

The Humorous Poetry of the English Language

James Parton

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by James Parton

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***** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK, THE HUMOUROUS POETRY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE *****

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THE HUMOROUS POETRY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, FROM CHAUCER TO SAXE.

Narratives, Satires, Enigmas, Burlesques, Parodies, Travesties, Epigrams, Epitaphs, Translations, Including the Most Celebrated Comic Poems of the Anti-Jacobin, Rejected Addresses, the Ingoldsby Legends, Blackwood's Magazine, Bentley's Miscellany, and Punch.

With More Than Two Hundred Epigrams, and the Choicest Humorous Poetry of Wolcott, Cowper, Lamb, Thackeray, Praed, Swift, Scott, Holmes, Aytoun, Gay, Burns, Southey, Saxe, Hood, Prior, Coleridge, Byron, Moore, Lowell, Etc.

WITH

NOTES, EXPLANATORY AND BIOGRAPHICAL,

BY JAMES PARTON.

PREFACE.

The design of the projector of this volume was, that it should contain the Best of the shorter humorous poems in the literatures of England and the United States, except:

Poems so local or cotemporary in subject or allusion, as not to be readily understood by the modern American reader;

Poems which, from the freedom of expression allowed in the healthy ages, can not now be read aloud in a company of men and women;

Poems that have become perfectly familiar to every body, from their incessant reproduction in school-books and newspapers; and

Poems by living American authors, who have collected their humorous pieces from the periodicals in which most of them originally appeared, and given them to the world in their own names.

Holmes, Saxe, and Lowell are, therefore, only REPRESENTED in this collection. To have done more than fairly represent them, had been to infringe rights which are doubly sacred, because they are not protected by law. To have done less would have deprived the reader of a most convenient means of observing that, in a kind of composition confessed to be among the most difficult, our native wits are not excelled by foreign.

The editor expected to be embarrassed with a profusion of material for his purpose. But, on a survey of the poetical literature of the two countries, it was discovered that, of really excellent humorous poetry, of the kinds universally interesting, untainted by obscenity, not marred by coarseness of language, nor obscured by remote allusion, the quantity in existence is not great. It is thought that this volume contains a very large proportion of the best pieces that have appeared.

An unexpected feature of the book is, that there is not a line in it by a female hand. The alleged foibles of the Fair have given occasion to libraries of comic verse; yet, with diligent search, no humorous poems by women have been found which are of merit sufficient to give them claim to a place in a collection like this. That lively wit and graceful gayety, that quick perception of the absurd, which ladies are continually displaying in their conversation and correspondence, never, it seems, suggest the successful epigram, or inspire happy satirical verse.

The reader will not be annoyed by an impertinent superfluity of notes. At the end of the volume may be found a list of the sources from which its contents have been taken. For the convenience of those who live remote from biographical dictionaries, a few dates and other particulars have been added to the mention of each name. For valuable contributions to this portion of the volume, and for much well-directed work upon other parts of it, the reader is indebted to Mr. T. BUTLER GUNN, of this city.

There is, certainly, nothing more delightful than the fun of a man of genius. Humor, as Mr. Thackeray observes, is charming, and poetry is charming, but the blending of the two in the same composition is irresistible. There is much nonsense in this book, and some folly, and a little ill-nature; but there is more wisdom than either. They who possess it may congratulate themselves upon having the largest collection ever made of the sportive effusions of genius.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

TO MY EMPTY PURSE.

CHAUCER.

To you, my purse, and to none other wight,
Complain I, for ye be my lady dere;
I am sorry now that ye be light,
For, certes, ye now make me heavy chere;
Me were as lefe be laid upon a bere,
For which unto your mercy thus I crie,
Be heavy againe, or els mote I die.

Now vouchsafe this day or it be night,
That I of you the blissful sowne may here,
Or see your color like the sunne bright,
That of yellowness had never pere; Ye are my life, ye be my hertes
stere,
Queen of comfort and of good companie,
Be heavy again, or else mote I die.

Now purse, thou art to me my lives light,
And saviour, as downe in this world here,
Out of this towne helpe me by your might,
Sith that you will not be my treasure,
For I am slave as nere as any frere,
But I pray unto your curtesie,
Be heavy again, or els mote I die.

TO CHLOE.

AN APOLOGY FOR GOING INTO THE COUNTRY.
PETER PINDAR.

Chloe, we must not always be in heaven,
For ever toying, ogling, kissing, billing;
The joys for which I thousands would have given,
Will presently be scarcely worth a shilling.

Thy neck is fairer than the Alpine snows,

And, sweetly swelling, beats the down of doves;
Thy cheek of health, a rival to the rose;
Thy pouting lips, the throne of all the loves;
Yet, though thus beautiful beyond expression,
That beauty fadeth by too much possession.

Economy in love is peace to nature,
Much like economy in worldly matter;
We should be prudent, never live too fast;
Profusion will not, can not, always last.

Lovers are really spendthrifts--'tis a shame--
Nothing their thoughtless, wild career can tame,
Till penury stares them in the face;
And when they find an empty purse,
Grown calmer, wiser, how the fault they curse,
And, limping, look with such a sneaking grace!
Job's war-horse fierce, his neck with thunder hung,
Sunk to an humble hack that carries dung.

Smell to the queen of flowers, the fragrant rose--
Smell twenty times--and then, my dear, thy nose
Will tell thee (not so much for scent athirst)
The twentieth drank less flavor than the FIRST.

Love, doubtless, is the sweetest of all fellows;
Yet often should the little god retire--
Absence, dear Chloe, is a pair of bellows,
That keeps alive the sacred fire.

TO A FLY,

TAKEN OUT OF A BOWL OF PUNCH.
PETER PINDAR.

Ah! poor intoxicated little knave,
Now senseless, floating on the fragrant wave;
Why not content the cakes alone to munch?
Dearly thou pay'st for buzzing round the bowl;
Lost to the world, thou busy sweet-lipped soul--
Thus Death, as well as Pleasure, dwells with Punch.

Now let me take thee out, and moralize--
Thus 'tis with mortals, as it is with flies,
Forever hankering after Pleasure's cup:
Though Fate, with all his legions, be at hand,
The beasts, the draught of Circe can't withstand,
But in goes every nose--they must, will sup.

Mad are the passions, as a colt untamed!
When Prudence mounts their backs to ride them mild,
They fling, they snort, they foam, they rise inflamed,
Insisting on their own sole will so wild.

Gadsbud! my buzzing friend, thou art not dead;
The Fates, so kind, have not yet snapped thy thread;
By heavens, thou mov'st a leg, and now its brother.

And kicking, lo, again, thou mov'st another!

And now thy little drunken eyes unclose,
And now thou feelest for thy little nose,
And, finding it, thou rubbest thy two hands
Much as to say, "I'm glad I'm here again."
And well mayest thou rejoice--'tis very plain,
That near wert thou to Death's unsocial lands.

And now thou rollest on thy back about,
Happy to find thyself alive, no doubt--
Now turnest--on the table making rings,
Now crawling, forming a wet track,
Now shaking the rich liquor from thy back,
Now fluttering nectar from thy silken wings.

Now standing on thy head, thy strength to find,
And poking out thy small, long legs behind;
And now thy pinions dost thou briskly ply;
Preparing now to leave me--farewell, fly!

Go, join thy brothers on yon sunny board,
And rapture to thy family afford--
There wilt thou meet a mistress, or a wife,
That saw thee drunk, drop senseless in the stream
Who gave, perhaps, the wide-resounding scream,
And now sits groaning for thy precious life.

Yes, go and carry comfort to thy friends,
And wisely tell them thy imprudence ends.

Let buns and sugar for the future charm;
These will delight, and feed, and work no harm--
While Punch, the grinning, merry imp of sin,
Invites th' unwary wanderer to a kiss,
Smiles in his face, as though he meant him bliss,
Then, like an alligator, drags him in.

MAN MAY BE HAPPY.

PETER PINDAR.

"Man may be happy, if he will:"
I've said it often, and I think so still;
Doctrine to make the million stare!
Know then, each mortal is an actual Jove;
Can brew what weather he shall most approve,
Or wind, or calm, or foul, or fair.

But here's the mischief--man's an ass, I say;
Too fond of thunder, lightning, storm, and rain;
He hides the charming, cheerful ray
That spreads a smile o'er hill and plain!
Dark, he must court the skull, and spade, and shroud--
The mistress of his soul must be a cloud!

Who told him that he must be cursed on earth?
The God of Nature?--No such thing;

Heaven whispered him, the moment of his birth,
"Don't cry, my lad, but dance and sing;
Don't be too wise, and be an ape:--
In colors let thy soul be dressed, not crape.

"Roses shall smooth life's journey, and adorn;
Yet mind me--if, through want of grace,
Thou mean'st to fling the blessing in my face,
Thou hast full leave to tread upon a thorn."

Yet some there are, of men, I think the worst,
Poor imps! unhappy, if they can't be cursed--
Forever brooding over Misery's eggs,
As though life's pleasure were a deadly sin;
Mousing forever for a gin
To catch their happiness by the legs.

Even at a dinner some will be unblessed,
However good the viands, and well dressed:
They always come to table with a scowl,
Squint with a face of verjuice o'er each dish,
Fault the poor flesh, and quarrel with the fish,
Curse cook and wife, and, loathing, eat and growl.

A cart-load, lo, their stomachs steal,
Yet swear they can not make a meal.
I like not the blue-devil-hunting crew!
I hate to drop the discontented jaw!
O let me Nature's simple smile pursue,
And pick even pleasure from a straw.

ADDRESS TO THE TOOTHACHE.

WRITTEN WHEN THE AUTHOR WAS GRIEVOUSLY TORMENTED BY THAT DISORDER.
ROBERT BURNS.

My curse upon thy venom'd stang,
That shoots my tortur'd gums along;
And thro' my lugs gies mony a twang,
 Wi' gnawing vengeance;
Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,
 Like racking engines!

When fevers burn, or ague freezes,
Rheumatics gnaw, or cholic squeezes;
Our neighbors' sympathy may ease us,
 Wi' pitying moan;
But thee--thou hell o' a' diseases,
 Aye mocks our groan!

A down my beard the slavers trickle!
I kick the wee stools o'er the mickle,
As round the fire the giglets keckle,
 To see me loup;
While, raving mad, I wish a heckle
 Were in their doup.

O' a' the num'rous human dools,
Ill har'sts, daft bargains, cutty-stools,
Or worthy friends rak'd i' the mools,
 Sad sight to see!
The tricks o' knaves, or fash o' fools,
 Thou bear'st the gree.

Where'er that place be priests ca' hell,
Whence a' the tones o' mis'ry yell,
And ranked plagues their numbers tell,
 In dreadfu' raw,
Thou, Toothache, surely bear'st the bell,
 Amang them a';

O thou grim mischief-making chiel,
That gars the notes of discord squeel,
'Till daft mankind aft dance a reel
 In gore a shoe-thick;--
Gie a' the faes o' Scotland's weal
 A towmond's Toothache!

THE PIG.

A COLLOQUIAL POEM.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

Jacob! I do not like to see thy nose
Turn'd up in scornful curve at yonder pig,
It would be well, my friend, if we, like him,
Were perfect in our kind!..And why despise
The sow-born grunter?..He is obstinate,
Thou answerest; ugly, and the filthiest beast
That banquets upon offal. ...Now I pray you
Hear the pig's counsel.

 Is he obstinate?

We must not, Jacob, be deceived by words;
We must not take them as unheeding hands
Receive base money at the current worth
But with a just suspicion try their sound,
And in the even balance weigh them well
See now to what this obstinacy comes:
A poor, mistreated, democratic beast,
He knows that his unmerciful drivers seek
Their profit, and not his. He hath not learned
That pigs were made for man,...born to be brawn'd
And baconized: that he must please to give
Just what his gracious masters please to take;
Perhaps his tusks, the weapons Nature gave
For self-defense, the general privilege;
Perhaps,...hark, Jacob! dost thou hear that horn?
Woe to the young posterity of Pork!
Their enemy is at hand.

 Again. Thou say'st

The pig is ugly. Jacob, look at him!
Those eyes have taught the lover flattery.
His face, ...nay, Jacob! Jacob! were it fair
To judge a lady in her dishabille?

Fancy it dressed, and with saltpeter rouged.
Behold his tail, my friend; with curls like that
The wanton hop marries her stately spouse:
So crisp in beauty Amoretta's hair
Rings round her lover's soul the chains of love.
And what is beauty, but the aptitude
Of parts harmonious? Give thy fancy scope,
And thou wilt find that no imagined change
Can beautify this beast. Place at his end
The starry glories of the peacock's pride,
Give him the swan's white breast; for his horn-hoofs
Shape such a foot and ankle as the waves
Crowded in eager rivalry to kiss
When Venus from the enamor'd sea arose;...
Jacob, thou canst but make a monster of him!
All alteration man could think, would mar
His pig-perfection.

 The last charge,...he lives
A dirty life. Here I could shelter him
With noble and right-reverend precedents,
And show by sanction of authority
That 'tis a very honorable thing
To thrive by dirty ways. But let me rest
On better ground the unanswerable defense.
The pig is a philosopher, who knows
No prejudice. Dirt?...Jacob, what is dirt?
If matter,...why the delicate dish that tempts
An o'ergorged epicure to the last morsel
That stuffs him to the throat-gates, is no more.
If matter be not, but as sages say,
Spirit is all, and all things visible
Are one, the infinitely modified,
Think, Jacob, what that pig is, and the mire
Wherein he stands knee-deep!

 And there! the breeze
Pleads with me, and has won thee to a smile
That speaks conviction. O'er yon blossom'd field
Of beans it came, and thoughts of bacon rise.

SNUFF.

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

A delicate pinch! oh how it tingles up
The titillated nose, and fills the eyes
And breast, till in one comfortable sneeze
The full-collected pleasure bursts at last!
Most rare Columbus! thou shalt be for this
The only Christopher in my calendar.
Why, but for thee the uses of the nose
Were half unknown, and its capacity
Of joy. The summer gale that from the heath,
At midnight glowing with the golden gorse,
Bears its balsamic odor, but provokes
Not satisfies the sense; and all the flowers,
That with their unsubstantial fragrance tempt
And disappoint, bloom for so short a space,
That half the year the nostrils would keep lent,

But that the kind tobacconist admits
No winter in his work; when Nature sleeps
His wheels roll on, and still administer
A plenitude of joy, a tangible smell.

What are Peru and those Golcondan mines
To thee, Virginia? miserable realms,
The produce of inhuman toil, they send
Gold for the greedy, jewels for the vain.
But thine are COMMON comforts!...To omit
Pipe-panegyric and tobacco-praise,
Think what a general joy the snuff-box gives,
Europe, and far above Pizarro's name
Write Raleigh in thy records of renown!
Him let the school-boy bless if he behold
His master's box produced, for when he sees
The thumb and finger of authority
Stuffed up the nostrils: when hat, head, and wig
Shake all; when on the waistcoat black, brown dust,
From the oft-reiterated pinch profuse
Profusely scattered, lodges in its folds,
And part on the magistral table lights,
Part on the open book, soon blown away,
Full surely soon shall then the brow severe
Relax; and from vituperative lips
Words that of birch remind not, sounds of praise,
And jokes that MUST be laughed at shall proceed.

A FAREWELL TO TOBACCO.
CHARLES LAMB.

May the Babylonish curse
Straight confound my stammering verse,
If I can a passage see
In this word-perplexity,
Or a fit expression find,
Or a language to my mind,
(Still the phrase is wide or scant)
To take leave of thee, GREAT PLANT!
Or in any terms relate
Half my love, or half my hate:
For I hate, yet love thee, so,
That, whichever thing I show,
The plain truth will seem to be
A constrain'd hyperbole,
And the passion to proceed
More from a mistress than a weed.

Sooty retainer to the vine,
Bacchus' black servant, negro fine;
Sorcerer, that mak'st us dote upon
Thy begrimed complexion,
And, for thy pernicious sake,
More and greater oaths to break
Than reclaimed lovers take
'Gainst women: thou thy siege dost lay
Much too in the female way,
While thou suck'st the lab'ring breath

Faster than kisses or than death,

Thou in such a cloud dost bind us,
That our worst foes can not find us,
And ill fortune, that would thwart us
Shoots at rovers, shooting at us;
While each man, through thy height'ning steam,
Does like a smoking Etna seem,
And all about us does express
(Fancy and wit in richest dress)
A Sicilian fruitfulness.

Thou through such a mist dost show us,
That our best friends do not know us,
And, for those allowed features,
Due to reasonable creatures,
Liken'st us to fell Chimeras,
Monsters that, who see us, fear us;
Worse than Cerberus or Geryon,
Or, who first loved a cloud, Ixion.

Bacchus we know, and we allow
His tipsy rites. But what art thou
That but by reflex canst show
What his deity can do,
As the false Egyptian spell
Aped the true Hebrew miracle?
Some few vapors thou may'st raise,
The weak brain may serve to amaze,
But to the reins and nobler heart
Canst nor life nor heat impart.

Brother of Bacchus, later born.
The old world was sure forlorn
Wanting thee, that aidest more
The god's victories than before
All his panthers, and the brawls
Of his piping Bacchanals.
These, as stale, we disallow,
Or judge of THEE meant only thou
His true Indian conquest art;
And, for ivy round his dart,
The reformed god now weaves
A finer thyrsus of thy leaves.

Scent to match thy rich perfume
Chemic art did ne'er presume
Through her quaint alembic strain,
None so sov'reign to the brain;
Nature, that did in thee excel,
Framed again no second smell.
Roses, violets, but toys
For the smaller sort of boys,
Or for greener damsels meant;
Thou art the only manly scent.

Stinking'st of the stinking land,
Filth of the mouth and fog of the mind,
Africa, that brags her foison,
Breeds no such prodigious poison

Henbane, nightshade, both together,
Hemlock, aconite---

Nay, rather,
Plant divine, of rarest virtue;
Blisters on the tongue would hurt you.
'Twas but in a sort I blamed thee;
None e'er prosper'd who defamed thee
Irony all, and feign'd abuse,
Such as perplex'd lovers use,
At a need, when, in despair
To paint forth their fairest fair,
Or in part but to express
That exceeding comeliness
Which their fancies doth so strike,
They borrow language of dislike;
And, instead of Dearest Miss,
Jewel, Honey, Sweetheart, Bliss,
And those forms of old admiring,
Call her Cockatrice and Siren,
Basilisk, and all that's evil,
Witch, Hyena, Mermaid, Devil,
Ethiop, Wench, and Blackamoor,
Monkey, Ape, and twenty more;
Friendly Trait'ress, loving Foe--
Not that she is truly so,
But no other way they know
A contentment to express,
Borders so upon excess,
That they do not rightly wot
Whether it be pain or not.

Or, as men, constrain'd to part
With what's nearest to their heart,
While their sorrow's at the height,
Lose discrimination quite,
And their hasty wrath let fall,
To appease their frantic gall,
On the darling thing whatever,
Whence they feel it death to sever
Though it be, as they, perforce,
Guiltless of the sad divorce.

For I must (nor let it grieve thee,
Friendliest of plants, that I must) leave thee.
For thy sake; TOBACCO, I
Would do any thing but die,
And but seek to extend my days
Long enough to sing thy praise.
But, as she, who once hath been
A king's consort, is a queen
Ever after, nor will bate
Any title of her state,
Though a widow, or divorced,
So I, from thy converse forced,
The old name and style retain,
A right Katherine of Spain;
And a seat, too, 'mongst the joys
Of the blest Tobacco Boys.

Where, though I, by sour physician,
Am debarr'd the full fruition
Of thy favors, I may catch
Some collateral sweets, and snatch
Sidelong odors, that give life
like glances from a neighbor's wife;
And still live in the by-places
And the suburbs of thy graces;
And in thy holders take delight,
An unconquer'd Canaanite.

WRITTEN AFTER SWIMMING FROM SESTOS TO ABYDOS.

BYRON.

If, in the month of dark December,
Leander, who was nightly wont,
(What maid will not the tale remember?)
To cross thy stream broad Hellespont!

If, when the wint'ry tempest roar'd,
He sped to Hero nothing loth,
And thus of old thy current pour'd,
Fair Venus! how I pity both!

For ME, degenerate, modern wretch,
Though in the genial month of May,
My dripping limbs I faintly stretch,
And think I've done a feat to-day.

But since he crossed the rapid tide,
According to the doubtful story,
To woo--and--Lord knows what beside,
And swam for Love, as I for Glory;

'Twere hard to say who fared the best:
Sad mortals! thus the gods still plague you!
He lost his labor, I my jest;
For he was drowned, and I've the ague

THE LISBON PACKET.

BYRON.

Huzza! Hodgson, we are going,
Our embargo's off at last;
Favorable breezes blowing
Bend the canvas o'er the mast.
From aloft the signal's streaming,
Hark! the farewell gun is fired;
Women screeching, tars blaspheming,
Tell us that our time's expired.
Here's a rascal
Come to task all,
Prying from the custom-house;

Trunks unpacking,
Cases cracking,
Not a corner for a mouse
'Scapes unsearched amid the racket,
Ere we sail on board the Packet.

Now our boatmen quit their mooring,
And all hands must ply the oar;
Baggage from the quay is lowering,
We're impatient--push from shore.
"Have a care! that case holds liquor--
Stop the boat--I'm sick--O Lord!"
"Sick, ma'am, damme, you'll be sicker
Ere you've been an hour on board."
Thus are screaming
Men and women,
Gemmen, ladies, servants, Jacks;
Here entangling,
All are wrangling,
Stuck together close as wax.--
Such the general noise and racket,
Ere we reach the Lisbon Packet.

Now we've reached her, lo! the captain,
Gallant Kid, commands the crew;
Passengers their berths are clapped in,
Some to grumble, some to spew.
"Hey day! call you that a cabin?
Why, 'tis hardly three feet square;
Not enough to stow Queen Mab in--
Who the deuce can harbor there?"
"Who, sir? plenty--
Nobles twenty
Did at once my vessel fill."--
"Did they? Jesus,
How you squeeze us!
Would to God they did so still;
Then I'd 'scape the heat and racket
Of the good ship Lisbon Packet."

Fletcher! Murray! Bob! where are you?
Stretched along the decks like logs--
Bear a hand, you jolly tar, you!
Here's a rope's end for the dogs.
Hobhouse muttering fearful curses,
As the hatchway down he rolls,
Now his breakfast, now his verses,
Vomits forth--and damns our souls.
"Here's a stanza
On Braganza--
Help!"--"A couplet?"--"No, a cup
Of warm water--"
"What's the matter?"
"Zounds! my liver's coming up;
I shall not survive the racket
Of this brutal Lisbon Packet."

Now at length we're off for Turkey,
Lord knows when we shall come back!

Breezes foul and tempests murky
May unship us in a crack.
But, since life at most a jest is,
As philosophers allow,
Still to laugh by far the best is,
Then laugh on--as I do now.
Laugh at all things,
Great and small things,
Sick or well, at sea or shore;
While we're quaffing,
Let's have laughing--
Who the devil cares for more?--
Some good wine! and who would lack it,
Even on board the Lisbon Packet?

TO FANNY.

THOMAS MOORE

Never mind how the pedagogue proses,
You want not antiquity's stamp,
The lip that's so scented by roses,
Oh! never must smell of the lamp.

Old Chloe, whose withering kisses
Have long set the loves at defiance,
Now done with the science of blisses,
May fly to the blisses of science!

Young Sappho, for want of employments,
Alone o'er her Ovid may melt,
Condemned but to read of enjoyments,
Which wiser Corinna had felt.

But for YOU to be buried in books--
Oh, FANNY! they're pitiful sages;
Who could not in ONE of your looks
Read more than in millions of pages!

Astronomy finds in your eye
Better light than she studies above,
And music must borrow your sigh
As the melody dearest to love.

In Ethics--'tis you that can check,
In a minute, their doubts and their quarrels
Oh! show but that mole on your neck,
And 'twill soon put an end to their morals.

Your Arithmetic only can trip
When to kiss and to count you endeavor;
But eloquence glows on your lip
When you swear that you'll love me forever

Thus you see what a brilliant alliance
Of arts is assembled in you--
A course of more exquisite science
Man never need wish to go through!

And, oh!--if a fellow like me
May confer a diploma of hearts,
With my lip thus I seal your degree,
My divine little Mistress of Arts!

YOUNG JESSICA.

THOMAS MOORE.

Young Jessica sat all the day,
In love-dreams languishingly pining,
Her needle bright neglected lay,
Like truant genius idly shining.
Jessy, 'tis in idle hearts
That love and mischief are most nimble;
The safest shield against the darts
Of Cupid, is Minerva's thimble.

A child who with a magnet play'd,
And knew its winning ways so wily,
The magnet near the needle laid,
And laughing, said, "We'll steal it slyly."
The needle, having naught to do,
Was pleased to let the magnet wheedle,
Till closer still the tempter drew,
And off, at length, eloped the needle.

Now, had this needle turn'd its eye
To some gay reticule's construction,
It ne'er had stray'd from duty's tie,
Nor felt a magnet's sly seduction.
Girls would you keep tranquil hearts,
Your snowy fingers must be nimble;
The safest shield against the darts
Of Cupid, is Minerva's thimble.

RINGS AND SEALS.

THOMAS MOORE.

"Go!" said the angry weeping maid,
"The charm is broken!--once betray'd,
Oh! never can my heart rely
On word or look, on oath or sigh.
Take back the gifts, so sweetly given,
With promis'd faith and vows to heaven;
That little ring, which, night and morn,
With wedded truth my hand hath worn;
That seal which oft, in moments blest,
Thou hast upon my lip imprest,
And sworn its dewy spring should be
A fountain seal'd for only thee!
Take, take them back, the gift and vow,
All sullied, lost, and hateful, now!"

I took the ring--the seal I took,
While oh! her every tear and look
Were such as angels look and shed,
When man is by the world misled!
Gently I whisper'd, "FANNY, dear!
Not half thy lover's gifts are here:
Say, where are all the seals he gave
To every ringlet's jetty wave,
And where is every one he printed
Upon that lip, so ruby-tinted--
Seals of the purest gem of bliss,
Oh! richer, softer, far than this!

"And then the ring--my love! recall
How many rings, delicious all,
His arms around that neck hath twisted,
Twining warmer far than this did!
Where are they all, so sweet, so many?
Oh! dearest, give back all, if any!"

While thus I murmur'd, trembling too
Lest all the nymph had vow'd was true,
I saw a smile relenting rise
'Mid the moist azure of her eyes.
Like day-light o'er a sea of blue,
While yet the air is dim with dew!
She let her cheek repose on mine,
She let my arms around her twine--
Oh! who can tell the bliss one feels
In thus exchanging rings and seals!

NETS AND CAGES.

THOMAS MOORE.

Come, listen to my story, while
Your needle's task you ply;
At what I sing some maids will smile,
While some, perhaps, may sigh.
Though Love's the theme, and Wisdom blames
Such florid songs as ours,
Yet Truth, sometimes, like eastern dames,
Can speak her thoughts by flowers.
Then listen, maids, come listen, while
Your needle's task you ply;
At what I sing there's some may smile,
While some, perhaps, will sigh.
Young Cloe, bent on catching Loves,
Such nets had learn'd to frame,
That none, in all our vales and groves,
Ere caught so much small game:
While gentle Sue, less given to roam,
When Cloe's nets were taking
These flights of birds, sat still at home,
One small, neat Love-cage making.
Come, listen, maids, etc.

Much Cloe laugh'd at Susan's task;

But mark how things went on:
These light-caught Loves, ere you could ask
Their name and age, were gone!
So weak poor Cloe's nets were wove,
That, though she charm'd into them
New game each hour, the youngest Love
Was able to break through them.
Come, listen, maids, etc.

Meanwhile, young Sue, whose cage was wrought
Of bars too strong to sever,
One love with golden pinions caught,
And caged him there forever;
Instructing thereby, all coquettes,
Whate'er their looks or ages,
That, though 'tis pleasant weaving Nets,
'Tis wiser to make Cages.
Thus, maidens, thus do I beguile
The task your fingers ply--
May all who hear, like Susan smile,
Ah! not like Cloe sigh!

SALAD.

SYDNEY SMITH.

To make this condiment, your poet begs
The pounded yellow of two hard-boiled eggs;
Two boiled potatoes, passed through kitchen-sieve,
Smoothness and softness to the salad give;
Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,
And, half-suspected, animate the whole.
Of mordant mustard add a single spoon,
Distrust the condiment that bites so soon;
But deem it not, thou man of herbs, a fault,
To add a double quantity of salt.
And, lastly, o'er the flavored compound toss
A magic soup-spoon of anchovy sauce.
Oh, green and glorious! Oh, herbaceous treat!
'Twould tempt the dying anchorite to eat;
Back to the world he'd turn his fleeting soul,
And plunge his fingers in the salad bowl!
Serenely full, the epicure would say,
Fate can not harm me, I have dined to-day!

MY LETTERS.

R. HARRIS BARHAM.

"Litera scripta manet."--Old Saw.

Another mizzling, drizzling day!
Of clearing up there's no appearance;
So I'll sit down without delay,
And here, at least, I'll make a clearance!

Oh ne'er "on such a day as this,"
Would Dido with her woes oppressed
Have woo'd Aeneas back to bliss,
Or Troilus gone to hunt for Cressid!

No, they'd have stay'd at home, like me,
And popp'd their toes upon the fender,
And drank a quiet cup of tea:
On days like this one can't be tender.

So, Molly, draw that basket nigher,
And put my desk upon the table--
Bring that portfolio--stir the fire--
Now off as fast as you are able!

First here's a card from Mrs. Grimes,
"A ball!"--she knows that I'm no dancer--
That woman's ask'd me fifty times,
And yet I never send an answer.

"DEAR JACK,--
Just lend me twenty pounds,
Till Monday next, when I'll return it.
Yours truly,
HENRY GIBBS."
Why Z--ds!
I've seen the man but twice--here, burn it.

One from my cousin Sophy Daw--
Full of Aunt Margery's distresses;
"The cat has kitten'd 'in the DRAW,'
And ruin'd two bran-new silk dresses."

From Sam, "The Chancellor's motto,"--nay
Confound his puns, he knows I hate 'em;
"Pro Rege, Lege, Grege,"--Ay,
"For King read Mob!" Brougham's old erratum.

From Seraphina Price--"At two"--
"Till then I can't, my dearest John, stir;"
Two more because I did not go,
Beginning "Wretch" and "Faithless Monster!"

"Dear Sir,--
"This morning Mrs. P---
Who's doing quite as well as may be,
Presented me at half past three
Precisely, with another baby.

"Well name it John, and know with pleasure
You'll stand"--Five guineas more, confound it!--
I wish they'd call it Nebuchadnezzar,
Or thrown it in the Thames and drown'd it.

What have we next? A civil dun:
"John Brown would take it as a favor"--
Another, and a surlier one,
"I can't put up with SICH behavior."

"Bill so long standing,"--"quite tired out,"--
"Must sit down to insist on payment,"
"Called ten times,"--Here's a fuss about
A few coats, waistcoats, and small raiment.

For once I'll send an answer, and in-
form Mr. Snip he needn't "call" so;
But when his bill's as "tired of standing"
As he is, beg't will "sit down also."

This from my rich old Uncle Ned,
Thanking me for my annual present;
And saying he last Tuesday wed
His cook-maid, Molly--vastly pleasant!

An ill-spelt note from Tom at school,
Begging I'll let him learn the fiddle;
Another from that precious fool,
Miss Pyefinch, with a stupid riddle.

"D'ye give it up?" Indeed I do!
Confound those antiquated minxes:
I won't play "Billy Black" to a "Blue,"
Or OEdipus to such old sphinxes.

A note sent up from Kent to show me,
Left with my bailiff, Peter King;
"I'll burn them precious stacks down, blow me!
"Yours most sincerely,
"CAPTAIN SWING."

Four begging letters with petitions,
One from my sister Jane, to pray
I'll execute a few commissions
In Bond-street, "when I go that way."

"And buy at Pearsall's in the city
Twelve skeins of silk for netting purses:
Color no matter, so it's pretty;--
Two hundred pons"--two hundred curses!

From Mistress Jones: "My little Billy
Goes up his schooling to begin,
Will you just step to Piccadilly,
And meet him when the coach comes in?"

"And then, perhaps, you will as well, see
The poor dear fellow safe to school
At Dr. Smith's in Little Chelsea!"
Heaven send he flog the little fool!

From Lady Snooks: "Dear Sir, you know
You promised me last week a Rebus;
A something smart and apropos,
For my new Album?"--Aid me, Phoebus!

"My first is follow'd by my second;
Yet should my first my second see,

A dire mishap it would be reckon'd,
And sadly shock'd my first would be.

"Were I but what my whole implies,
And pass'd by chance across your portal
You'd cry 'Can I believe my eyes?
I never saw so queer a mortal!"

"For then my head would not be on,
My arms their shoulders must abandon;
My very body would be gone,
I should not have a leg to stand on."

Come that's dispatch'd--what follows?--Stay
"Reform demanded by the nation;
Vote for Tagrag and Bobtail!" Ay,
By Jove a blessed REFORMATION!

Jack, clap the saddle upon Rose--
Or no!--the filly--she's the fleeter;
The devil take the rain--here goes,
I'm off--a plumper for Sir Peter!

THE POPLAR.

R. HARRIS BARHAM.

Ay, here stands the Poplar, so tall and so stately,
On whose tender rind--'twas a little one then--
We carved HER initials; though not very lately,
We think in the year eighteen hundred and ten.

Yes, here is the G which proclaimed Georgiana;
Our heart's empress then; see, 'tis grown all askew;
And it's not without grief we perforce entertain a
Conviction, it now looks much more like a Q.

This should be the great D too, that once stood for Dobbin,
Her lov'd patronymic--ah! can it be so?
Its once fair proportions, time, too, has been robbing;
A D?--we'll be DEED if it isn't an O!

Alas! how the soul sentimental it vexes,
That thus on our labors stern CHRONOS should frown
Should change our soft liquids to izzards and Xes,
And turn true-love's alphabet all upside down!

SPRING.

A NEW VERSION.

THOMAS HOOD.

"HAM. The air bites shrewdly--it is very cold.
HOR. It is a nipping and eager air."--HAMLET.

Come, GENTLE Spring! ethereal MILDNESS, come!
O! Thomson, void of rhyme as well as reason,
How couldst thou thus poor human nature hum?
There's no such season.

The Spring! I shrink and shudder at her name!
For why, I find her breath a bitter blighter!
And suffer from her BLOWS as if they came
From Spring the Fighter.

Her praises, then, let hardy poets sing,
And be her tuneful laureates and upholders,
Who do not feel as if they had a SPRING
Poured down their shoulders!

Let others eulogize her floral shows;
From me they can not win a single stanza.
I know her blooms are in full blow--and so's
The Influenza.

Her cowslips, stocks, and lilies of the vale,
Her honey-blossoms that you hear the bees at,
Her pansies, daffodils, and primrose pale,
Are things I sneeze at!

Fair is the vernal quarter of the year!
And fair its early buddings and its blowings--
But just suppose Consumption's seeds appear
With other sowings!

For me, I find, when eastern winds are high,
A frigid, not a genial inspiration;
Nor can, like Iron-Chested Chubb, defy
An inflammation.

Smitten by breezes from the land of plague,
To me all vernal luxuries are fables,
O! where's the SPRING in a rheumatic leg,
Stiff as a table's?

I limp in agony--I wheeze and cough;
And quake with Ague, that great Agitator,
Nor dream, before July, of leaving off
My Respirator.

What wonder if in May itself I lack
A peg for laudatory verse to hang on?--
Spring, mild and gentle!--yes, a Spring-heeled Jack
To those he sprang on.

In short, whatever panegyrics lie
In fulsome odes too many to be cited,
The tenderness of Spring is all my eye,
And that is blighted!

ODE.

ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF CLAPHAM ACADEMY.
THOMAS HOOD.

Ah me! those old familiar bounds!
That classic house, those classic grounds,
My pensive thought recalls!
What tender urchins now confine,
What little captives now repine,
Within yon irksome walls!

Ay, that's the very house! I know
Its ugly windows, ten a row!
Its chimneys in the rear!
And there's the iron rod so high,
That drew the thunder from the sky
And turned our table-beer!

There I was birched! there I was bred!
There like a little Adam fed
From Learning's woeful tree!
The weary tasks I used to con!--
The hopeless leaves I wept upon!--
Most fruitful leaves to me!

The summoned class!--the awful bow!--
I wonder who is master now
And wholesome anguish sheds!
How many ushers now employs,
How many maids to see the boys
Have nothing in their heads!

And Mrs. S * * *?--Doth she abet
(Like Pallas in the parlor) yet
Some favored two or three--
The little Crichtons of the hour,
Her muffin-medals that devour,
And swill her prize--bohea?

Ay, there's the playground! there's the lime,
Beneath whose shade in summer's prime
So wildly I have read!--
Who sits there NOW, and skims the cream
Of young Romance, and weaves a dream
Of Love and Cottage-bread?

Who struts the Randall of the walk?
Who models tiny heads in chalk?
Who scoops the light canoe?
What early genius buds apace?
Where's Poynter? Harris? Bowers? Chase!
Hal Baylis? blithe Carew?

Alack! they're gone--a thousand ways!
And some are serving in "the Greys,"
And some have perished young!--
Jack Harris weds his second wife;
Hal Baylis drives the WAYNE of life;
And blithe Carew--is hung!

Grave Bowers teaches A B C
To Savages at Owhyee;
Poor Chase is with the worms!--
All are gone--the olden breed!--
New crops of mushroom boys succeeds,
"And push us from our FORMS!"

Lo! where they scramble forth, and shout,
And leap, and skip, and mob about,
At play where we have played!
Some hop, some run (some fall), some twine
Their crony arms; some in the shine,
And some are in the shade!

Lo there what mixed conditions run!
The orphan lad; the widow's son;
And Fortune's favored care--
The wealthy born, for whom she hath
Macadamized the future path--
The nabob's pampered heir!

Some brightly starred--some evil born--
For honor some, and some for scorn--
For fair or foul renown!
Good, bad, indifferent--none they lack!
Look, here's a white, and there's a black!
And there's a creole brown!

Some laugh and sing, some mope and weep,
And wish THEIR frugal sires would keep
Their only sons at home;--
Some tease the future tense, and plan
The full-grown doings of the man,
And pant for years to come!

A foolish wish! There's one at hoop;
And four at FIVES! and five who stoop
The marble taw to speed!
And one that curvets in and out,
Reining his fellow-cob about,
Would I were in his STEED!

Yet he would gladly halt and drop
That boyish harness off, to swop
With this world's heavy van--
To toil, to tug. O little fool!
While thou can be a horse at school
To wish to be a man!

Perchance thou deem'st it were a thing
To wear a crown--to be a king!
And sleep on regal down!
Alas! thou know'st not kingly cares;
Far happier is thy head that wears
That hat without a crown!

And dost thou think that years acquire
New added joys? Dost think thy sire
More happy than his son?

That manhood's mirth?--O, go thy ways
To Drury-lane when----PLAYS,
And see how FORCED our fun!

Thy taws are brave!--thy tops are rare!--
OUR tops are spun with coils of care,
Our DUMPS are no delight!--
The Elgin marbles are but tame,
And 'tis at best a sorry game
To fly the Muse's kite!

Our hearts are dough, our heels are lead,
Our topmost joys fall dull and dead,
Like balls with no rebound!
And often with a faded eye
We look behind, and send a sigh
Toward that merry ground!

Then be contented. Thou hast got
The most of heaven in thy young lot;
There's sky-blue in thy cup!
Thou'lt find thy manhood all too fast--
Soon come, soon gone! and age at last
A sorry BREAKING UP!

SCHOOL AND SCHOOL-FELLOWS.
W. MACKWORTH PRAED.

Twelve years ago I made a mock
Of filthy trades and traffics:
I wondered what they meant by stock;
I wrote delightful sapphics:
I knew the streets of Rome and Troy,
I supped with fates and furies;
Twelve years ago I was a boy,
A happy boy at Drury's.

Twelve years ago!--how many a thought
Of faded pains and pleasures,
Those whispered syllables have brought
From memory's hoarded treasures!
The fields, the forms, the beasts, the books.
The glories and disgraces,
The voices of dear friends, the looks
Of old familiar faces.

Where are my friends?--I am alone,
No playmate shares my beaker--
Some lie beneath the church-yard stone,
And some before the Speaker;
And some compose a tragedy,
And some compose a rondo;
And some draw sword for liberty,
And some draw pleas for John Doe.

Tom Mill was used to blacken eyes,

Without the fear of sessions;
Charles Medler loathed false quantities,
As much as false professions;
Now Mill keeps order in the land,
A magistrate pedantic;
And Medler's feet repose unscanned
Beneath the wide Atlantic.

Wild Nick, whose oaths made such a din,
Does Dr. Martext's duty;
And Mullion, with that monstrous chin,
Is married to a beauty;
And Darrel studies, week by week,
His Mant and not his Manton;
And Ball, who was but poor at Greek,
Is very rich at Canton.

And I am eight-and-twenty now--
The world's cold chain has bound me;
And darker shades are on my brow,
And sadder scenes around me:
In Parliament I fill my seat,
With many other noodles;
And lay my head in Germyn-street,
And sip my hock at Doodle's.

But often when the cares of life,
Have set my temples aching,
When visions haunt me of a wife,
When duns await my waking,
When Lady Jane is in a pet,
Or Hobby in a hurry,
When Captain Hazard wins a bet,
Or Beauheu spoils a curry:

For hours and hours, I think and talk
Of each remembered hobby:
I long to lounge in Poet's Walk--
Or shiver in the lobby;
I wish that I could run away
From House, and court, and levee,
Where bearded men appear to-day,
Just Eton boys, grown heavy;

That I could bask in childhood's sun,
And dance o'er childhood's roses;
And find huge wealth in one pound one,
Vast wit and broken noses;
And pray Sir Giles at Datchet Lane,
And call the milk-maids Houris;
That I could be a boy again--
A happy boy at Drury's!

THE VICAR.

W. MACKWORTH PRAED

Some years ago, ere Time and Taste
Had turned our parish topsy-turvy,
When Darnel Park was Darnel Waste,
And roads as little known as scurvy,
The man who lost his way between
St. Marys' Hill and Sandy Thicket,
Was always shown across the Green,
And guided to the Parson's Wicket.

Back flew the bolt of lisson lath;
Fair Margaret in her tidy kirtle,
Led the lorn traveler up the path,
Through clean-clipped rows of box and myrtle: And Don and Sancho,
Tramp and Tray,
Upon the parlor steps collected,
Wagged all their tails, and seemed to say,
"Our master knows you; you're expected!"

Up rose the Reverend Doctor Brown,
Up rose the Doctor's "winsome marrow;"
The lady lay her knitting down,
Her husband clasped his ponderous Barrow;
Whate'er the stranger's caste or creed,
Pundit or papist, saint or sinner,
He found a stable for his steed,
And welcome for himself, and dinner.

If, when he reached his journey's end,
And warmed himself in court or college,
He had not gained an honest friend,
And twenty curious scraps of knowledge:--
If he departed as he came,
With no new light on love or liquor,--
Good sooth the traveler was to blame,
And not the Vicarage, or the Vicar.

His talk was like a stream which runs
With rapid change from rocks to roses;
It slipped from politics to puns:
It passed from Mohammed to Moses:
Beginning with the laws which keep
The planets in their radiant courses,
And ending with some precept deep
For dressing eels or shoeing horses.

He was a shrewd and sound divine,
Of loud Dissent the mortal terror;
And when, by dint of page and line,
He 'stablished Truth, or started Error,
The Baptist found him far too deep;
The Deist sighed with saving sorrow;
And the lean Levite went to sleep,
And dreamed of tasting pork to-morrow.

His sermons never said or showed
That Earth is foul, that Heaven is gracious,
Without refreshment on the road
From Jerome, or from Athanasius;
And sure a righteous zeal inspired

The hand and head that penned and planned them,
For all who understood, admired,
And some who did not understand them.

He wrote, too, in a quiet way,
Small treatises and smaller verses;
And sage remarks on chalk and clay,
And hints to noble lords and nurses;
True histories of last year's ghost,
Lines to a ringlet or a turban;
And trifles for the Morning Post,
And nothing for Sylvanus Urban.

He did not think all mischief fair,
Although he had a knack of joking;
He did not make himself a bear,
Although he had a taste for smoking
And when religious sects ran mad,
He held, in spite of all his learning,
That if a man's belief is bad, It will not be improved by burning.

And he was kind, and loved to sit
In the low hut or garnished cottage,
And praise the farmer's homely wit,
And share the widow's homelier pottage:
At his approach complaint grew mild,
And when his hand unbarred the shutter,
The clammy lips of Fever smiled
The welcome which they could not utter.

He always had a tale for me
Of Julius Caesar or of Venus:
From him I learned the rule of three,
Cat's cradle, leap-frog, and Quae genus;
I used to singe his powdered wig,
To steal the staff he put such trust in;
And make the puppy dance a jig
When he began to quote Augustin.

Alack the change! in vain I look
For haunts in which my boyhood trifled;
The level lawn, the trickling brook,
The trees I climbed, the beds I rifled:
The church is larger than before:
You reach it by a carriage entry:
It holds three hundred people more:
And pews are fitted up for gentry.

Sit in the Vicar's seat: you'll hear
The doctrine of a gentle Johnian,
Whose hand is white, whose tone is clear,
Whose tone is very Ciceronian.
Where is the old man laid?--look down,
And construe on the slab before you,
HIC JACET GULIELMUS BROWN,
VIR NULLA NON DONANDUS LAURA.

THE BACHELOR'S CANE-BOTTOMED CHAIR.
W. M. THACKERAY

In tattered old slippers that toast at the bars,
And a ragged old jacket perfumed with cigars,
Away from the world and its toils and its cares,
I've a snug little kingdom up four pair of stairs.

To mount to this realm is a toil, to be sure,
But the fire there is bright and the air rather pure;
And the view I behold on a sunshiny day
Is grand through the chimney-pots over the way.

This snug little chamber is crammed in all nooks,
With worthless old knickknacks and silly old books,
And foolish old odds and foolish old ends,
Cracked bargains from brokers, cheap keepsakes from friends.

Old armor, prints, pictures, pipes, china (all cracked),
Old rickety tables, and chairs broken-backed;
A twopenny treasury, wondrous to see;
What matter? 'tis pleasant to you, friend, and me.

No better divan need the Sultan require,
Than the creaking old sofa that basks by the fire;
And 'tis wonderful, surely, what music you get
From the rickety, ramshackle, wheezy spinet.

That praying-rug came from a Turcoman's camp;
By Tiber once twinkled that brazen old lamp;
A Mameluke fierce yonder dagger has drawn:
'Tis a murderous knife to toast muffins upon.

Long, long through the hours, and the night, and the chimes,
Here we talk of old books, and old friends, and old times;
As we sit in a fog made of rich Latakie
This chamber is pleasant to you, friend, and me.

But of all the cheap treasures that garnish my nest,
There's one that I love and I cherish the best;
For the finest of couches that's padded with hair
I never would change thee, my cane-bottomed chair.

'Tis a bandy-legged, high-shouldered, worm-eaten seat,
With a creaking old back, and twisted old feet;
But since the fair morning when FANNY sat there,
I bless thee and love thee, old cane-bottomed chair.

If chairs have but feeling in holding such charms,
A thrill must have passed through your withered old arms!
I looked, and I longed, and I wished in despair;
I wished myself turned to a cane-bottomed chair.

It was but a moment she sat in this place,
She'd a scarf on her neck, and a smile on her face!
A smile on her face, and a rose in her hair,
And she sat there, and bloomed in my cane-bottomed chair.

And so I have valued my chair ever since,

Like the shrine of a saint, or the throne of a prince;
Saint FANNY, my patroness sweet I declare,
The queen of my heart and my cane-bottomed chair.
When the candles burn low, and the company's gone,
In the silence of night as I sit here alone--
I sit here alone, but we yet are a pair--
My FANNY I see in my cane-bottomed chair.

She comes from the past and revisits my room;
She looks as she then did, all beauty and bloom;
So smiling and tender, so fresh and so fair,
And yonder she sits in my cane-bottomed chair.

STANZAS TO PALE ALE.

PUNCH.

Oh! I have loved thee fondly, ever
Preferr'd thee to the choicest wine;
From thee my lips they could not sever
By saying thou contain'dst strychnine.
Did I believe the slander? Never!
I held thee still to be divine.

For me thy color hath a charm,
Although 'tis true they call thee Pale;
And be thou cold when I am warm,
As late I've been--so high the scale
Of FAHRENHEIT--and febrile harm
Allay, refrigerating Ale!

How sweet thou art!--yet bitter, too
And sparkling, like satiric fun;
But how much better thee to brew,
Than a conundrum or a pun,
It is, in every point of view,
Must be allow'd by every one.

Refresh my heart and cool my throat,
Light, airy child of malt and hops!
That dost not stuff, engross, and bloat
The skin, the sides, the chin, the chops,
And burst the buttons off the coat,
Like stout and porter--fattening slops!

"CHILDREN MUST BE PAID FOR."

PUNCH.

Sweet is the sound of infant voice;
Young innocence is full of charms:
There's not a pleasure half so choice,
As tossing up a child in arms.
Babyhood is a blessed state,
Felicity expressly made for;
But still, on earth it is our fate,
That even "Children must be paid for."

If in an omnibus we ride,
It is a beauteous sight to see,
When full the vehicle inside, Age taking childhood on its knee.
But in the dog-days' scorching heat,
When a slight breath of air is pray'd for,
Half suffocated in our seat,
We feel that "Children must be paid for."

There is about the sports of youth
A charm that reaches every heart,
Marbles or tops are games of truth,
The bat plays no deceiver's part.
But if we hear a sudden crash,
No explanation need be stay'd for,
We know there's something gone to smash;
We feel that "Children must be paid for."

How exquisite the infant's grace,
When, clambering upon the knee,
The cherub, smiling, takes his place
Upon his mother's lap at tea;
Perchance the beverage flows o'er,
And leaves a stain there is no aid for,
On carpet, dress, or chair--Once more
We feel that "Children must be paid for."

Presiding at the festive board,
With many faces laughing round,
Dull melancholy is ignored
While mirth and jollity abound:
We see our table amply spread
With knives and forks a dozen laid for,
Then pause to think--"How are they fed?"
Yes, "Children must indeed be paid for!"

[Illustration: William Cullen Bryant]

THE MUSQUITO.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

Fair insect! that, with thread-like legs spread out,
And blood-extracting bill, and filmy wing,
Dost murmur, as thou slowly sail'st about,
In pitiless ears full many a plaintive thing,
And tell how little our large veins should bleed,
Would we but yield them to thy bitter need.

Unwillingly, I own, and, what is worse,
Full angrily men hearken to thy plaint,
Thou gettest many a brush and many a curse,
For saying thou art gaunt, and starved, and faint:
Even the old beggar, while he asks for food,
Would kill thee, hapless stranger, if he could.

I call thee stranger, for the town, I ween,
Has not the honor of so proud a birth--

Thou com'st from Jersey meadows, fresh and green,
The offspring of the gods, though born on earth;
For Titan was thy sire, and fair was she,
The ocean-nymph that nursed thy infancy.

Beneath the rushes was thy cradle swung,
And when, at length, thy gauzy wings grew strong,
Abroad to gentle airs their folds were flung,
Rose in the sky, and bore thee soft along;
The south wind breathed to waft thee on thy way,
And danced and shone beneath the billowy bay.

Calm rose afar the city spires, and thence
Came the deep murmur of its throng of men,
And as its grateful odors met thy sense,
They seemed the perfumes of thy native fen.
Fair lay its crowded streets, and at the sight
Thy tiny song grew shriller with delight.

At length thy pinion fluttered in Broadway---
Ah, there were fairy steps, and white necks kissed
By wanton airs, and eyes whose killing ray
Shone through the snowy veils like stars through mist;
And fresh as morn, on many a cheek and chin,
Bloomed the bright blood through the transparent skin.

Sure these were sights to tempt an anchorite!
What! do I hear thy slender voice complain?
Thou wailest when I talk of beauty's light,
As if it brought the memory of pain:
Thou art a wayward being--well--come near,
And pour thy tale of sorrow in my ear.

What say'st thou, slanderer!--rouge makes thee sick?
And China Bloom at best is sorry food?
And Rowland's Kalydor, if laid on thick,
Poisons the thirsty wretch that bores for blood?
Go! 'twas a just reward that met thy crime--
But shun the sacrilege another time.

That bloom was made to look at--not to touch;
To worship--not approach--that radiant white;
And well might sudden vengeance light on such
As dared, like thee, most impiously to bite.
Thou should'st have gazed at distance, and admired--
Murmured thy admiration, and retired.

Thou 'rt welcome to the town--but why come here
To bleed a brother poet, gaunt like thee?
Alas! the little blood I have is dear,
And thin will be the banquet drawn from me.
Look round--the pale-eyed sisters in my cell,
Thy old acquaintance, Song and Famine, dwell.

Try some plump alderman, and suck the blood
Enriched by generous wine and costly meat;
On well-filled skins, sleek as thy native mud,
Fix thy light pump, and press thy freckled feet;
Go to the men for whom, in ocean's halls,

The oyster breeds, and the green turtle sprawls.

There corks are drawn, and the red vintage flows,
To fill the swelling veins for thee, and now
The ruddy cheek, and now the ruddier nose
Shall tempt thee, as thou flittest round the brow;
And when the hour of sleep its quiet brings,
No angry hand shall rise to brush thy wings.

TO THE LADY IN THE CHEMISSETTE WITH BLACK BUTTONS.
N. P. WILLIS.

I know not who thou art, thou lovely one,
Thine eyes were drooped, thy lips half sorrowful,
Yet didst thou eloquently smile on me,
While handing up thy sixpence through the hole
Of that o'er-freighted omnibus!--ah, me!--
The world is full of meetings such as this;
A thrill--a voiceless challenge and reply,
And sudden partings after--we may pass,
And know not of each other's nearness now,
Thou in the Knickerbocker line, and I
Lone in the Waverley! Oh! life of pain;
And even should I pass where thou dost dwell--
Nay, see thee in the basement taking tea--
So cold is this inexorable world,
I must glide on, I dare not feast mine eye,
I dare not make articulate my love,
Nor o'er the iron rails that hem thee in
Venture to throw to thee my innocent card,
Not knowing thy papa.

Hast thou papa?

Is thy progenitor alive, fair girl?
And what doth he for lucre? Lo again!
A shadow o'er the face of this fair dream!
For thou may'st be as beautiful as Love
Can make thee, and the ministering hands
Of milliners, incapable of more,
Be lifted at thy shapeliness and air,
And still 'twixt me and thee, invisibly,
May rise a wall of adamant. My breath
Upon my pale lip freezes as I name
Manhattan's orient verge, and eke the west
In its far down extremity. Thy sire
May be the signer of a temperance pledge,
And clad all decently may walk the earth--
Nay--may be number'd with that blessed few
Who never ask for discount--yet, alas!
If, homeward wending from his daily cares,
He go by Murphy's Line, thence eastward tending--
Or westward from the Line of Kipp & Brown--
My vision is departed! Harshly falls
The doom upon the ear, "She's not genteel!"
And pitiless is woman who doth keep
Of "good society" the golden key!
And gentlemen are bound, as are the stars,

To stoop not after rising!

But farewell,
And I shall look for thee in streets where dwell
The passengers by Broadway Lines alone!
And if my dreams be true, and thou, indeed,
Art only not more lovely than genteel--
Then, lady of the snow-white chemisette,
The heart which vent'rously cross'd o'er to thee
Upon that bridge of sixpence, may remain--
And, with up-town devotedness and truth,
My love shall hover round thee!

COME OUT, LOVE.

N. P. WILLIS.

Argument.--The poet starts from the Bowling Green to take his sweetheart up to Thompson's for an ice, or (if she is inclined for more) ices. He confines his muse to matters which any every-day man and young woman may see in taking the same promenade for the same innocent refreshment.

Come out, love--the night is enchanting!
The moon hangs just over Broadway;
The stars are all lighted and panting--
(Hot weather up there, I dare say!)
'Tis seldom that "coolness" entices,
And love is no better for chilling--
But come up to Thompson's for ices,
And cool your warm heart for a shilling!

What perfume comes balmily o'er us?
Mint juleps from City Hotel!
A loafer is smoking before us--
(A nasty cigar, by the smell!) O Woman! thou secret past knowing!
Like lilacs that grow by the wall,
You breathe every air that is going,
Yet gather but sweetness from all!

On, on! by St. Paul's, and the Astor!
Religion seems very ill-plann'd!
For one day we list to the pastor,
For six days we list to the band!
The sermon may dwell on the future,
The organ your pulses may calm--
When--pest!--that remember'd cachucha
Upsets both the sermon and psalm!

Oh, pity the love that must utter
While goes a swift omnibus by!
(Though sweet is I SCREAM* when the flutter
Of fans shows thermometers high)--
But if what I bawl, or I mutter,
Falls into your ear but to die,
Oh, the dew that falls into the gutter
Is not more unhappy than I!

*[Footnote: Query--Should this be Ice cream, or I scream?--Printer's Devil.]

THE WHITE CHIP HAT.

N. P. WILLIS.

I pass'd her one day in a hurry,
When late for the Post with a letter--
I think near the corner of Murray--
And up rose my heart as I met her!
I ne'er saw a parasol handled
So like to a duchess's doing--
I ne'er saw a slighter foot sandal'd,
Or so fit to exhale in the shoeing--
Lovely thing!

Surprising!--one woman can dish us
So many rare sweets up together!
Tournure absolutely delicious--
Chip hat without flower or feather--
Well-gloved and enchantingly boddiced,
Her waist like the cup of a lily--
And an air, that, while daintily modest,
Repell'd both the saucy and silly--
Quite the thing!

For such a rare wonder you'll say, sir,
There's reason in tearing one's tether--
And, to see her again in Broadway, sir,
Who would not be lavish of leather!
I met her again, and as YOU know
I'm sage as old Voltaire at Ferney--
But I said a bad word--for my Juno
Look'd sweet on a sneaking attorney--
Horrid thing!

Away flies the dream I had nourish'd--
My castles like mockery fall, sir!
And, now, the fine airs that she flourish'd
Seem varnish and crockery all, sir!
The bright cup which angels might handle
Turns earthy when finger'd by asses--
And the star that "swaps" light with a candle,
Thenceforth for a pennyworth passes!--
Not the thing!

YOU KNOW IF IT WAS YOU

N. P. WILLIS.

As the chill'd robin, bound to Florida
Upon a morn of autumn, crosses flying
The air-track of a snipe most passing fair--
Yet colder in her blood than she is fair--
And as that robin lingers on the wing,

And feels the snipe's flight in the eddying air,
And loves her for her coldness not the less--
But fain would win her to that warmer sky
Where love lies waking with the fragrant stars--
Lo I--a languisher for sunnier climes,
Where fruit, leaf, blossom, on the trees forever
Image the tropic deathlessness of love--
Have met, and long'd to win thee, fairest lady,
To a more genial clime than cold Broadway!

Tranquil and effortless thou glidest on,
As doth the swan upon the yielding water,
And with a cheek like alabaster cold!
But as thou didst divide the amorous air
Just opposite the Astor, and didst lift
That veil of languid lashes to look in
At Leary's tempting window--lady! then
My heart sprang in beneath that fringed veil,
Like an adventurous bird that would escape
To some warm chamber from the outer cold!
And there would I delightedly remain,
And close that fringed window with a kiss,
And in the warm sweet chamber of thy breast,
Be prisoner forever!

THE DECLARATION.

N. P. WILLIS.

'Twas late, and the gay company was gone,
And light lay soft on the deserted room
From alabaster vases, and a scent
Of orange-leaves, and sweet verbena came
Through the uushutter'd window on the air,
And the rich pictures with their dark old tints
Hung like a twilight landscape, and all things
Seem'd hush'd into a slumber. Isabel,
The dark-eyed, spiritual Isabel
Was leaning on her harp, and I had stay'd
To whisper what I could not when the crowd
Hung on her look like worshipers. I knelt,
And with the fervor of a lip unused
To the cool breath of reason, told my love.
There was no answer, and I took the hand
That rested on the strings, and press'd a kiss
Upon it unforbidden--and again
Besought her, that this silent evidence
That I was not indifferent to her heart,
Might have the seal of one sweet syllable.
I kiss'd the small white fingers as I spoke,
And she withdrew them gently, and upraised
Her forehead from its resting-place, and look'd
Earnestly on me--SHE HAD BEEN ASLEEP!

LOVE IN A COTTAGE.

N. P. WILLIS.

They may talk of love in a cottage,
And bowers of trellised vine--
Of nature bewitchingly simple,
And milkmaids half divine;
They may talk of the pleasure of sleeping
In the shade of a spreading tree,
And a walk in the fields at morning,
By the side of a footstep free!

But give me a sly flirtation
By the light of a chandelier--
With music to play in the pauses,
And nobody very near;
Or a seat on a silken sofa,
With a glass of pure old wine,
And mamma too blind to discover
The small white hand in mine.

Four love in a cottage is hungry,
Your vine is a nest for flies--
Your milkmaid shocks the Graces,
And simplicity talks of pies!
You lie down to your shady slumber
And wake with a bug in your ear,
And your damsel that walks in the morning
Is shod like a mountaineer.

True love is at home on a carpet,
And mightily likes his ease--
And true love has an eye for a dinner,
And starves beneath shady trees.
His wing is the fan of a lady,
His foot's an invisible thing,
And his arrow is tipp'd with a jewel,
And shot from a silver string.

TO HELEN IN A HUFF.
N. P. WILLIS

Nay, lady, one frown is enough
In a life as soon over as this--
And though minutes seem long in a huff,
They're minutes 'tis pity to miss!
The smiles you imprison so lightly
Are reckon'd, like days in eclipse;
And though you may smile again brightly,
You've lost so much light from your lips!
Pray, lady, smile!

The cup that is longest untasted
May be with our bliss running o'er,
And, love when we will, we have wasted
An age in not loving before!
Perchance Cupid's forging a fetter
To tie us together some day,

And, just for the chance, we had better
Be laying up love, I should say!
Nay, lady, smile!

THE HEIGHT OF THE RIDICULOUS.
OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

I wrote some lines, once on a time,
In wondrous merry mood,
And thought, as usual, men would say
They were exceeding good.

They were so queer, so very queer,
I laughed as I would die;
Albeit, in the general way,
A sober man am I.

I called my servant, and he came;
How kind it was of him,
To mind a slender man like me,
He of the mighty limb!

"These to the printer," I exclaimed.
And, in my humorous way,
I added (as a trifling jest),
"There'll be the devil to pay."

He took the paper, and I watched,
And saw him peep within;
At the first line he read, his face
Was all upon the grin.

He read the next; the grin grew broad.
And shot from ear to ear;
He read the third; a chuckling noise
I now began to hear.

The fourth; he broke into a roar;
The fifth; his waistband split;
The sixth; he burst five buttons off,
And tumbled in a fit.

Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye,
I watched that wretched man,
And since, I never dare to write
As funny as I can.

THE BRIEFLESS BARRISTER.
A BALLAD.

JOHN G. SAXE.

An Attorney was taking a turn,
In shabby habiliments drest;
His coat it was shockingly worn,

And the rust had invested his vest.

His breeches had suffered a breach,
His linen and worsted were worse;
He had scarce a whole crown in his hat,
And not half-a-crown in his purse.

And thus as he wandered along,

A

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