most delight to call
The crown of womanhood. We make pretense—
Offending majesty of virtue hence—
Of guarding that which needs but to install
Its own defender. Better than stone wall
And military post is Common Sense.
Here for seduction stands the boy arraigned,
And he is dumb before a grave-faced throng.
Guilty? Oh, what odds if only end attained
Ts virtue's vindication? And how long
Must virtue wait? The thing is all explained
If we but sing to-day the same old song.
The boy's at fault, of course; and much is gained;—
Let all seducers go where they belong.

But not so fast, oh, Outraged Justice, hold
Thy withering hand a moment; let us see
Wherein the measure of his guilt may be
Greater than hers. This boy's not worldly-wise, I'm told;
While she is older, and a trifle bold.
Who did the tempting here? Was't he or she?
Let's view the matter calmly and agree
The fault was hers, the greater, many fold.
And such the product of our hectic life,
With everything to stimulate the young
And surging passions! And the cause of strife
May seem at last to equally belong
To false conditions and to Nature, rife
For what she claims;—albeit right or wrong.

But let the case proceed. I'm fain to say
Justice is justice, and the courts must give
Protection. Let the wayward learn to live
Within the law, for law must have its way
Or all our safeguards tumble in a day;—
Thus pleads the prosecutor, who must strive
And in the law's complexities contrive
To bring conviction;—gaining thus his pay.
But still, my legal friend, a human life
Hangs in the balance, and this boy consigned
To prison means his end; and rope or knife
Might bring a better. Ere the shackles bind
Let's bring to view the stricken man and wife,
His parents;—Keep their punishment in mind.

But let the case proceed, may't please the Court,
For we have much to do to vindicate
This much abused young woman. Let me state
It is my solemn duty; and retort
That others' grief, or any other sort
Of plea for sympathy cannot abate
The Court's prerogative. And now the great
Contention's on; it is a public sport;—
The room is filled with eager auditors;—
Women and men, and girls, if they're allowed;
And prurient details that the soul abhors
Are brought before the evil-minded crowd;
And life of culprit and progenitors
Laid bare. This makes the prying lawyers proud.

Moving Pictures on the Great White Way—reconstructed typography—21/26

And prurient Press takes up the eager chase,
And spreads before its readers, old and young,
Delicious morsels, (rolled beneath the tongue)
Of all salacious details,—every base
And scand'lous thing developed in the case,
And such insinuations slily fung;—
As any snake that ever hissed and stung
Might claim for fellow. Readers in their place
Of fond security, and smug and sure
Within their sanctity, may at their will
Revel in banquet spread of this impure
Turkey, with trimmings, and their stomachs fill,
As they may cram or relish or endure.
And this, for most, completely fills the bill.

And if the pabulum the press purveys
Be somewhat heavy, or too quickly gorged,
The theme's inviting, and may be enlarged
To quantum suf. in movies, books and plays
And recreation for both nights and days
Supplied ad lib. The prices charged
Within the reach of all; and thus is urged
The poison-potion in a million ways;—
Quick and most pungent, if one chooses so,
Or long drawn out in ravished anguish, still;—
Three Weeks or more, if one should choose to go
So far to reach erotic end, and fill
With many thrills the writer cares to throw
Into the rotten story. Thus they flow.

Oh, age lascivious, oh, groveling throng,
That find men's evil conduct thy delight,
And feast upon it morning, noon and night,
And prop it up, thy other food among,
And taste another flavor that is sprung
From crime and scandal,—If I read aright
The sign of this thy morbid appetite,
The fruits are yours, the faults to you belong.
Thus have they gone, the peoples in decay
Who passed and are not, save in monument
They left,—forbidding, vast and grey,—
To show the world perchance which road they went;—
For it was down this broadening Great White
Way;—
Their one-time greatness now forever spent.

I see a mad, amusement-seeking race,
In hectic fever pressing to its goal,
And grasping pleasures, all of sense, not soul.
I see a Clown installed in market place
Outmidasing old Midas by the grace
Of all who hang upon his antics, pay his toll,
And then in mighty spasms sway and roll.
This lofty mummer makes the fool's grimace;
And holds his servitors with easy rein.
And if the one they serve by right appears
Their beau-ideal of life, why then it's plain
They are a race of mummers, and the shears
Are mine: and I, the Timid Barber, whisper plain:
This vaunted King of yours hath Ass's ears.

Moving Pictures on the Great White Way—reconstructed typography—23/26

Thou flaunting beauty of the vaudeville,
Displayer of thy charms in dress undress,
Purveying to the throng thy loveliness;—
A word with thee would do but little ill,
Or little good, because thy wont is will
To lead this hectic life. But couldst thou guess
The end impending, it would suit thee less.
Down in the slums are led the lives that kill!
A girl like thee I saw the other day,—
Fashioned as fine, and once as debonair;—
Who danced and sang adown this broad highway;
But she is in a little crib down there,
And selling to all comers,—if they pay;
But retail, mind you,—each his single share.

Thou, flaunting beauty of the higher grade,
Doth hold the wholesale market for a while,
Selling thy body, with thy song and smile,
To please the leering crowd; and in the trade
A weekly stipend, looming large, is made
For shameless show and antics that beguile,
And cause the prurient thought and smirk and smile.
There's all the difference, my buxom maid.
Plain language this; and such I apprehend
You seldom hear from those who keep the pace,
And travel with thy dalliance. Not a friend
Would dare or care to utter in thy face
A hint of such a shame or such an end
Or say thy glory, girl, is thy disgrace!

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Whence comes this modern craze for nakedness?
Is here produced in life the artist's dream,—
Art for Art's sake—portrayed, not as they seem,
But as they are, and seeking to express
The chosen forms of human loveliness,
Allin the nude? Then has the artist's scheme
Been carried to its logical extreme,
And nothing's left his craving soul to guess,—
If theme unhackneyed he would fain disclose,—
But to revise his theories entire,
And paint his human beings wearing clothes.
Ah, then the thought artistic may aspire
To show the things of life he really knows,
And paint the smoke that partly hides the fire!

And still the question stands: Whence comes the craze?
For surely tis not based on bare ideals;
No sublimated standard e'er appeals
To the chic maiden of these stylish days
Or her fond mother. Regulate their ways
By anything but Fashion? Why one feels
Preposterous upon the very heels
Of such a limping thought. The ayes and nays
Are called instanter. Then it's Fashion's word
Decides the issue what and when and how,
And whether garb is charming or absurd.
And who is Fashion, dearest? Answer now,
Who's the dictator? Has it e'er occurred;—
Paris? Her demi-mondaine? Well, I vow!

Moving Pictures on the Great White Way—reconstructed typography—25/26

But Autocrat of Paris rules by grace
Of greater powers than his, and if we will
The end that he's appointed to fulfill
Looms large upon us; for his reign hath place
In comprehending, overmastering grace
That orders human action, good or ill,
To work at last its written, sovereign will.
Change is predestined for the human race,
As 'tis for all creation; and this change
Means making over; and in tearing down
No less than building up it finds its range
For Evolution's plan, the Maker's own
For conservation of his forces strange
That men engage, as yet but illy known.

Afar, afar, against the northern mist
I see two mighty caravans that march
Contra-wise; one headed for the arch
Of rising sun, the other to the west;
And both these columns seem in eager quest
Of goal beyond horizon of their search.
And one doth bound and roll and heave and lurch
In great commotion, antic-joy possesst.
The other moves more surely, soberly,
As if for earnest search their course they wend
And when I look more closely still I see
Much joy of quiet sort doth these attend,
And Evolution's written large and free.
The other, Devolution, and The End.

And not alone in the affairs of men
Such mighty columns show, but all through space
The contra-movements may be seen apace,
Building—Destroying. In telescopic ken
Are misty spheres new-born; and turn again,
Are old ones going out, their day of grace
Concluded in a blaze; thus giving place
To newer orders. Evolution's gain
Is Devolution's loss; and thus is set
The vast creative plan that carries on
The universe of universes. Yet
We fail so oft to see the words upon
God's handiwork before us, signed and set
Too large to read,—until our chance is gone.

Oh, age uncanny, times all out of joint!
O Tempora, O Mores. Custom's Law!
The Senate knew this and the Consul saw!
Yet, in an age degenerate, who could point,—
What Prophet doth the Centuries anoint
And charge with warning that can overawe
A people plunging to their fate below;—
For pointing vainly is to disappoint.
Oh Times, oh, Customs! I have shown ye all
The issues that arise 'twixt Nature's Law
And man-made practice; and in great and small
The conflict rages, and the Furies draw
Their meshes for thy capture and thy fall;—
The Senate knew this, and the Consul saw!

Moving Pictures on the Great White Way

Source facsimile. The original page remains the textual and spatial authority.

MOVING PICTURES ON THE GREAT WHITE WAY

THE VAMPIRE

Oh, Little Girl, in woman's plumes full-fledged,—
Child of mine own and child of Passion fell,
Endowed with all the graces that compel
Willing devotion,—plighted oft and pledged
By arrant son of man, whose unassuaged,
Inherent instincts, lettered all, doth spell
His ardent love,—and slavery as well;
Oh, Little Girl, his birthright is engaged
That he may leave all else and follow thee,
O'er hill and dale,—to meet thine every whim!
Hold forth the suppliant hand and bend the knee;
Hang on thy changing mood, or gay or grim,—
Thy servitor most humble e'er to be;—
How hath thou charmed this man, and mastered him?

IN A GARDEN.

Ah, well, it is an age-long story; and to tell
Its deeper import man should need to know
The scheme of human being, through and through,
The plan of his Creator; and 'tis well
We know not everything; for what befel
Those in the Garden, when the race was new,
Who ate of fruit forbidden, in their view?
Was 't not the curse of toil and death and hell?
And yet the fruit was most alluring, and the Snake
Knew well of human instincts when he held
In tempting reach, and urged them then to take
The fruit of knowledge. And 'twas self-impelled
That sin of Eve and Adam. For their sake
All of their sons and daughters have rebelled.

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A So Little Girl, if from the Tempter now
N You take this luscious apple, and hold forth
D To Adam,—with all the sweetness of the earth
And hopes of heaven combined,—pray tell me how
H He can refuse thee, and himself avow
I A Super-man, above the claims of birth
S And all tradition since the new-made race
In Eden set example! Adam ate;
F His son eats also, following the plan
A That Nature gives, (or cursed or consecrate)
L For her chief handiwork, her creature, man;
L Saying that in this act, to procreate
Is her supreme decree;—and not her ban.

A Ah, Little Girl, but hear me not amiss;
N I said 'tis Nature's plan; but pray observe
O Plan for a purpose;—plan that doth subserve
T The Law of Being, in that age and this;
H And, willy-nilly, what the pretext is,
E Not to be trifled with; and when you swerve
R From Nature's fruitful law, and only serve
Your pleasure for the passing hour amiss,
C You help to bring another curse, more dire
U Than that upon our parents, fall'n from grace,—
R Than that which brought the stern Creator's ire,
S With maledictions on the coming race.
E This means Extinction;—not a threat of fire.

A For, Little Girl, you have a part to play
Along with men and women, creatures all
P Of Nature. If they rise or fall,
A Survive or perish, it is theirs to say.
R And shall this gift be lightly thrown away?
T Life, with its hopes and purposes, and all,—
The bauble of a moment's hasty call,—
T Discarded plaything of a child so gay?
O Ah, Little Girl, a moment stop and think!
You are but one;—if all of woman-kind
P Were like to you, and all the men would drink
L The cup of wanton pleasure that you give,
A The race would soon be hovering on the brink
Y Of sheer destruction. Shall it die,—or live?

A *But some were born for mothers, some were not;*
I think I hear the petulant retort;
R And some for serious things, and some for sport
I Mayhap; and for the concubine, I wot,
S Some valued service consecrates the lot,
K By reasoning of this easy-going sort,
Y And makes it all conveniently comport
With Nature's plan. And yet I like it not.
G For Nature makes her creatures fruitful; then
A Determines the survival for her use
M And leaves no trifling option open when
E Her precious gifts are squandered by abuse.
'Twere better far to say her gifts to men
Are not for them to frivol or refuse.

A And if she place on some the hapless seal
Of barrenness, perchance it is her sign
J That, at a station just adown the line
U Her gift was scorned; and thus doth she reveal
D Her mandate, signed and shut; and no appeal
G Shall mitigation give from her design;—
M The punishment's conclusive and condign:
E *Weighed in the balance, and found wanting; thine*
N *The end appointed for this rank offense.*
T And no contrition serves,—no faith can give
For thee a smug, vicarious pretence.
Thine executioner is sure and positive;—
He is thyself; and for thy untoward vice
The line that waited on thee shall not live.

A So, Little Girl, if barrenness thy claim,
'Tis not a license given thee by Fate
S For pleasant dalliance. Through the gate
A Thou may'st be passing, for another's blame,
D To such foredoomed extinction. If it came
Through thy misdeeds, 'twere sad enough; but
P wait,—
A Not jeering at thy sister's doleful strait;
R Nor ev'n pretending 'tis a merry game;—
A Nor seek to gather others in thy train,
D And swell the ribald throng. But bow thy head,
E My girl, in contrite spirit, for the vain
Hilarity's unseeming; and instead
The March in Saul were better played again,
For those who might have been, and now are dead.

A Oh, Little Spider, with thy filmy net
Athwart the tree's outreaching branches here,
S With parts concealed, and others that appear;—
P All cunningly devised, and neatly set
I To catch the ever-vagrant roamer; yet
D Not too obtrusive; lest, or far or near,
E The danger of the trap should be too clear,
R And warn the stranger it is made to get;—
Oh, little huntress, crouching in thy den,
To satisfy thy appetite and greed,
And sally forth upon the victim when
His wings are snarled; and then in eager speed
Enwind him more and more, and wind again,
And at thy pleasant leisure do the deed;

A Oh, Crafty Trapper, ever is thy skill
N Too subtle for the roaming gnat or fly,
D And for the beetle, swiftly shooting by,
Or even for the sluggish worm that still
A Wiggles in hopeless bondage at thy lure.
For all are subject to thy scheming will,
F And all thy studied torture must endure.
L And e'en the mate that seeks thee thou shalt kill,
Y After the nuptials only,—to make sure.

A Oh, Plotting Female, of the demon-kind,
How fares it that thy gossamer device,—
F So infamous, so deadly and so nice,—
E Withstands the winds that blow where e'er inclined,—
M The winds of heaven, just but ever blind
A To thy misdeeds? And can it be that vice
L Must always stay, to take its wonted price?
E And hold we still that Providence is kind?
Oh, small exemplar of the Devil's hold
D Upon the hapless human-kind afield,
E His luring traps unrecognized, untold;—
V The pleasure only, not the pain, revealed;—
I Why is it that his schemes, so sly, so bold,
L Are not by Heaven sundered, shut and sealed?

A Oh, Motherhood! And is it just a bane,—
Part of the primal curse, with toil and death,
M Sent as a penalty? And doth the breath
O Of new-born babe wail out the woe and pain
T Of punishment, inflicted once again,
H To satisfy an angry God? So saith
E The preacher, mayhap; sadly blinded with
R Too close a scrutiny of myth inane,
And book and text construed with thought severe,
To find some pretext for his endless hell.
And heaven is far away, and hell right here
If all be true we hear the preacher tell.
But Nature makes both pain and joy appear;—
And Nature knoweth her own purpose well.

A And she that holds the right of motherhood,
And prizes not the blessing, though disguised
L With suffering and constraint, and penalized,
A Mayhap, with endless care and toil, hath understood
D But ill her mission; knowing not the good
Y Outweighs the travail and the pain. Unprized
God's gift most precious; and unrecognized
Her debt to Nature. Think you, then, she could
Allay the lingering qualm by act so base
As taking to her arms a fawning beast,—
A little dog, let's say,—and in the place
Of Baby, hold it to her breast,
And call this Mother-love, by act of grace,
And satisfy her being's first request?

H A lady with her little dog in arms!
E (And Solomon, in most exalted hour,
R Was not arrayed like one of these!) Our
Deference to her! We proclaim her charms,
D And tip the hat, and bow; for sure it harms
O None to defer somewhat to wealth and power!
G But do you know?—There now; no gossip! Bower
So ornate and so sacred, nothing harms!
A husband? Well,—I think so;—yes—somewhere,
In fond retirement of his own device!
(Such gorgeous creatures cannot live on air.)
And, do you know, a husband's really nice,
(If he be nice,) to make a handsome pair,
And pay the bills;—and sometimes give advice?

S A Gorgeous Creature, in her limousine!
O With all that luxury and wealth can give,
C And living as the rich alone can live,
I And free to go, (whatever that may mean;—
E The easy import you can catch between
T My random words,) as she elects; and give
Y Her time to pomp and show. I'm positive
In high society she is the Queen.
Q *And of what service to herself and kind?*
U You ask. It is a useless question, quite.
E Of all the foibles that possess her mind,
E That is the very slightest to invite
N Her fond attention, or her life to bind
In narrow groove. She's just a pretty sprite!

A And hath the Maker use for such fine birds,
To flit about the world, and sing and dance,
F And preen their plumage? Yes, by happy chance,
I He hath,—for birds. But can his solemn words
N To Man be thus construed? And how accords
E Such life with earnest aim He doth advance
For human being? How shall it enhance
B The sum of all? Alas! it but affords
I Another instance of a life gone wrong,
R And flung in face of Giver. 'Tis defeat
D Of purposes benign;—a dance and song,
When labor is commanded to complete
The beauteous plan He gave to help along
The mighty Structure for the Mercy Seat.

A And will the Giver treasure such as this,
Tendered as service mete for beings here;—
G Brought to his altar with a trifling leer?
A And, think you, there's reserved a state of bliss
R For those in pandered idling, not of his
M Commanding? Would it not, instead, appear,
E For earnest mission a return so queer
N Demands both like and equal offices?
T Ah, here's a garment made of wondrous cloth,
With laces, flowers and jewels set thereon,—
A thing so beautiful and useless both,
Yet out of fashion, and completely gone
For service in the after-life, forsooth;—
'Twere better laid away, as food for moth
Of all eternity to feed upon.

C *How of the Man, thou caviler?* I hear
O In querulous complaint against this strain
M Of evil conduct, charged and charged again,
P Against the Female of the species. Dear
A And mischievous they are, it would appear,
N Therefore more deadly. And, my friend, 'tis plain
I That courtesy's fair sequence in this train
O Should grant the woman first. The man is near
N You may be sure; and in our modern way,
S He comes full soon;—but generally behind.
And so, in war, in peace, in work, in play,
In conquests of the heart and soul and mind,
They are together, following the way
That Nature points for all of human kind.

A And if a frailty lies in one of these,
Shall we not look to find it in the mate?
L Where's the philosopher to estimate
I The difference in their fault; or set at ease
T The quibble of so many, (hard to please,)
T Of who's the greater sinner? Let them prate
L And put the matter, proof and predicate,
E But it shall ne'er be settled. Cavilers like these
Are hard to reconcile. I mind the flow
F Of old Castilian humor: "*Man is Fire:*
I "*And Woman* (fine and fluffy creature), *Tow:*
R "*The Devil*, (coming at their fond desire,
E In stertorous breath) *goes whiff,—and gives a blow!*"
(The Devil is a friend I oft admire.)

A And, of the man who owns the limousine,
N And finds the Gorgeous Creature and her pet,
D And the free manners of her social set
Much to his liking, (haply in between
T Matters of greater interest): What is seen
H In him to give us better thought? Or yet
E A higher estimate, in gross or net,
Upon his value to the race, I ween?
M For his chief purpose is to scatter gold,
A That others digged and earned, and to maintain
N For gaping throng of strangers to behold,
A pomp and circumstance as idly vain
As hers. The dog, her pet, is all he hath to hold;—
His name, his line aborted;—and what gain?

A I see a youth, just stepping on the sill
Of Manhood. O'er the way is grandly placed
Y A word, let's hope, shall never be erased,
O The legend Opportunity. With will
U And courage all his part to fill,
T The future of this Lad's already traced;
H And, let us hope, 'twill never be disgraced
By act unworthy of this day. And still
S I see beside the road, on either hand,
T In beauteous foliage, and full well disguised,
E A million cobwebs, and each filmy band
P A trap for him, full cunningly devised,
S For his destruction. Can he move and stand
'Mongst fruit and flowers—the cobwebs recognized?
F Find pleasant rest, when worn by travel long,
O And in his hours of pleasure and of ease,
R Enjoy the beauty only, and the song
T Of innocence,—and be content with these?
H

H I see this youth,—is he your son, or mine?
I His face a-smile, in confidence sublime,
S Take to the road, and dare the test of time;—
Dare as the hero dares who answers call divine
C To action;—with no time to falter or repine,—
H And up the hill of conquest he would climb.
A Now can'st thou say, in reason or in rhyme,
N Why he should not attain his goal, and shine
C As conqueror, upon its lofty crown?
E And yet, this son of yours or mine, my friend,
Hath many chances now to him unknown.
For, at beginning, who foresees the end?
Life tells her tale in chapters; and not shown
Too soon the fate the Author minds to send.

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N This youth of ours is born to good estate,
A With circumstance bespoken in his cause,
T And every needful aid around him draws
U For his achievement. Faithful friends await
R To help him on, and keep him in the straight
E And hobbled path of virtue. Here let's pause
' To say that he is Nature's child, by laws
S Immutable and urgent;—just as great
As ties of kin, religion, duty;—all
C The moral virtues;—bring them all, enlist
H In common cause to master or forestall
I The pull of Nature. If the boy resist
L That pull by all these aids, then we may call
D Him hero, and his name shall head the list.

N For Nature hath her way throughout the earth,
A With beast and bird and reptile; fish and all
T Her creatures animate. To Nature's call
U The trees and shrubs and flowers respond, in birth
R From seed all fertilized; and prove their worth
E By yielding seed again. Or great or small
' In Nature's plenteous lap they fall,
S And pay her tribute. Thus she holdeth forth
From age to age, and life perpetuate
C Is granted in return for service done:
A And every kind and species animate
L Is charged with its own duty,—one by one,—
L To save its own;—to serve the ranks that wait
A-down the centuries, from sire to son.

S And Nature calls for tribute when 'tis due;—
E Not at convenience of the life in bond;—
R Not leaving option open, to respond
V Or send regrets; but, preparation through,
I And full equipped;—why, that's the thing to do:
C Pay tribute: And the urge is all around
E In Nature's realm;—in sea and air and ground!
Pay tribute: high and low and through and through!
Think you, my friend, our boy doth hear this call?
Oh, yes;—of course;—but then the boy must wait;
There's yet four years of college;—after all
The discipline is good; he'll get his gait
When fitted well for life; there's Virtue's wall—
But, friend, will Nature halt or hesitate?

O My Christian friend, you know just what we do;
U I shut my eyes and fondly trust to fate;
R You shut your eyes and fondly pray and prate;
And both are hypocrites! In heart we two
B Are hoping that the boy will struggle through,
L And with his instincts just procrastinate;—
E Keep out of trouble, and at any rate
S Avoid a scandal; be discreet; from view
S Of family and friends keep closely hid
I His little peccadilloes, if they come;
N And not get tangled with some Bowery kid,
G And after marriage bring the hussy home.
(That heinous sin we strictly now forbid.)—
And thus we turn our hero out to roam.

W If he gets through his college course quite free,
E We are devoutly thankful, and we say
L He's had his trial, and has learned the way
L To dodge such mischief; and we straight agree
He knows a thing or two; and can be trusted free
S To play the game as other dodgers play,
T And hold Dan Cupid further still at bay,
A Until his Mother and his Dad agree
R It's time to marry. This depends, of course,
T On business or profession. Further years
E For this, and further still to gain a source
D Of income;—for this youngster, it appears,
Must furnish home of elegance,—no worse
Than that She lives in. Thus the sequel nears.

A Oh, Superficial Planners of the day!
Oh, Purblind Parents, thinking you can bend
C The laws of Nature to conserve your end,
A And sweep her sovereign edicts all away,
R To satisfy your fond ambition! Stay
E To see the evil that your plans portend;—
F The punishment that Nature's wont to send
U In retribution; for there blocks the way
L Ten thousand chances of a sore defeat
At some unguarded angle. Soon or late
P The boy may break from such an indiscreet
L And irksome tutelage; and then your great
A Air-castle tumbles. Should you ev'n complete—
N Unhappiness, divorce and wreck await.

A I saw your daughter, Madam, on the street.
A winsome girl indeed, and I would say
F Favors her father in a certain way,
I With all her mother's graces; and complete
N In every detail was her costume;—mete
E For ball-room, or for other gorgeous-gay
Society affair;—that is, I mean to say,—
C She looked most grandly elegant and sweet!
R (I am so awkward in descriptive phrase
E Of woman's dress and finery and style!)
A A simple walking costume?—yes; the praise
T Is due her mother I am sure! Her smile
U Was so bewitching! Her unconscious ways
R Disclosed her innocence! No thought of guile
E Belongs to her in these most guileful days;—
With others on the street I gazed a while.

A Her bodice, I am certain, was cut square,
And low;—just reasonably, you know, and fine
C To show a bust with grace in every line,
O So far as it was shown, for with a wondrous care
Y The line was drawn;—yes, certainly,—just there!
A graceful compromise, as I opine
G Between your stricter notions, ma'am, and mine;
I Not quite so low, perhaps, as she would dare.
R There must be something undisclosed, I know
L To whet the fancy, else no witching charm
Invests the draperies that coyly flow
Against the tempting bust or leg or arm.
Her hose, I'm sure, could little farther go;—
Pink and diaphanous,—transparent,—warm.

A I saw your daughter, Madam, at the show.
It was a vaudeville;—the common mix
F Of movies, dancing, music, circus tricks
E And so forth. I was seated in the row
T Assigned to men of sober years who grow
C But little hair a-top; and five or six
H Rows back, as I remember—if I fix
I The place aright, the two were there, you know;—
N She and my son. Oh, well, 'twas good enough;—
G The same old story;—something pretty raw
Worked in between the music, and the stuff
S That lovers want; and ever there we saw
H The villain still pursuing,—coarse and rough—
O *Pursuing what? The Maiden? Yes; oh, pshaw!*
W

T I saw the pair anon down in the grill,
H In flush of light and glare of grand array;
R And they were there the gayest of the gay.
I To see the throng disport in merry mill
L Would charm the gloom of anchorite, and fill
L His head with antics. Feasting and the play
I Of all the senses in one grand array;—
N Women, wine and song, as suits the will
G Of those already surfeited, who seek
To add to surfeit yet another thrill!
S And girls with painted lips and painted cheek
C Were mingling in the throng at will,
E With men of painted eyes and painted beak,
N The garish painted programme to fulfill.
E

A I saw your daughter, Madam, much enthused;—
N My son, I thought, was just a bit blase;
D For, though at times affecting to be gay,
His gayety seemed forced;—as if 'twere used
A To stronger spice than this, and felt abused
At so much fol-de-rol for merest play.
G And then I thought perhaps in other way
H His fervor had been sated. If refused
O By her beside him in this merry mock
S Why there are others, surely, that invite
T To amplest satisfaction;—and that stock
Is never far to seek for one who's quite
In tune for revel. Now let's stop the clock
For our fell ghost has risen,—wan and white.

A You know we chuckled when we found our boy
Had dodged the mischief of the plotting crew;
T And then concluded that the lad would do
H To face the world, and ever be our joy
I In strict propriety. But morals cloy
N With over-worked command. Remember, too,—
G And never let this fact escape your view,—
That Nature pulls the other way: Ahoy!
O And heave, ho! And the pull she doth engage
R Warps our good ship leeward, far away,
From course we're steering, and from anchorage
T That we selected. Say to Nature, Nay,
W Thy course is wrong; then vainly curb thy rage!
O This "thing or two" the boy hath learned at play.

A And if I thought the youngster somewhat cold,
When merrily was running all the play,
M And she beside him was so very gay,
I Perchance the reason now is plainly told,
G And any further moral to unfold
H Were quite superfluous; but still we may
T Hold just a little moment more to say
Y The trick of female charms so very bold
We also noted, is the female urge
P Prompted by Nature, to allure the coy,
U Elusive lover running still at large;—
L And all the scenes of revelry and joy;—
L And song and dance and story, charge on charge,
Are Nature pulling at the girl and boy.

W But, this, our boy who "knows a thing or two,"
H Finds just a mere diversion, mainly meant
Y To keep his fancy flowing; his intent
Is marriage sometime,—yes, of course; but who
H Wants marriage, with the splurge it means in view,
E Unless he has the cash? If this be sent
Together with the girl, it's easy spent
H And he is ready both to dare and do.
A But, for your daughter, Madam, who, he knows,
L Hath not the wherewithal, it's not so clear.
T He couldn't earn enough to buy her clothes,—
S Say nothing of the other things, so dear,
So necessary for herself and those
She loves;—and breach-of-promise suits are queer!

A I see a youth arraigned for grave offense
Against the laws, made and provided all
C To safeguard what we most delight to call
R The crown of womanhood. We make pretense—
I Offending majesty of virtue hence—
M Of guarding that which needs but to install
I Its own defender. Better than stone wall
N And military post is Common Sense.
A Here for seduction stands the boy arraigned,
L And he is dumb before a grave-faced throng.
Guilty? Oh, what odds if only end attained
Is virtue's vindication? And how long
Must virtue wait? The thing is all explained
If we but sing to-day the same old song.
The boy's at fault, of course; and much is gained;—
Let all seducers go where they belong.

K But not so fast, oh, Outraged Justice, hold
N Thy withering hand a moment; let us see
O Wherein the measure of his guilt may be
T Greater than hers. This boy's not worldly-wise, I'm
T told;
Y While she is older, and a trifle bold.
Who did the tempting here? Was't he or she?
P Let's view the matter calmly and agree
R The fault was hers, the greater, many fold.
O And such the product of our hectic life,
B With everything to stimulate the young
L And surging passions! And the cause of strife
E May seem at last to equally belong
M To false conditions and to Nature, rife
For what she claims;—albeit right or wrong.

A *But let the case proceed. I'm fain to say*
Justice is justice, and the courts must give
S *Protection. Let the wayward learn to live*
O *Within the law, for law must have its way*
R *Or all our safeguards tumble in a day;—*
E Thus pleads the prosecutor, who must strive
And in the law's complexities contrive
D To bring conviction;—gaining thus his pay.
I But still, my legal friend, a human life
L Hangs in the balance, and this boy consigned
E To prison means his end; and rope or knife
M Might bring a better. Ere the shackles bind
M Let's bring to view the stricken man and wife,
A His parents;—Keep their punishment in mind.

T *But let the case proceed, may't please the Court,*
H *For we have much to do to vindicate*
E *This much abused young woman. Let me state*
It is my solemn duty; and retort
C *That others' grief, or any other sort*
O *Of plea for sympathy cannot abate*
N *The Court's prerogative.* And now the great
F Contention's on; it is a public sport;—
L The room is filled with eager auditors;—
I Women and men, and girls, if they're allowed;
C And prurient details that the soul abhors
T Are brought before the evil-minded crowd;
And life of culprit and progenitors
O Laid bare. This makes the prying lawyers proud.
N

A And prurient Press takes up the eager chase,
And spreads before its readers, old and young,
B Delicious morsels, (rolled beneath the tongue)
A Of all salacious details,—every base
N And scand'lous thing developed in the case,
Q And such insinuations slily flung;—
U As any snake that ever hissed and stung
E Might claim for fellow. Readers in their place
T Of fond security, and smug and sure
Within their sanctity, may at their will
Revel in banquet spread of this impure
Turkey, with trimmings, and their stomachs fill,
As they may cram or relish or endure.
And this, for most, completely fills the bill.

E And if the pabulum the press purveys
N Be somewhat heavy, or too quickly gorged,
T The theme's inviting, and may be enlarged
I To *quantum suf.* in movies, books and plays
C And recreation for both nights and days
I Supplied *ad lib.* The prices charged
N Within the reach of all; and thus is urged
G The poison-potion in a million ways;—
Quick and most pungent, if one chooses so,
T Or long drawn out in ravished anguish, still;—
H Three Weeks or more, if one should choose to go
E So far to reach erotic end, and fill
M With many thrills the writer cares to throw
E Into the rotten story. Thus they flow.

F Oh, age lascivious, oh, groveling throng,
E That find men's evil conduct thy delight,
A And feast upon it morning, noon and night,
S And prop it up, thy other food among,
T And taste another flavor that is sprung
From crime and scandal,—If I read aright
The sign of this thy morbid appetite,
W The fruits are yours, the faults to you belong.
A Thus have they gone, the peoples in decay
R Who passed and are not, save in monument
N They left,—forbidding, vast and grey,—
I To show the world perchance which road they went;—
N For it was down this broadening Great White
G Way;—
Their one-time greatness now forever spent.

A I see a mad, amusement-seeking race,
In hectic fever pressing to its goal,
K And grasping pleasures, all of sense, not soul.
I I see a Clown installed in market place
N Outmidasing old Midas by the grace
G Of all who hang upon his antics, pay his toll,
And then in mighty spasms sway and roll.
C This lofty mummer makes the fool's grimace;
R And holds his servitors with easy rein.
O And if the one they serve by right appears
W Their beau-ideal of life, why then it's plain
N They are a race of mummers, and the shears
E Are mine: and I, the Timid Barber, whisper plain:
D This vaunted King of yours hath Ass's ears.

R Thou flaunting beauty of the vaudeville,
E Displayer of thy charms in dress undress,
T Purveying to the throng thy loveliness;—
A A word with thee would do but little ill,
I Or little good, because thy wont is will
L To lead this hectic life. But couldst thou guess
The end impending, it would suit thee less.
T Down in the slums are led the lives that kill!
R A girl like thee I saw the other day,—
A Fashioned as fine, and once as debonair;—
D Who danced and sang adown this broad highway;
E But she is in a little crib down there,
And selling to all comers,—if they pay;
But retail, mind you,—each his single share.

A Thou, flaunting beauty of the higher grade,
N Doth hold the wholesale market for a while,
D Selling thy body, with thy song and smile,
To please the leering crowd; and in the trade
W A weekly stipend, looming large, is made
H For shameless show and antics that beguile,
O And cause the prurient thought and smirk and
L smile.
E There's all the difference, my buxom maid.
S Plain language this; and such I apprehend
A You seldom hear from those who keep the pace,
L And travel with thy dalliance. Not a friend
E Would dare or care to utter in thy face
A hint of such a shame or such an end
Or say thy glory, girl, is thy disgrace!

A Whence comes this modern craze for nakedness?
Is here produced in life the artist's dream,—
B Art for Art's sake—portrayed, not as they seem,
A But as they are, and seeking to express
R The chosen forms of human loveliness,
E All in the nude? Then has the artist's scheme
Been carried to its logical extreme,
I And nothing's left his craving soul to guess,—
D If theme unhackneyed he would fain disclose,—
E But to revise his theories entire,
A And paint his human beings wearing clothes.
L Ah, then the thought artistic may aspire
To show the things of life he really knows,
And paint the smoke that partly hides the fire!

A And still the question stands: Whence comes the craze?
For surely 'tis not based on bare ideals;
D No sublimated standard e'er appeals
I To the chic maiden of these stylish days
C Or her fond mother. Regulate their ways
T By anything but Fashion? Why one feels
A Preposterous upon the very heels
T Of such a limping thought. The ayes and nays
O Are called instanter. Then it's Fashion's word
R Decides the issue what and when and how,
And whether garb is charming or absurd.
And who is Fashion, dearest? Answer now,
Who's the dictator? Has it e'er occurred;—
Paris? Her demi-mondaine? Well, I vow!

A But Autocrat of Paris rules by grace
Of greater powers than his, and if we will
D The end that he's appointed to fulfill
U Looms large upon us; for his reign hath place
M In comprehending, overmastering grace
M That orders human action, good or ill,
Y To work at last its written, sovereign will.
Change is predestined for the human race,
K As 'tis for all creation; and this change
I Means making over; and in tearing down
N No less than building up it finds its range
G For Evolution's plan, the Maker's own
For conservation of his forces strange
That men engage, as yet but illy known.

T Afar, afar, against the northern mist
W I see two mighty caravans that march
O Contra-wise; one headed for the arch
Of rising sun, the other to the west;
C And both these columns seem in eager quest
A Of goal beyond horizon of their search.
R And one doth bound and roll and heave and lurch
A In great commotion, antic-joy possesst.
V The other moves more surely, soberly,
A As if for earnest search their course they wend
N And when I look more closely still I see
S Much joy of quiet sort doth these attend,
And Evolution's written large and free.
The other, Devolution, and The End.

T And not alone in the affairs of men
H Such mighty columns show, but all through space
E The contra-movements may be seen apace,
Building—Destroying. In telescopic ken
L Are misty spheres new-born; and turn again,
A Are old ones going out, their day of grace
W Concluded in a blaze; thus giving place
To newer orders. Evolution's gain
Is Devolution's loss; and thus is set
The vast creative plan that carries on
The universe of universes. Yet
We fail so oft to see the words upon
God's handiwork before us, signed and set
Too large to read,—until our chance is gone.

O Oh, age uncanny, times all out of joint!
O Tempora, O Mores. Custom's Law!
T The Senate knew this and the Consul saw!
E Yet, in an age degenerate, who could point,—
M What Prophet doth the Centuries anoint
P And charge with warning that can overawe
O A people plunging to their fate below;—
R For pointing vainly is to disappoint.
A Oh Times, oh, Customs! I have shown ye all
The issues that arise 'twixt Nature's Law
O And man-made practice; and in great and small
The conflict rages, and the Furies draw
M Their meshes for thy capture and thy fall;—
O The Senate knew this, and the Consul saw!
R
E
S

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), pp. 189–214.

Some Day

Some day your reminiscent look
May fall upon this little book,
    And you'll recall an absent one.
Then, mayhap, you'll be nigh with me;-
To smile with me and sigh with me;
To laugh with me and cry with me—
    When I am gone.

FINIS

Publication. *Snatches of Song, with Verses of Lighter and More Sober Moods* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1921), p. 215.

MAGAZINE VERSE

Stage III | The late periodical afterlife, 1923

The following poem was located during internet research and verified against its original periodical page. It postdates *Snatches of Song* and is not present in either book.

Dirge

Seek we now the Widow's Son,
From our midst forever gone;
Good and gracious, true and wise,
In unhallowed grave He lies.

Fellowcraft of evil thought
Slew our Master where He wrought;
And in self-invited fate
Is the murder expiate.

Now we seek the Widow's Son
In His grave so dark and lone;
Death has left the empty form,
Gone the spirit, free from harm.

As we gather round His grave,
Stricken are our hearts, but brave;
And the task He grandly set
Shall be finished grandly yet.

Publication. *The New Age* 31, no. 12 (December 1923), p. 714.

AFTERWORD

Books, newspapers, archive, and future recovery

A newspaper poetics

Spalding's range is inseparable from the newspaper: lyric bird song, city boosterism, parody, labor politics, children's play, civic ceremony, and private elegy share a public medium. The poems often sound occasional because occasion was their original strength. Their local names and topical arguments record the city as it learned to narrate itself.

Revision by repetition

The overlap between *My Vagabonds* and *Snatches of Song* is not removed here. The later book recontextualizes early fugitive verse, dividing song, children's work, satire, and sober reflection into a career retrospective. Comparison also reveals changed titles and revised wording. Each appearance therefore belongs to the book that prints it.

Visual verse

Several poems treat the page as a field for movement, voice, gloss, acrostic argument, or pictorial comedy. Each now appears first as a clean spatial resetting or high-contrast typographic trace, followed by the complete source facsimile. The reconstruction makes the typographic argument newly legible; the facsimile preserves the authoritative wording, scale, and placement.

The open archive

Spalding's Huntington papers contain manuscripts, correspondence, speeches, music, and photographs beyond the printed books. The early Grant song, newspaper verse under 'Pokey,'and other fugitive publications remain targets for further recovery. This edition claims completeness for the two scanned poetry books and includes one newly verified post-book poem; it does not claim manuscript completeness.

Colophon

Compiled from the BKS Extremes William Andrew Spalding and Journals folders, with additional archival and internet research, August 2026. Designed in EB Garamond at six by nine inches. The cover uses the user's unlettered Spalding artwork with live series typography. The poetry was newly extracted from the original scans and visually reviewed in the finished pages.