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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK OUTLOOK ODES ***

OUTLOOK ODES

By T. W. H. CROSLAND

AUTHOR OF "THE UNSPEAKABLE SCOT,"
"LITERARY PARABLES," "THE FINER SPIRIT," &c.

LONDON: AT THE UNICORN
VII CECIL COURT W.C.
MCMII

TO
THE LORD WINDSOR
ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER

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TO THE PRIVATE MEMBER

My dear Sir,—
You may think it unkind of me
To interrupt the peaceful calm of your holiday
With a poem about business.

But I assure you, my dear sir,
That I do so with the very best intentions,
And at the call of what I consider to be duty.
Duty, as you know, is a tremendous abstraction,
And brings a man into all sorts of difficult corners.
It was duty that took you into Parliament:
Similarly it is duty that constrains me to Odes.
When a man sees another man and pities him,
It is the duty of the first man to let the other man know about it
Delicately.
I pity you, my dear Mr. Private Member,
From the bottom of a bottomless heart.
Many a time and oft in the course of my rambles
Through the lobbies and liquor bars of St. Stephens
It has been my ineffable portion to run across you—
Silk hat, frock coat, baggy trousers, patient stare, bored expression:
Suddenly you smile
And crook the pregnant hinges of the back of your neck.
Mrs. Wiggle, the three Misses Wiggle, and little Master Wiggle,
Wife, daughters, and son of Mr. Forththree Wiggle,
Draper, and burgess of the good old Parliamentary Division
Of Mudsher West,
Are up from Mudsher West,
And they want showin' round the 'Ouse, you know.
Round you go.
Again: you appear in the Strangers' Lobby,
Spectacles on nose, somebody's card in hand.
The policeman roars out name of leading constituent.
Leading constituent departed in a huff twenty minutes ago,
Because he thought you were not attending to him.
There being no answer,
Policeman roars out name of leading constituent once more.
Name echoes along Lords' Lobby;
But not being there, leading constituent fails to come forward.
You look embarrassed, turn tail, retire to your back bench,
And feel deucedly uncomfortable for the rest of the evening.
You would like to get away to the theatre,
But you dare not do it:
There are Whips about.
You would like to go home to bed;
You must wait the good pleasure of the course of the debate.
You would like to stand on your hind legs
And address the House on large matters:
But you know in your heart
That the House will stand absolutely nothing from you
Bar a question or so.
You sit, and sit, and sit through dull debate after dull debate,
And you sigh for the hustings and the brass bands,
And the banquets and the "He's-a-jolly-good-fellow"-s
And wonder how it comes to pass
That you, who were once set down in the *Mudsher Mercury*
For a blend of Demosthenes and John Bright,
Can never get more than twenty words off the end of your tongue
After "Mr. Speaker, Sir."
Oh! my dear Mr. Private Member,
Your case is indeed a sad one,
And it is all the sadder when one comes to reflect
That, as a general rule, you are a sincereish sort of man,
Burning and bursting with a desire
To do your poor suffering country
A bit of good.
You know that the men who have the ear of the House
Are mere talkers;
That they are only "playing the party game,"
And that the country may go to pot for anything they care.
And yet they make their speeches
And get them reported at length in the papers,
And are given places in the Cabinet,
And go for "dines-and-sleeps" with the King,
What time you grow old and grey and obese and bleary eyed,
And never get the smallest show.
I pity you, my dear Mr. Private Member, I do really.
But for your comfort I may tell you
That all you lack
Is courage

And brains.

TO THE TRUE-BORN BRITON

(After Peace Night)

Dear Sir, or Madam,
As the case may be,
When Britain first,
At Heaving's command,
Arose from out
The azure main,
This was the chawter
Of that land
And gawdian a-a-a-angels
Sang this strain:
Don't you think so?
For my own part,
I am quite sure of it:
Monday night convinced me.
Mafeking night,
As you may remember,
Was a honeyed
And beautiful affair.
But
Peace night,
I think,
Really outdid it in splendours.
At the cafe
Which I most frequent,
All was Peace.
Round the table next mine,
There were seventeen Jews,
With a Union Jack.
Ever and anon
(Between drinks, as it were),
They held up
That Union Jack
And yelled:
"Shend him victoriouth,
'Appy and gloriouth,
Long to-o reign over uth,
&c., &c."
I wonder, my dear Sir, or Madam,
Why the Jews are so pleased:
I can't make it out.
Howsomever,
Pleased they are,
And a pleased Jew
Is worth a king's ransom,
Or words to that effect.
Peace, my dear Sir, or Madam,
Is a chaste and choice
Thing.

Outside the aforesaid cafe,
The crowd
Was so numerous
And exuberant
That I was compelled
(Much to my annoyance, of course)
To remain inside
Till closing-time.
Then I went home
In the friendly embrace
Of a four-wheeler.
For a little while,
There was much shouting and yelling and roaring and squeaking and singing;
And then I knew

No more.
My cab
Bowled away
Through the sweet evening air
(That is to say,
If the common or Regent Street growler
Ever does bowl away),
And all the time
I snored.
Duly awakened
Outside my bungalow,
I raked up the fare,
And, in reply to kind enquiries
In the hall,
I remarked:
"Peace, O woman of mine,
Peace!"

TO THE CAMBRIDGE CREW

My dear Cambridge,
You have pulled it off,
As all men know.
This ode
Will make Oxford pretty sick;
But the spoils are to the victor.
If Oxford had rowed better
And won,
They should have had a nice new ode,
Like good boys;
But they have been and gone and lost,
And are, therefore,
Not fit subjects
For immortal verse.
Pah!
I pass by Oxford!
As for you, dear Cambridge,
Here's to you:
In spite of your long and honourable connection
With the manufacture
Of sossiges,
There appears to be something in you,
Which is more than can be said
For some of the sossiges.
Cambridge, my own,
You have won the bowt rice!
'Ave a drink!
What is the good of winning the bowt rice,
If you don't 'ave a drink?
I don't know,
And I'm sure you don't.
Also, what is the good
Of winning the bowt rice
At all?
I give it up.
Yes, I do really;
Please do let me give it up.
You have won;
You can afford to be generous;
Suffer me to indulge my little whim:
There is no good
In winning the bowt rice, Cambridge
No good at all.
On the other hand,
When I come to think of it
I am not quite sure
That to have rowed
In the Cambridge boat
Which won the bowt rice,

Is materially to have damaged
One's prospects or career:
At the very least, it makes one safe
For a tutor's job
At £80 per annum;
And what self-respecting person from Cambridge
Could wish for more?
I have heard of a man
Who rowed
In a winning Cambridge boat
And is now driving
A hansom cab.
And I have heard of another man
Who omitted to row
In a winning Cambridge boat
And is now driving a four-wheeler.
You see the difference, of course!
After all,
To row
In a winning Cambridge boat
Does give one
A sort of start in life,
And don't you forget it.
Always remember, my dear Cambridge, who you are.
You licked Oxford by five lengths
In 1902.
This is probably
All you will get
For your father's money.
Be thankful.

TO MR. DAN LENO

(On his Appearance at Sandringham)

Dear Mr. Dan Leno,—
This has been a great week
For Art—
One of the biggest weeks in fact
On record.
For at the beginning of the week, my dear Mr. Leno,
You were a mere popular entertainer,
Whereas at the present moment
You are a proud and 'appy man,
And in a position to walk about the Strand
With a diamond E
Scintillating in your cravat.
The thing that was anticipated
By the intelligent paragraphists,
My dear Mr. Leno,
Has come to pass.
His Britannic Majesty
King Edward VII., D.G.: B. et T.T.B.R.: I.I.,
Does intend to give artists and authors and people
A little bit more of a show
Than has hitherto fallen to their lot.
His Majesty,
My dear Mr. Leno,
Has always been noted for his tact,
And in opening the ball with you, as it were,
His Majesty has exhibited an amount of tact
Which leaves absolutely nothing to be desired.
Had he commenced with Mr. Swinburne,
Or myself,
Or Mr. Hall Caine
What howls there would have been!
Whereas as it is
Everybody is delighted,
And the Halls resound nightly with his Majesty's praises.

Furthermore,
 Besides being tactful,
 The King's choice of you,
 My dear Mr. Leno,
 For an invitation to Sandringham
 Has its basis in a profound common sense;
 For I am acquainted with nobody in the movement,
 My dear Mr. Leno,
 Who could have done the Sandringham turn
 With anything like the success which appears to have been yours.
 I gather from interviews
 That the King "laughed heartily" at your jokes,
 And that "it was a treat to see him enjoying himself."
 It is just here that Mr. Swinburne, myself, and Mr. Hall Caine
 Would have broken down.
 It seems to me unlikely
 That the King would have laughed
 At Mr. Swinburne's jokes;
 My own jokes, as everybody is aware,
 Are constructed on a principle
 Which entirely prohibits laughter;
 While, as for Mr. Hall Caine's jokes,
 They have such a tremendous sale
 That it is not good form to laugh at them.
 Mr. Leno, my boy,
 You have been the humble means
 Of doing us all
 A great kindness.
 Those jokes of yours
 Which have tickled Royal ears
 Will be nectar to me
 When next it is my pleasurable duty
 To sit under you;
 That hand which Royalty has shaken
 I shall grasp
 With an added fervour;
 That smile will cheer me all the more readily
 Because it has cheered
 My liege Lord and Sovereign;
 Those feet——
 But, after all, the great point
 Is the scarf pin.
 I suppose you would not care to lend it to me
 For a week or two
 While I have one made
 Like it?

TO THE POPE

May it please your Holiness
 There are possibly two,
 Or it may be three,
 Men
 In Europe
 Who could indite this Ode
 Without treading on anybody's corns.
 After mature reflection,
 I am inclined to think that I am those three men
 So that you will understand.
 Well, my dear Pope, I hear on all hands
 That you are engaged, at the present moment,
 In the cheerful act and process
 Of having a Jubilee.
 I have had several myself
 And I know what pleasant little functions they are,
 Especially when the King
 Sends a mission to congratulate one on them.
 To proceed,
 You must know, my dear Pope,

That, by conviction
And in my own delightful country,
I am a rabid, saw-toothed Kensitite Protestant;
All my ancestors figure gloriously
In Foxe's "Book of Martyrs,"
And, if they don't, they ought to.
Also, I never go into Smithfield
Without thinking of the far-famed fires thereof
And thanking my lucky stars
That this is Protestant England
And that the King defends the Faith.
But, when I get on to the Continent,
To do my week-end in Paris,
Or my "ten days at lovely Lucerne,"
Or my walk with Dr. Lunn
"In the footsteps of St. Paul,"
Why, then, somehow
The bottom falls clean out of my Kensitariousness
And I become a decent, mass-hearing, candle-burning Catholic.
That is curious, but true,
And may probably be accounted for
By differences of climate.
However, we can leave that;
Here, in England, my dear Pope,
We all like you,
Whether we be Catholics or Protestants or Jews or Gentiles or members of the
Playgoers' Club;
And we all see you, in our minds' eye,
Seated benevolently upon your throne
Giving people blessings;
Or walking in the Vatican Garden
Clothed on with simple white.
We all think of you, my beloved Pope,
As a diaphanous and dear old gentleman
Whose intentions are the kindest in the world.
And yet, and yet, and yet—
The memory of Smithfield
So rages in our honest British blood
That, in spite of your white garments
And your placid, gentle ways,
We feel quite sure that you do carry,
Somewhere about your person,
A box of matches;
And that, if certain people had their way,
You would soon be lighting such a candle in England
That we should want a new Foxe
And a new Book of Martyrs
Of about the size of a pantechnicon.
Hence it is, my dear Pope,
That we—er—Englishmen remain Protestant
And make the King swear fearful oaths
Against popery and all its works,
Although, for aught one knows to the contrary,
He may have Mass said twice daily
Behind the curtain, as it were.
All the same, I wish you good wishes
As to this your Jubilee
And
Nihil obstat.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN

(Touching his Audience of the King)

My dear Mr. Chamberlain,
Since you last heard from me,
Many curious things have happened,
Both in Birmingham and abroad.
As to the happenings in Birmingham,

Nobody cares tuppence for them.
 The happenings abroad, however, are a different matter,
 Inasmuch as they have brought you great fame,
 And cost us a lot of money.
 Your influence in the governance of this great country, my dear Mr. Chamberlain,
 Is undoubted.
 When you say things,
 It is understood that all your fellow-ministers
 Sit up and look good.
 "We don't like it," they say in their decent hearts;
 "But Joseph says it must be so, and be so it must."
 To the delicate souls of Arthur James,
 And George, and Broddy, and the rest of 'em,
 You must, my dear Mr. Chamberlain, be a good deal of a trial,
 But, somehow, they have to put up with you,
 Even as the honest martyr has to put up with his shirt;
 And, for my own part, I rather like to see it:
 At any rate, in a sort of way, don't you know.
 But, my dear Mr. Chamberlain,
 In the daily papers of Monday morning,
 What did I read? Why, I read:
 "Mr. Chamberlain had an audience of the King
 Yesterday afternoon."
 And yesterday afternoon was Sunday afternoon.
 Now, my dear Joseph, I do not mind in the least
 What you do to Arthur James,
 Or what you do to George,
 Or what you do to Broddy,
 Or whether you do it on Sunday afternoons,
 Or on any other afternoon.
 But I really must draw the line somewhere,
 And I wish you to understand
 That if you go to see His Majesty the King
 On Sunday afternoons
 (On the afternoon of the Sabbath, as they would say in Birmingham),
 You do so entirely without my approval.
 I think it is scandalous, and, not being a politician,
 I have no hesitation in saying what I think.
 Somehow, while I know you to be a competent man of business,
 You never figure in my mind's eye, Joseph,
 As the sort of man who ought to have
 Personal communication with his Sovereign,
 Particularly on Sunday afternoons.
 Birmingham men were not born to grace the Court;
 And, when it comes to the furnishing of Pleasant Sunday Afternoons for Monarchs,
 In my opinion, they are quite out of it.
 When business presses,
 As it no doubt did press on Sunday, Joseph,
 It is your business, as a Birmingham man,
 To remember your origin,
 And, if you have anything on your mind
 Which really must be communicated
 To His Gracious Majesty King Edward the Seventh,
 To look up the peerage and send round somebody
 Who is, as one might say, fit for the job.
 There is always Salisbury,
 There is always Arthur James,
 There is always George,
 And there is always Broddy:
 These men, my dear Joseph, are gentlemen,
 And have known the Court all their lives.
 What they do on Sundays I neither know nor care
 But I have no doubt that, if you told them to go round and see the King,
 They would go hotfoot and see him.
 So that you have no excuse, Joseph.
 Birmingham will, no doubt, forgive you this once:
 As for me, I solemnly swear that I never will.

TO THE TSAR

My dear Tsar,—
I am owing you
The usual apologies.
I did not come to Dunkirk,
I did not come to Dunkirk,
I did not come to Dunkirk;
I was billed as usual,
But at the last moment
I did not come.
So that it was in vain, my dear Tsar,
That you and your Imperial spouse
(To whom I offer my very humble duty),
It was in vain
That you and your Imperial spouse
(To whom I again offer my very humble duty)
Searched the poop of *La Marguerite*
With your Imperial binoculars;
I was not there,
I was not there,
(O pregnant phrase!)
I was not there;
I was not on the poop,
I was not on the poop,
I was not on the poop,
I was not even abaft the binnacle,
In fine, I was not there at all.
And why?
Ah, ingrate that I am,
Why? O why?
The North Sea or German Ocean, my dear Tsar,
No doubt hath its pearls,
It also hath other things,
As, for example, a Dover-Ostend route.
I went on that route
On Saturday last;
It is a nice route,
I give you my word for it;
But the North Sea or German Ocean
Also has
An Ostend-Dover route,
On which route I went
On Sunday evening
And part of Monday morning last.
Five hours, my dear Tsar,
Had I of that Ostend-Dover route;
And I am now at a place called Thame
In Oxfordshire,
Recruiting—
Though I promised a man at Bruges,
And another man at Ypres,
That I would infallibly see him
At Dunkirk.
The Loubets are, of course,
Bitterly disappointed,
But you can explain for me,
Can you not, my dear Tsar?
You understand,
Do you not?
The North Sea or German Ocean
Fatigued you,
Did it not?
That is precisely what it did to me.
Fatigue is a good word.
I thank thee, Tsar, for that beautiful word fatigue.
All day Monday I felt so fatigued
That I went and joined a Peace Society.
The Boer war, my dear Tsar,
Is entirely over,
So far as I am concerned;
Henceforth I quarrel with no man.
Fatigue has laid its heavy hand upon me;
I am too much fatigued to quarrel even with the partner of my joys and sorrows.
Peace, perfect peace,

Is what I require,
And what I mean having.
Time writes no wrinkles on the Ostend-Dover route.
But you should see the people who have been that way.
Thame, in Oxfordshire,
Pitches beneath my feet
When I think of it.

TO DAN LENO

Dear Mr. Leno,
It is now many happy weeks
Since I had the pleasure of addressing you.
On the last occasion, you will remember,
You were fresh from Sandringham,
With a medal and sundry excellent stories
As to the manner in which you had been received
By His Majesty the King
And the Members of the Royal Family.
"To see them laugh," you told us, "was a treat."
Since then you have gone about
With a diamond "E" in your cravat,
And "The King's Jester" written all over you
As I have already stated,
I do not doubt for a moment
That the King really did laugh
At Mr. Leno.
I have laughed at him
(That is to say, at Mr. Leno) myself,
And I know what it is;
But to-day, Mr. Leno,
To-day being the 1st of April,
It is my turn to laugh,
And I do so with a right good will,
For to-day, Mr. Leno,
Your cup appears to be full,
Inasmuch as for this day only
You are actually editing a paper!
Now when a man takes to editing papers
All is over with him:
The next step is
Into the unutterable dark.
I have read your paper, Mr. Leno,
And I find that on the whole
It has been remarkably well edited:
That is to say, you as Editor
And your big co-editor,
Mr. Campbell of that ilk,
Have had the good sense
To edit the paper
In the only way in which an editor
Should edit a paper,
Namely, by leaving it to itself
As much as possible.
If all editors would have the sense
To take this wise course,
Contributors and subordinates, generally,
Would, to say the least of it,
Have a fairly happy life.
It seems in a way a pity, Mr. Leno,
That you should waste yourself
Upon an evening paper,
When there are so many morning papers
Requiring Editors:
The *Daily Chronicle*, for example,
Would have offered you a fair field
For the exercise of your extraordinary abilities;
Even the *Times* might, for once in a way,
Have added lustre to itself

By taking on
Your joyous and winning lucubrations;
Then there is *Punch*,
Which journal, I understand,
Is always (and still) on the look-out
For that humour
Which somehow never comes its way.
But there, Mr. Leno,
You have missed your chance,
And possibly it will not come round again.
As you are young in journalism,
Let me say three things to you:
Imprimis, never be an Editor,
It is better to be in the ballet;
Item, always be on either a morning paper or a weekly.
The all-day papers keep one too busy.
Item, if you are an editor only for a day,
Be sure to subscribe to the Newspaper Press Fund;
Otherwise, what will your widow do?

TO THE POET LAUREATE

My dear Poet Laureate,—
Do not, I implore you,
Be perturbed.
It is not my purpose to harp
Upon old strings,
Or to express the smallest satisfaction
Either with you as an official personage
Or with your verses as a production of an official personage;
I have called to-day, as it were,
For a little quiet talk:
You are a fellow-townsmen of mine,
Consequently
I am a fellow-townsmen of yours;
We ought to get on well together.
Between ourselves, my dear Poet Laureate,
It seems to me
That if you were to set about it
In the right way
You might, with very little trouble
Render a real service to the State
Being as you are
The only writer fellow
Who in his literary capacity
Is associated with the Court,
You have, if I may say so, chances and opportunities
Such as do not appear to have been vouchsafed
To any other contemporary worker in the department of Letters.
Our Gracious Sovereign Lord King Edward VII.
(I make no doubt)
Continually consults you on matters literary
"Dear Mr. Austen" (I can hear him saying),
"Would you now advise me to read
Mr. Newverse's Sonnets
And Miss Jumpabouti's new novel,
Or would you not?"
Of course, my dear Poet Laureate,
If you were one of those stiff ungenerous Poets Laureate
Who make it a rule to stick to business,
You would say very respectfully,
"Your Majesty honours me,
But I am not your Majesty's Book-Taster,
Being, as your Majesty is aware,
Paid only to wangle my harp
In celebration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages.
Therefore I must respectfully, civilly, humbly, and generally otherwisely
Beg to decline to answer your Majesty's kind inquiry."
But my dear Poet Laureate,

There is nothing of that sort about you.
 You believe that a Poet Laureate,
 Should not only be a sort of walking rhyming dictionary,
 But also a general compendium of advice, counsel, and straight tips
 For crowned heads.
 Hence (I make no doubt)
 That when his Majesty the King
Does ask you for a hint as to the kind of book he ought to read
 You break the marble box of your wisdom
 Upon the palace floor
 And expound things to him.
 Having thus the ear
 Of an exceedingly amiable and capable Monarch,
 You should by all means
 Take advantage of the circumstance
 To do what you can in that quarter
 For the benefit of your brethren and sisters of the pen.
 Many of them, my dear Poet Laureate,
 Are at the present moment
 Going about the country
 With weary souls and tattered nerves
 Because their Services to Literature
 Have not been blessed and approved,
 Not to say "recognised,"
 By the Crown.
 Some of them believe in their hearts
 That they ought to have a peerage.
 Others desire to be Baronets, Knights, and so forth,
 In order that their wives may be called "Lady."
 Others, whom I know,
 Would be well content with a humble K.C.B.
 And yet others
 Would go off their heads with joy
 If they might only be invited regularly
 To the King's Levees and Droring Rooms.
 My dear Poet Laureate,
 I charge you to do your best for these suffering people.
 WRITING IS A NOBLE ART,
 IT SHOULD MOST CERTAINLY BE RECOGNISED BY THE CROWN.
 Rub these facts well in, my dear Poet Laureate
 (You know who to rub 'em into);
 And while you are about it,
 There are two persons
 On whose behalf
 You might use every legitimate endeavour
 To rub your hardest—
 One of them, my dear Poet Laureate, is YOURSELF
 And the other is
 MYSELF.
 Your own desires in the way of "recognition"
 Are of course your own affair,
 Ask for what you like, my dear Poet Laureate,
 And see that you get it,
 For me
 (Let me whisper)
 I want a pension.

TO THE AMERICAN INVADER

Dear Sir or Madam
 (As the case may be),—
 Peace hath her victories as well as war
 And sometimes
 When I have occasion to travel
 In this muggy metropolis of ours,
 I begin to wonder whether I really am in London,
 Or in New York.
 On the tops of Atlas 'buses, and all other 'buses,
 At the dining-tables of hotels at all prices,

At all theatres,
At all music-halls,
At all art galleries,
At all "evenings,"
At all social functions
Metropolitan in their nature
You, my dear Sir or Madam
(As the case may be),
Flourish and are to the fore,
There are people in the world
Who can pick you out at a glance.
The American woman, I am told,
Wears a certain kind of complexion
And a certain kind of blouse;
The American man, I am told,
Is weedy and anæmic,
A cigarette smoker,
A confirmed spitter,
And a moderate drinker;
He has a soft hat and unlimited dollars:
It is his dollars, of course,
Which are creating all the trouble.
They are beginning to circulate
And "get-a-holt"
Wherever honest Britons most do congregate.
My tobacco merchant,
Who sells me two ounces of the real thing every week,
Has just been bought up by an American syndicate;
My barber is in the same case;
And I feel sure
That the woman who brings home "the laundry"
Is seriously considering proposals which have been made to her
By a syndicate of wealthy American gentlemen.
The electric-lighting plant in St. Paul's Cathedral
Was, it seems, paid for by an American.
Another American is doing something or other
With the underground railways,
And a third proposes to erect a building
Which will contain 6,000 rooms
On one of the best sites
On the new Holborn-Strand improvement.
Also I am using
An American roll-top desk,
An American typewriter,
An American chair,
American ink,
American pens,
American blotting paper,
American gum,
American paper fasteners,
American notions,
An American pattern of Ode,
And Heaven knows what besides.
I am all American.
I can whistle the "Star-Spangled Banner,"
I can, really!
Shake!
I like you,
There are no flies on you.
How are Mr. Roosevelt and all at home?
Is Pierpont keeping hearty?
Do you miss Carnegie—much?
Have you seen the Amur'can eagle at the Zoo?
Is Monroe's docterin'
Good for dyspepsia?
And it's O to be at home
On the rolling perarie,
With one's money well invested in English concerns,
Run by British labour,
And paying good old, fruity, nourishing British dividends!

TO THE "MUDDIED OAF"

My dear Muddied Oaf,—
While still a youth and all unknown to fame,
I went to school.
And on a certain Saturday
I put on a beautiful blue jersey, and some striped knickers,
And betook myself into a damp field
With my hands nice and clean,
And my hair parted.
Within an hour's time
My shins had the appearance of a broken paint can,
My garments were covered with mud,
One of my teeth had somehow got swallowed,
And my hair was out of joint.
When I come to think of it,
In that hour I must have been a Muddied Oaf,
Though I did not know what to call myself.
And no doubt on that and successive Saturday afternoons
I won my various journalistic Waterloos,
And contracted a stubborn cardiac hypertrophy
Which is even yet with me.
For nigh twenty years, however,
I have never, to my knowledge,
Taken part in a football match;
And, in spite of Mr. Kipling,
I do not propose to indulge again
In either Rugby or the other thing.
Youth loves to be muddied;
In old age one flings one's mud at other people.
I don't know, my dear Muddied Oaf,
How you like being called a Muddied Oaf.
The average Muddied Oaf of my acquaintance
Will not in the least understand
What Muddied Oaf means,
And even when a dozen reporters
Have explained it to him, dictionary in hand,
He will not care.
You cannot take the glory of having crumpled up the Foogleum Otspurs out of a man
By calling him Muddy;
And as for Oaf,
When all is said
It is a poor synonym for "dashing forward."
No, my dear boy,
Phrases out of poems cannot damp your ardours.
And, so far as you are concerned,
Mr.
Rudyard
Kipling
May
Be
Blowed!
All the same, I assure you
As an old muddifier
That there is a great deal in what the gentleman says.
To a delicate age,
Rifle practice presents many attractions:
To shoot out of a No. 1 rifle
At a choice array of clay pipes, dancing globules, and cardboard rabbits
Is on the face of it
A gentleman's job:
You can do it with your hair parted:
And providing you don't get betting drinks
That you will ring the bell every time,
It doesn't cost much.
Regular practice
At the ordinary shooting booths
Will no doubt make a soldier and a gentleman of you,
And teach you to fear no Boer in shining armour.
These are points worth considering.
Also, the game does not hurt.
You need no lemon to help you through with it,

You run no risk of dislocation, fracture, hypertrophy, gouged eye, or broken neck,
You are on velvet all the time.
And when it comes to calling names,
You will have the honour and glory
Of being set down for a gallant and gilt-edged
Defender of your country,
Ponder it, O Muddied One,
And be wise.

TO A PUBLISHER

My dear Sir,—
In the whole round
Of animated nature
I am acquainted
With nothing or nobody
Who is, generally speaking,
So gay, gaudy, and interesting
As yourself.
From my youth up
I have been taught to look upon a publisher
As a very great person indeed.
When I was young and courted him
He it was drew from me
(As morn from Memnon)
Rivers of melody;
The which, however,
He took good care
Not to glorify with his imprimatur.
In those days
I looked upon publishing as a trade
And poetry as a profession.
Recently I have become wise,
And I feel in the heart of me
That publishing is a profession
And poetry a trade.
In spite of all that has been said to the contrary,
Barabbas
Certainly was not a publisher.
I have not had time to look him up,
But I feel quite sure
That he was not a professional man.
Besides,
If he was a publisher,
Why did he not publish something?
Echo and the Publishers' Association
No doubt answer
"Why?"
I sometimes think I should like to be a publisher myself.
It must be rather nice
To know for a fact
How many copies
Mr. So-and-so, and Mr. So-and-so, and Mr. So-and-so
Really do sell,
And how many "A second large edition"
And "Tenth impression"
Really mean.
It must be rather nice, also,
To go off to Switzerland every year
(With your wife)
To attend the Publishers' Conference.
It must be rather nice, too,
To know of a surety
That when an author is making money
Some publisher or other
Is making just as much,
And not infrequently a trifle more,
On the same work.
We have learnt of late

Greatly to our disgust
That when a publisher dies rich
He has made his money out of Apollinaris.
This is hard on authors,
Who, between ourselves,
Are not by any means bad people,
And invariably take a kindly interest
In their publishers' welfare.
On the other hand,
You must admit, sir,
That a publisher seldom goes bankrupt,
And does not as a rule sleep
Under his own counter.
Once
I lent a publisher half a crown.
He paid it back.
The average author would have taken it
As money earned.
So that, on the whole,
I am inclined to like publishers,
And to set them down in my tablets
For
Useful persons.

TO AN HOTEL KEEPER

My dear Sir,—
Oft in the stilly night
My thoughts fly
In your direction,
For oft in the stilly night
It is my unfortunate habit
To have uncomfortable dreams,
And the worst of them
Runs to bankruptcy.
I have a horror of bankruptcy,
At any rate in my dreams.
I sometimes lie
Between the blankets
In a cold sweat
And for public examination as it were,
And the presiding genius of the court
Says to me, sepulchrally,
"To what do you attribute your financial rottenness?"
I fall into a colder sweat
And remark,
With a humility
Which becomes my unfortunate position,
"Sir, if you please,
I have been living at an hotel."
At this juncture of course
I come in for every sympathy:
The Court is with me,
The Court has been there itself;
There is not a dry eye about the place,
Every man present knows what I mean,
And his heart is touched accordingly.
Sir,
My dear Sir,
You also know what I mean;
In other words, you know
That I am the victim of a convention,
And that, when all is said that can be said,
You are the author of that convention.
As to the nature of that convention
We will put it this way:
One pound of steak
To the actual consumer
Should cost, say, 1s. 2d.

Trimnings
In the way of potatoes and peas might cost, say, 6d.,
Bread, 1d.,
Pepper, salt, and mustard, 1d.
(You will notice that I put a princely price on everything),
Total, 1s. 10d.
Fifty per cent. profit for you, let us say,
Would bring us up to 2s. 9d.
Really you ought to let one off for 2s. 9d.,
But what do you do?
Well,
So far as I can gather from your bills,
You lie awake at night
Debating with yourself
Whether you should charge one 3s. 6d. or 4s. 6d.
And you usually come to the conclusion
That it will be best
For all parties concerned
To charge one 5s.
If one expostulates,
You remark
With hauteur
That you thought you were dealing with a gentleman.
You are quite correct in this surmise.
But—
One pays,
And you pocket the difference.
Then, again, on one's bill
You put
Bed, 7s. 6d.
Which is cheap;
And I do not murmur;
But you also put
Attendance, 2s. 6d.;
Coffee in bedroom before rising, 1s.;
Bath, 1s. 6d.;
This is just 5s. too much,
Especially in view of the fact
That the attendance wears dirty shirts,
That the bath
Is lukewarm if you order it cold
And lukewarm if you order it hot;
And that the coffee before rising
Doesn't cost you a farthing.
I am aware, of course,
That all this is very mean
And low down
On my part,
But frankly
Your rapacity
Matters not so much to me
As to yourself.
People come once to your establishment,
They read your bill,
Pay your prices
And tip your dirty-shirted waiters,
And go away
And forget to come back.
Hence
You are bound to charge
The next man that comes along
As much extra as he will stand,
And by slow degrees
Your establishment
Is becoming
A by-word
And a warning.
My dear Sir,
Have a shilling bottle of wine
(For which you charge me 3s. 6d.)
At your own expense,
Consult with your wife,
And make up your mind
Never to charge
More than 2s.

For 9d. worth of goods.
Honesty is its own reward—
It is really.

TO THE MAN WITH A GUN

My dear Sir,—
I suppose you are having an excellent time just now.
There are a large number of counties
In England and Scotland,
And I am not acquainted with one of them
Wherein your bang-bang
And puffs of smoke
And red-faced men with dogs
Are not to be encountered.
You like it;
It is very nice;
And really, when you come to think of it,
It is what the counties were made for.
In the history books
They were wont to say
Of a certain Norman monarch,
That he loved the red deer
As if he were their brother.
Of you it may safely be said
That you love the red grouse
And the brown partridge.
As if you were a poulterer.
You are a sportsman.
The man who first went out with a gun
To shoot game
Probably did it on the sly.
Had he been caught
He would no doubt have been regarded
By the sportsmen of his day
With the same contempt
That you yourself indulge
For the unprincipled blackguard, Sir,
Who shoots foxes.
But time and the gunsmiths
Have changed all that;
And now you are a sportsman,
A shooter of birds
For the London market.
You are also a gunner,
And you kill things.
Oh! why do you not go
And live at Gunners-bury?
Bad joke?
Well, I know it is.
But I assure you, my dear Sir,
That it is not half so bad as I can make them
When I try.
To come now to the region
Of practical politics,
Let me explain to you right off
That, despite all that has been said against you
By people who are mad about the Land
And the Game-laws,
And the feathered kingdom
And so forth,
I,
Who am always on the side of wisdom,
Have discovered a justification for you.
It is this:
There has been a great demand of late
For really competent shots.
In response to that demand
Mr. Kipling has started a village rifle club.

I understand that the members thereof
Are, let us say, five hundred in number.
Now, I put it to you, Sir,
How many sportsmen are there
Shooting in this beautiful country and Scotland
To-day?
Well, we will not compute;
It is dangerous.
But you could make a fairly big rifle club out of them.
They are all good men,
And of course all beautiful shots.
Some day
(When the war is over)
England may want them.
Will they answer to the call?
My dear Sir,
You have your uses.
Go in peace.

TO THE STOCK EXCHANGE

(On its Centenary)

My dear Stock Exchange,—
I am given to understand
That to-day you are a hundred years old,
And that to-day therefore
You will celebrate
What nine men out of every ten of you
Call your "*Centenary*"
By taking a whole holiday instead of a half one.
It would be easy for me, my dear Stock Exchange,
To present you
With a sort of illuminated address on this occasion;
But I refrain.
One short year ago
I tumbled into a little money;
It was "not enough to live upon,"
But it was a nice sum.
A man introduced me to a member of the Stock Exchange,
The member of the Stock Exchange introduced me to a little game of "in and out,"
And my five hundred pounds folded its tents like the Arabs—
That is to say, it silently stole away.
It was not the member of the Stock Exchange's fault;
Certainly it was not my fault;
And I will not say that it was the fault of the Stock Exchange.
But I am not giving the Stock Exchange
Any illuminated addresses
At present.
On the other hand, let me assure you
That I believe the Stock Exchange
To be a highly respectable,
Honourable,
And useful institution.
It leaves the court without a stain upon its character.
I say these latter things advisedly,
Because some time back
A friend of mine who writes articles on food supply
Having delivered himself of the opinion
That London's milk was largely water,
Was sued for slander
By the Amalgamated Society of Dairymen's Daughters,
And had to climb down and apologise.
So that on the whole I repeat that, in my humble opinion,
If you want to find
Really sound, white men,
Men of spotless character and impregnable probity,
You cannot do better
Than wend your way to Gorgonzola Hall.

And joking apart, my dear Stock Exchange,
You really are a blessing.
If it were not for you
People with a lot of money,
And people with only a little,
Would simply not lose it.
It would lie in banks and old stockings and kindred receptacles
Till it went mouldy.
You keep things going.
You are the heart of the monetary world,
You pump in the gold,
You pump out all that you don't happen to want.
And you go and live in Maida Vale,
Keep a butler,
Drive two horses,
And change your name from Manassah to Howard.
This "Centenary" holiday of yours
Gives me much pause.
Supposing, instead of taking a day,
You were to take a year,
What would happen to England?
SHE—WOULD—BE—RUINED!
Yeth, indeed.

TO THE LORD MAYOR

(November 9th)

My dear Lord Mayor,—
In Fleet Street all is gay
From min' office window I catch glimpses
Of fluttering bunting and swinging festoons.
I don't know who pays for them
(The bunting and the festoons, that is to say),
But I am informed by the police that they
(The bunting and the festoons, that is to say)
Have been hung up in honour of YOU.
I am also given to understand that there has been a big rush
For free windows to view your procession,
Which, all being well (the Procession, that is to say)
Will take place this day, Saturday;
For my own part I am going into the country,
And I dare say that on the whole
You wish you were going with me;
But ambition has its penalties,
And if you will become Lord Mayor of London
(A dizzy pinnacle to which none but the biggest-souled of us
May aspire)
I suppose you must put up with the attendant inconveniences
And publicity.
So far as I have been able to judge
(And I arrive at this conclusion by dint of steadfast abstinence
From witnessing Lord Mayors' Shows)
A Lord Mayor's Show is a distinctly inspiriting spectacle.
It may be set down
As the Londoner's one annual opportunity
Of seeing a circus for nothing;
Hence no doubt its popularity.
Think not, however, my dear Lord Mayor,
That I deprecate your little pageant, gratis though it be.
This country, as everybody knows,
Has for centuries past been on the high road to ruin,
And, in my humble opinion, its decadence has been largely due
To a deep-rooted tendency on the part of the powerful
To curtail and do away with mayoral and other shows.
Feasts and fairs have been kicked out of England
By the aforesaid powerful:
If you would be a respectable community
You must have neither feast nor fair,

And, if you would be a respectable citizen of any given city,
 You must not array yourself in motley.
 A man who walked into his bank
 In yellow trousers and a blue silk hat
 Would never be allowed an overdraft,
 Black and subdued greens and browns being the only wear
 For persons who would get on in life.
 All this is wrong, my dear Lord Mayor.
 I am of opinion that millionaires
 Ought to wear purple breeches;
 I see no reason why I myself
 Should not have a morning coat of red, white, and blue,
 Or a waistcoat emblazoned with the arms
 Of the Worshipful Company of Spectaclemakers.
 In fact, my dear Lord Mayor,
 To perpetrate a Mrs. Meynellism,
 The colour of life is the salt of it,
 Just as the Lord Mayor's Show is the salt of the Lord Mayoralty
 And the one beautiful thing
 About life as people expect you to live it
 In the Metropolis.
 Come hither, come hither, my dear Lord Mayor,
 And do not tremble so!
 We are all glad to see you going up Fleet Street,
 We are all glad to see you going home the other way;
 And we shall be equally glad to see your successor
 Getting through the same flowerful day's work
 Next year.
 Goodbye, my dear Lord Mayor!
 And
 Hooray?

TO THE MOTORIST

My dear Sir,—
 When men have nightmares, they dream about you.
 I myself have been chased over the tops of pinnacles
 By flaming-eyed Panhards and Durkopps
 In my sleep.
 Nor is this all,
 For if one brings oneself
 To read reports of the proceedings of police courts
 One finds that the average citizen
 Gets more or less chased by you sir,
 In his waking moments.
 The Police I know, sir, seldom speak the truth:
 They remember so well the day
 When a horseless carriage had to be taken through the street
 At the speed of a funeral march,
 And with a red flag in front of it,
 That the spectacle of an affable motorist
 Bowling through a Surrey village
 To the tune of six miles an hour
 Shocks their imagination,
 And they believe for the rest of their natural lives
 That the affable motorist aforesaid
 Must have been travelling
 At the rate of anything from 60 to 600 miles per minute.
 Hence, my dear motorist,
 It comes to pass that you are afforded so many opportunities
 For airing your eloquence and the fatness of your purse
 Before the police magistrates.
 In my opinion it seems just possible
 That the real trouble lies in the fact
 That you, my dear sir, do actually
 Go through villages at a very low speed,
 And that really the best thing you can do
 Would be to make a point of going through them
 At the highest speed consistent

With the safety of your own person.
For if you did this,
No policeman of my acquaintance would be able to catch you,
Hence you would never be fined.
I have been out of sympathy with motor cars
Right up to the other night.
The other night I had the felicity to take a small trip on one.
The motorist would fain have driven me to my house,
Which is half an hour's cab drive from Charing Cross.
He offered to do the distance in ten minutes
And started stirring up his petroleum,
But I said "No. Let us go to the Marble Arch."
We went through the Mall, to Hyde Park Corner,
to South Kensington, to Paddington,
Into the Edgware Road, and so to the Marble Arch;
Time, at the outside, 15 min.
I am willing to admit
That we went down certain streets quite rapidly,
What time the policemen at odd corners stared stupidly,
And fumbled for their note-books.
But, as a result of that trip, my dear sir,
I have become an enthusiastic motorist.
I am convinced that speed and wind and the smell of petroleum mixed
Is the only thing which can be considered worth living for.
And if you happen to know anybody
Who would be willing to take
A typewriter and a pair of skates (not much worn)
In exchange for a Durkopp racer,
Kindly communicate with me.

TO NEXT CHRISTMAS

My dear Next Christmas,—
It is an excellent journalistic thing,
Not to say a poetical thing,
To be first in the field.
Behold me, therefore, advancing
At the head of that motley army
Which will inevitably hail you
When your time comes.
For your predecessor,
My dear Next Christmas,
I cannot say much.
He came in with several thousand inches of rain;
He went out on a watery moon.
There was turkey as usual,
Pudding as usual,
Mistletoe as usual,
Peace on earth as usual.
There were also the waits,
The young folks,
The postman,
The dustman
(No connection with the scavengers),
And the turncock.
We had a merry day.
Half the world pretended to be happy,
The other half pretended to be bored.
The festivities, I understand,
Are still being kept up.
There is a ping-pong tournament at the Queen's Hall
And a children's banquet
At the Guildhall on Tuesday evening;
Not to mention Mr. Dan Leno at Drury Lane
And Mr. De Wet at the Tweefontein.
It is all very cheerful
And very inspiring.
All the same,
Let us not repine:

Christmas comes but once a year,
 And it will come again, I fear.
 This couplet, of course.
 My dear Next Christmas,
 Is not intended to be
 Disrespectful to you;
 It is inserted simply
 For the sake of effect.
 For I never miss an opportunity
 Of bursting into rhyme.
 When the way is plain before me.
 My dear Next Christmas,
 Do not be discouraged,
 Come next year by all means;
 If I said "Don't come"
 You would come just the same.
 Therefore, I say "Come,"
 And I trust, my dear Next Christmas,
 That when you do come
 You will bring us a little luck.
 Ring out the old, as it were,
 And ring in the new;
 Let candied peel
 Be a trifle cheaper;
 Let the war be settled
 To the satisfaction of both parties;
 Let the book trade flourish;
 Let the Income-tax be reduced:
 Let there be a fine Christmas Eve
 And dry waits,
 And a little skating next morning;
 Let there be peace and plenty,
 A pocket full of money,
 And a barrel full of beer,
 And all other good things,
 Including a free and enlightened Press,
 And a strong demand
 For seasonable poetry.
 My dear Next Christmas,
 Here is my hand,
 With my heart in it.
 Till we meet again—
 As Mr. Hall Caine says—
 Addio.

TO THE TRIPPER

My dear Sir, or Madam,—
 When James Watt,
 Or some such person,
 Had the luck
 To see a kettle boil,
 He little dreamed
 That he was discovering you,
 Otherwise he would have let his kettle boil
 For a million million years
 Without saying anything about it.
 However,
 James Watt
 Omitted to take cognisance of the ultimate trouble,
 And here you are.
 And here, alas! you will stay,
 Till our iron roads are beaten into ploughshares,
 And Messrs. Cook & Sons are at rest.
 "When I was young, a single man,
 And after youthful follies ran"
 (Which, strange as it may seem, is Wordsworth)
 Your goings to and fro upon the earth,
 And walkings up and down thereon,

Were limited by the day trip.
 For half-a-crown
 You went to Brighton,
 Or to Buxton and Matlock,
 Or Stratford-on-Avon,
 As the case may be.
 A special tap of ale
 And a special cut of 'am
 Were put on for your delectation;
 You sang a mixture of hymns
 And music-hall songs
 On your homeward journey,
 And there was an end of the matter.
 But nowadays there is no escape from you.
 The trip that was over and done
 In twenty-four hours at most
 Has become a matter
 Of "Saturday to Monday at Sunny Saltburn,"
 "Ten days in Lovely Lucerne,"
 And "A Visit to the Holy Land for Ten Guineas."
 Wherever one goes
 On this wide globe
 There shall one find
 Your empty ginger-beer bottle and your old newspaper;
 The devastations,
 Fence-breakings,
 And flower-pot maraudings
 Which you once reserved for noblemen's seats
 Are now extended to the Rigi,
 The Bridge of Sighs,
 Mount Everest,
 And the deserts of Gobi
 And Shamo.
 Indeed, I question whether it would be possible
 For one to traverse
 The trackless forests of Mexico
 Or "the dreary tundras of remote Siberia,"
 Or to put one's nose
 Into such an uncompromising fastness as Craig Ell Achaie
 (Which is the last place the Canadian Pacific Railway made
 And which may not be properly spelled)
 Without coming upon you
 Picnicking in a spinny,
 And prepared to greet all and sundry
 With that time-honoured remark,
 "There's 'air,"
 Or some other
 Equally objectionable ribaldry.
 Well, my dear Tripper,
 Time is short,
 And poets fill their columns easily,
 So that I must not abuse you any more.
 You are part of the Cosmos,
 And as such I am bound to respect you;
 But, by Day and Night,
 I wish
 That James Watt
 Had taken no notice
 Of his boiling kettle!

TO THE GLASGOW MAGISTRATES

(On their Proposal to Banish Barmaids)

May it please your Worships,
 For years past, Glasgow has stood in the forefront
 As a city given over to the small-pox
 And magisterial reform.
 It is, I believe,

An exceedingly well-managed city:
In fact, it appears to be managed
Out of all reasonable existence;
Hence, no doubt, it comes to pass
That it was lately visited
By a smart sample of the plague.
I have not the smallest doubt that your Worships
Are sincere and clean-thinking men.
I believe that you do what you do do, so to speak,
Out of sheer public spirit
And with a view to bettering the condition
Of the city over which you preside.
In other words, I impute no motives:
That is to say, no base motives.
But, my dear Worships,
Why, in the name of Heaven, would you abolish
The harmless, necessary barmaid?
Have you never been young?
Have you never known the tender delight
Of whiling away a morning
With your elbow on the zinc
And threepennyworth of Bass before you?
What, may I ask your Worships,
Is Bass without a barmaid?
I grant that, taking them all in all,
The barmaids of Scotland
Are not what you might term
An altogether bewitching lot.
Years ago, when I was young and callow,
Fate threw me into the propinquity
Of a lady of this ilk;
She hailed from Glasgow,
And she was not beautiful;
On the other hand, I was young.
And, out of an income which was even slenderer then
Than it is now,
I purchased for that dear lady of the North
Many bottles of perfume,
Many pairs of kid gloves,
And a Prayer Book or so;
And, when I had consumed innumerable Basses
At her altar,
And the time had, as I thought, become ripe,
I offered her matrimony,
To which she replied, in limpid Doric:
"Gang awa hame to yer mither."
That, my dear Worships,
Is Glasgow!
If you can weed out of Glasgow
All young females
Possessed of this particular kind of temperament,
I am not so sure
But that you would have my blessing.
On the other hand, I am free to admit
That I hae my doots as to your capacity for so doing.
The perfume-bottle,
The kid gloves,
The Prayer Book
And "Na, na, na, I winna,"
Will always remain the prerogatives
Of the Glasgae lassies,
If I know anything of them.
Also, my dear Worships,
One thing is absolutely certain,
That, if the magistrates of all the cities
In the United Kingdom
Would take the step you have taken,
We should have gone a very considerable way
Towards solving the drink problem,
And putting Sir Michael Hicks-Beach
Into a fearful hole for money.

P.S.—I hate Scotch men,
But I sometimes think that Scotch women
Are rather bonnie.

TO A BOOKSELLER

My dear Sir,—
"There lies a vale in Ida
Lovelier
Than all the valleys
Of Ionian hills."
I take it
That this is a geographical fact.
Anyway it is Tennyson,
And I quote it
In order that you may perceive
That I have some acquaintance
With the higher walks of Literature,
And am therefore a man
Of entirely different build from yourself.
I was born a poet,
And have stuck to my trade
Unto this last.
Possibly you were born a bookseller.
I am willing to give your credit for it,
But I doubt it all the same,
For I often think the average bookseller
Must have been born a draper.
The other day I had occasion to do a little book-buying.
It was my first essay
In what I now believe to be
An altogether elegant and delightful form
Of intellectual recreation.
Of course, I went into a shop:
From the yawning Cimmerianity at the back of that shop
There came unto me swiftly and in large boots
A fat youth.
He bowed, and he bowed, and he bowed.
"I want a good edition of Shelley," I said.
And he replied straightway
"Ninepenceshillingnetoneandsixpencenethalf-
crownnettwoandeightpencethreeandnine-
pencefiveshillingsnethalfaguineaandkindly-
stepthisway."
I said, "Thank you,
But I want Shelley,
Not egg-whisks."
Whereat he smiled and banged under my nose
A heavy volume,
Bound like a cheap purse,
And murmured, "There you are,
The best line in the market,
Two-and-eight."
And because I opened it,
And looked disconsolately at the stodgy running-titles
And the entrancing red-line border,
He cast upon me eyes of contempt and disgust,
And told me that I could not expect
Kelmscott Press and tree-calf
At the money.
In fact, that fat youth
Annoyed me.
He
Was
A bookseller.
Ah, my dear Sir,
When I reflect that whatever I may write,
No matter how excellent it may be,
Must ultimately pass into the hands
Of that fat youth
And become to him
Something
At ninepenceashillingneteightheenpencetwoandsix-

netthreeandninefiveshillingsnetorhalfaguinea-
andkindlystepthisway
The spirit of my fathers quails within me,
I know that authorship
Is a trade for fools.
Go to!
Ninepence me no ninepences,
Two-and-sixpence me no nets,
Bring yourself at once
To your logical conclusion,
And next time I call upon you
For Shelley,
Sell him to me,
As you appear to sell "Temporal Power."
By the pound
Avoirdupois.

TO THE DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER

My dear Deceased Wife's Sister,—
(The wife of my bosom being still happily amongst us,
The above,
As the learned might say,
Is a misnomer.
You, on the other hand,
Are a Miss ——,
And I would not marry you
To save myself from boiling oil.
If I had wanted you
I could have had you in the beginning.
And if I had married you
The wife of my bosom
Would have been aunt to her own children, as it were.
And in the event of your demise
She would also have been
My deceased wife's sister—
Which is at once inconsequential and peculiar.
A man cannot marry his deceased wife's sister
Till she is dead.
This is quite wrong.
In my humble opinion
It is also quite right.
Anyway, we will close this parenthesis
With the usual sign,
And proceed along the primrose path
Of business)
As I have already remarked
In my usual quaint way,
A man cannot marry
His deceased wife's sister
Until she is dead.
(By "she" of course I mean the man's wife.)
The bishops declare
That he cannot marry her anyhow
(By "he" I mean the man,
And by "her" of course
The bishops mean
The man's deceased wife's sister.
I desire to be explicit on these points
In order that we may avoid
Ambiguity.)
Well, my dear deceased wife's sister
(Always remembering that Mrs. —— is still alive),
What is your view of matters?
Do you really wish to marry me or not?
Have you any opinions about Lord Hugh Cecil?
If so,
Kindly state them.
Was he or was he not justified in demanding

On Wednesday night
That the word "Shame"
Be put upon the record?
If so, why not?
If not, why so?
My dear deceased wife's sister,
Do not let us get confused.
Let us clear our minds of Cecil.
After all is said
You are the Auntie of my children,
And the great-niece of my wife's great-uncle,
Not to say the sister-in-law of my children's father.
Come along,
Here are ducats,
A ring,
And a Canadian parson,
Let us get married at once.
Of course it is so sudden.
It always is.
And we have forgotten about Mrs. ——
We always do.
But I tell you here and now,
And in good set terms,
My dear deceased wife's sister,
That if I wish to marry
Either you or any more of your mother's daughters
(Which Heaven forbid),
I shall go to Canada or Australia
And marry 'em.

TO THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

(Before his Retirement)

My dear Sir Michael Hicks-Beach,—
The devotion of one's life
To the service of the Muses
And the neglect of golden opportunities,
Is not without its compensations,
One of the chief of them being
That the devotee can look into the eyes
Of the most rapacious of Chancellors of the Exchequer
And smile.
For my own part, dear Sir Michael,
By the writing of Odes,
And general inattention to business,
I am able to knock up a precarious one hundred and seventy-five pounds per annum;
On one hundred and sixty pounds of that sum
I am always careful to claim exemption,
Which leaves a taxable balance of fifteen pounds.
Out of this balance, my dear old friend, you are welcome to take fifteen shillings,
Or twenty-three and fourpence ha'penny,
Or twenty-seven and sixpence farthing,
Or any other sum that you think might come in handy.
Indeed, in all the circumstances
(And without prejudice),
I should not be greatly upset
If you took the lot.
For well I wot
That the late War
Has cost more than the price of a row of houses,
And that it is my duty, as a full-blooded patriot,
To pay, and pay cheerfully;
And particularly so
Since it is not due for a month or so.
Ah, my dear Chancellor,
Who fears Black Michael
Must himself be black.
They call you Black because you want a lot of money;

I call them black because they've got it.
However, this is not a Ruskinian oration,
But an Ode,
And I shall therefore proceed to give you a few tips
As to legitimate methods of raising the wind.
Judging by your recent efforts,
You appear to be short of ideas.
Here you are.
Put sixpence a hundred on cigars.
"See What You Save"
Will see me through somehow;
Besides, I never smoke cigars.
Put a bit more on all sorts of wines and liqueurs,
Excepting Sauterne and Benedictine
(Of which I am particularly fond);
Put a bit more on beer,
And sixpence a pound on arsenic
(As a rule I do not take either);
Tax railway tickets
(I invariably travel on "passes");
Tax perambulators
(My sons and heirs can all walk);
Tax sky-signs
(Like the Omar Khayyam Club,
I never advertise);
Tax bicycles
(I abhor exertion);
Tax gold and gem jewellery
(I never keep it);
Tax fiction
And "Fourth enormous" editions
(We shall then hear less about them)
Abolish the free breakfast-table
(I invariably begin the day with lunch);
Also tax ground-rents
(I am not the Duke of Bedford);
And seize all the unclaimed bank balances
(None of which by any possibility
Can be mine).
In fact, my dear Sir Michael,
Tax and seize whatever you like.
The opulent, and the well-to-do,
Not to mention the rascally working classes,
Will have to put up with it.

TO THE COMMON GOLFER

My dear Common Golfer,—
The game you affect
Is a great game
Played by yourself
And all the crowned heads of Europe,
Not to mention all the fat persons who desire to bant,
All the thin persons who desire to become
Vigorous and muscular, as it were,
All the clerks who desire to pass for dukes,
And all the dukes who relish the society of clerks.
It is a great game:
The people who play it are not the fault of the game.
It is also a good game.
If I am not mistaken,
It is a game that originally came out of Scotland;
Therefore it must be a good game.
For everything that comes out of Scotland is good,
Even the Scot.
And golf being a great and good game
I do not see any tremendous reason
Why you, my dear Common Golfer,
Should not engage in it if you so choose.

On the other hand, I wish from the bottom of my heart
 That you did not engage in it.
 I know a bank
 Whereon the wild thyme blows
 (Or ought to blow):
 Oft of a pleasant summer morn
 Have I taken a cheap ticket
 To a station which is not far from that bank,
 And there (on the bank, that is to say) reclined me
 What time I looked up into the blue dome,
 And watched the lazy-pacing clouds,
 And flicked away the midges,
 And wished my name was Corydon,
 And remembered bits of Keats
 And bits of Herrick
 And bits of business,
 And so forth.
 Oft, I say, have I done these things;
 But of late I no longer do them,
 Inasmuch as my bank
 Has become (if I may so term it)
 Golf-ridden.
 The other day I repaired to the said bank
 On rural musings bent.
 What did I find?
 Why, my dear old thymy bank
 Was in the possession
 Of half a dozen gross fellows in red coats,
 Thy had pipes in their mouths,
 And a jar of beer in their midst,
 And they were actually talking and laughing
 In the most uproarious fashion.
 I heard one of them say
 "Why did Arthur Bawl-Fore?"
 And the others thought hard,
 And trifled with their brassies and things,
 And could not make answer.
 O, my dear Common Golfer,
You were of that party;
You were;
 You are always of such parties,
 You are always sitting
 On other people's thymy banks,
 And saying, "Why did So-and-so so-and-so?"
 And depleting village public-houses of good beer,
 And turning whole village populations into caddies,
 And dotting the landscape with your red coats,
 And generally appropriating the fair face of Nature.
 I cannot stop you, my dear Common Golfer,
 I cannot, O I cannot!
 Would that I could. O would that I could!
 In which case, perhaps, I wouldn't.
 No, my dear boy,
 Rural England is yours,
 Also the sea-side,
 Take them, old man, take them;
 I hand them over to you with the best heart in the world.
 Take them—they are yours—
 And excuse these tears.

TO MR. PIERPONT MORGAN

Dear Mr. Pierpont Morgan,—
 I hasten to give you a hearty British welcome.
 Come to my arms;
 I am in the Trust line myself—
 That is to say, I used to be
 Before people started putting up announcements
 To the effect that

"Poor Trust is dead,
 Bad pay killed him."
 Some day, an I mistake not, Mr. Morgan,
 Your Trust will die:
 All Trusts are grass.
 Ponder it!
 I am a political economist, and I know.
 Meanwhile I am very pleased to think
 That we have amongst us a man of your financial prowess
 And purchasing power.
 There is a certain class of British person
 Who apparently goes in bodily fear of you.
 That class of person has groaned loudly over your steel exploit,
 And he has groaned loudlier still
 Over your purchase of the Leyland Line of Steamships.
 To groan over a fair deal of any kind
 Appears to me, my dear Mr. Pierpont Morgan,
 To be an entirely stupid proceeding.
 Nobody can come to grief by selling things,
 Providing they sell them at the right price.
 You have bought the Leyland Line of Steamships:
 I see no reason why you should not buy all the other lines
 If you want them, and have the wherewithal to pay for them,
 For in the long run everything comes to him who vends.
 You buy my steamships, or my steelworks,
 Or, for that matter, my caller herrin':
 I take your money, I put it in your bank,
 And live sumptuously on the interest.
 You have all the trouble
 Inasmuch as you have to rake up the interest.
 I sit at home and enjoy myself,
 You scheme, and scheme, and scheme, and scheme, and scheme, and scheme, and
 scheme,
 I am happy,
 I hope you are.
 Between ourselves I should not tremble
 If you bought up Great Britain and Ireland (especially Ireland),
 And all that in them is,
 Providing always, as I have said before,
 That you paid the price.
 Indeed, I hope to live to see the day
 When Englishmen will cease to toil and spin,
 And derive their incomes
 Wholly and solely from American dividends.
 Fools buy things, my dear Mr. Pierpont Morgan,
 Wise men sell them.
 That is particularly true
 When the article involved happens to be poetry.
 Nevertheless, as you appear to be in a buying frame of mind,
 I take this opportunity of informing you
 That I have at my villa at Hindhead
 A large and varied stock
 Of sonnets, odes, rhymes, jingles, and what not,
 Which I am prepared to sell at an enormous sacrifice.
 My price to you for the lot would be
 Fifteen Million Dollars.
 If you care to deal, I undertake to melt your cheque
 At your own bank,
 And to invest the proceeds in any concerns
 In which you happen to be interested,
 So that you would not only get the poetry,
 But also your money back again.
 This, at any rate, is how it seems to me.
 Vale!

TO PRINCE EDWARD OF YORK

(On the Return of the "Ophir")

Most well-behaved little Prince,—
As the small boy
Who will one day be the Sovereign Lord
Of certain other small boys
In whom I am interested
I hasten to assure you
Of my loyalty to the Imperial House
Of which you are the joy and hope,
And of my respect for your own podgy little person.
To-day, I need scarcely tell you, my dear little Prince,
Is a very big day for you,
Inasmuch as
To-day your excellent parents—
Their Royal Highnesses
The Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, KG.—
Return from their wanderings,
Laden, I am given to understand,
With presents for his Royal Highness
Prince Edward of York,
Who, I am given to understand,
Has been a very good boy
During these long weeks of separation.
I am quite sure
That you deserve these presents,
And that your Grandmama
Will be able to give your parents a very good account of you,
And that your Grandpapa,
With that tact which is only one of many of his excellent qualities,
Will refrain from making reports
Which might lead to parental chastisement,
I remember quite well
That when my own Mama and Papa
Returned once from a little jaunt
They brought back with them,
As a present for me,
A tin cylinder with a spike to it,
Which you set on a piece of wood
And spun round;
Then you looked through some holes in the tin cylinder
And beheld many wonderful things,
Such as a little girl skipping,
And jockeys riding a steeplechase on tigers.
If your Papa, my dear little Prince,
Has not brought you one of those,
Be sure you ask for it.
It is not rude to ask for what you do not see in the window,
Providing you say "Please."
And now before I go
Let me add a few words
Of kindly admonition.
I hope you will grow up to be a good and great man,
And that you will never give your parents
Cause for sorrow,
By turning Socialist,
Or newspaper editor,
Or attempting to imitate these Odes.
To your infant mind
This last crime
May appear to be the most innocent in the world,
Because these odes
(God wot)
Are so easy to imitate;
Diplomats, Members of Parliament, publishers' assistants,
Cabmen, poets, peers of the realm,
Nay, even the very crowned heads of Europe,
Have, at time and time,
Been consumed with a desire to do them for me;
Because, as I have said,
It is so easy.
Well, my dear little Prince,
Let us draw our moral.
The easy thing is not always the wisest thing.
I feel that in my inmost heart.
And if you blossom into manhood
With the same conviction,

More or less,
I make no doubt whatever
That you will be an immense success
As a king.
I wish you the best of luck.

TO MME. BERNHARDT

My dear Madame Bernhardt,—
I have been very nigh addressing this ode
To the winner of the Derby.
But, on second thoughts, I said,
"No, no—never!"
(*Non, non, jamais*, in fact.)
"Not while we have in our midst
One of whom I wot,
For is it meet
That the charming Mme. Bernhardt
Should return to her interesting country
Possessed of the impression that the *bas Anglais*
Have a greater feeling for *le sport*
Than for the *arts dramatiques*,
Or whatever you call 'em?
Non, non, a thousand times, *non!*"
Ah, Madame, believe me,
I love my country—
La patrie, la patrie, la patrie, you know:
It is a fine country when you understand it,
And I would have my beautiful Bernhardt
Take away with her
Nothing but splendid memories of it.
I was exceedingly glad
To read in the papers the other morning
That in the opinion of the *critics dramatiques Anglais*,
Or whatever you call 'em,
Madame had done herself proud
At the Lyceum Theatre the other evening.
One *critic dramatique Anglais*,
Or whatever you call him,
Wrote of Madame thus:
"Such passages,
Wherein the eaglet is borne away
On a flight of adoration for the dead eagle,
Recur throughout the play:
They are, in fact, its keynote,
And Mme. Bernhardt
Declaimed them with superb intensity.
The famous voice has lost its golden notes,
But its power to thrill remains,
She runs the gamut of the emotions
With all the grace and dexterity
Of
A
PROFESSOR."
Madame Bernhardt,
You will perceive
That the *critics dramatiques Anglais*,
Or whatever you call 'em,
Write of nobody
That they do not adorn;
My beautiful B.,
You are a made woman,
You have all the grace and dexterity
Of
A
PROFESSOR.
O happiness!
O crown and fulfilment of a life-time devoted to Ar-rt!
Your cup, my quenchless one,

Is at length heaped up,
 Like Benjamin's,
 And it runs over!
 Heaven bless us all!
 And in conclusion, my dear Mme. Bernhardt,
 Will you do me the honour to allow me to explain
 That in the event of any young enthusiast from Paris
 Calling round at any of our newspaper offices
 With a view to getting satisfaction
 From the person who accuses you
 Of having all the skill and dexterity
 Of
 A
 PROFESSOR,
 He (the young enthusiast from Paris)
 Will do himself no good,
 Because in my dear country, dear Madame Bernhardt,
 We do not fight the duel *à la cut finger*,
 Like gentlemen;
 We merely throw downstairs.

TO SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT

My dear Sir William Harcourt,—
 (I have not time to get up your other distinguished names,
 So that you must please excuse the plain Sir William),
 My dear Sir William, do you ever survey the Liberal party,
 From China to Peru,
 And from Rosebery to Lloyd-George as it were?
 Do you, my dear Sir William? O do you?
I do sometimes.
 I do, Sir William, I do indeed.
 O, I do!
 And what is the conclusion I come to, my dear Sir William,
 Ah, what?
 O, what?
 What, what, what, what, what, what, what, what, what?
 Shall I tell you, my dear Sir William?
 You are sure you won't be offended if I do?
 And it will be strictly between ourselves, now, won't it?
 Well then, come hither, coz,
 Put your sweet hand in mine and trust in me,
 And do not construe my kindness into cruelty;
 Harken, my dear Sir William, harken,
 Harken, harken, harken, harken har——court:—
 The Liberal party is an unweeded garden
 Choked with a myriad strange growths,
 And a sad, fierce, baffled, careless-ordered thing to look upon,
 And in its midst there sits down perennially
 A huge and ponderous and unwieldy ruminant,
 Whom, merely for the sake of talking, my dear Sir William,
 We will call the Harcourt.
 Here, when it is not at its lordly pleasure-house,
 Which men call Malwood,
 The Harcourt, as I say, sits down.
 Goodman Bannerman cometh to his Liberal Garden
 To gather him a posy and do a little weeding;
 The Harcourt is there heavily chewing the cud,
 And it takes the heart out of goodman Bannerman
 To behold him.
 Goodman Asquith had fain pick a bit of dinner in the precincts;
 The Harcourt watcheth him with rolling eye,
 And goodman Asquith shivereth.
 And by and by cometh the simple, rural Rosebery,
 Armed cap-à-pie with a muck-fork;
 Being rural he understands gardening;
 He looks over the wall and sayeth,
 "Gadzooks, when folk tell me that I am the man to put this garden to rights
 They speak a mortal deal o' truth.

I will e'en go in and delve a bit."
 And then he beholdeth the Harcourt
 Luxuriating with his back against the biggest fig tree,
 And he sayeth "No;
 That powerful big animal be there still,
 And I know'un, I do, I know'un!"
 And who shall blame him?
 What jobbing gardener of any self-respect
 Would undertake to do up my genariums and fuchers
 If I had a wild rhinoceros gambolling upon them
 Day in and day out?
 I should have great difficulty
 In finding such a jobbing gardener, my dear Sir William;
 And, to come at once to the plain poetry so beloved of this age,
 Let me tell you, my dear Sir William,
 That, in my opinion, you (and no other) are at the present juncture
 The real trouble and incubus of the party you love.
 If you would only go home and crown yourself with a laurel or two,
 And read history books, and take tea with bishops
 And not come back again,
 I believe the Liberal party
 Would begin to get along like a house afire.
 Will you not try it, my dear Sir William; oh, will you not try it?
 For who would fardels bear and flounder round,
 When he might sit with Lulu on the lawn
 And leave his party for his party's good?

TO THE KING'S BULLDOG

Dear Brindle,—
 Possibly your name is not Brindle,
 But that is of no consequence;
 The great point, my dear Brindle, being
 That when his Majesty Edward VII.
 Landed at Flushing the other day
 He was accompanied
 By
 You.
 At least so I gather from the halfpenny papers,
 And I am free to admit
 That when I read the paragraph
 Descriptive of your landing at Flushing
 My bosom swelled with honest pride.
 I am not a doggy man myself,
 Dear Brindle,
 And no judge of points.
 Also,
 When I see a dog coming towards me
 I invariably
 Whisper
 "Bite,"
 And consequently
 My hair
 Is apt to stand on end
 Like quills upon the fretful porcupine
 At pretty well every canine approach.
 Bulldogs especially
 Affright me,
 So that I can well understand
 How the little foreign boy,
 Assembled at Flushing
 To scoff in his sleeve at the English King,
 Remained to flee as it were
 At the sight of you.
 That, in a nutshell,
 Is why my bosom swelled
 When I read the paragraph
 To which previous reference has been made.
 It was a picturesque circumstance, my dear Brindle.

And may be taken
As one more illustration
Of his Majesty's determination
(Pray excuse the rhyme)
To do things as a king of England should.
To have alighted at Flushing
Accompanied by a Lion
Would have been a little outré,
And Unicorns, we know,
Are not obtainable—
What does his Majesty do?
Why he takes, as he always has taken,
The middle and dignified course:
He disjoints himself on Flushing
With You by his side.
Next to the Lion and the Unicorn
The Bulldog may be reckoned
The truest
Exemplar and symbol
Of our great nation.
It is like this:
The Bulldog is not too beautiful,
Neither is our great nation;
But he frightens people—
So do we;
He is tenacious
And magnanimous—
Which is just our game;
He fears no foe in shining armour,
Or any other sort of armour—
That is precisely our case;
And he is kept by Lord Charles Beresford,
The Duke of Manchester,
And Mr. G. R. Sims—
Three eminently typical Britons.
In short,
The genius of the British nation,
My dear Brindle,
Is not a policeman
But a Bulldog.

TO THE *DAILY MAIL*

(Aug. 3, 1901)

My dear "Daily Mail,"—
To-day you attain
Your 1,650th number,
Which, for the sake of talking,
We will call your Jubilee.
Congratulations,
My dear *Daily Mail*,
Congratulations!
There are people in the world
Who,
In the time of your infancy,
Gave you the usual three months.
Most new papers
Get three months on the day of their birth.
For at the sight of a new sheet,
Your wise man invariably taps his nose,
Looks even wiser than is his wont,
And says,
"My dear Sir,
I give it
Three months."
Well,
My dear *Daily Mail*,
You have survived the sentence of the wise,

And I am given to understand
That you have long been a tremendous property.
Once again
Congratulations!
BUT
(These buts are fearful things,
Are they not?)—
But
(Pray excuse me if I appear to say "but" again)—
But—
Well, you know what I mean, don't you?
Let me put it this way.
When I come to town of a morning,
Per 'bus or Potromelitan Railway,
As the case may be,
What do I see?
Not to put too fine a point upon it,
I see a row of silk or straw hats
(According to the state of the weather),
And I see a row
Of choice trouserings,
And between the hats and the trouserings
There is spread
A row of rustling morning papers.
I can tell you the names of those papers
With my eyes shut:
Five out of six of them is called
The *Daily Mail*.
This upsets me.
It is all right for you, of course,
But it distresses me,
And I do not like being distressed.
Now, why does it distress me?
Shall I tell you?
Are you sure that you could bear the blow?
Can you pull yourself together for a moment?
Very well, then,
You distress me
Because
The price of you is one halfpenny.
I am of opinion
That in the present condition of the general purse,
Things which are sold for a halfpenny
Are really too cheap.
I will give you my reasons some other day.
Meanwhile
(To take your own case)
When I look into your pages,
Which is seldom,
What do I find?
I will be frank for the second time,
And tell you:
I find,
My dear *Daily Mail*,
Ha'pennyness
Writ in every line of you,
From the front page, "Personal Column,"
With its "Massa, me nebber leab you
While you keep So-and-So's toffee about,"
To the last line
Of your astonishing Magazine page,
You are
Ha'pennyness,
Ha'pennyness,
Ha'pennyness,
Ha'pennyness,
Ha'pennyness,
Ha'pennyness
All the time.
Of course there is no harm in that,
Especially
As you get the ha'pennies,
And far be it from me
To contemn you for it.
On the other hand,

As I have remarked previously,
I do not like it.
I have no advice to offer you,
Inasmuch
As I do not see how you can help yourself.
But I shall ask you kindly to note
That the congratulations
Expressed at the beginning of this poem
Bear reference to your attainment of your 1,650th number
And not
To another matter,
Which,
While you certainly have the right upon your side,
You appear to me to be conducting
IN
AN
UNMITIGATED
HA'PENNY
WAY.

TO EVERYBODY

My dear Everybody,—
The other day I lunched at a place
Where there was a pretty lady.
During the course of the talk
The pretty lady said to me,
"You see, Everybody is out of town
At present."
I said, "Who is Everybody?"
Whereupon the pretty lady replied,
"Well—er—Everybody."
I said, "Quite so;
But don't you think it is rather
Fortunate that Everybody is out of town?
And the pretty lady answered and said,
"No."
I conclude, therefore,
That you, Everybody,
Must, on the whole, be rather nice.
I hope you are;
For Everybody should be rather nice,
Should they not?
And when I come to think of it
The circumstance that I heard of you
The other day
Has nothing prodigiously unusual about it.
Really and truly,
One is always hearing about you.
One is, believe me.
For example, the paragraph writers assure me
That Everybody is reading
Miss So-and-So's great novel;
Also, that Everybody will join with them
In congratulating Miss So-and-So on her approaching marriage;
Also, that Everybody is in the Highlands,
That Everybody anticipates a good season,
That Everybody keeps a houseboat,
That Everybody sups at the Carlton after the theatre,
That Everybody recognises in Lord Salisbury a great statesman,
That Everybody plays golf,
That Everybody who can afford it dresses well,
That Everybody knows the King has tact,
That Everybody thinks the Queen grows younger as she grows older,
That Everybody hopes Sir Thomas Lipton
Will win the America Cup,
And so on.
Which is well.
I don't mind in the least.

Why should I?
Yet, if I were Everybody,
I imagine that I should not do things
Quite in the same way that you do them.
To my mind, your great defect is that you do things
Not because you like to do them,
But simply because
Everybody does them.
This is an excellent reason
From your point of view;
But to me it seems a trifle stupid.
Who is reading Miss So-and-So's book?
Everybody.
Why are they reading it?
Because Everybody is reading it.
Do they like Miss So-and-So's book?
They are not quite sure.
But Everybody says it is good,
And therefore Everybody must read it.
Why are frock-coats worn?
Because Everybody wears them.
Why does Everybody wear them?
Because Everybody wears them.
Why does Everybody dine at a certain restaurant?
Because Everybody dines there.
Why does Everybody dine there?
Because Everybody dines there.
Why does——
But, there,
I forbear.
Did time allow I might multiply instances
Till Everybody felt bored,
But I stay min' hand;
Enough, you know, is as good as a feast;
Likewise, better a stalled ox
Than a dinner of herbs;
Everybody says so,
Wherefore I am constrained to believe it.
By way of conclusion, let us ask ourselves
What is happening just now.
Everybody says
That nothing is happening just now,
And that everything is frightfully dull;
And
Everybody
Is
Quite
Right.

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