

Fly Leaves

C. S. Calverley

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C. S. Calverley

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Transcribed by David Price, email ccx074@coventry.ac.uk. From the 1884 Deighton, Bell, and Co. edition.

MORNING.

'Tis the hour when white-horsed Day
Chases Night her mares away;
When the Gates of Dawn (they say)
Phobus opes:
And I gather that the Queen
May be uniformly seen,
Should the weather be serene,
On the slopes.

When the ploughman, as he goes
Leathern-gaitered o'er the snows,
From his hat and from his nose
Knocks the ice;
And the panes are frosted o'er,
And the lawn is crisp and hoar,
As has been observed before
Once or twice.

When arrayed in breastplate red
Sings the robin, for his bread,
On the elmtree that hath shed
Every leaf;
While, within, the frost benumbs
The still sleepy schoolboy's thumbs,
And in consequence his sums
Come to grief.

But when breakfast-time hath come,
And he's crunching crust and crumb,
He'll no longer look a glum
Little dunce;
But be brisk as bees that settle
On a summer rose's petal:
Wherefore, Polly, put the kettle
On at once.

EVENING.

Fly Leaves

Kate! if e'er thy light foot lingers
On the lawn, when up the fells
Steals the Dark, and fairy fingers
Close unseen the pimpernels:
When, his thighs with sweetness laden,
From the meadow comes the bee,
And the lover and the maiden
Stand beneath the trysting tree:—

Lingers on, till stars unnumber'd
Tremble in the breeze—swept tarn,
And the bat that all day slumber'd
Flits about the lonely barn;
And the shapes that shrink from garish
Noon are peopling cairn and lea;
And thy sire is almost bearish
If kept waiting for his tea:—

And the screech—owl scares the peasant
As he skirts some churchyard drear;
And the goblins whisper pleasant
Tales in Miss Rossetti's ear;
Importuning her in strangest,
Sweetest tones to buy their fruits:—
O be careful that thou changest,
On returning home, thy boots.

SHELTER.

By the wide lake's margin I mark'd her lie —
The wide, weird lake where the alders sigh —
A young fair thing, with a shy, soft eye;
And I deem'd that her thoughts had flown
To her home, and her brethren, and sisters dear,
As she lay there watching the dark, deep mere,
All motionless, all alone.

Then I heard a noise, as of men and boys,
And a boisterous troop drew nigh.
Whither now will retreat those fairy feet?
Where hide till the storm pass by?
One glance the wild glance of a hunted thing —

SHELTER.

Fly Leaves

She cast behind her; she gave one spring;
And there follow'd a splash and a broadening ring
On the lake where the alders sigh.

She had gone from the ken of ungentle men!
Yet scarce did I mourn for that;
For I knew she was safe in her own home then,
And, the danger past, would appear again,
For she was a water-rat.

IN THE GLOAMING.

In the Gloaming to be roaming, where the crested waves are foaming,
And the shy mermaidens combing locks that ripple to their feet;
When the Gloaming is, I never made the ghost of an endeavour
To discover but whatever were the hour, it would be sweet.

"To their feet," I say, for Leech's sketch indisputably teaches
That the mermaids of our beaches do not end in ugly tails,
Nor have homes among the corals; but are shod with neat balmorals,
An arrangement no one quarrels with, as many might with scales.

Sweet to roam beneath a shady cliff, of course with some young lady,
Lalage, Neaera, Haidee, or Elaine, or Mary Ann:
Love, you dear delusive dream, you! Very sweet your victims deem
you,
When, heard only by the seamew, they talk all the stuff one can.

Sweet to haste, a licensed lover, to Miss Pinkerton the glover,
Having managed to discover what is dear Neaera's "size":
P'raps to touch that wrist so slender, as your tiny gift you tender,
And to read you're no offender, in those laughing hazel eyes.

Then to hear her call you "Harry," when she makes you fetch and
carry –
O young men about to marry, what a blessed thing it is!
To be photograph'd together cased in pretty Russia leather –
Hear her gravely doubting whether they have spoilt your honest
phiz!

Then to bring your plighted fair one first a ring a rich and rare
one –
Next a bracelet, if she'll wear one, and a heap of things beside;

IN THE GLOAMING.

Fly Leaves

And serenely bending o'er her, to inquire if it would bore her
To say when her own adorer may aspire to call her bride!

Then, the days of courtship over, with your WIFE to start for Dover
Or Dieppe and live in clover evermore, whate'er befalls:
For I've read in many a novel that, unless they've souls that
grovel,
Folks PREFER in fact a hovel to your dreary marble halls:

To sit, happy married lovers; Phillis trifling with a plover's
Egg, while Corydon uncovers with a grace the Sally Lunn,
Or dissects the lucky pheasant that, I think, were passing
pleasant;
As I sit alone at present, dreaming darkly of a Dun.

THE PALACE.

They come, they come, with fife and drum,
And gleaming pikes and glancing banners:
Though the eyes flash, the lips are dumb;
To talk in rank would not be manners.
Onward they stride, as Britons can;
The ladies following in the Van.

Who, who be these that tramp in threes
Through sumptuous Piccadilly, through
The roaring Strand, and stand at ease
At last 'neath shadowy Waterloo?
Some gallant Guild, I ween, are they;
Taking their annual holiday.

To catch the destin'd train to pay
Their willing fares, and plunge within it –
Is, as in old Romaunt they say,
With them the work of half-a-minute.
Then off they're whirl'd, with songs and shouting,
To cedared Sydenham for their outing.

I mark'd them light, with faces bright
As pansies or a new coin'd florin,
And up the sunless stair take flight,
Close-pack'd as rabbits in a warren.
Honour the Brave, who in that stress

THE PALACE.

Still trod not upon Beauty's dress!

Kerchief in hand I saw them stand;
In every kerchief lurk'd a lunch;
When they unfurl'd them, it was grand
To watch bronzed men and maidens crunch
The sounding celery—stick, or ram
The knife into the blushing ham.

Dash'd the bold fork through pies of pork;
O'er hard—boil'd eggs the saltspoon shook;
Leapt from its lair the playful cork:
Yet some there were, to whom the brook
Seem'd sweetest beverage, and for meat
They chose the red root of the beet.

Then many a song, some rather long,
Came quivering up from girlish throats;
And one young man he came out strong,
And gave "The Wolf" without his notes.
While they who knew not song or ballad
Still munch'd, approvingly, their salad.

But ah! what bard could sing how hard,
The artless banquet o'er, they ran
Down the soft slope with daisies starr'd
And kingcups! onward, maid with man,
They flew, to scale the breezy swing,
Or court frank kisses in the ring.

Such are the sylvan scenes that thrill
This heart! The lawns, the happy shade,
Where matrons, whom the sunbeams grill,
Stir with slow spoon their lemonade;
And maidens flirt (no extra charge)
In comfort at the fountain's marge!

Others may praise the "grand displays"
Where "fiery arch," "cascade," and "comet,"
Set the whole garden in a "blaze"!
Far, at such times, may I be from it;
Though then the public may be "lost
In wonder" at a trifling cost.

Fann'd by the breeze, to puff at ease
My faithful pipe is all I crave:
And if folks rave about the "trees
Lit up by fireworks," let them rave.
Your monster fetes, I like not these;
Though they bring grist to the lessees.

PEACE A STUDY.

He stood, a worn-out City clerk –
Who'd toil'd, and seen no holiday,
For forty years from dawn to dark –
Alone beside Caermarthen Bay.

He felt the salt spray on his lips;
Heard children's voices on the sands;
Up the sun's path he saw the ships
Sail on and on to other lands;

And laugh'd aloud. Each sight and sound
To him was joy too deep for tears;
He sat him on the beach, and bound
A blue bandana round his ears:

And thought how, posted near his door,
His own green door on Camden Hill,
Two bands at least, most likely more,
Were mingling at their own sweet will

Verdi with Vance. And at the thought
He laugh'd again, and softly drew
That Morning Herald that he'd bought
Forth from his breast, and read it through.

THE ARAB.

On, on, my brown Arab, away, away!
Thou hast trotted o'er many a mile to-day,
And I trow right meagre hath been thy fare
Since they roused thee at dawn from thy straw-piled lair,
To tread with those echoless unshod feet
Yon weltering flats in the noontide heat,
Where no palmtree proffers a kindly shade

Fly Leaves

And the eye never rests on a cool grass blade;
And lank is thy flank, and thy frequent cough
Oh! it goes to my heart but away, friend, off!

And yet, ah! what sculptor who saw thee stand,
As thou standest now, on thy Native Strand,
With the wild wind ruffling thine uncomb'd hair,
And thy nostril upturn'd to the od'rous air,
Would not woo thee to pause till his skill might trace
At leisure the lines of that eager face;
The collarless neck and the coal-black paws
And the bit grasp'd tight in the massive jaws;
The delicate curve of the legs, that seem
Too slight for their burden and, O, the gleam
Of that eye, so sombre and yet so gay!
Still away, my lithe Arab, once more away!

Nay, tempt me not, Arab, again to stay;
Since I crave neither Echo nor Fun to-day.
For thy HAND is not Echoless there they are
Fun, Glowworm, and Echo, and Evening Star:
And thou hintest withal that thou fain would'st shine,
As I con them, these bulgy old boots of mine.
But I shrink from thee, Arab! Thou eat'st eel-pie,
Thou evermore hast at least one black eye;
There is brass on thy brow, and thy swarthy hues
Are due not to nature but handling shoes;
And the hit in thy mouth, I regret to see,
Is a bit of tobacco-pipe Flee, child, flee!

LINES ON HEARING THE ORGAN.

Grinder, who serenely grindest
At my door the Hundredth Psalm,
Till thou ultimately findest
Pence in thy unwashen palm:

Grinder, jocund-hearted Grinder,
Near whom Barbary's nimble son,
Poised with skill upon his hinder
Paws, accepts the proffered bun:

Dearly do I love thy grinding;

LINES ON HEARING THE ORGAN.

Fly Leaves

Joy to meet thee on thy road
Where thou prowlest through the blinding
Dust with that stupendous load,

'Neath the baleful star of Sirius,
When the postmen slower jog,
And the ox becomes delirious,
And the muzzle decks the dog.

Tell me by what art thou bindest
On thy feet those ancient shoon:
Tell me, Grinder, if thou grindest
Always, always out of tune.

Tell me if, as thou art buckling
On thy straps with eager claws,
Thou forecastest, inly chuckling,
All the rage that thou wilt cause.

Tell me if at all thou mindest
When folks flee, as if on wings,
From thee as at ease thou grindest:
Tell me fifty thousand things.

Grinder, gentle-hearted Grinder!
Ruffians who led evil lives,
Soothed by thy sweet strains, are kinder
To their bullocks and their wives:

Children, when they see thy supple
Form approach, are out like shots;
Half-a-bar sets several couple
Waltzing in convenient spots;

Not with clumsy Jacks or Georges:
Unprofaned by grasp of man
Maidens speed those simple orgies,
Betsey Jane with Betsey Ann.

As they love thee in St. Giles's
Thou art loved in Grosvenor Square:
None of those engaging smiles is
Unreciprocated there.

Often, ere yet thou hast hammer'd
Through thy four delicious airs,
Coins are flung thee by enamour'd
Housemaids upon area stairs:

E'en the ambrosial-whisker'd flunkey
Eyes thy boots and thine unkempt

LINES ON HEARING THE ORGAN.

Fly Leaves

Beard and melancholy monkey
More in pity than contempt.

Far from England, in the sunny
South, where Anio leaps in foam,
Thou wast rear'd, till lack of money
Drew thee from thy vineclad home:

And thy mate, the sinewy Jocko,
From Brazil or Afric came,
Land of simoom and sirocco –
And he seems extremely tame.

There he quaff'd the undefiled
Spring, or hung with apelike glee,
By his teeth or tail or eyelid,
To the slippery mango–tree:

There he woo'd and won a dusky
Bride, of instincts like his own;
Talk'd of love till he was husky
In a tongue to us unknown:

Side by side 'twas theirs to ravage
The potato ground, or cut
Down the unsuspecting savage
With the well–aim'd cocoa–nut:–

Till the miscreant Stranger tore him
Screaming from his blue–faced fair;
And they flung strange raiment o'er him,
Raiment which he could not bear:

Sever'd from the pure embraces
Of his children and his spouse,
He must ride fantastic races
Mounted on reluctant sows:

But the heart of wistful Jocko
Still was with his ancient flame
In the nutgroves of Morocco;
Or if not it's all the same.

Grinder, winsome grinsome Grinder!
They who see thee and whose soul
Melts not at thy charms, are blinder
Than a trebly–bandaged mole:

They to whom thy curt (yet clever)
Talk, thy music and thine ape,
Seem not to be joys for ever,

LINES ON HEARING THE ORGAN.

Fly Leaves

Are but brutes in human shape.

'Tis not that thy mien is stately,
'Tis not that thy tones are soft;
'Tis not that I care so greatly
For the same thing play'd so oft:

But I've heard mankind abuse thee;
And perhaps it's rather strange,
But I thought that I would choose thee
For encomium, as a change.

CHANGED.

I know not why my soul is rack'd
Why I ne'er smile as was my wont:
I only know that, as a fact,
I don't.
I used to roam o'er glen and glade
Buoyant and blithe as other folk:
And not unfrequently I made
A joke.

A minstrel's fire within me burn'd,
I'd sing, as one whose heart must break,
Lay upon lay: I nearly learn'd
To shake.
All day I sang; of love, of fame,
Of fights our fathers fought of yore,
Until the thing almost became
A bore.

I cannot sing the old songs now!
It is not that I deem them low;
'Tis that I can't remember how
They go.
I could not range the hills till high
Above me stood the summer moon:
And as to dancing, I could fly
As soon.

The sports, to which with boyish glee
I sprang erewhile, attract no more;

CHANGED.

Fly Leaves

Although I am but sixty-three
Or four.
Nay, worse than that, I've seem'd of late
To shrink from happy boyhood boys
Have grown so noisy, and I hate
A noise.

They fright me, when the beech is green,
By swarming up its stem for eggs:
They drive their horrid hoops between
My legs:—
It's idle to repine, I know;
I'll tell you what I'll do instead:
I'll drink my arrowroot, and go
To bed.

FIRST LOVE.

O my earliest love, who, ere I number'd
Ten sweet summers, made my bosom thrill!
Will a swallow or a swift, or some bird —
Fly to her and say, I love her still?

Say my life's a desert drear and arid,
To its one green spot I aye recur:
Never, never although three times married —
Have I cared a jot for aught but her.

No, mine own! though early forced to leave you,
Still my heart was there where first we met;
In those "Lodgings with an ample sea-view,"
Which were, forty years ago, "To Let."

There I saw her first, our landlord's oldest
Little daughter. On a thing so fair
Thou, O Sun, who (so they say) beholdest
Everything, hast gazed, I tell thee, ne'er.

There she sat so near me, yet remoter
Than a star a blue-eyed bashful imp:
On her lap she held a happy bloater,
'Twixt her lips a yet more happy shrimp.

FIRST LOVE.

And I loved her, and our troth we plighted
On the morrow by the shingly shore:
In a fortnight to be disunited
By a bitter fate for evermore.

O my own, my beautiful, my blue eyed!
To be young once more, and bite my thumb
At the world and all its cares with you, I'd
Give no inconsiderable sum.

Hand in hand we tramp'd the golden seaweed,
Soon as o'er the gray cliff peep'd the dawn:
Side by side, when came the hour for tea, we'd
Crunch the mottled shrimp and hairy prawn:—

Has she wedded some gigantic shrimper,
That sweet mite with whom I loved to play?
Is she girt with babes that whine and whimper,
That bright being who was always gay?

Yes she has at least a dozen wee things!
Yes I see her darning corduroys,
Scouring floors, and setting out the tea-things,
For a howling herd of hungry boys,

In a home that reeks of tar and sperm-oil!
But at intervals she thinks, I know,
Of those days which we, afar from turmoil,
Spent together forty years ago.

O my earliest love, still unforgotten,
With your downcast eyes of dreamy blue!
Never, somehow, could I seem to cotton
To another as I did to you!

WANDERERS.

As o'er the hill we roam'd at will,
My dog and I together,
We mark'd a chaise, by two bright bays
Slow-moved along the heather:

Two bays arch neck'd, with tails erect

WANDERERS.

And gold upon their blinkers;
And by their side an ass I spied;
It was a travelling tinker's.

The chaise went by, nor aught cared I;
Such things are not in my way:
I turn'd me to the tinker, who
Was loafing down a by-way:

I ask'd him where he lived a stare
Was all I got in answer,
As on he trudged: I rightly judged
The stare said, "Where I can, sir."

I ask'd him if he'd take a whiff
Of 'bacco; he acceded;
He grew communicative too,
(A pipe was all he needed,)
Till of the tinker's life, I think,
I knew as much as he did.

"I loiter down by thorp and town;
For any job I'm willing;
Take here and there a dusty brown,
And here and there a shilling.

"I deal in every ware in turn,
I've rings for buddin' Sally
That sparkle like those eyes of her'n;
I've liquor for the valet.

"I steal from th' parson's strawberry-plots,
I hide by th' squire's covers;
I teach the sweet young housemaids what's
The art of trapping lovers.

"The things I've done 'neath moon and stars
Have got me into messes:
I've seen the sky through prison bars.
I've torn up prison dresses.

"I've sat, I've sigh'd, I've gloom'd, I've glanced
With envy at the swallows
That through the window slid, and danced
(Quite happy) round the gallows;

"But out again I come, and show
My face nor care a stiver
For trades are brisk and trades are slow,
But mine goes on for ever."

WANDERERS.

Thus on he prattled like a babbling brook.
Then I, "The sun hath slipt behind the hill,
And my aunt Vivian dines at half-past six."
So in all love we parted; I to the Hall,
They to the village. It was noised next noon
That chickens had been miss'd at Syllabub Farm.

SAD MEMORIES.

They tell me I am beautiful: they praise my silken hair,
My little feet that silently slip on from stair to stair:
They praise my pretty trustful face and innocent grey eye;
Fond hands caress me oftentimes, yet would that I might die!

Why was I born to be abhorr'd of man and bird and beast?
The bulfinch marks me stealing by, and straight his song hath
ceased;
The shrewmouse eyes me shudderingly, then flees; and, worse than
that,
The housedog he flees after me why was I born a cat?

Men prize the heartless hound who quits dry-eyed his native land;
Who wags a mercenary tail and licks a tyrant hand.
The leal true cat they prize not, that if e'er compell'd to roam
Still flies, when let out of the bag, precipitately home.

They call me cruel. Do I know if mouse or songbird feels?
I only know they make me light and salutary meals:
And if, as 'tis my nature to, ere I devour I tease 'em,
Why should a low-bred gardener's boy pursue me with a besom?

Should china fall or chandeliers, or anything but stocks –
Nay stocks, when they're in flowerpots the cat expects hard knocks:
Should ever anything be missed milk, coals, umbrellas, brandy –
The cat's pitch'd into with a boot or any thing that's handy.

"I remember, I remember," how one night I "fleeted by,"
And gain'd the blessed tiles and gazed into the cold clear sky.
"I remember, I remember, how my little lovers came;"
And there, beneath the crescent moon, play'd many a little game.

Fly Leaves

They fought by good St. Catharine, 'twas a fearsome sight to see
The coal-black crest, the glowering orbs, of one gigantic He.
Like bow by some tall bowman bent at Hastings or Poitiers,
His huge back curved, till none observed a vestige of his ears:

He stood, an ebon crescent, flouting that ivory moon;
Then raised the pibroch of his race, the Song without a Tune;
Gleam'd his white teeth, his mammoth tail waved darkly to and fro,
As with one complex yell he burst, all claws, upon the foe.

It thrills me now, that final Miaow that weird unearthly din:
Lone maidens heard it far away, and leap'd out of their skin.
A potboy from his den o'erhead peep'd with a scared wan face;
Then sent a random brickbat down, which knock'd me into space.

Nine days I fell, or thereabouts: and, had we not nine lives,
I wis I ne'er had seen again thy sausage-shop, St. Ives!
Had I, as some cats have, nine tails, how gladly I would lick
The hand, and person generally, of him who heaved that brick!

For me they fill the milkbowl up, and cull the choice sardine:
But ah! I nevermore shall be the cat I once have been!
The memories of that fatal night they haunt me even now:
In dreams I see that rampant He, and tremble at that Miaow.

COMPANIONS. A TALE OF A GRANDFATHER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DEWY MEMORIES,"

I know not of what we ponder'd
Or made pretty pretence to talk,
As, her hand within mine, we wander'd
Tow'rd the pool by the limetree walk,
While the dew fell in showers from the passion flowers
And the blush-rose bent on her stalk.

I cannot recall her figure:
Was it regal as Juno's own?
Or only a trifle bigger
Than the elves who surround the throne
Of the Faery Queen, and are seen, I ween,
By mortals in dreams alone?

What her eyes were like, I know not:
Perhaps they were blurr'd with tears;

Fly Leaves

And perhaps in your skies there glow not
 (On the contrary) clearer spheres.
No! as to her eyes I am just as wise
As you or the cat, my dears.

Her teeth, I presume, were "pearly":
 But which was she, brunette or blonde?
Her hair, was it quaintly curly,
 Or as straight as a beadle's wand?
That I fail'd to remark; it was rather dark
And shadowy round the pond.

Then the hand that reposed so snugly
 In mine was it plump or spare?
Was the countenance fair or ugly?
 Nay, children, you have me there!
MY eyes were p'raps blurr'd; and besides I'd heard
That it's horribly rude to stare.

And I was I brusque and surly?
 Or oppressively bland and fond?
Was I partial to rising early?
 Or why did we twain abscond,
All breakfastless too, from the public view
To prowl by a misty pond?

What pass'd, what was felt or spoken –
 Whether anything pass'd at all –
And whether the heart was broken
 That beat under that shelt'ring shawl –
(If shawl she had on, which I doubt) has gone,
Yes, gone from me past recall.

Was I haply the lady's suitor?
 Or her uncle? I can't make out –
Ask your governess, dears, or tutor.
 For myself, I'm in hopeless doubt
As to why we were there, who on earth we were,
And what this is all about.

BALLAD.

The auld wife sat at her ivied door,

BALLAD.

Fly Leaves

(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
A thing she had frequently done before;
And her spectacles lay on her apron'd knees.

The piper he piped on the hill—top high,
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
Till the cow said "I die," and the goose ask'd "Why?"
And the dog said nothing, but search'd for fleas.

The farmer he strode through the square farmyard;
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
His last brew of ale was a trifle hard –
The connexion of which with the plot one sees.

The farmer's daughter hath frank blue eyes;
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
She hears the rooks caw in the windy skies,
As she sits at her lattice and shells her peas.

The farmer's daughter hath ripe red lips;
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
If you try to approach her, away she skips
Over tables and chairs with apparent ease.

The farmer's daughter hath soft brown hair;
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
And I met with a ballad, I can't say where,
Which wholly consisted of lines like these.

PART II.

She sat with her hands 'neath her dimpled cheeks,
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
And spake not a word. While a lady speaks
There is hope, but she didn't even sneeze.

She sat, with her hands 'neath her crimson cheeks;
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
She gave up mending her father's breeks,
And let the cat roll in her new chemise.

She sat, with her hands 'neath her burning cheeks,
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
And gazed at the piper for thirteen weeks;
Then she follow'd him out o'er the misty leas.

Her sheep follow'd her, as their tails did them.
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
And this song is consider'd a perfect gem,
And as to the meaning, it's what you please.

BALLAD.

PRECIOUS STONES.

AN INCIDENT IN MODERN HISTORY.

My Cherrystones! I prize them,
No tongue can tell how much!
Each lady caller eyes them,
And madly longs to touch!
At eve I lift them down, I look
Upon them, and I cry;
Recalling how my Prince 'partook'
(Sweet word!) of cherry-pie!

To me it was an Era
In life, that Dejeuner!
They ate, they sipp'd Madeira
Much in the usual way.
Many a soft item there would be,
No doubt, upon the carte:
But one made life a heaven to me:
It was the cherry-tart.

Lightly the spoonfuls enter'd
That mouth on which the gaze
Of ten fair girls was centred
In rapturous amaze.
Soon that august assemblage clear'd
The dish; and as they ate –
The stones, all coyly, re-appear'd
On each illustrious plate.

And when His Royal Highness
Withdrew to take the air,
Waiving our natural shyness,
We swoop'd upon his chair.
Policemen at our garments clutch'd:
We mock'd those feeble powers;
And soon the treasures that had touch'd
Exalted lips were ours!

One large one at the moment
It seem'd almost divine –
Was got by that Miss Beaumont:
And three, O three, are mine!

Yes! the three stones that rest beneath
Glass, on that plain deal shelf,
Stranger, once dallied with the teeth
Of Royalty itself.

Let Parliament abolish
Churches and States and Thrones:
With reverent hand I'll polish
Still, still my Cherrystones!
A clod a piece of orange-peel
An end of a cigar –
Once trod on by a Princely heel,
How beautiful they are!

Years since, I climb'd Saint Michael
His Mount:– you'll all go there
Of course, and those who like'll
Sit in Saint Michael's Chair:
For there I saw, within a frame,
The pen O heavens! the pen –
With which a Duke had sign'd his name,
And other gentlemen.

"Great among geese," I faltered,
"Is she who grew that quill!"
And, Deathless Bird, unalter'd
Is mine opinion still.
Yet sometimes, as I view my three
Stones with a thoughtful brow,
I think there possibly might be
E'en greater geese than thou.

DISASTER.

'Twas ever thus from childhood's hour!
My fondest hopes would not decay:
I never loved a tree or flower
Which was the first to fade away!
The garden, where I used to delve
Short-frock'd, still yields me pinks in plenty:
The peartree that I climb'd at twelve
I see still blossoming, at twenty.

DISASTER.

I never nursed a dear gazelle;
But I was given a parroquet –
(How I did nurse him if unwell!)
He's imbecile, but lingers yet.
He's green, with an enchanting tuft;
He melts me with his small black eye:
He'd look inimitable stuff'd,
And knows it but he will not die!

I had a kitten I was rich
In pets but all too soon my kitten
Became a full-sized cat, by which
I've more than once been scratch'd and bitten.
And when for sleep her limbs she curl'd
One day beside her untouch'd plateful,
And glided calmly from the world,
I freely own that I was grateful.

And then I bought a dog a queen!
Ah Tiny, dear departing pug!
She lives, but she is past sixteen
And scarce can crawl across the rug.
I loved her beautiful and kind;
Delighted in her pert Bow-wow:
But now she snaps if you don't mind;
'Twere lunacy to love her now.

I used to think, should e'er mishap
Betide my crumple visaged Ti,
In shape of prowling thief, or trap,
Or coarse bull-terrier I should die.
But ah! disasters have their use;
And life might e'en be too sunshiny:
Nor would I make myself a goose,
If some big dog should swallow Tiny.

CONTENTMENT.

AFTER THE MANNER OF HORACE.

Friend, there be they on whom mishap
Or never or so rarely comes,
That, when they think thereof, they snap
Derisive thumbs:

CONTENTMENT.

And there be they who lightly lose
Their all, yet feel no aching void;
Should aught annoy them, they refuse
To be annoy'd:

And fain would I be e'en as these!
Life is with such all beer and skittles;
They are not difficult to please
About their victuals:

The trout, the grouse, the early pea,
By such, if there, are freely taken;
If not, they munch with equal glee
Their bit of bacon:

And when they wax a little gay
And chaff the public after luncheon,
If they're confronted with a stray
Policeman's truncheon,

They gaze thereat with outstretch'd necks,
And laughter which no threats can smother,
And tell the horror-stricken X
That he's another.

In snowtime if they cross a spot
Where unsuspected boys have slid,
They fall not down though they would not
Mind if they did:

When the spring rosebud which they wear
Breaks short and tumbles from its stem,
No thought of being angry e'er
Dawns upon them;

Though 'twas Jemima's hand that placed,
(As well you ween) at evening's hour,
In the loved button-hole that chaste
And cherish'd flower.

And when they travel, if they find
That they have left their pocket-compass
Or Murray or thick boots behind,
They raise no rumpus,

But plod serenely on without:
Knowing it's better to endure
The evil which beyond all doubt
You cannot cure.

When for that early train they're late,
They do not make their woes the text
Of sermons in the Times, but wait
On for the next;

And jump inside, and only grin
Should it appear that that dry wag,
The guard, omitted to put in
Their carpet-bag.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

ABROAD WITH HIS SON.

O what harper could worthily harp it,
Mine Edward! this wide-stretching wold
(Look out wold) with its wonderful carpet
Of emerald, purple, and gold!
Look well at it also look sharp, it
Is getting so cold.

The purple is heather (erica);
The yellow, gorse call'd sometimes "whin."
Cruel boys on its prickles might spike a
Green beetle as if on a pin.
You may roll in it, if you would like a
Few holes in your skin.

You wouldn't? Then think of how kind you
Should be to the insects who crave
Your compassion and then, look behind you
At you barley-ears! Don't they look brave
As they undulate (undulate, mind you,
From unda, a wave).

The noise of those sheep-bells, how faint it
Sounds here (on account of our height)!
And this hillock itself who could paint it,
With its changes of shadow and light?
Is it not (never, Eddy, say "ain't it") –
A marvellous sight?

Then yon desolate eerie morasses,
The haunts of the snipe and the hern –

Fly Leaves

(I shall question the two upper classes
On aquatiles, when we return) –
Why, I see on them absolute masses
Of filix or fern.

How it interests e'en a beginner
(Or tiro) like dear little Ned!
Is he listening? As I am a sinner
He's asleep he is wagging his head.
Wake up! I'll go home to my dinner,
And you to your bed.

The boundless ineffable prairie;
The splendour of mountain and lake
With their hues that seem ever to vary;
The mighty pine-forests which shake
In the wind, and in which the unwary
May tread on a snake;

And this wold with its heathery garment –
Are themes undeniably great.
But although there is not any harm in't –
It's perhaps little good to dilate
On their charms to a dull little varmint
Of seven or eight.

ARCADES AMBO.

Why are ye wandering aye 'twixt porch and porch,
Thou and thy fellow when the pale stars fade
At dawn, and when the glowworm lights her torch,
O Beadle of the Burlington Arcade?
Who asketh why the Beautiful was made?
A wan cloud drifting o'er the waste of blue,
The thistledown that floats above the glade,
The lilac-blooms of April fair to view,
And naught but fair are these; and such, I ween, are you.

Yes, ye are beautiful. The young street boys
Joy in your beauty. Are ye there to bar
Their pathway to that paradise of toys,
Ribbons and rings? Who'll blame ye if ye are?
Surely no shrill and clattering crowd should mar

Fly Leaves

The dim aisle's stillness, where in noon's mid-glow
Trip fair-hair'd girls to boot-shop or bazaar;
Where, at soft eve, serenely to and fro
The sweet boy-graduates walk, nor deem the pastime slow.

And O! forgive me, Beadles, if I paid
Scant tribute to your worth, when first ye stood
Before me robed in broadcloth and brocade
And all the nameless grace of Beadlehood!
I would not smile at ye if smile I could
Now as erewhile, ere I had learn'd to sigh:
Ah, no! I know ye beautiful and good,
And evermore will pause as I pass by,
And gaze, and gazing think, how base a thing am I.

WAITING.

"O come, O come," the mother pray'd
And hush'd her babe: "let me behold
Once more thy stately form array'd
Like autumn woods in green and gold!

"I see thy brethren come and go;
Thy peers in stature, and in hue
Thy rivals. Same like monarchs glow
With richest purple: some are blue

"As skies that tempt the swallow back;
Or red as, seen o'er wintry seas,
The star of storm; or barr'd with black
And yellow, like the April bees.

"Come they and go! I heed not, I.
Yet others hail their advent, cling
All trustful to their side, and fly
Safe in their gentle piloting

"To happy homes on heath or hill,
By park or river. Still I wait
And peer into the darkness: still
Thou com'st not I am desolate.

"Hush! hark! I see a towering form!

WAITING.

Fly Leaves

From the dim distance slowly roll'd
It rocks like lilies in a storm,
And O, its hues are green and gold:

"It comes, it comes! Ah rest is sweet,
And there is rest, my babe, for us!"
She ceased, as at her very feet
Stopp'd the St. John's Wood omnibus.

PLAY.

Play, play, while as yet it is day:
While the sweet sunlight is warm on the brae!
Hark to the lark singing lay upon lay,
While the brown squirrel eats nuts on the spray
And in the apple-leaves chatters the jay!
Play, play, even as they!
What though the cowslips ye pluck will decay,
What though the grass will be presently hay?
What though the noise that ye make should dismay
Old Mrs. Clutterbuck over the way?
Play, play, for your locks will grow gray;
Even the marbles ye sport with are clay.

Play, ay in the crowded highway:
Was it not made for you? Yea, my lad, yea.
True that the babes you were bid to convey
Home may fall out or be stolen or stray;
True that the tip-cat you toss about may
Strike an old gentleman, cause him to sway,
Stumble, and p'raps be run o'er by a dray:
Still why delay? Play, my son, play!
Barclay and Perkins, not you, have to pay.

Play, play, your sonatas in A,
Heedless of what your next neighbour may say!
Dance and be gay as a faun or a fay,
Sing like the lad in the boat on the bay;
Sing, play if your neighbours inveigh
Feebly against you, they're lunatics, eh?
Bang, twang, clatter and clang,
Strum, thrum, upon fiddle and drum;
Neigh, bray, simply obey

PLAY.

All your sweet impulses, stop not or stay!
Rattle the "bones," hit a tinbottom'd tray
Hard with the fireshovel, hammer away!
Is not your neighbour your natural prey?
Should he confound you, it's only in play.

LOVE.

Canst thou love me, lady?
I've not learn'd to woo:
Thou art on the shady
Side of sixty too.
Still I love thee dearly!
Thou hast lands and pelf:
But I love thee merely
Merely for thyself.

Wilt thou love me, fairest?
Though thou art not fair;
And I think thou wearest
Someone—else's hair.
Thou could'st love, though, dearly:
And, as I am told,
Thou art very nearly
Worth thy weight, in gold.

Dost thou love me, sweet one?
Tell me that thou dost!
Women fairly beat one,
But I think thou must.
Thou art loved so dearly:
I am plain, but then
Thou (to speak sincerely)
Art as plain again.

Love me, bashful fairy!
I've an empty purse:
And I've "moods," which vary;
Mostly for the worse.
Still, I love thee dearly:
Though I make (I feel)
Love a little queerly,
I'm as true as steel.

Love me, swear to love me
 (As, you know, they do)
By yon heaven above me
 And its changeless blue.
Love me, lady, dearly,
 If you'll be so good;
Though I don't see clearly
 On what ground you should.

Love me ah or love me
 Not, but be my bride!
Do not simply shove me
 (So to speak) aside!
P'raps it would be dearly
 Purchased at the price;
But a hundred yearly
 Would be very nice.

THOUGHTS AT A RAILWAY STATION.

'Tis but a box, of modest deal;
 Directed to no matter where:
Yet down my cheek the teardrops steal –
Yes, I am blubbering like a seal;
For on it is this mute appeal,
 "With care."

I am a stern cold man, and range
 Apart: but those vague words "With care"
Wake yearnings in me sweet as strange:
Drawn from my moral Moated Grange,
I feel I rather like the change
 Of air.

Hast thou ne'er seen rough pointsmen spy
 Some simple English phrase "With care"
Or "This side uppermost" and cry
Like children? No? No more have I.
Yet deem not him whose eyes are dry
 A bear.

But ah! what treasure hides beneath

THOUGHTS AT A RAILWAY STATION.

That lid so much the worse for wear?
A ring perhaps a rosy wreath –
A photograph by Vernon Heath –
Some matron's temporary teeth
Or hair!

Perhaps some seaman, in Peru
Or Ind, hath stow'd herein a rare
Cargo of birds' eggs for his Sue;
With many a vow that he'll be true,
And many a hint that she is too,
Too fair.

Perhaps but wherefore vainly pry
Into the page that's folded there?
I shall be better by and by:
The porters, as I sit and sigh,
Pass and repass I wonder why
They stare!

ON THE BRINK.

I watch'd her as she stoop'd to pluck
A wildflower in her hair to twine;
And wish'd that it had been my luck
To call her mine.

Anon I heard her rate with mad
Mad words her babe within its cot;
And felt particularly glad
That it had not.

I knew (such subtle brains have men)
That she was uttering what she shouldn't;
And thought that I would chide, and then
I thought I wouldn't:

Who could have gazed upon that face,
Those pouting coral lips, and chided?
A Rhadamanthus, in my place,
Had done as I did:

For ire wherewith our bosoms glow

Is chain'd there oft by Beauty's spell;
And, more than that, I did not know
The widow well.

So the harsh phrase pass'd unreprieved.
Still mute (O brothers, was it sin?) –
I drank, unutterably moved,
Her beauty in:

And to myself I murmur'd low,
As on her upturn'd face and dress
The moonlight fell, "Would she say No,
By chance, or Yes?"

She stood so calm, so like a ghost
Betwixt me and that magic moon,
That I already was almost
A finish'd coon.

But when she caught adroitly up
And soothed with smiles her little daughter;
And gave it, if I'm right, a sup
Of barley–water;

And, crooning still the strange sweet lore
Which only mothers' tongues can utter,
Snow'd with deft hand the sugar o'er
Its bread and butter;

And kiss'd it clingingly (Ah, why
Don't women do these things in private?) –
I felt that if I lost her, I
Should not survive it:

And from my mouth the words nigh flew –
The past, the future, I forgot 'em:
"Oh! if you'd kiss me as you do
That thankless atom!"

But this thought came ere yet I spake,
And froze the sentence on my lips:
"They err, who marry wives that make
Those little slips."

It came like some familiar rhyme,
Some copy to my boyhood set;
And that's perhaps the reason I'm
Unmarried yet.

Would she have own'd how pleased she was,
And told her love with widow's pride?

ON THE BRINK.

I never found out that, because
I never tried.

Be kind to babes and beasts and birds:
Hearts may be hard, though lips are coral;
And angry words are angry words:
And that's the moral.

"FOREVER."

Forever; 'tis a single word!
Our rude forefathers deem'd it two:
Can you imagine so absurd
A view?

Forever! What abysses of woe
The word reveals, what frenzy, what
Despair! For ever (printed so)
Did not.

It looks, ah me! how trite and tame!
It fails to sadden or appal
Or solace it is not the same
At all.

O thou to whom it first occur'd
To solder the disjoin'd, and dower
Thy native language with a word
Of power:

We bless thee! Whether far or near
Thy dwelling, whether dark or fair
Thy kingly brow, is neither here
Nor there.

But in men's hearts shall be thy throne,
While the great pulse of England beats:
Thou coiner of a word unknown
To Keats!

And nevermore must printer do
As men did long ago; but run
"For" into "ever," bidding two

"FOREVER."

Be one.

Forever! passion–fraught, it throws
O'er the dim page a gloom, a glamour:
It's sweet, it's strange; and I suppose
It's grammar.

Forever! 'Tis a single word!
And yet our fathers deem'd it two:
Nor am I confident they err'd;
Are you?

UNDER THE TREES.

"Under the trees!" Who but agrees
That there is magic in words such as these?
Promptly one sees shake in the breeze
Stately lime–avenues haunted of bees:
Where, looking far over buttercupp'd leas,
Lads and "fair shes" (that is Byron, and he's
An authority) lie very much at their ease;
Taking their teas, or their duck and green peas,
Or, if they prefer it, their plain bread and cheese:
Not objecting at all though it's rather a squeeze
And the glass is, I daresay, at 80 degrees.
Some get up glees, and are mad about Ries
And Sainton, and Tamberlik's thrilling high Cs;
Or if painters, hold forth upon Hunt and Maclise,
And the tone and the breadth of that landscape of Lee's;
Or if learned, on nodes and the moon's apogees,
Or, if serious, on something of AKHB's,
Or the latest attempt to convert the Chaldees;
Or in short about all things, from earthquakes to fleas.
Some sit in twos or (less frequently) threes,
With their innocent lambswool or book on their knees,
And talk, and enact, any nonsense you please,
As they gaze into eyes that are blue as the seas;
And you hear an occasional "Harry, don't tease"
From the sweetest of lips in the softest of keys,
And other remarks, which to me are Chinese.
And fast the time flees; till a ladylike sneeze,
Or a portly papa's more elaborate wheeze,
Makes Miss Tabitha seize on her brown muffatees,

UNDER THE TREES.

And announce as a fact that it's going to freeze,
And that young people ought to attend to their Ps
And their Qs, and not court every form of disease:
Then Tommy eats up the three last ratafias,
And pretty Louise wraps her robe de cerise
Round a bosom as tender as Widow Machree's,
And (in spite of the pleas of her lorn vis-a-vis)
Goes to wrap up her uncle a patient of Skey's,
Who is prone to catch chills, like all old Bengalese:—
But at bedtime I trust he'll remember to grease
The bridge of his nose, and preserve his rupees
From the premature clutch of his fond legatees;
Or at least have no fees to pay any M. D.s
For the cold his niece caught, sitting under the Trees.

MOTHERHOOD.

She laid it where the sunbeams fall
Unscann'd upon the broken wall.
Without a tear, without a groan,
She laid it near a mighty stone,
Which some rude swain had haply cast
Thither in sport, long ages past,
And Time with mosses had o'erlaid,
And fenced with many a tall grassblade,
And all about bid roses bloom
And violets shed their soft perfume.
There, in its cool and quiet bed,
She set her burden down and fled:
Nor flung, all eager to escape,
One glance upon the perfect shape
That lay, still warm and fresh and fair,
But motionless and soundless there.

No human eye had mark'd her pass
Across the linden-shadow'd grass
Ere yet the minster clock chimed seven:
Only the innocent birds of heaven —
The magpie, and the rook whose nest
Swings as the elmtree waves his crest —
And the lithe cricket, and the hoar
And huge-limb'd hound that guards the door,
Look'd on when, as a summer wind

Fly Leaves

That, passing, leaves no trace behind,
All unapparell'd, barefoot all,
She ran to that old ruin'd wall,
To leave upon the chill dank earth
(For ah! she never knew its worth)
'Mid hemlock rank, and fern, and ling,
And dews of night, that precious thing!

And there it might have lain forlorn
From morn till eve, from eve to morn:
But that, by some wild impulse led,
The mother, ere she turn'd and fled,
One moment stood erect and high;
Then pour'd into the silent sky
A cry so jubilant, so strange,
That Alice as she strove to range
Her rebel ringlets at her glass –
Sprang up and gazed across the grass;
Shook back those curls so fair to see,
Clapp'd her soft hands in childish glee;
And shriek'd her sweet face all aglow,
Her very limbs with rapture shaking –
"My hen has laid an egg, I know;
"And only hear the noise she's making!"

MYSTERY.

I know not if in others' eyes
She seem'd almost divine;
But far beyond a doubt it lies
That she did not in mine.

Each common stone on which she trod
I did not deem a pearl:
Nay it is not a little odd
How I abhorr'd that girl.

We met at balls and picnics oft,
Or on a drawingroom stair;
My aunt invariably cough'd
To warn me she was there:

At croquet I was bid remark

MYSTERY.

Fly Leaves

How queenly was her pose,
As with stern glee she drew the dark
Blue ball beneath her toes,

And made the Red fly many a foot:
Then calmly she would stoop,
Smiling an angel smile, to put
A partner through his hoop.

At archery I was made observe
That others aim'd more near.
But none so tenderly could curve
The elbow round the ear:

Or if we rode, perhaps she DID
Pull sharply at the curb;
But then the way in which she slid
From horseback was superb!

She'd throw off odes, again, whose flow
And fire were more than Sapphic;
Her voice was sweet, and very low;
Her singing quite seraphic:

She WAS a seraph, lacking wings.
That much I freely own.
But, it is one of those queer things
Whose cause is all unknown –

(Such are the wasp, the household fly,
The shapes that crawl and curl
By men called centipedes) that I
Simply abhorred that girl.

* * *

No doubt some mystery underlies
All things which are and which are not:
And 'tis the function of the Wise
Not to expound to us what is what,

But let his consciousness play round
The matter, and at ease evolve
The problem, shallow or profound,
Which our poor wits have fail'd to solve,

Then tell us blandly we are fools;
Whereof we were aware before:
That truth they taught us at the schools,
And p'raps (who knows?) a little more.

MYSTERY.

– But why did we two disagree?
Our tastes, it may be, did not dovetail:
All I know is, we ne'er shall be
Hero and heroine of a love–tale.

FLIGHT.

O memory! that which I gave thee
To guard in thy garner yestreen –
Little deeming thou e'er could'st behave thee
Thus basely hath gone from thee clean!
Gone, fled, as ere autumn is ended
The yellow leaves flee from the oak –
I have lost it for ever, my splendid
Original joke.

What was it? I know I was brushing
My hair when the notion occurred:
I know that I felt myself blushing
As I thought, "How supremely absurd!
"How they'll hammer on floor and on table
As its drollery dawns on them how
They will quote it" I wish I were able
To quote it just now.

I had thought to lead up conversation
To the subject it's easily done –
Then let off, as an airy creation
Of the moment, that masterly pun.
Let it off, with a flash like a rocket's;
In the midst of a dazzled conclave,
Where I sat, with my hands in my pockets,
The only one grave.

I had fancied young Titterton's chuckles,
And old Bottleby's hearty guffaws
As he drove at my ribs with his knuckles,
His mode of expressing applause:
While Jean Bottleby queenly Miss Janet –
Drew her handkerchief hastily out,
In fits at my slyness what can it
Have all been about?

I know 'twas the happiest, quaintest
Combination of pathos and fun:
But I've got no idea the faintest –
Of what was the actual pun.
I think it was somehow connected
With something I'd recently read –
Or heard or perhaps recollected
On going to bed.

What HAD I been reading? The Standard:
"Double Bigamy;" "Speech of the Mayor."
And later eh? yes! I meandered
Through some chapters of Vanity Fair.
How it fuses the grave with the festive!
Yet e'en there, there is nothing so fine –
So playfully, subtly suggestive –
As that joke of mine.

Did it hinge upon "parting asunder?"
No, I don't part my hair with my brush.
Was the point of it "hair?" Now I wonder!
Stop a bit I shall think of it hush!
There's HARE, a wild animal Stuff!
It was something a deal more recondite:
Of that I am certain enough;
And of nothing beyond it.

Hair LOCKS! There are probably many
Good things to be said about those.
Give me time that's the best guess of any –
"Lock" has several meanings, one knows.
Iron locks IRON-GRAY LOCKS a "deadlock" –
That would set up an everyday wit:
Then of course there's the obvious "wedlock;"
But that wasn't it.

No! mine was a joke for the ages;
Full of intricate meaning and pith;
A feast for your scholars and sages –
How it would have rejoiced Sidney Smith!
'Tis such thoughts that ennoble a mortal;
And, singing him out from the herd,
Fling wide immortality's portal –
But what was the word?

Ah me! 'tis a bootless endeavour.
As the flight of a bird of the air
Is the flight of a joke you will never
See the same one again, you may swear.
'Twas my firstborn, and O how I prized it!
My darling, my treasure, my own!

FLIGHT.

This brain and none other devised it –
And now it has flown.

ON THE BEACH.

LINES BY A PRIVATE TUTOR.

When the young Augustus Edward
Has reluctantly gone bedward
(He's the urchin I am privileged to teach),
From my left-hand waistcoat pocket
I extract a batter'd locket
And I commune with it, walking on the beach.

I had often yearn'd for something
That would love me, e'en a dumb thing;
But such happiness seem'd always out of reach:
Little boys are off like arrows
With their little spades and barrows,
When they see me bearing down upon the beach;

And although I'm rather handsome,
Tiny babes, when I would dance 'em
On my arm, set up so horrible a screech
That I pitch them to their nurses
With (I fear me) mutter'd curses,
And resume my lucubrations on the beach.

And the rabbits won't come nigh me,
And the gulls observe and fly me,
And I doubt, upon my honour, if a leech
Would stick on me as on others,
And I know if I had brothers
They would cut me when we met upon the beach.

So at last I bought this trinket.
For (although I love to think it)
'Twasn't GIVEN me, with a pretty little speech:
No! I bought it of a pedlar,
Brown and wizen'd as a medlar,
Who was hawking odds and ends about the beach.

But I've managed, very nearly,
To believe that I was dearly

ON THE BEACH.

Loved by Somebody, who (blushing like a peach)
Flung it o'er me saying, "Wear it
For my sake" and I declare, it
Seldom strikes me that I bought it on the beach.

I can see myself revealing
Unsuspected depths of feeling,
As, in tones that half upbraid and half beseech,
I aver with what delight I
Would give anything my right eye –
For a souvenir of our stroll upon the beach.

O! that eye that never glisten'd
And that voice to which I've listen'd
But in fancy, how I dote upon them each!
How regardless what o'clock it
Is, I pore upon that locket
Which does not contain her portrait, on the beach!

As if something were inside it
I laboriously hide it,
And a rather pretty sermon you might preach
Upon Fantasy, selecting
For your "instance" the affecting
Tale of me and my proceedings on the beach.

I depict her, ah, how charming!
I portray myself alarming
Herby swearing I would "mount the deadly breach,"
Or engage in any scrimmage
For a glimpse of her sweet image,
Or her shadow, or her footprint on the beach.

And I'm ever ever seeing
My imaginary Being,
And I'd rather that my marrowbones should bleach
In the winds, than that a cruel
Fate should snatch from me the jewel
Which I bought for one and sixpence on the beach.

LOVERS, AND A REFLECTION.

In moss-prankt dells which the sunbeams flatter

Fly Leaves

(And heaven it knoweth what that may mean:
Meaning, however, is no great matter)
Where woods are a-tremble, with rifts atween;

Thro' God's own heather we wonn'd together,
I and my Willie (O love my love):
I need hardly remark it was glorious weather,
And flutterbats waver'd alow, above:

Boats were curtseying, rising, bowing,
(Boats in that climate are so polite),
And sands were a ribbon of green endowing,
And O the sundazzle on bark and bight!

Thro' the rare red heather we danced together,
(O love my Willie!) and smelt for flowers:
I must mention again it was gorgeous weather,
Rhymes are so scarce in this world of ours:—

By rises that flush'd with their purple favours,
Thro' becks that brattled o'er grasses sheen,
We walked and waded, we two young shavers,
Thanking our stars we were both so green.

We journeyed in parallels, I and Willie,
In fortunate parallels! Butterflies,
Hid in weltering shadows of daffodilly
Or marjoram, kept making peacock eyes:

Songbirds darted about, some inky
As coal, some snowy (I ween) as curds;
Or rosy as pinks, or as roses pinky —
They reck of no eerie To-come, those birds!

But they skim over bents which the midstream washes,
Or hang in the lift 'neath a white cloud's hem;
They need no parasols, no goloshes;
And good Mrs. Trimmer she feedeth them.

Then we thrid God's cowslips (as erst His heather)
That endowed the wan grass with their golden blooms;
And snapt (it was perfectly charming weather) —
Our fingers at Fate and her goddess-glooms:

And Willie 'gan sing (O, his notes were fluty;
Wafts fluttered them out to the white-wing'd sea) —
Something made up of rhymes that have done much duty,
Rhymes (better to put it) of "ancientry:"

Bowers of flowers encounter'd showers
In William's carol (O love my Willie!)

LOVERS, AND A REFLECTION.

Fly Leaves

Then he bade sorrow borrow from blithe to-morrow
I quite forget what say a daffodilly:

A nest in a hollow, "with buds to follow,"
I think occurred next in his nimble strain;
And clay that was "kneaden" of course in Eden –
A rhyme most novel, I do maintain:

Mists, bones, the singer himself, love-stories,
And all least furlable things got "furled;"
Not with any design to conceal their "glories,"
But simply and solely to rhyme with "world."

* * *

O if billows and pillows and hours and flowers,
And all the brave rhymes of an elder day,
Could be furled together, this genial weather,
And carted, or carried on "wafts" away,
Nor ever again trotted out ah me!
How much fewer volumes of verse there'd be!

THE COCK AND THE BULL.

You see this pebble-stone? It's a thing I bought
Of a bit of a chit of a boy i' the mid o' the day –
I like to dock the smaller parts-o'-speech,
As we curtail the already cur-tail'd cur
(You catch the paronomasia, play 'po' words?)
Did, rather, i' the pre-Landseerian days.
Well, to my muttuns. I purchased the concern,
And clapt it i' my poke, having given for same
By way o' chop, swop, barter or exchange –
'Chop' was my snickering dandiprat's own term –
One shilling and fourpence, current coin o' the realm.
O-n-e one and f-o-u-r four
Pence, one and fourpence you are with me, sir? –
What hour it skills not: ten or eleven o' the clock,
One day (and what a roaring day it was
Go shop or sight-see bar a spit o' rain!)
In February, eighteen sixty nine,
Alexandrina Victoria, Fidei
Hm hm how runs the jargon? being on throne.

THE COCK AND THE BULL.

Such, sir, are all the facts, succinctly put,
 The basis or substratum what you will –
 Of the impending eighty thousand lines.
 "Not much in 'em either," quoth perhaps simple Hodge.
 But there's a superstructure. Wait a bit.

Mark first the rationale of the thing:
 Hear logic rivel and levigate the deed.
 That shilling and for matter o' that, the pence –
 I had o' course upo' me wi' me say –
 (Mecum's the Latin, make a note o' that)
 When I popp'd pen i' stand, scratch'd ear, wiped snout,
 (Let everybody wipe his own himself)
 Sniff'd tch! at snuffbox; tumbled up, he–heed,
 Haw–haw'd (not hee–haw'd, that's another guess thing:)
 Then fumbled at, and stumbled out of, door,
 I shoved the timber ope wi' my omoplat;
 And in vestibulo, i' the lobby to–wit,
 (Iacobi Facciolati's rendering, sir,)
 Donn'd galligaskins, antigropeloes,
 And so forth; and, complete with hat and gloves,
 One on and one a–dangle i' my hand,
 And ombrifuge (Lord love you!), case o' rain,
 I flopp'd forth, 'sbuddikins! on my own ten toes,
 (I do assure you there be ten of them),
 And went clump–clumping up hill and down dale
 To find myself o' the sudden i' front o' the boy.
 Put case I hadn't 'em on me, could I ha' bought
 This sort–o'–kind–o'–what–you–might–call toy,
 This pebble–thing, o' the boy–thing? Q. E. D.
 That's proven without aid from mumping Pope,
 Sleek porporate or bloated Cardinal.
 (Isn't it, old Fatchaps? You're in Euclid now.)
 So, having the shilling having i' fact a lot –
 And pence and halfpence, ever so many o' them,
 I purchased, as I think I said before,
 The pebble (lapis, lapidis, –di, –dem, –de –
 What nouns 'crease short i' the genitive, Fatchaps, eh?)
 O' the boy, a bare–legg'd beggarly son of a gun,
 For one–and–fourpence. Here we are again.

Now Law steps in, bigwigg'd, voluminous–jaw'd;
 Investigates and re–investigates.
 Was the transaction illegal? Law shakes head.
 Perpend, sir, all the bearings of the case.

At first the coin was mine, the chattel his.
 But now (by virtue of the said exchange
 And barter) vice versa all the coin,
 Per juris operationem, vests
 I' the boy and his assigns till ding o' doom;

(In saecula saeculo—o—o—orum;
 I think I hear the Abate mouth out that.)
 To have and hold the same to him and them . . .
 Confer some idiot on Conveyancing.
 Whereas the pebble and every part thereof,
 And all that appertaineth thereunto,
 Quodcunque pertinet ad eam rem,
 (I fancy, sir, my Latin's rather pat)
 Or shall, will, may, might, can, could, would or should,
 (Subaudi caetera clap we to the close —
 For what's the good of law in a case o' the kind)
 Is mine to all intents and purposes.
 This settled, I resume the thread o' the tale.

Now for a touch o' the vendor's quality.
 He says a gen'lman bought a pebble of him,
 (This pebble i' sooth, sir, which I hold i' my hand) —
 And paid for't, LIKE a gen'lman, on the nail.
 "Did I o'ercharge him a ha'penny? Devil a bit.
 Fiddlepin's end! Got out, you blazing ass!
 Gabble o' the goose. Don't bugaboo—baby ME!
 Go double or quits? Yah! tittup! what's the odds?"
 There's the transaction view'd i' the vendor's light.

Next ask that dumped hag, stood snuffling by,
 With her three frowsy blowsy brats o' babes,
 The scum o' the kennel, cream o' the filth—heap Faugh!
 Aie, aie, aie, aie! ot?t?t?toi,
 ('Stead which we blurt out Hoighty toighty now) —
 And the baker and candlestickmaker, and Jack and Gill,
 Blear'd Goody this and queasy Gaffer that.
 Ask the schoolmaster. Take schoolmaster first.

He saw a gentleman purchase of a lad
 A stone, and pay for it rite, on the square,
 And carry it off per saltum, jauntily,
 Propria quae maribus, gentleman's property now
 (Agreeably to the law explain'd above),
 In proprium usum, for his private ends.
 The boy he chuck'd a brown i' the air, and bit
 I' the face the shilling: heaved a thumping stone
 At a lean hen that ran cluck clucking by,
 (And hit her, dead as nail i' post o' door.)
 Then abiit what's the Ciceronian phrase? —
 Excessit, evasit, erupit off slogs boy;
 Off like bird, avi similis (you observed
 The dative? Pretty i' the Mantuan!) Anglice
 Off in three flea skips. Hactenus, so far,
 So good, tam bene. Bene, satis, male —,
 Where was I with my trope 'bout one in a quag?
 I did once hitch the syntax into verse:

Verbum personale, a verb personal,
Concordat ay, "agrees," old Fatchaps cum
Nominativo, with its nominative,
Genere, i' point o' gender, numero,
O' number, et persona, and person. Ut,
Instance: Sol ruit, down flops sun, et and,
Montes umbrantur, out flounce mountains. Pah!
Excuse me, sir, I think I'm going mad.
You see the trick on't though, and can yourself
Continue the discourse ad libitum.
It takes up about eighty thousand lines,
A thing imagination boggles at:
And might, odds-bobs, sir! in judicious hands,
Extend from here to Mesopotamy.

AN EXAMINATION PAPER.

"THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF THE PICKWICK CLUB."
Cambridge, 1857.

1. Mention any occasions on which it is specified that the Fat Boy was NOT asleep; and that (1) Mr. Pickwick and (2) Mr. Weller, senr., ran. Deduce from expressions used on one occasion Mr. Pickwick's maximum of speed.

2. Translate into coherent English, adding a note wherever a word, a construction, or an allusion, requires it:

"Go on, Jemmy like black-eyed Susan all in the Downs" "Smart chap that cabman handled his fives well but if I'd been your friend in the green jemmy punch his head pig's whisper pieman, too."

Elucidate the expression, "the Spanish Traveller," and the "narcotic bedstead."

3. Who were Mr. Staple, Goodwin, Mr. Brooks, Villam, Mrs. Bunkin, "old Nobs," "cast-iron head," "young Bantam?"

4. What operation was performed on Tom Smart's chair? Who little thinks that in which pocket, of what garment, in where, he has left what, entreating him to return to whom, with how many what, and all how big?

Fly Leaves

5. Give, approximately, the height of Mr. Dubbley; and, accurately, the Christian names of Mr. Grummer, Mrs. Raddle, and the fat Boy; also the surname of the Zephyr.
6. "Mr. Weller's knowledge of London was extensive and peculiar." Illustrate this by a reference to the facts.
7. Describe the Rebellion which had irritated Mr. Nupkins on the day of Mr. Pickwick's arrest?
8. Give in full Samuel Weller's first compliment to Mary, and his father's critique upon the same young lady. What church was on the valentine that first attracted Mr. Samuel's eye in the shop?
9. Describe the common Profeel-machine.
10. State the component parts of dog's nose; and simplify the expression "taking a grinder."
11. On finding his principal in the pound, Mr. Weller and the town-beadle varied directly. Show that the latter was ultimately eliminated, and state the number of rounds in the square which is not described.
12. "Any think for air and exercise; as the wery old donkey observed ven they yoke him up from his deathbed to carry ten gen'lmen to Greenwich in a tax-cart." Illustrate this by stating any remark recorded in the Pickwick Papers to have been made by a (previously) dumb animal, with the circumstances under which he made it.
13. What kind of cigars did Mr. Ben Allen chiefly smoke, and where did he knock and take naps alternately, under the impression that it was his home?
14. What was the ordinary occupation of Mr. Sawyer's boy? whence did Mr. Allen derive the idea that there was a special destiny between Mr. S. and Arabella?
15. Describe Weller's Method of "gently indicating his presence" to the young lady in the garden; and the Form of Salutation usual among the coachmen of the period.
16. State any incidents you know in the career of Tom Martin, butcher, previous to his incarceration.
17. Give Weller's Theories for the extraction of Mr. Pickwick from the Fleet. Where was his wife's will found?
18. How did the old lady make a memorandum, and of what, at whist? Show that there were at least three times as many fiddles as harps

Fly Leaves

in Muggleton at the time of the ball at Manor Farm.

19. What is a red-faced Nixon?

20. Write down the chorus to each verse of Mr. S. Weller's song, and a sketch of the mottle-faced man's excursus on it. Is there any ground for conjecturing that he (Sam) had more brothers than one?

21. How many lumps of sugar went into the Shepherd's liquor as a rule? and is any exception recorded?

22. What seal was on Mr. Winkle's letter to his father? What penitential attitude did he assume before Mr. Pickwick?

23. "She's a swelling visibly." When did the same phenomenon occur again, and what fluid caused the pressure on the body in the latter case?

24. How did Mr. Weller, senior, define the Funds, and what view did he take of Reduced Consols? in what terms is his elastic force described, when he assaulted Mr. Stiggins at the meeting? Write down the name of the meeting?

25. "[Greek text]: a good judge of cattle; hence, a good judge of character." Note on AEsch. Ag. Illustrate the theory involved by a remark of the parent Weller.

26. Give some account of the word "fanteeg," and hazard any conjecture explanatory of the expression "My Prooshan Blue," applied by Mr. Samuel to Mr. Tony Weller.

27. In developing to P. M. his views of a proposition, what assumption did Mr. Pickwick feel justified in making?

28. Deduce from a remark of Mr. Weller, junior, the price per mile of cabs at the period.

29. What do you know of the hotel next the Bull at Rochester?

30. Who, besides Mr. Pickwick, is recorded to have worn gaiters?

KEY TO THE 'PICKWICK' EXAMINATION PAPER.

1. See Chapters IV., VIII., XXVIII., LIV.
(1), IV., XXX. (twice), XXXIX.
(2), LVI.

2. Two of Jingle's speeches are here quoted, the first being in Chapter III., and the second in Chapter II. For "Spanish traveller"

AN EXAMINATION PAPER.

Fly Leaves

see Chapter III., and for "narcotic bedstead" see Chapter XLI. "Go on, Jemmy," is Mr. Jingle's adjuration to the actor whom he has previously designated "Dismal Jemmy," urging the commencement of the 'Stroller's Tale.' "Like black-eyed Susan all in the Downs" has the double application to the stroller's melancholy and the first line of Gay's song of 'Black-eyed Susan' "All in the Downs the fleet was moored." "Handled his fives well" of course refers to the "sparring" of the cabman who wanted to fight Mr. Pickwick. "Friend in the green jemmy" refers to Mr. Winkle, who, we are told in Chapter I., "wore a new green shooting-coat," "Pig's whisper" is slang for a very brief space of time. Bartlett says the Americans have "pig's whistle" the same signification.

3. See Chapters VII., XVIII., XIX., XXII., XXXIV., XXXVII., XXXVI., XLIV.

4. See two several parts of 'The Bagman's Story' in Chapter XIV.

5. See Chapters XXIV., XXV., XLVI., VIII., XLI.

6. See Chapter XX.

7. See Chapter XXIV.

8. See Chapters XXV., LVI., XXXIII.

9. See Chapter XXXIII.

10. See Chapters XXXIII. and XXXI.

11. See the end of Chapter XIX.

12. Illustrations will be found severally in Chapters XXXIII., XXXV., XLVII.

13. See Chapters XXX. and XXXII.

14. See two separate passages in Chapter XXXVIII.

15. See Chapters XXXIX. and XLIII.

16. See Chapter XLII.

17. See Chapters XLIII., XLV., LV.

18. See Chapters VI. and XXVIII.

19. See Chapter XLIII. "You've been a prophesyin' away very fine like a red-faced Nixon as the sixpenny books gives picters on." The allusion is to Robert Nixon, the Cheshire prophet. See Notes and Queries, first series, vol. viii., pp. 257 and 326; and fourth

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series, vol. xi., pp. 171 and 265. Nixon's prophecies have been frequently published in the form of chapbooks, and were probably current at the time with a highly-coloured portrait.

20. The first requisition may be complied with by reference to Chapter XLIII. The following is answered in Chapter X.

21. See Chapters XLV. and LII.

22. See Chapters L. and XLVII.

23. See Chapters XXXIII. and XLV.

24. The first two questions are answered in Chapters LII. and LV. The next is answered at the end of Chapter XXXIII.; where also is the information lastly required.

25. The illustration required is in Chapter LV.

26. See Chapters XXXVIII. and XXXIII. "Fanteeg, a worry or bustle. Also, ill-humour. Various Dialects." HALLIWELL. "Prooshan blue" probably refers to the colour of dress-coats. "Which gentleman of your party wears a bright blue dress-coat?" enquires The Boots, in 'Pickwick,' Chapter II. Thus Sam Weller's "Prooshan Blue" is a finely-dressed fellow of the Pickwick-Weller period.

27. See Chapter XXIV.

28. See the opening of Chapter XXII.

29. See Chapter II.

30. See Chapter XX.