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Songs of a Savoyard

by W. S. Gilbert

June, 1997 [Etext #934]

Project Gutenberg's Etext of Songs of a Savoyard by W. S. Gilbert
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Songs of a Savoyard by W. S. Gilbert

Scanned and proofed by David Price, email ccx074@coventry.ac.uk

Songs of a Savoyard

Contents:

The Darned Mounseer
The Englishman
The Disagreeable Man
The Coming By-And-By
The Highly Respectable Gondolier
The Fairy Queen's Song
Is Life A Boon
The Modern Major-General
The Heavy Dragoon
Proper Pride
The Policeman's Lot
The Baffled Grumbler
The House Of Peers
A Merry Madrigal
The Duke And The Duchess
Eheu Fugaces -!
They'll None Of 'Em Be Missed
Girl Graduates
Braid The Raven Hair
The Working Monarch
The Ape And The Lady
Only Roses
The Rover's Apology
An Appeal
The Reward Of Merit
The Magnet And The Churn
The Family Fool
Sans Souci
A Recipe
The Merryman And His Maid
The Susceptible Chancellor
When A Merry Maiden Marries
The British Tar
A Man Who Would Woo A Fair Maid
The Sorcerer's Song
The Fickle Breeze
The First Lord's Song
Would You Know?
Speculation
Ah Me!
The Duke Of Plaza-Toro
The Aesthete
Said I To Myself, Said I
Sorry Her Lot
The Contemplative Sentry
The Philosophic Pill

Blue Blood
The Judge's Song
When I First Put This Uniform On
Solatium
A Nightmare
Don't Forget!
The Suicide's Grave
He And She
The Mighty Must
A Mirage
The Ghosts' High Noon
The Humane Mikado
Willow Waly!
Life Is Lovely All The Year
The Usher's Charge
The Great Oak Tree
King Goodheart
Sleep On!
The Love-Sick Boy
Poetry Everywhere
He Loves!
True Diffidence
The Tangled Skein
My Lady
One Against The World
Put A Penny In The Slot
Good Little Girls
Life
Limited Liability
Anglicised Utopia
An English Girl
A Manager's Perplexities
Out Of Sorts
How It's Done
A Classical Revival
The Practical Joker
The National Anthem
Her Terms
The Independent Bee
The Disconcerted Tenor
The Played-Out Humorist

Ballad: The Darned Mounseer

I shipped, d'ye see, in a Revenue sloop,
And, off Cape Finisteere,
A merchantman we see,
A Frenchman, going free,
So we made for the bold Mounseer,

D'ye see?
We made for the bold Mounseer!
But she proved to be a Frigate - and she up with her ports,
And fires with a thirty-two!
It come uncommon near,
But we answered with a cheer,
Which paralysed the Parley-voo,
D'ye see?
Which paralysed the Parley-voo!

Then our Captain he up and he says, says he,
"That chap we need not fear, -
We can take her, if we like,
She is sartin for to strike,
For she's only a darned Mounseer,
D'ye see?
She's only a darned Mounseer!
But to fight a French fal-lal - it's like hittin' of a gal -
It's a lubberly thing for to do;
For we, with all our faults,
Why, we're sturdy British salts,
While she's but a Parley-voo,
D'ye see?
A miserable Parley-voo!"

So we up with our helm, and we scuds before the breeze,
As we gives a compassionating cheer;
Froggee answers with a shout
As he sees us go about,
Which was grateful of the poor Mounseer,
D'ye see?
Which was grateful of the poor Mounseer!
And I'll wager in their joy they kissed each other's cheek
(Which is what them furriners do),
And they blessed their lucky stars
We were hardy British tars
Who had pity on a poor Parley-voo,
D'ye see?
Who had pity on a poor Parley-voo!

Ballad: The Englishman

He is an Englishman!
For he himself has said it,
And it's greatly to his credit,
That he is an Englishman!
For he might have been a Roosian,
A French, or Turk, or Proosian,
Or perhaps Itali-an!

But in spite of all temptations,
To belong to other nations,
He remains an Englishman!
Hurrah!
For the true-born Englishman!

Ballad: The Disagreeable Man

If you give me your attention, I will tell you what I am:
I'm a genuine philanthropist - all other kinds are sham.
Each little fault of temper and each social defect
In my erring fellow-creatures, I endeavour to correct.
To all their little weaknesses I open people's eyes,
And little plans to snub the self-sufficient I devise;
I love my fellow-creatures - I do all the good I can -
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!
And I can't think why!

To compliments inflated I've a withering reply,
And vanity I always do my best to mortify;
A charitable action I can skilfully dissect;
And interested motives I'm delighted to detect.
I know everybody's income and what everybody earns,
And I carefully compare it with the income-tax returns;
But to benefit humanity, however much I plan,
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!
And I can't think why!

I'm sure I'm no ascetic; I'm as pleasant as can be;
You'll always find me ready with a crushing repartee;
I've an irritating chuckle, I've a celebrated sneer,
I've an entertaining snigger, I've a fascinating leer;
To everybody's prejudice I know a thing or two;
I can tell a woman's age in half a minute - and I do -
But although I try to make myself as pleasant as I can,
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!
And I can't think why!

Ballad: The Coming By-And-By

Sad is that woman's lot who, year by year,
Sees, one by one, her beauties disappear;
As Time, grown weary of her heart-drawn sighs,
Impatiently begins to "dim her eyes"! -
Herself compelled, in life's uncertain gloamings,

To wreath her wrinkled brow with well-saved "combings" -
Reduced, with rouge, lipsalve, and pearly grey,
To "make up" for lost time, as best she may!

Silvered is the raven hair,
Spreading is the parting straight,
Mottled the complexion fair,
Halting is the youthful gait,

Hollow is the laughter free,
Spectacled the limpid eye,
Little will be left of me,
In the coming by-and-by!
Fading is the taper waist -
Shapeless grows the shapely limb,
And although securely laced,
Spreading is the figure trim!
Stouter than I used to be,
Still more corpulent grow I -
There will be too much of me
In the coming by-and-by!

Ballad: The Highly Respectable Gondolier

I stole the Prince, and I brought him here,
And left him, gaily prattling
With a highly respectable Gondolier,
Who promised the Royal babe to rear,
And teach him the trade of a timoneer
With his own beloved bratling.

Both of the babes were strong and stout,
And, considering all things, clever.
Of that there is no manner of doubt -
No probable, possible shadow of doubt -
No possible doubt whatever.

Time sped, and when at the end of a year
I sought that infant cherished,
That highly respectable Gondolier
Was lying a corpse on his humble bier -
I dropped a Grand Inquisitor's tear -
That Gondolier had perished!

A taste for drink, combined with gout,
Had doubled him up for ever.
Of THAT there is no manner of doubt -
No probable, possible shadow of doubt -
No possible doubt whatever.

But owing, I'm much disposed to fear,
To his terrible taste for tipping,
That highly respectable Gondolier
Could never declare with a mind sincere
Which of the two was his offspring dear,
And which the Royal stripling!

Which was which he could never make out,
Despite his best endeavour.
Of THAT there is no manner of doubt -
No probable, possible shadow of doubt -
No possible doubt whatever.

The children followed his old career -
(This statement can't be parried)
Of a highly respectable Gondolier:
Well, one of the two (who will soon be here) -
But WHICH of the two is not quite clear -
Is the Royal Prince you married!

Search in and out and round about
And you'll discover never
A tale so free from every doubt -
All probable, possible shadow of doubt -
All possible doubt whatever!

Ballad: The Fairy Queen's Song

Oh, foolish fay,
Think you because
Man's brave array
My bosom thaws
I'd disobey
Our fairy laws?
Because I fly
In realms above,
In tendency
To fall in love
Resemble I
The amorous dove?

Oh, amorous dove!
Type of Ovidius Naso!
This heart of mine
Is soft as thine,
Although I dare not say so!

On fire that glows

With heat intense
I turn the hose
Of Common Sense,
And out it goes
At small expense!
We must maintain
Our fairy law;
That is the main
On which to draw -
In that we gain
A Captain Shaw.

Oh, Captain Shaw!
Type of true love kept under!
Could thy Brigade
With cold cascade
Quench my great love, I wonder!

Ballad: Is Life A Boon

Is life a boon?
If so, it must befall
That Death, whene'er he call,
Must call too soon.
Though fourscore years he give
Yet one would pray to live
Another moon!
What kind of plaint have I,
Who perish in July?
I might have had to die
Perchance in June!

Is life a thorn?
Then count it not a whit!
Man is well done with it;
Soon as he's born
He should all means essay
To put the plague away;
And I, war-worn,
Poor captured fugitive,
My life most gladly give -
I might have had to live
Another morn!

Ballad: The Modern Major-General

I am the very pattern of a modern Major-General,
I've information vegetable, animal, and mineral;
I know the kings of England, and I quote the fights historical,
From Marathon to Waterloo, in order categorical;
I'm very well acquainted, too, with matters mathematical,
I understand equations, both the simple and quadratical;
About binomial theorem I'm teeming with a lot o' news,
With interesting facts about the square of the hypotenuse,
I'm very good at integral and differential calculus,
I know the scientific names of beings animalculous.
In short, in matters vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I am the very model of a modern Major-General.

I know our mythic history - KING ARTHUR'S and SIR CARADOC'S,
I answer hard acrostics, I've a pretty taste for paradox;
I quote in elegiacs all the crimes of HELIOGABALUS,
In conics I can floor peculiarities parabolous.
I tell undoubted RAPHAELS from GERARD DOWS and ZOFFANIES,
I know the croaking chorus from the "Frogs" of ARISTOPHANES;
Then I can hum a fugue, of which I've heard the music's din afore,
And whistle all the airs from that confounded nonsense "Pinafore."
Then I can write a washing-bill in Babylonian cuneiform,
And tell you every detail of CHARACTERUS'S uniform.
In short, in matters vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I am the very model of a modern Major-General.

In fact, when I know what is meant by "mamelon" and "ravelin,"
When I can tell at sight a Chassepot rifle from a javelin,
When such affairs as SORTIES and surprises I'm more wary at,
And when I know precisely what is meant by Commissariat,
When I have learnt what progress has been made in modern gunnery,
When I know more of tactics than a novice in a nunnery,
In short, when I've a smattering of elementary strategy,
You'll say a better Major-General has never SAT a gee -
For my military knowledge, though I'm plucky and adventury,
Has only been brought down to the beginning of the century.
But still in learning vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I am the very model of a modern Major-General!

Ballad: The Heavy Dragoon

If you want a receipt for that popular mystery,
Known to the world as a Heavy Dragoon,
Take all the remarkable people in history,
Rattle them off to a popular tune!
The pluck of LORD NELSON on board of the VICTORY -
Genius of BISMARCK devising a plan;
The humour of FIELDING (which sounds contradictory) -

Coolness of PAGET about to trepan -
The grace of MOZART, that unparalleled musico -
Wit of MACAULAY, who wrote of QUEEN ANNE -
The pathos of PADDY, as rendered by BOUCICAULT -
Style of the BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN -
The dash of a D'ORSAY, divested of quackery -
Narrative powers of DICKENS and THACKERAY -
VICTOR EMMANUEL - peak-haunting PEVERIL -
THOMAS AQUINAS, and DOCTOR SACHEVERELL -
TUPPER and TENNYSON - DANIEL DEFOE -
ANTHONY TROLLOPE and MISTER GUIZOT!
Take of these elements all that is fusible,
Melt 'em all down in a pipkin or crucible,
Set 'em to simmer and take off the scum,
And a Heavy Dragoon is the residuum!

If you want a receipt for this soldierlike paragon,
Get at the wealth of the CZAR (if you can) -
The family pride of a Spaniard from Arragon -
Force of MEPHISTO pronouncing a ban -
A smack of LORD WATERFORD, reckless and rollicky -
Swagger of RODERICK, heading his clan -
The keen penetration of PADDINGTON POLLAKY -
Grace of an Odalisque on a divan -
The genius strategic of CAESAR or HANNIBAL -
Skill of LORD WOLSELEY in thrashing a cannibal -
Flavour of HAMLET - the STRANGER, a touch of him -
Little of MANFRED (but not very much of him) -
Beadle of Burlington - RICHARDSON'S show -
MR. MICAWBER and MADAME TUSSAUD!
Take of these elements all that is fusible -
Melt 'em all down in a pipkin or crucible -
Set 'em to simmer and take off the scum,
And a Heavy Dragoon is the residuum!

Ballad: Proper Pride

The Sun, whose rays
Are all ablaze
With ever-living glory,
Will not deny
His majesty -
He scorns to tell a story:
He won't exclaim,
"I blush for shame,
So kindly be indulgent,"
But, fierce and bold,
In fiery gold,
He glories all effulgent!

I mean to rule the earth,
As he the sky -
We really know our worth,
The Sun and I!

Observe his flame,
That placid dame,
The Moon's Celestial Highness;
There's not a trace
Upon her face
Of diffidence or shyness:
She borrows light
That, through the night,
Mankind may all acclaim her!
And, truth to tell,
She lights up well,
So I, for one, don't blame her!

Ah, pray make no mistake,
We are not shy;
We're very wide awake,
The Moon and I!

Ballad: The Policeman's Lot

When a felon's not engaged in his employment,
Or maturing his felonious little plans,
His capacity for innocent enjoyment
Is just as great as any honest man's.
Our feelings we with difficulty smother
When constabulary duty's to be done:
Ah, take one consideration with another,
A policeman's lot is not a happy one!

When the enterprising burglar isn't burgling,
When the cut-throat isn't occupied in crime,
He loves to hear the little brook a-gurgling,
And listen to the merry village chime.
When the coster's finished jumping on his mother,
He loves to lie a-basking in the sun:
Ah, take one consideration with another,
The policeman's lot is not a happy one!

Ballad: The Baffled Grumbler

Whene'er I poke
Sarcastic joke
Replete with malice spiteful,
The people vile
Politely smile
And vote me quite delightful!
Now, when a wight
Sits up all night
Ill-natured jokes devising,
And all his wiles
Are met with smiles,
It's hard, there's no disguising!
Oh, don't the days seem lank and long
When all goes right and nothing goes wrong,
And isn't your life extremely flat
With nothing whatever to grumble at!

When German bands,
From music stands
Play Wagner imperFECTly -
I bid them go -
They don't say no,
But off they trot directly!
The organ boys
They stop their noise
With readiness surprising,
And grinning herds
Of hurdy-gurds
Retire apologising!
Oh, don't the days seem lank and long
When all goes right and nothing goes wrong,
And isn't your life extremely flat
With nothing whatever to grumble at!

I've offered gold,
In sums untold,
To all who'd contradict me -
I've said I'd pay
A pound a day
To any one who kicked me -
I've bribed with toys
Great vulgar boys
To utter something spiteful,
But, bless you, no!
They WILL be so
Confoundedly politeful!
In short, these aggravating lads,
They tickle my tastes, they feed my fads,
They give me this and they give me that,
And I've nothing whatever to grumble at!

Ballad: The House Of Peers

When Britain really ruled the waves -
(In good Queen Bess's time)
The House of Peers made no pretence
To intellectual eminence,
Or scholarship sublime;
Yet Britain won her proudest bays
In good Queen Bess's glorious days!

When Wellington thrashed Bonaparte,
As every child can tell,
The House of Peers, throughout the war,
Did nothing in particular,
And did it very well;
Yet Britain set the world ablaze
In good King George's glorious days!

And while the House of Peers withholds
Its legislative hand,
And noble statesmen do not itch
To interfere with matters which
They do not understand,
As bright will shine Great Britain's rays,
As in King George's glorious days!

Ballad: A Merry Madrigal

Brightly dawns our wedding day;
Joyous hour, we give thee greeting!
Whither, whither art thou fleeting?
Fickle moment, prithee stay!
What though mortal joys be hollow?
Pleasures come, if sorrows follow.
Though the tocsin sound, ere long,
Ding dong! Ding dong!
Yet until the shadows fall
Over one and over all,
Sing a merry madrigal -
Fal la!

Let us dry the ready tear;
Though the hours are surely creeping,
Little need for woeful weeping
Till the sad sundown is near.
All must sip the cup of sorrow,

I to-day and thou to-morrow:
This the close of every song -
Ding dong! Ding dong!
What though solemn shadows fall,
Sooner, later, over all?
Sing a merry madrigal -
Fal la!

Ballad: The Duke And The Duchess

[THE DUKE.]

Small titles and orders
For Mayors and Recorders
I get - and they're highly delighted.
M.P.s baroneted,
Sham Colonels gazetted,
And second-rate Aldermen knighted.
Foundation-stone laying
I find very paying,
It adds a large sum to my makings.
At charity dinners
The best of speech-spinners,
I get ten per cent on the takings!

[THE DUCHESS.]

I present any lady
Whose conduct is shady
Or smacking of doubtful propriety;
When Virtue would quash her
I take and whitewash her
And launch her in first-rate society.
I recommend acres
Of clumsy dressmakers -
Their fit and their finishing touches;
A sum in addition
They pay for permission
To say that they make for the Duchess!

[THE DUKE.]

Those pressing prevailers,
The ready-made tailors,
Quote me as their great double-barrel;
I allow them to do so,
Though ROBINSON CRUSOE
Would jib at their wearing apparel!
I sit, by selection,
Upon the direction
Of several Companies bubble;
As soon as they're floated

I'm freely bank-noted -
I'm pretty well paid for my trouble!

[THE DUCHESS.]

At middle-class party
I play at ECARTE -
And I'm by no means a beginner;
To one of my station
The remuneration -
Five guineas a night and my dinner.
I write letters blatant
On medicines patent -
And use any other you mustn't;
And vow my complexion
Derives its perfection
From somebody's soap - which it doesn't.

[THE DUKE.]

We're ready as witness
To any one's fitness
To fill any place or preferment;
We're often in waiting
At junket FETING,
And sometimes attend an interment.
In short, if you'd kindle
The spark of a swindle,
Lure simpletons into your clutches,
Or hoodwink a debtor,
You cannot do better
Than trot out a Duke or a Duchess!

Ballad: Eheu Fugaces -!

The air is charged with amatory numbers -
Soft madrigals, and dreamy lovers' lays.
Peace, peace, old heart! Why waken from its slumbers
The aching memory of the old, old days?

Time was when Love and I were well acquainted;
Time was when we walked ever hand in hand;
A saintly youth, with worldly thought untainted,
None better loved than I in all the land!
Time was, when maidens of the noblest station,
Forsaking even military men,
Would gaze upon me, rapt in adoration -
Ah me, I was a fair young curate then!

Had I a headache? sighed the maids assembled;
Had I a cold? welled forth the silent tear;

Did I look pale? then half a parish trembled;
And when I coughed all thought the end was near!
I had no care - no jealous doubts hung o'er me -
For I was loved beyond all other men.
Fled gilded dukes and belted earls before me -
Ah me, I was a pale young curate then!

Ballad: They'll None Of 'Em Be Missed

As some day it may happen that a victim must be found,
I've got a little list - I've got a little list
Of social offenders who might well be underground,
And who never would be missed - who never would be missed!
There's the pestilential nuisances who write for autographs -
All people who have flabby hands and irritating laughs -
All children who are up in dates, and floor you with 'em flat -
All persons who in shaking hands, shake hands with you like THAT -
And all third persons who on spoiling TETE-E-TETES insist -
They'd none of 'em be missed - they'd none of 'em be missed!

There's the nigger serenader, and the others of his race,
And the piano organist - I've got him on the list!
And the people who eat peppermint and puff it in your face,
They never would be missed - they never would be missed!
Then the idiot who praises, with enthusiastic tone,
All centuries but this, and every country but his own;
And the lady from the provinces, who dresses like a guy,
And who "doesn't think she waltzes, but would rather like to try";
And that FIN-DE-SIECLE anomaly, the scorching motorist -
I don't think he'd be missed - I'm SURE he'd not be missed!

And that NISI PRIUS nuisance, who just now is rather rife,
The Judicial humorist - I've got HIM on the list!
All funny fellows, comic men, and clowns of private life -
They'd none of 'em be missed - they'd none of 'em be missed!
And apologetic statesmen of the compromising kind,
Such as - What-d'ye-call-him - Thing'em-Bob, and likewise - Never-
mind,
And 'St - 'st - 'st - and What's-his-name, and also - You-know-who
-
(The task of filling up the blanks I'd rather leave to YOU!)
But it really doesn't matter whom you put upon the list,
For they'd none of 'em be missed - they'd none of 'em be missed!

Ballad: Girl Graduates

They intend to send a wire
To the moon;
And they'll set the Thames on fire
Very soon;
Then they learn to make silk purses
With their rigs
From the ears of LADY CIRCE'S
Piggy-wigs.
And weasels at their slumbers
They'll trepan;
To get sunbeams from cuCUMbers
They've a plan.
They've a firmly rooted notion
They can cross the Polar Ocean,
And they'll find Perpetual Motion
If they can!

These are the phenomena
That every pretty domina
Hopes that we shall see
At this Universitee!

As for fashion, they forswear it,
So they say,
And the circle - they will square it
Some fine day;
Then the little pigs they're teaching
For to fly;
And the niggers they'll be bleaching
By-and-by!
Each newly joined aspirant
To the clan
Must repudiate the tyrant
Known as Man;
They mock at him and flout him,
For they do not care about him,
And they're "going to do without him"
If they can!

These are the phenomena
That every pretty domina
Hopes that we shall see
At this Universitee!

Ballad: Braid The Raven Hair

Braid the raven hair,
Weave the supple tress,

Deck the maiden fair
In her loveliness;
Paint the pretty face,
Dye the coral lip,
Emphasise the grace
Of her ladyship!
Art and nature, thus allied,
Go to make a pretty bride!

Sit with downcast eye,
Let it brim with dew;
Try if you can cry,
We will do so, too.
When you're summoned, start
Like a frightened roe;
Flutter, little heart,
Colour, come and go!
Modesty at marriage tide
Well becomes a pretty bride!

Ballad: The Working Monarch

Rising early in the morning,
We proceed to light the fire,
Then our Majesty adorning
In its work-a-day attire,
We embark without delay
On the duties of the day.

First, we polish off some batches
Of political despatches,
And foreign politicians circumvent;
Then, if business isn't heavy,
We may hold a Royal LEVEE,
Or ratify some Acts of Parliament:
Then we probably review the household troops -
With the usual "Shaloo humps" and "Shaloo hoops!"
Or receive with ceremonial and state
An interesting Eastern Potentate.
After that we generally
Go and dress our private VALET -

(It's a rather nervous duty - he a touchy little man) -
Write some letters literary
For our private secretary -
(He is shaky in his spelling, so we help him if we can.)
Then, in view of cravings inner,
We go down and order dinner;
Or we polish the Regalia and the Coronation Plate -

Spend an hour in titivating
All our Gentlemen-in-Waiting;
Or we run on little errands for the Ministers of State.
Oh, philosophers may sing
Of the troubles of a King,
Yet the duties are delightful, and the privileges great;
But the privilege and pleasure
That we treasure beyond measure
Is to run on little errands for the Ministers of State!

After luncheon (making merry
On a bun and glass of sherry),
If we've nothing in particular to do,
We may make a Proclamation,
Or receive a Deputation -
Then we possibly create a Peer or two.
Then we help a fellow-creature on his path
With the Garter or the Thistle or the Bath:
Or we dress and toddle off in semi-State
To a festival, a function, or a FETE.
Then we go and stand as sentry
At the Palace (private entry),
Marching hither, marching thither, up and down and to and fro,
While the warrior on duty
Goes in search of beer and beauty
(And it generally happens that he hasn't far to go).
He relieves us, if he's able,
Just in time to lay the table.

Then we dine and serve the coffee; and at half-past twelve or one,
With a pleasure that's emphatic;
Then we seek our little attic
With the gratifying feeling that our duty has been done.
Oh, philosophers may sing
Of the troubles of a King,
But of pleasures there are many and of troubles there are none;
And the culminating pleasure
That we treasure beyond measure
Is the gratifying feeling that our duty has been done!

Ballad: The Ape And The Lady

A LADY fair, of lineage high,
Was loved by an Ape, in the days gone by -
The Maid was radiant as the sun,
The Ape was a most unsightly one -
So it would not do -
His scheme fell through;
For the Maid, when his love took formal shape,

Expressed such terror
At his monstrous error,
That he stammered an apology and made his 'scape,
The picture of a disconcerted Ape.

With a view to rise in the social scale,
He shaved his bristles, and he docked his tail,
He grew moustachios, and he took his tub,
And he paid a guinea to a toilet club.
But it would not do,
The scheme fell through -
For the Maid was Beauty's fairest Queen,
With golden tresses,
Like a real princess's,
While the Ape, despite his razor keen,
Was the apiest Ape that ever was seen!

He bought white ties, and he bought dress suits,
He crammed his feet into bright tight boots,
And to start his life on a brand-new plan,
He christened himself Darwinian Man!
But it would not do,
The scheme fell through -
For the Maiden fair, whom the monkey craved,
Was a radiant Being,
With a brain far-seeing -
While a Man, however well-behaved,
At best is only a monkey shaved!

Ballad: Only Roses

To a garden full of posies
Cometh one to gather flowers;
And he wanders through its bowers
Toying with the wanton roses,
Who, uprising from their beds,
Hold on high their shameless heads
With their pretty lips a-pouting,
Never doubting - never doubting
That for Cytherean posies
He would gather aught but roses.

In a nest of weeds and nettles,
Lay a violet, half hidden;
Hoping that his glance unbidden
Yet might fall upon her petals.
Though she lived alone, apart,
Hope lay nestling at her heart,
But, alas! the cruel awaking

Set her little heart a-breaking,
For he gathered for his posies
Only roses - only roses!

Ballad: The Rover's Apology

Oh, gentlemen, listen, I pray;
Though I own that my heart has been ranging,
Of nature the laws I obey,
For nature is constantly changing.
The moon in her phases is found,
The time and the wind and the weather,
The months in succession come round,
And you don't find two Mondays together.
Consider the moral, I pray,
Nor bring a young fellow to sorrow,
Who loves this young lady to-day,
And loves that young lady to-morrow!

You cannot eat breakfast all day.
Nor is it the act of a sinner,
When breakfast is taken away,
To turn your attention to dinner;
And it's not in the range of belief
That you could hold him as a glutton,
Who, when he is tired of beef,
Determines to tackle the mutton.
But this I am ready to say,
If it will diminish their sorrow,
I'll marry this lady to-day,
And I'll marry that lady to-morrow!

Ballad: An Appeal

Oh! is there not one maiden breast
Which does not feel the moral beauty
Of making worldly interest
Subordinate to sense of duty?
Who would not give up willingly
All matrimonial ambition
To rescue such a one as I
From his unfortunate position?

Oh, is there not one maiden here,
Whose homely face and bad complexion

Have caused all hopes to disappear
Of ever winning man's affection?
To such a one, if such there be,
I swear by heaven's arch above you,
If you will cast your eyes on me, -
However plain you be - I'll love you!

Ballad: The Reward Of Merit

DR. BELVILLE was regarded as the CRICHTON of his age:
His tragedies were reckoned much too thoughtful for the stage;
His poems held a noble rank, although it's very true
That, being very proper, they were read by very few.
He was a famous Painter, too, and shone upon the "line,"
And even MR. RUSKIN came and worshipped at his shrine;
But, alas, the school he followed was heroically high -
The kind of Art men rave about, but very seldom buy;
And everybody said
"How can he be repaid -
This very great - this very good - this very gifted man?"
But nobody could hit upon a practicable plan!

He was a great Inventor, and discovered, all alone,
A plan for making everybody's fortune but his own;
For, in business, an Inventor's little better than a fool,
And my highly-gifted friend was no exception to the rule.
His poems - people read them in the Quarterly Reviews -
His pictures - they engraved them in the ILLUSTRATED NEWS -
His inventions - they, perhaps, might have enriched him by degrees,
But all his little income went in Patent Office fees;
And everybody said
"How can he be repaid -
This very great - this very good - this very gifted man?"
But nobody could hit upon a practicable plan!

At last the point was given up in absolute despair,
When a distant cousin died, and he became a millionaire,
With a county seat in Parliament, a moor or two of grouse,
And a taste for making inconvenient speeches in the House!
THEN it flashed upon Britannia that the fittest of rewards
Was, to take him from the Commons and to put him in the Lords!
And who so fit to sit in it, deny it if you can,
As this very great - this very good - this very gifted man?
(Though I'm more than half afraid
That it sometimes may be said
That we never should have revelled in that source of proper pride,
However great his merits - if his cousin hadn't died!)

Ballad: The Magnet And The Churn

A MAGNET hung in a hardware shop,
And all around was a loving crop
Of scissors and needles, nails and knives,
Offering love for all their lives;
But for iron the Magnet felt no whim,
Though he charmed iron, it charmed not him,
From needles and nails and knives he'd turn,
For he'd set his love on a Silver Churn!
His most aesthetic,
Very magnetic
Fancy took this turn -
"If I can wheedle
A knife or needle,
Why not a Silver Churn?"

And Iron and Steel expressed surprise,
The needles opened their well-drilled eyes,
The pen-knives felt "shut up," no doubt,
The scissors declared themselves "cut out,"
The kettles they boiled with rage, 'tis said,
While every nail went off its head,
And hither and thither began to roam,
Till a hammer came up - and drove it home,
While this magnetic
Peripatetic
Lover he lived to learn,
By no endeavour,
Can Magnet ever
Attract a Silver Churn!

Ballad: The Family Fool

Oh! a private buffoon is a light-hearted loon,
If you listen to popular rumour;
From morning to night he's so joyous and bright,
And he bubbles with wit and good humour!
He's so quaint and so terse, both in prose and in verse;
Yet though people forgive his transgression,
There are one or two rules that all Family Fools
Must observe, if they love their profession.
There are one or two rules,
Half-a-dozen, maybe,
That all family fools,
Of whatever degree,

Must observe if they love their profession.

If you wish to succeed as a jester, you'll need
To consider each person's auricular:
What is all right for B would quite scandalise C
(For C is so very particular);
And D may be dull, and E's very thick skull
Is as empty of brains as a ladle;
While F is F sharp, and will cry with a carp,
That he's known your best joke from his cradle!
When your humour they flout,
You can't let yourself go;
And it DOES put you out
When a person says, "Oh!
I have known that old joke from my cradle!"

If your master is surly, from getting up early
(And tempers are short in the morning),
An inopportune joke is enough to provoke
Him to give you, at once, a month's warning.
Then if you refrain, he is at you again,
For he likes to get value for money:
He'll ask then and there, with an insolent stare,
"If you know that you're paid to be funny?"
It adds to the tasks
Of a merryman's place,
When your principal asks,
With a scowl on his face,
If you know that you're paid to be funny?

Comes a Bishop, maybe, or a solemn D.D. -
Oh, beware of his anger provoking!
Better not pull his hair - don't stick pins in his chair;
He won't understand practical joking.
If the jests that you crack have an orthodox smack,
You may get a bland smile from these sages;
But should it, by chance, be imported from France,
Half-a-crown is stopped out of your wages!
It's a general rule,
Though your zeal it may quench,
If the Family Fool
Makes a joke that's TOO French,
Half-a-crown is stopped out of his wages!

Though your head it may rack with a bilious attack,
And your senses with toothache you're losing,
And you're mopy and flat - they don't fine you for that
If you're properly quaint and amusing!
Though your wife ran away with a soldier that day,
And took with her your trifle of money;
Bless your heart, they don't mind - they're exceedingly kind -
They don't blame you - as long as you're funny!
It's a comfort to feel

If your partner should flit,
Though YOU suffer a deal,
THEY don't mind it a bit -
They don't blame you - so long as you're funny!

Ballad: Sans Souci

I cannot tell what this love may be
That cometh to all but not to me.
It cannot be kind as they'd imply,
Or why do these gentle ladies sigh?
It cannot be joy and rapture deep,
Or why do these gentle ladies weep?
It cannot be blissful, as 'tis said,
Or why are their eyes so wondrous red?

If love is a thorn, they show no wit
Who foolishly hug and foster it.
If love is a weed, how simple they
Who gather and gather it, day by day!
If love is a nettle that makes you smart,
Why do you wear it next your heart?
And if it be neither of these, say I,
Why do you sit and sob and sigh?

Ballad: A Recipe

Take a pair of sparkling eyes,
Hidden, ever and anon,
In a merciful eclipse -
Do not heed their mild surprise -
Having passed the Rubicon.
Take a pair of rosy lips;
Take a figure trimly planned -
Such as admiration whets
(Be particular in this);
Take a tender little hand,
Fringed with dainty fingerettes,
Press it - in parenthesis; -
Take all these, you lucky man -
Take and keep them, if you can.

Take a pretty little cot -
Quite a miniature affair -
Hung about with trellised vine,

Furnish it upon the spot
With the treasures rich and rare
I've endeavoured to define.
Live to love and love to live -
You will ripen at your ease,
Growing on the sunny side -
Fate has nothing more to give.
You're a dainty man to please
If you are not satisfied.
Take my counsel, happy man:
Act upon it, if you can!

Ballad: The Merryman And His Maid

[HE] I have a song to sing, O!
[SHE] Sing me your song, O!
[HE] It is sung to the moon
By a love-lorn loon,
Who fled from the mocking throng, O!
It's the song of a merryman, moping mum,
Whose soul was sad, whose glance was glum,
Who sipped no sup, and who craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a ladye.
Heighdy! heighdy!
Misery me - lackadaydee!
He sipped no sup, and he craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a ladye!

[SHE] I have a song to sing, O!
[HE] Sing me your song, O!
[SHE] It is sung with the ring
Of the song maids sing
Who love with a love life-long, O!
It's the song of a merrymaid, peerly proud,
Who loved a lord, and who laughed aloud
At the moan of the merryman, moping mum,
Whose soul was sore, whose glance was glum,
Who sipped no sup, and who craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a ladye!
Heighdy! heighdy!
Misery me - lackadaydee!
He sipped no sup, and he craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a ladye!

[HE] I have a song to sing, O!
[SHE] Sing me your song, O!
[HE] It is sung to the knell
Of a churchyard bell,
And a doleful dirge, ding dong, O!

It's a song of a popinjay, bravely born,
Who turned up his noble nose with scorn
At the humble merrymaid, peerly proud,
Who loved that lord, and who laughed aloud
At the moan of the merryman, moping mum,
Whose soul was sad, whose glance was glum,
Who sipped no sup, and who craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a ladye!
Heighdy! heighdy!
Misery me - lackadaydee!
He sipped no sup, and he craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a ladye!

[SHE] I have a song to sing, O!
[HE] Sing me your song, O!
[SHE] It is sung with a sigh
And a tear in the eye,
For it tells of a righted wrong, O!
It's a song of a merrymaid, once so gay,
Who turned on her heel and tripped away
From the peacock popinjay, bravely born,
Who turned up his noble nose with scorn
At the humble heart that he did not prize;
And it tells how she begged, with downcast eyes,
For the love of a merryman, moping mum,
Whose soul was sad, whose glance was glum,
Who sipped no sup, and who craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a ladye!
[BOTH] Heighdy! heighdy!
Misery me - lackadaydee!
His pains were o'er, and he sighed no more.
For he lived in the love of a ladye!

Ballad: The Susceptible Chancellor

The law is the true embodiment
Of everything that's excellent.
It has no kind of fault or flaw,
And I, my lords, embody the Law.
The constitutional guardian I
Of pretty young Wards in Chancery,
All very agreeable girls - and none
Is over the age of twenty-one.
A pleasant occupation for
A rather susceptible Chancellor!

But though the compliment implied
Inflates me with legitimate pride,
It nevertheless can't be denied

That it has its inconvenient side.
For I'm not so old, and not so plain,
And I'm quite prepared to marry again,
But there'd be the deuce to pay in the Lords
If I fell in love with one of my Wards:
Which rather tries my temper, for
I'm SUCH a susceptible Chancellor!

And every one who'd marry a Ward
Must come to me for my accord:
So in my court I sit all day,
Giving agreeable girls away,
With one for him - and one for he -
And one for you - and one for ye -
And one for thou - and one for thee -
But never, oh never a one for me!
Which is exasperating, for
A highly susceptible Chancellor!

Ballad: When A Merry Maiden Marries

When a merry maiden marries,
Sorrow goes and pleasure tarries;
Every sound becomes a song,
All is right and nothing's wrong!
From to-day and ever after
Let your tears be tears of laughter -
Every sigh that finds a vent
Be a sigh of sweet content!
When you marry merry maiden,
Then the air with love is laden;
Every flower is a rose,
Every goose becomes a swan,
Every kind of trouble goes
Where the last year's snows have gone;
Sunlight takes the place of shade
When you marry merry maid!

When a merry maiden marries
Sorrow goes and pleasure tarries;
Every sound becomes a song,
All is right, and nothing's wrong.
Gnawing Care and aching Sorrow,
Get ye gone until to-morrow;
Jealousies in grim array,
Ye are things of yesterday!
When you marry merry maiden,
Then the air with joy is laden;
All the corners of the earth

Ring with music sweetly played,
Worry is melodious mirth,
Grief is joy in masquerade;
Sullen night is laughing day -
All the year is merry May!

Ballad: The British Tar

A British tar is a soaring soul,
As free as a mountain bird,
His energetic fist should be ready to resist
A dictatorial word.
His nose should pant and his lip should curl,
His cheeks should flame and his brow should furl,
His bosom should heave and his heart should glow,
And his fist be ever ready for a knock-down blow.

His eyes should flash with an inborn fire,
His brow with scorn be rung;
He never should bow down to a domineering frown,
Or the tang of a tyrant tongue.
His foot should stamp and his throat should growl,
His hair should twirl and his face should scowl;
His eyes should flash and his breast protrude,
And this should be his customary attitude!

Ballad: A Man Who Would Woo A Fair Maid

A man who would woo a fair maid,
Should 'prentice himself to the trade;
And study all day,
In methodical way,
How to flatter, cajole, and persuade.
He should 'prentice himself at fourteen
And practise from morning to e'en;
And when he's of age,
If he will, I'll engage,
He may capture the heart of a queen!
It is purely a matter of skill,
Which all may attain if they will:
But every Jack
He must study the knack
If he wants to make sure of his Jill!

If he's made the best use of his time,

His twig he'll so carefully lime
That every bird
Will come down at his word.
Whatever its plumage and clime.
He must learn that the thrill of a touch
May mean little, or nothing, or much;
It's an instrument rare,
To be handled with care,
And ought to be treated as such.
It is purely a matter of skill,
Which all may attain if they will:
But every Jack,
He must study the knack
If he wants to make sure of his Jill!

Then a glance may be timid or free;
It will vary in mighty degree,
From an impudent stare
To a look of despair
That no maid without pity can see.
And a glance of despair is no guide -
It may have its ridiculous side;
It may draw you a tear
Or a box on the ear;
You can never be sure till you've tried.
It is purely a matter of skill,
Which all may attain if they will:
But every Jack
He must study the knack
If he wants to make sure of his Jill!

Ballad: The Sorcerer's Song

Oh! my name is JOHN WELLINGTON WELLS -
I'm a dealer in magic and spells,
In blessings and curses,
And ever-filled purses,
In prophecies, witches, and knells!
If you want a proud foe to "make tracks" -
If you'd melt a rich uncle in wax -
You've but to look in
On our resident Djinn,
Number seventy, Simmery Axe.

We've a first-class assortment of magic;
And for raising a posthumous shade
With effects that are comic or tragic,
There's no cheaper house in the trade.
Love-philtre - we've quantities of it;

And for knowledge if any one burns,
We keep an extremely small prophet, a prophet
Who brings us unbounded returns:
For he can prophesy
With a wink OF his eye,
Peep with security
Into futurity,
Sum up your history,
Clear up a mystery,
Humour proclivity
For a nativity.
With mirrors so magical,
Tetrapods tragical,
Bogies spectacular,
Answers oracular,
Facts astronomical,
Solemn or comical,
And, if you want it, he
Makes a reduction on taking a quantity!
Oh!
If any one anything lacks,
He'll find it all ready in stacks,
If he'll only look in
On the resident Djinn,
Number seventy, Simmery Axe!

He can raise you hosts,
Of ghosts,
And that without reflectors;
And creepy things
With wings,
And gaunt and grisly spectres!
He can fill you crowds
Of shrouds,
And horrify you vastly;
He can rack your brains
With chains,
And gibberings grim and ghastly.
Then, if you plan it, he
Changes organity
With an urbanity,
Full of Satanity,
Vexes humanity
With an inanity
Fatal to vanity -
Driving your foes to the verge of insanity.
Barring tautology,
In demonology,
'Lectro biology,
Mystic nosology,
Spirit philology,
High class astrology,
Such is his knowledge, he

Isn't the man to require an apology
Oh!
My name is JOHN WELLINGTON WELLS,
I'm a dealer in magic and spells,
In blessings and curses,
And ever-filled purses -
In prophecies, witches, and knells.
If any one anything lacks,
He'll find it all ready in stacks,
If he'll only look in
On the resident Djinn,
Number seventy, Simmery Axe!

Ballad: The Fickle Breeze

Sighing softly to the river
Comes the loving breeze,
Setting nature all a-quiver,
Rustling through the trees!
And the brook in rippling measure
Laughs for very love,
While the poplars, in their pleasure,
Wave their arms above!
River, river, little river,
May thy loving prosper ever.
Heaven speed thee, poplar tree,
May thy wooing happy be!

Yet, the breeze is but a rover,
When he wings away,
Brook and poplar mourn a lover!
Sighing well-a-day!
Ah, the doing and undoing
That the rogue could tell!
When the breeze is out a-wooing,
Who can woo so well?
Pretty brook, thy dream is over,
For thy love is but a rover!
Sad the lot of poplar trees,
Courtied by the fickle breeze!

Ballad: The First Lord's Song

When I was a lad I served a term
As office boy to an Attorney's firm;

I cleaned the windows and I swept the floor,
And I polished up the handle of the big front door.
I polished up that handle so successfullee,
That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!

As office boy I made such a mark
That they gave me the post of a junior clerk;
I served the writs with a smile so bland,
And I copied all the letters in a big round hand.
I copied all the letters in a hand so free,
That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!

In serving writs I made such a name
That an articled clerk I soon became;
I wore clean collars and a brand-new suit
For the Pass Examination at the Institute:
And that Pass Examination did so well for me,
That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!

Of legal knowledge I acquired such a grip
That they took me into the partnership,
And that junior partnership I ween,
Was the only ship that I ever had seen:
But that kind of ship so suited me,
That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!

I grew so rich that I was sent
By a pocket borough into Parliament;
I always voted at my Party's call,
And I never thought of thinking for myself at all.
I thought so little, they rewarded me,
By making me the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!

Now, landsmen all, whoever you may be,
If you want to rise to the top of the tree -
If your soul isn't fettered to an office stool,
Be careful to be guided by this golden rule -
Stick close to your desks and NEVER GO TO SEA,
And you all may be Rulers of the Queen's Navee!

Ballad: Would You Know?

Would you know the kind of maid
Sets my heart a flame-a?
Eyes must be downcast and staid,
Cheeks must flush for shame-a!
She may neither dance nor sing,
But, demure in everything,
Hang her head in modest way

With pouting lips that seem to say,
"Kiss me, kiss me, kiss me, kiss me,
Though I die of shame-a!"
Please you, that's the kind of maid
Sets my heart a flame-a!

When a maid is bold and gay
With a tongue goes clang-a,
Flaunting it in brave array,
Maiden may go hang-a!
Sunflower gay and hollyhock
Never shall my garden stock;
Mine the blushing rose of May,
With pouting lips that seem to say
"Oh, kiss me, kiss me, kiss me, kiss me,
Though I die for shame-a!"
Please you, that's the kind of maid
Sets my heart a flame-a!

Ballad: Speculation

Comes a train of little ladies
From scholastic trammels free,
Each a little bit afraid is,
Wondering what the world can be!

Is it but a world of trouble -
Sadness set to song?
Is its beauty but a bubble
Bound to break ere long?

Are its palaces and pleasures
Fantasies that fade?
And the glory of its treasures
Shadow of a shade?

Schoolgirls we, eighteen and under,
From scholastic trammels free,
And we wonder - how we wonder! -
What on earth the world can be!

Ballad: Ah Me!

When maiden loves, she sits and sighs,
She wanders to and fro;

Unbidden tear-drops fill her eyes,
And to all questions she replies,
With a sad heigho!
'Tis but a little word - "heigho!"
So soft, 'tis scarcely heard - "heigho!"
An idle breath -
Yet life and death
May hang upon a maid's "heigho!"

When maiden loves, she mopes apart,
As owl mopes on a tree;
Although she keenly feels the smart,
She cannot tell what ails her heart,
With its sad "Ah me!"
'Tis but a foolish sigh - "Ah me!"
Born but to droop and die - "Ah me!"
Yet all the sense
Of eloquence
Lies hidden in a maid's "Ah me!"

Ballad: The Duke Of Plaza-Toro

In enterprise of martial kind,
When there was any fighting,
He led his regiment from behind
(He found it less exciting).
But when away his regiment ran,
His place was at the fore, O-
That celebrated,
Cultivated,
Underrated
Nobleman,
The Duke of Plaza-Toro!
In the first and foremost flight, ha, ha!
You always found that knight, ha, ha!
That celebrated,
Cultivated,
Underrated
Nobleman,
The Duke of Plaza-Toro!

When, to evade Destruction's hand,
To hide they all proceeded,
No soldier in that gallant band
Hid half as well as he did.
He lay concealed throughout the war,
And so preserved his gore, O!
That unaffected,
Undetected,

Well connected
Warrior,
The Duke of Plaza-Toro!
In every doughty deed, ha, ha!
He always took the lead, ha, ha!
That unaffected,
Undetected,
Well connected
Warrior,
The Duke of Plaza-Toro!

When told that they would all be shot
Unless they left the service,
That hero hesitated not,
So marvellous his nerve is.
He sent his resignation in,
The first of all his corps, O!
That very knowing,
Overflowing,
Easy-going
Paladin,
The Duke of Plaza-Toro!
To men of grosser clay, ha, ha!
He always showed the way, ha, ha!
That very knowing,
Overflowing,
Easy-going
Paladin,
The Duke of Plaza-Toro!

Ballad: The Aesthete

If you're anxious for to shine in the high aesthetic line, as a man
of culture rare,
You must get up all the germs of the transcendental terms, and
plant them everywhere.
You must lie upon the daisies and discourse in novel phrases of
your complicated state of mind
(The meaning doesn't matter if it's only idle chatter of a
transcendental kind).
And every one will say,
As you walk your mystic way,
"If this young man expresses himself in terms too deep for ME,
Why, what a very singularly deep young man this deep young man must
be!"

Be eloquent in praise of the very dull old days which have long
since passed away,
And convince 'em, if you can, that the reign of good QUEEN ANNE was

Culture's palmiest day.
Of course you will pooh-pooh whatever's fresh and new, and declare
it's crude and mean,
And that Art stopped short in the cultivated court of the EMPRESS
JOSEPHINE.
And every one will say,
As you walk your mystic way,
"If that's not good enough for him which is good enough for ME,
Why, what a very cultivated kind of youth this kind of youth must
be!"

Then a sentimental passion of a vegetable fashion must excite your
languid spleen,
An attachment E LA Plato for a bashful young potato, or a not-too-
French French bean.
Though the Philistines may jostle, you will rank as an apostle in
the high aesthetic band,
If you walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily in your
mediaeval hand.
And every one will say,
As you walk your flowery way,
"If he's content with a vegetable love which would certainly not
suit ME,
Why, what a most particularly pure young man this pure young man
must be!"

Ballad: Said I To Myself, Said I

When I went to the Bar as a very young man
(Said I to myself - said I),
I'll work on a new and original plan
(Said I to myself - said I),
I'll never assume that a rogue or a thief
Is a gentleman worthy implicit belief,
Because his attorney, has sent me a brief
(Said I to myself - said I!)

I'll never throw dust in a juryman's eyes
(Said I to myself - said I),
Or hoodwink a judge who is not over-wise
(Said I to myself - said I),
Or assume that the witnesses summoned in force
In Exchequer, Queen's Bench, Common Pleas, or Divorce,
Have perjured themselves as a matter of course
(Said I to myself - said I!)

Ere I go into court I will read my brief through
(Said I to myself - said I),
And I'll never take work I'm unable to do

(Said I to myself - said I).
My learned profession I'll never disgrace
By taking a fee with a grin on my face,
When I haven't been there to attend to the case
(Said I to myself - said I!)

In other professions in which men engage
(Said I to myself - said I),
The Army, the Navy, the Church, and the Stage,
(Said I to myself - said I),
Professional licence, if carried too far,
Your chance of promotion will certainly mar -
And I fancy the rule might apply to the Bar
(Said I to myself - said I!)

Ballad: Sorry Her Lot

Sorry her lot who loves too well,
Heavy the heart that hopes but vainly,
Sad are the sighs that own the spell
Uttered by eyes that speak too plainly;
Heavy the sorrow that bows the head
When Love is alive and Hope is dead!

Sad is the hour when sets the Sun -
Dark is the night to Earth's poor daughters,
When to the ark the wearied one
Flies from the empty waste of waters!
Heavy the sorrow that bows the head
When Love is alive and Hope is dead!

Ballad: The Contemplative Sentry

When all night long a chap remains
On sentry-go, to chase monotony
He exercises of his brains,
That is, assuming that he's got any.
Though never nurtured in the lap
Of luxury, yet I admonish you,
I am an intellectual chap,
And think of things that would astonish you.
I often think it's comical
How Nature always does contrive
That every boy and every gal,
That's born into the world alive,

Is either a little Liberal,
Or else a little Conservative!
Fal lal la!

When in that house M.P.'s divide,
If they've a brain and cerebellum, too,
They've got to leave that brain outside,
And vote just as their leaders tell 'em to.
But then the prospect of a lot
Of statesmen, all in close proximity,
A-thinking for themselves, is what
No man can face with equanimity.
Then let's rejoice with loud Fal lal
That Nature wisely does contrive
That every boy and every gal,
That's born into the world alive,
Is either a little Liberal,
Or else a little Conservative!
Fal lal la!

Ballad: The Philosophic Pill

I've wisdom from the East and from the West,
That's subject to no academic rule;
You may find it in the jeering of a jest,
Or distil it from the folly of a fool.
I can teach you with a quip, if I've a mind;
I can trick you into learning with a laugh;
Oh, winnow all my folly, and you'll find
A grain or two of truth among the chaff!

I can set a braggart quailing with a quip,
The upstart I can wither with a whim;
He may wear a merry laugh upon his lip,
But his laughter has an echo that is grim.
When they've offered to the world in merry guise,
Unpleasant truths are swallowed with a will -
For he who'd make his fellow-creatures wise
Should always gild the philosophic pill!

Ballad: Blue Blood

Spurn not the nobly born
With love affected,
Nor treat with virtuous scorn

The well connected.
High rank involves no shame -
We boast an equal claim
With him of humble name
To be respected!
Blue blood! Blue blood!
When virtuous love is sought,
Thy power is naught,
Though dating from the Flood,
Blue blood!

Spare us the bitter pain
Of stern denials,
Nor with low-born disdain
Augment our trials.
Hearts just as pure and fair
May beat in Belgrave Square
As in the lowly air
Of Seven Dials!
Blue blood! Blue blood!
Of what avail art thou
To serve me now?
Though dating from the Flood,
Blue blood!

Ballad: The Judge's Song

When I, good friends, was called to the Bar,
I'd an appetite fresh and hearty,
But I was, as many young barristers are,
An impecunious party.
I'd a swallow-tail coat of a beautiful blue -
A brief which was brought by a booby -
A couple of shirts and a collar or two,
And a ring that looked like a ruby!

In Westminster Hall I danced a dance,
Like a semi-despondent fury;
For I thought I should never hit on a chance
Of addressing a British Jury -
But I soon got tired of third-class journeys,
And dinners of bread and water;
So I fell in love with a rich attorney's
Elderly, ugly daughter.

The rich attorney, he wiped his eyes,
And replied to my fond professions:
"You shall reap the reward of your enterprise,
At the Bailey and Middlesex Sessions.

You'll soon get used to her looks," said he,
"And a very nice girl you'll find her -
She may very well pass for forty-three
In the dusk, with a light behind her!"

The rich attorney was as good as his word:
The briefs came trooping gaily,
And every day my voice was heard
At the Sessions or Ancient Bailey.
All thieves who could my fees afford
Relied on my orations,
And many a burglar I've restored
To his friends and his relations.

At length I became as rich as the GURNEYS -
An incubus then I thought her,
So I threw over that rich attorney's
Elderly, ugly daughter.
The rich attorney my character high
Tried vainly to disparage -
And now, if you please, I'm ready to try
This Breach of Promise of Marriage!

Ballad: When I First Put This Uniform On

When I first put this uniform on,
I said, as I looked in the glass,
"It's one to a million
That any civilian
My figure and form will surpass.
Gold lace has a charm for the fair,
And I've plenty of that, and to spare,
While a lover's professions,
When uttered in Hessians,
Are eloquent everywhere!"
A fact that I counted upon,
When I first put this uniform on!

I said, when I first put it on,
"It is plain to the veriest dunce
That every beauty
Will feel it her duty
To yield to its glamour at once.
They will see that I'm freely gold-laced
In a uniform handsome and chaste" -
But the peripatetics
Of long-haired aesthetics,
Are very much more to their taste -
Which I never counted upon

When I first put this uniform on!

Ballad: Solatium

Comes the broken flower -
Comes the cheated maid -
Though the tempest lower,
Rain and cloud will fade!
Take, O maid, these posies:
Though thy beauty rare
Shame the blushing roses,
They are passing fair!
Wear the flowers till they fade;
Happy be thy life, O maid!

O'er the season vernal,
Time may cast a shade;
Sunshine, if eternal,
Makes the roses fade:
Time may do his duty;
Let the thief alone -
Winter hath a beauty
That is all his own.
Fairest days are sun and shade:
Happy be thy life, O maid!

Ballad: A Nightmare

When you're lying awake with a dismal headache, and repose is
taboo'd by anxiety,
I conceive you may use any language you choose to indulge in
without impropriety;
For your brain is on fire - the bedclothes conspire of usual
slumber to plunder you:
First your counterpane goes and uncovers your toes, and your sheet
slips demurely from under you;
Then the blanketing tickles - you feel like mixed pickles, so
terribly sharp is the pricking,
And you're hot, and you're cross, and you tumble and toss till
there's nothing 'twixt you and the ticking.
Then the bedclothes all creep to the ground in a heap, and you pick
'em all up in a tangle;
Next your pillow resigns and politely declines to remain at its
usual angle!
Well, you get some repose in the form of a doze, with hot eyeballs

and head ever aching,
But your slumbering teems with such horrible dreams that you'd very
much better be waking;
For you dream you are crossing the Channel, and tossing about in a
steamer from Harwich,
Which is something between a large bathing-machine and a very small
second-class carriage;
And you're giving a treat (penny ice and cold meat) to a party of
friends and relations -
They're a ravenous horde - and they all came on board at Sloane
Square and South Kensington Stations.
And bound on that journey you find your attorney (who started that
morning from Devon);
He's a bit undersized, and you don't feel surprised when he tells
you he's only eleven.
Well, you're driving like mad with this singular lad (by the bye
the ship's now a four-wheeler),
And you're playing round games, and he calls you bad names when you
tell him that "ties pay the dealer";
But this you can't stand, so you throw up your hand, and you find
you're as cold as an icicle,
In your shirt and your socks (the black silk with gold clocks),
crossing Salisbury Plain on a bicycle:
And he and the crew are on bicycles too - which they've somehow or
other invested in -
And he's telling the tars all the particuLARS of a company he's
interested in -
It's a scheme of devices, to get at low prices, all goods from
cough mixtures to cables
(Which tickled the sailors) by treating retailers, as though they
were all vegeTAbles -
You get a good spadesman to plant a small tradesman (first take off
his boots with a boot-tree),
And his legs will take root, and his fingers will shoot, and
they'll blossom and bud like a fruit-tree -
From the greengrocer tree you get grapes and green pea,
cauliflower, pineapple, and cranberries,
While the pastry-cook plant cherry-brandy will grant - apple puffs,
and three-corners, and banberries -
The shares are a penny, and ever so many are taken by ROTHSCHILD
and BARING,
And just as a few are allotted to you, you awake with a shudder
despairing -
You're a regular wreck, with a crick in your neck, and no wonder
you snore, for your head's on the floor, and you've needles and
pins from your soles to your shins, and your flesh is a-creep, for
your left leg's asleep, and you've cramp in your toes, and a fly on
your nose, and some fluff in your lung, and a feverish tongue, and
a thirst that's intense, and a general sense that you haven't been
sleeping in clover;
But the darkness has passed, and it's daylight at last, and the
night has been long - ditto, ditto my song - and thank goodness
they're both of them over!

Ballad: Don't Forget!

Now, Marco, dear,
My wishes hear:
While you're away
It's understood
You will be good,
And not too gay.
To every trace
Of maiden grace
You will be blind,
And will not glance
By any chance
On womankind!
If you are wise,
You'll shut your eyes
Till we arrive,
And not address
A lady less
Than forty-five;
You'll please to frown
On every gown
That you may see;
And O, my pet,
You won't forget
You've married me!

O, my darling, O, my pet,
Whatever else you may forget,
In yonder isle beyond the sea,
O, don't forget you've married me!

You'll lay your head
Upon your bed
At set of sun.
You will not sing
Of anything
To any one:
You'll sit and mope
All day, I hope,
And shed a tear
Upon the life
Your little wife
Is passing here!
And if so be
You think of me,
Please tell the moon;
I'll read it all

In rays that fall
On the lagoon:
You'll be so kind
As tell the wind
How you may be,
And send me words
By little birds
To comfort me!

And O, my darling, O, my pet,
Whatever else you may forget,
In yonder isle beyond the sea,
O, don't forget you've married me!

Ballad: The Suicide's Grave

On a tree by a river a little tomtit
Sang "Willow, titwillow, titwillow!"
And I said to him, "Dicky-bird, why do you sit
Singing 'Willow, titwillow, titwillow'?"
Is it weakness of intellect, birdie?" I cried,
"Or a rather tough worm in your little inside?"
With a shake of his poor little head he replied,
"Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow!"

He slapped at his chest, as he sat on that bough,
Singing "Willow, titwillow, titwillow!"
And a cold perspiration bespangled his brow,
Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow!
He sobbed and he sighed, and a gurgle he gave,
Then he threw himself into the billowy wave,
And an echo arose from the suicide's grave -
"Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow!"

Now I feel just as sure as I'm sure that my name
Isn't Willow, titwillow, titwillow,
That 'twas blighted affection that made him exclaim,
"Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow!"
And if you remain callous and obdurate, I
Shall perish as he did, and you will know why,
Though I probably shall not exclaim as I die,
"Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow!"

Ballad: He And She

[HE.] I know a youth who loves a little maid -

(Hey, but his face is a sight for to see!)

Silent is he, for he's modest and afraid -

(Hey, but he's timid as a youth can be!)

[SHE.] I know a maid who loves a gallant youth -

(Hey, but she sickens as the days go by!)

SHE cannot tell him all the sad, sad truth -

(Hey, but I think that little maid will die!)

[BOTH.] Now tell me pray, and tell me true,

What in the world should the poor soul do?

[HE.] He cannot eat and he cannot sleep -

(Hey, but his face is a sight for to see!)

Daily he goes for to wail - for to weep -

(Hey, but he's wretched as a youth can be!)

[SHE.] She's very thin and she's very pale -

(Hey, but she sickens as the days go by!)

Daily she goes for to weep - for to wail -

(Hey, but I think that little maid will die!)

[BOTH.] Now tell me pray, and tell me true,

What in the world should the poor soul do?

[SHE.] If I were the youth I should offer her my name -

(Hey, but her face is a sight for to see!)

[HE.] If I were the maid I should fan his honest flame -

(Hey, but he's bashful as a youth can be!)

[SHE.] If I were the youth I should speak to her to-day -

(Hey, but she sickens as the days go by!)

[HE.] If I were the maid I should meet the lad half way -

(For I really do believe that timid youth will die!)

[BOTH.] I thank you much for your counsel true;

I've learnt what that poor soul ought to do!

Ballad: The Mighty Must

Come mighty Must!

Inevitable Shall!

In thee I trust.

Time weaves my coronal!

Go mocking Is!

Go disappointing Was!

That I am this

Ye are the cursed cause!

Yet humble Second shall be First,

I ween;

And dead and buried be the curst

Has Been!

Oh weak Might Be!

Oh May, Might, Could, Would, Should!
How powerless ye
For evil or for good!
In every sense
Your moods I cheerless call,
Whate'er your tense
Ye are Imperfect, all!
Ye have deceived the trust I've shown
In ye!
Away! The Mighty Must alone
Shall be!

Ballad: A Mirage

Were I thy bride,
Then the whole world beside
Were not too wide
To hold my wealth of love -
Were I thy bride!
Upon thy breast
My loving head would rest,
As on her nest
The tender turtle-dove -
Were I thy bride!

This heart of mine
Would be one heart with thine,
And in that shrine
Our happiness would dwell -
Were I thy bride!
And all day long
Our lives should be a song:
No grief, no wrong
Should make my heart rebel -
Were I thy bride!

The silvery flute,
The melancholy lute,
Were night-owl's hoot
To my low-whispered coo -
Were I thy bride!
The skylark's trill
Were but discordance shrill
To the soft thrill
Of wooing as I'd woo -
Were I thy bride!

The rose's sigh
Were as a carrion's cry

To lullaby
Such as I'd sing to thee -
Were I thy bride!
A feather's press
Were leaden heaviness
To my caress.
But then, unhappily,
I'm not thy bride!

Ballad: The Ghosts' High Noon

When the night wind howls in the chimney cowl, and the bat in the
moonlight flies,
And inky clouds, like funeral shrouds, sail over the midnight skies
-
When the footpads quail at the night-bird's wail, and black dogs
bay the moon,
Then is the spectres' holiday - then is the ghosts' high noon!

As the sob of the breeze sweeps over the trees, and the mists lie
low on the fen,
From grey tombstones are gathered the bones that once were women
and men,
And away they go, with a mop and a mow, to the revel that ends too
soon,
For cockcrow limits our holiday - the dead of the night's high
noon!

And then each ghost with his ladye-toast to their churchyard beds
take flight,
With a kiss, perhaps, on her lantern chaps, and a grisly grim "good
night";
Till the welcome knell of the midnight bell rings forth its
jolliest tune,
And ushers our next high holiday - the dead of the night's high
noon!

Ballad: The Humane Mikado

A more humane Mikado never
Did in Japan exist;
To nobody second,
I'm certainly reckoned
A true philanthropist.
It is my very humane endeavour

To make, to some extent,
Each evil liver
A running river
Of harmless merriment.

My object all sublime
I shall achieve in time -
To let the punishment fit the crime -
The punishment fit the crime;
And make each prisoner pent
Unwillingly represent
A source of innocent merriment -
Of innocent merriment!

All prosy dull society sinners,
Who chatter and bleat and bore,
Are sent to hear sermons
From mystical Germans
Who preach from ten to four:
The amateur tenor, whose vocal villainies
All desire to shirk,
Shall, during off-hours,
Exhibit his powers
To Madame Tussaud's waxwork:
The lady who dyes a chemical yellow,
Or stains her grey hair puce,
Or pinches her figger,
Is blacked like a nigger
With permanent walnut juice:
The idiot who, in railway carriages,
Scribbles on window panes,
We only suffer
To ride on a buffer
In Parliamentary trains.

My object all sublime
I shall achieve in time -
To let the punishment fit the crime -
The punishment fit the crime;
And make each prisoner pent
Unwillingly represent
A source of innocent merriment -
Of innocent merriment!

The advertising quack who wearies
With tales of countless cures,
His teeth, I've enacted,
Shall all be extracted
By terrified amateurs:
The music-hall singer attends a series
Of masses and fugues and "ops"
By Bach, interwoven
With Spohr and Beethoven,

At classical Monday Pops:
The billiard sharp whom any one catches
His doom's extremely hard -
He's made to dwell
In a dungeon cell
On a spot that's always barred;
And there he plays extravagant matches
In fitless finger-stalls,
On a cloth untrue
With a twisted cue,
And elliptical billiard balls!

My object all sublime
I shall achieve in time -
To let the punishment fit the crime -
The punishment fit the crime;
And make each prisoner pent
Unwillingly represent
A source of innocent merriment,
Of innocent merriment!

Ballad: Willow Waly!

[HE.] PRITHEE, pretty maiden - prithee, tell me true
(Hey, but I'm doleful, willow, willow waly!)
Have you e'er a lover a-dangling after you?
Hey, willow waly O!
I would fain discover
If you have a lover?
Hey, willow waly O!

[SHE.] Gentle sir, my heart is frolicsome and free -
(Hey, but he's doleful, willow, willow waly!)
Nobody I care for comes a-courting me -
Hey, willow waly O!
Nobody I care for
Comes a-courting - therefore,
Hey, willow waly O!

[HE.] Prithee, pretty maiden, will you marry me?
(Hey, but I'm hopeful, willow, willow waly!)
I may say, at once, I'm a man of propertee -
Hey, willow waly O!
Money, I despise it,
But many people prize it,
Hey, willow waly O!

[SHE.] Gentle sir, although to marry I design -
(Hey, but he's hopeful, willow, willow waly!)

As yet I do not know you, and so I must decline.
Hey, willow waly O!
To other maidens go you -
As yet I do not know you,
Hey, willow waly O!

Ballad: Life Is Lovely All The Year

When the buds are blossoming,
Smiling welcome to the spring,
Lovers choose a wedding day -
Life is love in merry May!

Spring is green - Fal la! la!
Summer's rose - Fal la! la!
It is sad when Summer goes,
Fal la!
Autumn's gold - Fal la! la!
Winter's grey - Fal la! la!
Winter still is far away -
Fal la!
Leaves in Autumn fade and fall;
Winter is the end of all.
Spring and summer teem with glee:
Spring and summer, then, for me!
Fal la!

In the Spring-time seed is sown:
In the Summer grass is mown:
In the Autumn you may reap:
Winter is the time for sleep.

Spring is hope - Fal la! la!
Summer's joy - Fal la! la!
Spring and Summer never cloy,
Fal la!
Autumn, toil - Fal la! la!
Winter, rest - Fal la! la!
Winter, after all, is best -
Fal la!
Spring and summer pleasure you,
Autumn, ay, and winter, too -
Every season has its cheer;
Life is lovely all the year!
Fal la!

Ballad: The Usher's Charge

Now, Jurymen, hear my advice -
All kinds of vulgar prejudice
I pray you set aside:
With stern judicial frame of mind -
From bias free of every kind,
This trial must be tried!

Oh, listen to the plaintiff's case:
Observe the features of her face -
The broken-hearted bride!
Condole with her distress of mind -
From bias free of every kind,
This trial must be tried!

And when amid the plaintiff's shrieks,
The ruffianly defendant speaks -
Upon the other side;
What HE may say you need not mind -
From bias free of every kind,
This trial must be tried!

Ballad: The Great Oak Tree

There grew a little flower
'Neath a great oak tree:
When the tempest 'gan to lower
Little heeded she:
No need had she to cower,
For she dreaded not its power -
She was happy in the bower
Of her great oak tree!
Sing hey,
Lackaday!
Let the tears fall free
For the pretty little flower and the great oak tree!

When she found that he was fickle,
Was that great oak tree,
She was in a pretty pickle,
As she well might be -
But his gallantries were mickle,
For Death followed with his sickle,
And her tears began to trickle
For her great oak tree!
Sing hey,
Lackaday!

Let the tears fall free
For the pretty little flower and the great oak tree!

Said she, "He loved me never,
Did that great oak tree,
But I'm neither rich nor clever,
And so why should he?
But though fate our fortunes sever,
To be constant I'll endeavour,
Ay, for ever and for ever,
To my great oak tree!"
Sing hey,
Lackaday!
Let the tears fall free
For the pretty little flower and the great oak tree!

Ballad: King Goodheart

There lived a King, as I've been told
In the wonder-working days of old,
When hearts were twice as good as gold,
And twenty times as mellow.
Good temper triumphed in his face,
And in his heart he found a place
For all the erring human race
And every wretched fellow.
When he had Rhenish wine to drink
It made him very sad to think
That some, at junket or at jink,
Must be content with toddy:
He wished all men as rich as he
(And he was rich as rich could be),
So to the top of every tree
Promoted everybody.

Ambassadors cropped up like hay,
Prime Ministers and such as they
Grew like asparagus in May,
And Dukes were three a penny:
Lord Chancellors were cheap as sprats,
And Bishops in their shovel hats
Were plentiful as tabby cats -
If possible, too many.
On every side Field-Marshal gleamed,
Small beer were Lords-Lieutenants deemed,
With Admirals the ocean teemed,
All round his wide dominions;
And Party Leaders you might meet
In twos and threes in every street

Maintaining, with no little heat,
Their various opinions.

That King, although no one denies,
His heart was of abnormal size,
Yet he'd have acted otherwise
If he had been acuter.
The end is easily foretold,
When every blessed thing you hold
Is made of silver, or of gold,
You long for simple pewter.
When you have nothing else to wear
But cloth of gold and satins rare,
For cloth of gold you cease to care -
Up goes the price of shoddy:
In short, whoever you may be,
To this conclusion you'll agree,
When every one is somebody,
Then no one's anybody!

Ballad: Sleep On!

Fear no unlicensed entry,
Heed no bombastic talk,
While guards the British Sentry
Pall Mall and Birdcage Walk.
Let European thunders
Occasion no alarms,
Though diplomatic blunders
May cause a cry "To arms!"
Sleep on, ye pale civilians;
All thunder-clouds defy:
On Europe's countless millions
The Sentry keeps his eye!

Should foreign-born rascalions
In London dare to show
Their overgrown battalions,
Be sure I'll let you know.
Should Russians or Norwegians
Pollute our favoured clime
With rough barbaric legions,
I'll mention it in time.
So sleep in peace, civilians,
The Continent defy;
While on its countless millions
The Sentry keeps his eye !

Ballad: The Love-Sick Boy

When first my old, old love I knew,
My bosom welled with joy;
My riches at her feet I threw;
I was a love-sick boy!
No terms seemed too extravagant
Upon her to employ -
I used to mope, and sigh, and pant,
Just like a love-sick boy!

But joy incessant palls the sense;
And love unchanged will cloy,
And she became a bore intense
Unto her love-sick boy?
With fitful glimmer burnt my flame,
And I grew cold and coy,
At last, one morning, I became
Another's love-sick boy!

Ballad: Poetry Everywhere

What time the poet hath hymned
The writhing maid, lithe-limbed,
Quivering on amaranthine asphodel,
How can he paint her woes,
Knowing, as well he knows,
That all can be set right with calomel?

When from the poet's plinth
The amorous colocynth
Yeans for the aloe, faint with rapturous thrills,
How can he hymn their throes
Knowing, as well he knows,
That they are only un-compounded pills?

Is it, and can it be,
Nature hath this decree,
Nothing poetic in the world shall dwell?
Or that in all her works
Something poetic lurks,
Even in colocynth and calomel?

Ballad: He Loves!

He loves! If in the bygone years
Thine eyes have ever shed
Tears - bitter, unavailing tears,
For one untimely dead -
If in the eventide of life
Sad thoughts of her arise,
Then let the memory of thy wife
Plead for my boy - he dies!

He dies! If fondly laid aside
In some old cabinet,
Memorials of thy long-dead bride
Lie, dearly treasured yet,
Then let her hallowed bridal dress -
Her little dainty gloves -
Her withered flowers - her faded tress -
Plead for my boy - he loves!

Ballad: True Diffidence

My boy, you may take it from me,
That of all the afflictions accurst
With which a man's saddled
And hampered and addled,
A diffident nature's the worst.
Though clever as clever can be -
A Crichton of early romance -
You must stir it and stump it,
And blow your own trumpet,
Or, trust me, you haven't a chance.

Now take, for example, MY case:
I've a bright intellectual brain -
In all London city
There's no one so witty -
I've thought so again and again.
I've a highly intelligent face -
My features cannot be denied -
But, whatever I try, sir,
I fail in - and why, sir?
I'm modesty personified!

As a poet, I'm tender and quaint -
I've passion and fervour and grace -
From Ovid and Horace
To Swinburne and Morris,

They all of them take a back place.
Then I sing and I play and I paint;
Though none are accomplished as I,
To say so were treason:
You ask me the reason?
I'm diffident, modest, and shy!

Ballad: The Tangled Skein

Try we life-long, we can never
Straighten out life's tangled skein,
Why should we, in vain endeavour,
Guess and guess and guess again?
Life's a pudding full of plums
Care's a canker that benumbs.
Wherefore waste our elocution
On impossible solution?
Life's a pleasant institution,
Let us take it as it comes!

Set aside the dull enigma,
We shall guess it all too soon;
Failure brings no kind of stigma -
Dance we to another tune!
String the lyre and fill the cup,
Lest on sorrow we should sup;
Hop and skip to Fancy's fiddle,
Hands across and down the middle -
Life's perhaps the only riddle
That we shrink from giving up!

Ballad: My Lady

Bedecked in fashion trim,
With every curl a-quiver;
Or leaping, light of limb,
O'er rivulet and river;
Or skipping o'er the lea
On daffodil and daisy;
Or stretched beneath a tree,
All languishing and lazy;
Whatever be her mood -
Be she demurely prude
Or languishingly lazy -
My lady drives me crazy!

In vain her heart is wooed,
Whatever be her mood!

What profit should I gain
Suppose she loved me dearly?
Her coldness turns my brain
To VERGE of madness merely.
Her kiss - though, Heaven knows,
To dream of it were treason -
Would tend, as I suppose,
To utter loss of reason!
My state is not amiss;
I would not have a kiss
Which, in or out of season,
Might tend to loss of reason:
What profit in such bliss?
A fig for such a kiss!

Ballad: One Against The World

It's my opinion - though I own
In thinking so I'm quite alone -
In some respects I'm but a fright.
YOU like my features, I suppose?
I'M disappointed with my nose:
Some rave about it - perhaps they're right.
My figure just sets off a fit;
But when they say it's exquisite
(And they DO say so), that's too strong.
I hope I'm not what people call
Opinionated! After all,
I'm but a goose, and may be wrong!

When charms enthrall
There's some excuse
For measures strong;
And after all
I'm but a goose,
And may be wrong!

My teeth are very neat, no doubt;
But after all they MAY fall out:
I think they will - some think they won't.
My hands are small, as you may see,
But not as small as they might be,
At least, I think so - others don't.
But there, a girl may preach and prate
From morning six to evening eight,
And never stop to dine,

When all the world, although misled,
Is quite agreed on any head -
And it is quite agreed on mine!

All said and done,
It's little I
Against a throng.
I'm only one,
And possibly
I may be wrong!

Ballad: Put A Penny In The Slot

If my action's stiff and crude,
Do not laugh, because it's rude.
If my gestures promise larks,
Do not make unkind remarks.
Clockwork figures may be found
Everywhere and all around.
Ten to one, if I but knew,
You are clockwork figures too.
And the motto of the lot,
"Put a penny in the slot!"

Usurer, for money lent,
Making out his cent per cent -
Widow plump or maiden rare,
Deaf and dumb to suitor's prayer -
Tax collectors, whom in vain
You implore to "call again" -
Cautious voter, whom you find
Slow in making up his mind -
If you'd move them on the spot,
Put a penny in the slot!

Bland reporters in the courts,
Who suppress police reports -
Sheriff's yeoman, pen in fist,
Making out a jury list -
Stern policemen, tall and spare,
Acting all "upon the square" -
(Which in words that plainer fall,
Means that you can square them all) -
If you want to move the lot,
Put a penny in the slot!

Ballad: Good Little Girls

Although of native maids the cream,
We're brought up on the English scheme -
The best of all
For great and small
Who modesty adore.
For English girls are good as gold,
Extremely modest (so we're told),
Demurely coy - divinely cold -
And we are that - and more.
To please papa, who argues thus -
All girls should mould themselves on us,
Because we are,
By furlongs far,
The best of all the bunch;
We show ourselves to loud applause
From ten to four without a pause -
Which is an awkward time because
It cuts into our lunch.

Oh, maids of high and low degree,
Whose social code is rather free,
Please look at us and you will see
What good young ladies ought to be!

And as we stand, like clockwork toys,
A lecturer papa employs
To puff and praise
Our modest ways
And guileless character -
Our well-known blush - our downcast eyes -
Our famous look of mild surprise
(Which competition still defies) -
Our celebrated "Sir!!!"
Then all the crowd take down our looks
In pocket memorandum books.
To diagnose,
Our modest pose
The kodaks do their best:
If evidence you would possess
Of what is maiden bashfulness,
You only need a button press -
And WE do all the rest.

Ballad: Life

First you're born - and I'll be bound you

Find a dozen strangers round you.
"Hallo," cries the new-born baby,
"Where's my parents? which may they be?"
Awkward silence - no reply -
Puzzled baby wonders why!
Father rises, bows politely -
Mother smiles (but not too brightly) -
Doctor mumbles like a dumb thing -
Nurse is busy mixing something. -
Every symptom tends to show
You're decidedly DE TROP -
Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! he! ho! ho!
Time's teetotum,
If you spin it,
Give its quatum
Once a minute:
I'll go bail
You hit the nail,
And if you fail
The deuce is in it!

You grow up, and you discover
What it is to be a lover.
Some young lady is selected -
Poor, perhaps, but well-connected,
Whom you hail (for Love is blind
As the Queen of Fairy-kind.
Though she's plain - perhaps unsightly,
Makes her face up - laces tightly,
In her form your fancy traces
All the gifts of all the graces.
Rivals none the maiden woo,
So you take her and she takes you!
Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho!
Joke beginning,
Never ceases,
Till your inning
Time releases;
On your way
You blindly stray,
And day by day
The joke increases!

Ten years later - Time progresses -
Sours your temper - thins your tresses;
Fancy, then, her chain relaxes;
Rates are facts and so are taxes.
Fairy Queen's no longer young -
Fairy Queen has such a tongue!
Twins have probably intruded -
Quite unbidden - just as you did;
They're a source of care and trouble -
Just as you were - only double.

Comes at last the final stroke -
Time has had his little joke!
Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho!
Daily driven
(Wife as drover)
Ill you've thriven -
Ne'er in clover:
Lastly, when
Threescore and ten
(And not till then),
The joke is over!
Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho!
Then - and then
The joke is over!

Ballad: Limited Liability

Some seven men form an Association
(If possible, all Peers and Baronets),
They start off with a public declaration
To what extent they mean to pay their debts.
That's called their Capital: if they are wary
They will not quote it at a sum immense.
The figure's immaterial - it may vary
From eighteen million down to eighteenpence.
I should put it rather low;
The good sense of doing so
Will be evident at once to any debtor.
When it's left to you to say
What amount you mean to pay,
Why, the lower you can put it at, the better.

They then proceed to trade with all who'll trust 'em,
Quite irrespective of their capital
(It's shady, but it's sanctified by custom);
Bank, Railway, Loan, or Panama Canal.
You can't embark on trading too tremendous -
It's strictly fair, and based on common sense -
If you succeed, your profits are stupendous -
And if you fail, pop goes your eighteenpence.
Make the money-spinner spin!
For you only stand to win,
And you'll never with dishonesty be twitted.
For nobody can know,
To a million or so,
To what extent your capital's committed!

If you come to grief, and creditors are craving
(For nothing that is planned by mortal head

Is certain in this Vale of Sorrow - saving
That one's Liability is Limited), -
Do you suppose that signifies perdition?
If so you're but a monetary dunce -
You merely file a Winding-Up Petition,
And start another Company at once!
Though a Rothschild you may be
In your own capacity,
As a Company you've come to utter sorrow -
But the Liquidators say,
"Never mind - you needn't pay,"
So you start another Company to-morrow!

Ballad: Anglicised Utopia

Society has quite forsaken all her wicked courses,
Which empties our police courts, and abolishes divorces.
(Divorce is nearly obsolete in England.)
No tolerance we show to undeserving rank and splendour;
For the higher his position is, the greater the offender.
(That's a maxim that is prevalent in England.)
No Peeress at our Drawing-Room before the Presence passes
Who wouldn't be accepted by the lower-middle classes;
Each shady dame, whatever be her rank, is bowed out neatly.
In short, this happy country has been Anglicised completely!
It really is surprising
What a thorough Anglicising
We've brought about - Utopia's quite another land;
In her enterprising movements,
She is England - with improvements,
Which we dutifully offer to our mother-land!

Our city we have beautified - we've done it willy-nilly -
And all that isn't Belgrave Square is Strand and Piccadilly.
(They haven't any slummeries in England.)
We have solved the labour question with discrimination polished,
So poverty is obsolete and hunger is abolished -
(They are going to abolish it in England.)
The Chamberlain our native stage has purged, beyond a question,
Of "risky" situation and indelicate suggestion;
No piece is tolerated if it's costumed indiscreetly -
In short, this happy country has been Anglicised completely!
It really is surprising
What a thorough Anglicising
We've brought about - Utopia's quite another land;
In her enterprising movements,
She is England - with improvements,
Which we dutifully offer to our mother-land!

Our Peerage we've remodelled on an intellectual basis,
Which certainly is rough on our hereditary races -
(They are going to remodel it in England.)
The Brewers and the Cotton Lords no longer seek admission,
And Literary Merit meets with proper recognition -
(As Literary Merit does in England!)
Who knows but we may count among our intellectual chickens
Like them an Earl of Thackeray and p'raps a Duke of Dickens -
Lord Fildes and Viscount Millais (when they come) we'll welcome
sweetly -
And then, this happy country will be Anglicised completely!
It really is surprising
What a thorough Anglicising
We've brought about - Utopia's quite another land;
In her enterprising movements,
She is England - with improvements,
Which we dutifully offer to our mother-land!

Ballad: An English Girl

A wonderful joy our eyes to bless,
In her magnificent comeliness,
Is an English girl of eleven stone two,
And five foot ten in her dancing shoe!
She follows the hounds, and on she pounds -
The "field" tails off and the muffs diminish -
Over the hedges and brooks she bounds -
Straight as a crow, from find to finish.
At cricket, her kin will lose or win -
She and her maids, on grass and clover,
Eleven maids out - eleven maids in -
(And perhaps an occasional "maiden over").
Go search the world and search the sea,
Then come you home and sing with me
There's no such gold and no such pearl
As a bright and beautiful English girl!

With a ten-mile spin she stretches her limbs,
She golfs, she punts, she rows, she swims -
She plays, she sings, she dances, too,
From ten or eleven till all is blue!
At ball or drum, till small hours come
(Chaperon's fan conceals her yawning),
She'll waltz away like a teetotum,
And never go home till daylight's dawning.
Lawn tennis may share her favours fair -
Her eyes a-dance and her cheeks a-glowing -
Down comes her hair, but what does she care?
It's all her own and it's worth the showing!

Go search the world and search the sea,
Then come you home and sing with me
There's no such gold and no such pearl
As a bright and beautiful English girl!

Her soul is sweet as the ocean air,
For prudery knows no haven there;
To find mock-modesty, please apply
To the conscious blush and the downcast eye.
Rich in the things contentment brings,
In every pure enjoyment wealthy,
Blithe as a beautiful bird she sings,
For body and mind are hale and healthy.
Her eyes they thrill with right goodwill -
Her heart is light as a floating feather -
As pure and bright as the mountain rill
That leaps and laughs in the Highland heather!
Go search the world and search the sea,
Then come you home and sing with me
There's no such gold and no such pearl
As a bright and beautiful English girl!

Ballad: A Manager's Perplexities

Were I a king in very truth,
And had a son - a guileless youth -
In probable succession;
To teach him patience, teach him tact,
How promptly in a fix to act,
He should adopt, in point of fact,
A manager's profession.
To that condition he should stoop
(Despite a too fond mother),
With eight or ten "stars" in his troupe,
All jealous of each other!
Oh, the man who can rule a theatrical crew,
Each member a genius (and some of them two),
And manage to humour them, little and great,
Can govern a tuppenny-ha'penny State!

Both A and B rehearsal slight -
They say they'll be "all right at night"
(They've both to go to school yet);
C in each act MUST change her dress,
D WILL attempt to "square the press";
E won't play Romeo unless
His grandmother plays Juliet;
F claims all hoydens as her rights
(She's played them thirty seasons);

And G must show herself in tights
For two convincing reasons -
Two very well-shaped reasons!
Oh, the man who can drive a theatrical team,
With wheelers and leaders in order supreme,
Can govern and rule, with a wave of his fin,
All Europe and Asia - with Ireland thrown in!

Ballad: Out Of Sorts

When you find you're a broken-down critter,
Who is all of a trimmle and twitter,
With your palate unpleasantly bitter,
As if you'd just bitten a pill -
When your legs are as thin as dividers,
And you're plagued with unruly insiders,
And your spine is all creepy with spiders,
And you're highly gamboge in the gill -
When you've got a beehive in your head,
And a sewing machine in each ear,
And you feel that you've eaten your bed,
And you've got a bad headache DOWN HERE -
When such facts are about,
And these symptoms you find
In your body or crown -
Well, it's time to look out,
You may make up your mind
You had better lie down!

When your lips are all smeary - like tallow,
And your tongue is decidedly yallow,
With a pint of warm oil in your swAllow,
And a pound of tin-tacks in your chest -
When you're down in the mouth with the vapours,
And all over your new Morris papers
Black-beetles are cutting their capers,
And crawly things never at rest -
When you doubt if your head is your own,
And you jump when an open door slams -
Then you've got to a state which is known
To the medical world as "jim-jams."
If such symptoms you find
In your body or head,
They're not easy to quell -
You may make up your mind
You are better in bed,
For you're not at all well!

Ballad: How It's Done

Bold-faced ranger
(Perfect stranger)
Meets two well-behaved young ladies
He's attractive,
Young and active -
Each a little bit afraid is.
Youth advances,
At his glances
To their danger they awaken;
They repel him
As they tell him
He is very much mistaken.
Though they speak to him politely,
Please observe they're sneering slightly,
Just to show he's acting vainly.
This is Virtue saying plainly,
"Go away, young bachelor,
We are not what you take us for!"
(When addressed impertinently,
English ladies answer gently,
"Go away, young bachelor,
We are not what you take us for!")

As he gazes,
Hat he raises,
Enters into conversation.
Makes excuses -
This produces
Interesting agitation.
He, with daring,
Undespairing,
Gives his card - his rank discloses -
Little heeding
This proceeding,
They turn up their little noses.
Pray observe this lesson vital -
When a man of rank and title
His position first discloses,
Always cock your little noses.
When at home, let all the class
Try this in the looking-glass.
(English girls of well-bred notions
Shun all unrehearsed emotions,
English girls of highest class
Practise them before the glass.)

His intentions
Then he mentions,

Something definite to go on -
Makes recitals
Of his titles,
Hints at settlements, and so on.
Smiling sweetly,
They, discreetly,
Ask for further evidences:
Thus invited,
He, delighted,
Gives the usual references.
This is business. Each is fluttered
When the offer's fairly uttered.
"Which of them has his affection?"
He declines to make selection.
Do they quarrel for his dross?
Not a bit of it - they toss!
Please observe this cogent moral -
English ladies never quarrel.
When a doubt they come across,
English ladies always toss.

Ballad: A Classical Revival

At the outset I may mention it's my sovereign intention
To revive the classic memories of Athens at its best,
For my company possesses all the necessary dresses,
And a course of quiet cramming will supply us with the rest.
We've a choir hyporchematic (that is, ballet-operatic)
Who respond to the CHOREUTAE of that cultivated age,
And our clever chorus-master, all but captious criticaster,
Would accept as the CHOREGUS of the early Attic stage.
This return to classic ages is considered in their wages,
Which are always calculated by the day or by the week -
And I'll pay 'em (if they'll back me) all in OBOLOI and DRACHMAE,
Which they'll get (if they prefer it) at the Kalends that are
Greek!

(At this juncture I may mention
That this erudition sham
Is but classical pretension,
The result of steady "cram."
Periphrastic methods spurning,
To my readers all discerning
I admit this show of learning
Is the fruit of steady cram."!)

In the period Socratic every dining-room was Attic
(Which suggests an architecture of a topsy-turvy kind),
There they'd satisfy their twist on a RECHERCHE cold [Greek text

which cannot be reproduced],
Which is what they called their lunch - and so may you, if you're
inclined.
As they gradually got on, they'd [Greek text which cannot be
reproduced]
(Which is Attic for a steady and a conscientious drink).
But they mixed their wine with water - which I'm sure they didn't
oughter -
And we Anglo-Saxons know a trick worth two of that, I think!
Then came rather risky dances (under certain circumstances)
Which would shock that worthy gentleman, the Licenser of Plays,
Corybantian maniAC kick - Dionysiac or Bacchic -
And the Dithyrambic revels of those indecorous days.

(And perhaps I'd better mention
Lest alarming you I am,
That it isn't our intention
To perform a Dithyramb -
It displays a lot of stocking,
Which is always very shocking,
And of course I'm only mocking
At the prevalence of "cram.")

Yes, on reconsideration, there are customs of that nation
Which are not in strict accordance with the habits of our day,
And when I come to codify, their rules I mean to modify,
Or Mrs. Grundy, p'r'aps, may have a word or two to say:
For they hadn't macintoshes or umbrellas or goloshes -
And a shower with their dresses must have played the very deuce,
And it must have been displeasing when they caught a fit of
sneezing,
For, it seems, of pocket-handkerchiefs they didn't know the use.
They wore little underclothing - scarcely anything - or no-thing -
And their dress of Coan silk was quite transparent in design -
Well, in fact, in summer weather, something like the "altogether."
And it's THERE, I rather fancy, I shall have to draw the line!

(And again I wish to mention
That this erudition sham
Is but classical pretension,
The result of steady "cram."
Yet my classic love aggressive,
If you'll pardon the possessive,
Is exceedingly impressive
When you're passing an exam.)

Ballad: The Practical Joker

Oh what a fund of joy jocund lies hid in harmless hoaxes!

What keen enjoyment springs
From cheap and simple things!
What deep delight from sources trite inventive humour coaxes,
That pain and trouble brew
For every one but you!
Gunpowder placed inside its waist improves a mild Havanah,
Its unexpected flash
Burns eyebrows and moustache;
When people dine no kind of wine beats ipecacuanha,
But common sense suggests
You keep it for your guests -
Then naught annoys the organ boys like throwing red-hot coppers,
And much amusement bides
In common butter-slides.
And stringy snares across the stairs cause unexpected croppers.
Coal scuttles, recollect,
Produce the same effect.
A man possessed
Of common sense
Need not invest
At great expense -
It does not call
For pocket deep,
These jokes are all
Extremely cheap.
If you commence with eighteenpence (it's all you'll have to pay),
You may command a pleasant and a most instructive day.

A good spring gun breeds endless fun, and makes men jump like
rockets,
And turnip-heads on posts
Make very decent ghosts:
Then hornets sting like anything, when placed in waist-coat pockets

-
Burnt cork and walnut juice
Are not without their use.
No fun compares with easy chairs whose seats are stuffed with
needles -
Live shrimps their patience tax
When put down people's backs -
Surprising, too, what one can do with fifty fat black beetles -
And treacle on a chair
Will make a Quaker swear!
Then sharp tin tacks
And pocket squirts -
And cobblers' wax
For ladies' skirts -
And slimy slugs
On bedroom floors -
And water jugs
On open doors -
Prepared with these cheap properties, amusing tricks to play,
Upon a friend a man may spend a most delightful day!

Ballad: The National Anthem

A monarch is pestered with cares,
Though, no doubt, he can often trepan them;
But one comes in a shape he can never escape -
The implacable National Anthem!
Though for quiet and rest he may yearn,
It pursues him at every turn -
No chance of forsaking
Its ROCOCO numbers;
They haunt him when waking -
They poison his slumbers -
Like the Banbury Lady, whom every one knows,
He's cursed with its music wherever he goes!
Though its words but imperfectly rhyme,
And the devil himself couldn't scan them;
With composure polite he endures day and night
That illiterate National Anthem!

It serves a good purpose, I own:
Its strains are devout and impressive -
Its heart-stirring notes raise a lump in our throats
As we burn with devotion excessive:
But the King, who's been bored by that song
From his cradle - each day - all day long -
Who's heard it loud-shouted
By throats operatic,
And loyally spouted
By courtiers emphatic -
By soldier - by sailor - by drum and by fife -
Small blame if he thinks it the plague of his life!
While his subjects sing loudly and long,
Their King - who would willingly ban them -
Sits, worry disguising, anathematising
That Bogie, the National Anthem!

Ballad: Her Terms

My wedded life
Must every pleasure bring
On scale extensive!
If I'm your wife
I must have everything
That's most expensive -

A lady's-maid -
(My hair alone to do
I am not able) -
And I'm afraid
I've been accustomed to
A first-rate table.
These things one must consider when one marries -
And everything I wear must come from Paris!
Oh, think of that!
Oh, think of that!
I can't wear anything that's not from Paris!
From top to toes
Quite Frenchified I am,
If you examine.
And then - who knows? -
Perhaps some day a fam -
Perhaps a famine!
My argument's correct, if you examine,
What should we do, if there should come a f-famine!

Though in green pea
Yourself you needn't stint
In July sunny,
In Januaree
It really costs a mint -
A mint of money!
No lamb for us -
House lamb at Christmas sells
At prices handsome:
Asparagus,
In winter, parallels
A Monarch's ransom:
When purse to bread and butter barely reaches,
What is your wife to do for hot-house peaches?
Ah! tell me that!
Ah! tell me that!
What IS your wife to do for hot-house peaches?
Your heart and hand
Though at my feet you lay,
All others scorning!
As matters stand,
There's nothing now to say
Except - good morning!
Though virtue be a husband's best adorning,
That won't pay rates and taxes - so, good morning!

Ballad: The Independent Bee

A hive of bees, as I've heard say,

Said to their Queen one sultry day,
"Please your Majesty's high position,
The hive is full and the weather is warm,
We rather think, with a due submission,
The time has come when we ought to swarm."

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.

Up spake their Queen and thus spake she -

"This is a matter that rests with me,
Who dares opinions thus to form?
I'LL tell you when it is time to swarm!"

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.

Her Majesty wore an angry frown,
In fact, her Majesty's foot was down -
Her Majesty sulked - declined to sup -
In short, her Majesty's back was up.

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.

Her foot was down and her back was up!

That hive contained one obstinate bee
(His name was Peter), and thus spake he -
"Though every bee has shown white feather,

To bow to tyranny I'm not prone -
Why should a hive swarm all together?
Surely a bee can swarm alone?"

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.

Upside down and inside out,
Backwards, forwards, round about,
Twirling here and twisting there,

Topsy turvily everywhere -

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.

Pitiful sight it was to see

Respectable elderly high-class bee,
Who kicked the beam at sixteen stone,
Trying his best to swarm alone!

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.

Trying his best to swarm alone!

The hive were shocked to see their chum
(A strict teetotaller) teetotum -

The Queen exclaimed, "How terrible, very!

It's perfectly clear to all the throng
Peter's been at the old brown sherry.

Old brown sherry is much too strong -

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.

Of all who thus themselves degrade,

A stern example must be made,

To Coventry go, you tipsy bee!"

So off to Coventry town went he.

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.

There, classed with all who misbehave,
Both plausible rogue and noisome knave,
In dismal dumps he lived to own

The folly of trying to swarm alone!
Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz.
All came of trying to swarm alone.

Ballad: The Disconcerted Tenor

A tenor, all singers above
(This doesn't admit of a question),
Should keep himself quiet,
Attend to his diet,
And carefully nurse his digestion.
But when he is madly in love,
It's certain to tell on his singing -
You can't do chromatics
With proper emphatics
When anguish your bosom is wringing!
When distracted with worries in plenty,
And his pulse is a hundred and twenty,
And his fluttering bosom the slave of mistrust is,
A tenor can't do himself justice.
Now observe - (SINGS A HIGH NOTE) -
You see, I can't do myself justice!

I could sing, if my fervour were mock,
It's easy enough if you're acting,
But when one's emotion
Is born of devotion,
You mustn't be over-exacting.
One ought to be firm as a rock
To venture a shake in VIBRATO;
When fervour's expected,
Keep cool and collected,
Or never attempt AGITATO.
But, of course, when his tongue is of leather,
And his lips appear pasted together,
And his sensitive palate as dry as a crust is,
A tenor can't do himself justice.
Now observe - (SINGS A CADENCE) -
It's no use - I can't do myself justice!

Ballad: The Played-Out Humorist

Quixotic is his enterprise, and hopeless his adventure is,
Who seeks for jocularities that haven't yet been said.
The world has joked incessantly for over fifty centuries,

And every joke that's possible has long ago been made.
I started as a humorist with lots of mental fizziness,
But humour is a drug which it's the fashion to abuse;
For my stock-in-trade, my fixtures, and the goodwill of the
business
No reasonable offer I am likely to refuse.
And if anybody choose
He may circulate the news
That no reasonable offer I'm likely to refuse.

Oh happy was that humorist - the first that made a pun at all -
Who when a joke occurred to him, however poor and mean,
Was absolutely certain that it never had been done at all -
How popular at dinners must that humorist have been!

Oh the days when some stepfather for the query held a handle out,
The door-mat from the scraper, is it distant very far?
And when no one knew where Moses was when Aaron blew the candle
out,
And no one had discovered that a door could be a-jar!
But your modern hearers are
In their tastes particular,
And they sneer if you inform them that a door can be a-jar!

In search of quip and quiddity, I've sat all day, alone, apart -
And all that I could hit on as a problem was - to find
Analogy between a scrag of mutton and a Bony-part,
Which offers slight employment to the speculative mind:
For you cannot call it very good, however great your charity -
It's not the sort of humour that is greeted with a shout -
And I've come to the conclusion that my mine of jocularity
In present Anno Domini, is worked completely out!
Though the notion you may scout,
I can prove beyond a doubt
That my mine of jocularity is utterly worked out.

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s by W. S. Gilbert

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