

# William Andrew Spalding

## Selected Poems



# William Andrew Spalding

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[William A. Spalding, Los Angeles journalist and civic leader, came to Los Angeles in 1874. He was business manager of the Daily herald and city editor of both the Evening express and the Los Angeles times (1886). He became a vice-president of the Los Angeles times. Spalding engaged in fruit growing for several years and was one of the organizers of the California Fruit-Growers Exchange. He served on several municipal commissions, was a founder and board member of the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History, and president of the Southern California Academy of Sciences. He wrote *The orange and its culture in California* (1885) and *History and reminiscences, Los Angeles city and county* (1931).]

*My Vagabonds*. Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Printing House, 1889.

*Snatches of Song*. Los Angeles: The Times-Mirror Printing and Binding House, 1921.

# The Mocking-bird

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

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

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

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

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

# The Canyon Wren

Trim little, pert little warbler,  
Far on the mountain height,  
Taking his daily lesson,  
Singing with all his might,

Do,

Si,

La,

Sol,

Think you I do it right?

Yes, little flitting singer,  
Up in the big pine tree,  
Partly your notes are warbled  
True as true can be;

Do,

Si,

La,

Sol,—

Then you astonish me.

Bright little, brisk little pupil  
Singing above the trail,  
Why should you try so aptly,  
Why should you try and fail?

Do,

Si,

La,

Sol,

Do not complete the scale.

Then sang a wren from the canyon,  
(Sweetest that ever I heard)  
And the notes were rippling laughter  
At critic so absurd;

Do,

Si,

La,  
Sol.  
Four are enough for a bird.

# To The Ostrich

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

# To An English Sparrow

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Oh, Cheer Up!

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

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

A sad little maiden happened near  
Chirrup, cheer up, chirrup,  
Wiping away a briny tear,  
Chirrup.  
And she heard the song of the little bird,  
And it warmed her heart with its cheery word:  
'Tis the sweetest song that ever I've heard,  
This Cheer up."

A passing lad was grumpy and blue,  
Chirrup, cheer up, chirrup,  
And he didn't know just what to do;  
Cheer up.  
But his gloomy mood did the song beguile,  
And he staid his step to listen a while;  
He saw the maid and caught her smile,  
Oh, cheer up.

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

# Little Swallow, Flitting

Little Swallow, flitting  
To and fro,  
Innocent, unwitting  
Aught of woe,  
Could I be as light of heart and free,  
Would I were a swallow too, with thee,  
Flitting,  
Flitting,  
Flitting to and fro,  
Innocent, unwitting aught of woe.  
Mud-daubed nest dependent  
From the wall,  
Where the sun resplendent  
Makes his call;  
Man might imitate thy simple art,  
Letting sunshine into home and heart;  
Humble,  
Happy,  
Pattern for us all  
Mud-daubed nest dependent from the wall.  
Sober coat and homely,  
Brown and white,  
Other birds more comely  
To the sight;  
For thy garb I prize thee not the less; .  
Birds nor men are better for their dress.  
Plain,  
Or gay,  
Unchanged is thy delight,  
Sober coat and homely brown and white.

Lowly is thy station,  
Daubing clay,  
Artisan and mason  
In a way,  
Pattern still of industry and thrift;

Fortune favors those who earn her gift.  
Toiling,  
Delving,  
Through the livelong day;-  
Lowly is thy station, daubing clay.  
Sweeter song and fitter  
Other's note;  
Thine a simple twitter  
From the throat.  
Envy thou the fulsome, merry song,  
While thy plaintive note thou dost prolong?  
Peace,  
Content,  
Ambitionless thy lot,  
Thine a simple twitter; envy not!  
Every want provided,  
Frugal care!  
Duties all divided  
By the pair;  
Sharing each in turn the toil and rest,  
Side by side at night upon the nest;  
Love  
And labor,  
Equal joy and care  
Duties all divided by the pair!

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

Know st thou what a sorrow  
Is in store?  
Ruthless hands this evil day will come  
Making desolate thy happy home;  
Ruined,  
Desolate,  
A home no more;  
Know st thou what a sorrow is in store?  
Nest all torn and tattered,  
Ruin done;  
Five small eggs all shattered,  
Every one!  
Will the heart within thee fail at last,  
Looking at the ruin of the past?  
Cheerless,  
Homeless,  
Hopelessly undone;  
Five small eggs all shattered, every one!

Scarcely worth regretting  
Mischief done;  
Ere the sun s next setting  
Work begun:  
Soon another nest with precious store,  
Other five within it as before.  
Brave,  
Undaunted,  
Noble little one!  
Ere the sun s next setting work begun.  
Now in joy unceasing  
And in peace,  
May thy tribe increasing  
Still increase!  
And thy humble home aye happy be,  
From the spoiler s hand forever free.  
Careless,  
Busy,  
Living aye in peace,

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

# Florence, With The Laughing Eyes

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

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

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

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

## Mrs. Me Shaughnessy

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

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

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

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

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

And wearying thin of his plain occupation  
Och, hone, Mrs. Me Shaughnessy,  
He married a gurrul of fortune and station;  
Och, hone, Mrs. Me Shaughnessy.

And thin into politics he gallivantend;  
Och, hone, Mrs. Me Shaughnessy,  
And wint aff campaigning and argued and rantend;  
Och, hone, Mrs. Me Shaughnessy.

But politics wasn t at last to his liking;

Och, hone, Mrs. Me Shaughnessy,  
And he lift in a way that was novel and sthriking;  
Och, hone, Mrs. Me Shaughnessy.

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

# Sinn Fein

O,  
Donnybrook Fair is a dandy,  
And symbol of Oireland s might;  
The shillalah that iver comes handy  
Is what we adore in a fight;  
And an Oirishman houlds himself ridy  
To take a spahlpeen b th t roat,  
And give him what Bruin gave Teddy,  
If you tread on th tail av his coat.  
That s plain  
Hit m again,  
Larry O Lane.

Theer  
Sodgers we always are sthrifin ,  
And law is a deadly disgrace;  
So the Oirish are slily conthrivin\*  
To have none at all in its place.  
We don t mooch incloine to recruitin\*  
Or drillin contimptible wark,  
But we re overmuch fonder of shootin  
A Bobby or two in the park.  
Again,  
Sinn Fein,  
Larry O Lane.

Coom  
Fighting th Hun in his helling,  
No rigiment Dublin sinds;  
For I make it no secret in telling,  
His Allness is one av our fr ends;  
And wheer is th use av a shindy  
So far from th Imerald Isle,  
Whin Ulster is aisy and handy,  
And out f r a schrap all th whoile?  
Come again,

Sinn Fein,  
Larry O Lane.

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

# Larry O Lane

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

This Mither (whut is t?) de la Mallery  
(It s a foine combination of name,  
And wort th full price av his salary  
To say nothing else of the game.)  
Ach, hane,  
Larry O Lane.

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

And ivery political party  
That plays for the Oirish vote  
Is well ripsented and hearty  
And pipes a rispictible note.  
Sinn Fein,  
Larry O Lane.

And whin it comes round to th spaykin ,  
There s not an unoccupied bench,  
And th jaw av th spayker is breakin  
Wuth utterin Oirish and Frinch.  
Hit im again,  
Larry O Lane.

And if iver it comes to a mocker,

That raises his voice over loud;  
There s a bundle av sthicks in th locker,  
And just laive th rist to th crowd.  
Ach, hane,  
Larry O Lane,  
Sinn Fein.

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

# Song Of The Aeroplane

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

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

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

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

I veer and climb,  
Like eagle wheeling in his flight  
To pierce the empyrean's height,  
The air outmastered by my might;  
I veer and climb.

Afar, afar,  
Where the void enwraps and the earth grows dim,  
Beyond the cloud with a purple rim,  
I wheel and dive and loop and skim;  
Afar, afar.

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

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

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

I soar and sing,  
Over the desert's shifting bed,  
Over a land that is sere and dead,  
Over the Colorado red,  
I cleave the void.

My way is free;  
Beyond the mountains wreathed with snow,  
Where broad Pacific waters flow,  
In the flowery fields of the after-glow,  
I claim mine own.

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

The air is mine.  
And thus, behold I issue forth

Another Puck, of modern birth,  
To put a girdle round the earth.  
The air is mine!

Echo

I fly, I fly,  
I sail, I soar;  
I circle wide,  
And journey far;  
I veer and climb,  
Like bird a-wing,  
In eager quest,  
I soar and sing.  
The air is mine;  
My way is free  
From shore to shore,  
From sea to sea!

# A Wonderful Little Italian Man

Tis a curious tale, if the tale be true;  
As twas told to me I tell it to you.  
The Grinder  
The story ran  
Of a wonderful little Italian man,  
A genius who played  
An organ by trade,  
And sang, (or at least essayed,  
For his voice was appalling,)  
And gathered in dimes from the public, and made  
A very good thing from his calling.  
His Organ  
It would play  
In its very proper mechanical way,  
Always true, needing no apology  
Sixteen tunes and the doxology.  
And when all of its airs and the sacred refrain  
Had been ground by the grinder again and again,  
They were still as sweet, as tender and true  
And as good as new.  
His Monkey  
There followed close at the grinder s heels,  
With a tireless succession of jigs and reels,  
A monkey, trim,  
Supple of limb,  
In color dun,  
And full of fun,  
And the boys were exceedingly fond of him.  
Wherever the grinder went to grind,  
The monkey always appeared behind,  
And whenever he opened his mouth to sing,  
The monkey danced at the end of his string.  
His Music  
In a stoical way  
Early and late the grinder would play,  
Never skipping a tune, never losing a day;

And twas said thus he had played  
For at least a decade;  
Yet there wasn't a sign  
Of any decline,  
And after all this, folks fell into a doubt  
Whether organ or grinder would ever wear out.

#### His Ways

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

#### His Perquisites

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

#### His Thrift

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

#### His Mischance

But it happened one time I am pained to relate  
He tried once too often, and met his fate.  
One ill-omened day,  
The legends say,  
He came to a stop  
In front of the shop

Of a savage old Dutchman of sinister trade,  
And then the Italian he played.  
Now these Dutchmen,  
Butchers and such men  
Do not care a straw  
For life, limb or law;  
And the one that I mention,  
With savage intention,  
Laid hold of a saw.

His Fate  
With no more ado  
Than such craftsmen make  
In cutting a steak,  
Or cleaving through  
A rib or stew,  
He sawed the poor grinder in two.  
Then a policeman came down on a canter  
And arrested the villainous butcher instanter.

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

The Defense  
When the time for defense came on in the trial,  
The butcher s attorney arose with a smile,  
And he said, “Please your Honor, my client s insane  
That s plain  
Such a horrid grind  
Would unsettle the mind  
Of the devil, your Honor, (not being profane).”

The Argument  
I need not detail how he twisted the laws,  
Picking code and indictment full of flaws,  
Or how he worked himself into a fury,

And made it appear  
That the butcher was queer  
Up here,  
And by dint of his eloquence, carried the jury.

#### Retribution

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

# Lure Of The Hydrant

The  
tcr  
from  
the  
hydrant  
drips,  
Dripping away and dripping,  
In many merry hops and skips,  
Skipping away and skipping.

I  
hear  
the  
fun  
ny  
drops  
at  
play,  
Playing away and playing,  
As once upon a childhood day.  
Running away and staying.

Now  
like  
a  
rat  
tling  
drum  
it  
goes,  
Going away and going;  
The merry music onward flows,  
Flowing away and flowing.

Now  
like  
a  
banjo  
s

tinkatink

Tinking away and tinkering,  
And ev'ry tinkle brings a think,  
Thinking away and thinking.

But

still

the

ban.

jo

tink

les

there

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

And

there

comes

a

roundelay.

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

Now

like

a

little

boy

at

play,

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

Now

as

an

or

gan

whee  
zy  
blows,  
Wheezy it is and wheezy,  
The little boy uneasy grows,  
Uneasy and uneasy.  
But  
still  
he  
hears  
the  
mer  
ry  
din,  
A-rattling and a-striking;  
I think I d better now begin  
To do a little hiking.  
If  
this  
con  
founded  
or  
ches  
tra  
Would quit its fiddle-faddling.  
(You know that only yesterday  
You got an awful paddling!)  
I  
think  
I  
bet  
ter  
go  
away,  
A-going and a-going,  
And come again another day,  
And hear the water flowing.  
There!

now

I

hear

a

lit

tle

bell

A-ringing and a-ringing,

A song o sixpence, I can tell

I ll pretty soon be singing.

# A Barmecidal Feast

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

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

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

And, not content to serve a simple bill  
Of bread and meat nutritious,  
The board with sweets of platitude you fill,  
All quite delicious.

While on the festal gathering you bestow  
Obsequious devotion,  
A grim confederate is loitering below  
With deadly potion.

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

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

And what between the goodies you bestow

And his conserves unerring,  
You catch the voters as they come and go,  
As dead as herring.

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

Down with the rights of property and men!  
Down with the nation!  
Well revolutionize society, and then  
Unmade creation!

Our nihilistic banner we unfurl  
The while we are recruiting,  
Then blood and fire shall start the merry whirl.  
And bring the looting!

Alas, my demagogic friend, I fear  
Your pard is too outspoken;  
The double game you play is made so clear  
The charm is broken.

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

# At A Christmas Jinks

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

# Enigma\*

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

\*NOTE: Electricity

# A Fair Idyl\*

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

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

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

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

The constituted committee  
Hath come, puffed up with importance,  
To domineer as they listed  
O'er the coops all saw-dust littered.

The turkey-cocks and the roosters  
They did outdo in strutting,  
And, moved by a sense of justice,  
Awarded the wide blue ribbon  
Unto themselves.

Even so,  
The judges of wines and brandies  
With fortitude amazing,  
Tasted the unctuous samples,  
And passed to their friends for judgment,  
And drained the dark colored bottles,  
And forgot to award the prizes.

And the fat and fretful babies,  
Squeezed to infantile pomatum  
In the crowd of fierce spectators,  
Who trampled on each other  
In a vain attempt to see them;  
Oh, the babies, the dear babies,  
Gone to swell the angel chorus,  
Crushed and jammed to baby-butter!  
Only one from all that concourse  
He the plump Jose Maria,  
Left to tell the mournful story,  
And to occupy the buggy.  
Join me, then, oh, suffering brother,  
In my chuckled satisfaction,  
In my song of loud rejoicing,  
In my shout of exultation,  
That at last the Fair is over.

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

## To Gyp, a Singing Dog

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

# The Newsboy

Compliments of The "Times" Carriers to its Patrons, New Years Day, 1885.

I like the little Waif that runs the streets,  
Bearing, neath bended arm his stock in trade.  
I like to hear his shout, and see anon  
The eager face upturned. Ragged and rough  
May be this urchin of the gutter bred;  
Ragged and rough, in manners as in dress;  
But, for the better self, the heart within,  
That one doth seldom read, I like him still.

Morning pipers. Times and Herald;  
Two for a dime.

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

Morning pipers. Daily Times, Sir?  
Only five cents.

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

Quick in his rivalry, an eye for gain  
Shrewd as the shrewdest ever glib of speech

These his accomplishments so early gained,  
So oft reviewed in his one school, the street.  
What wonder then, that pupil apt as he,  
Cast on the world before his time, should learn  
Too much of ill! Behold the reflex here  
Of public morals. Satire on us all!

Times or Herald. Morning pipers.  
Only five cents.

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

Daily pipers.

# In Evil Brass

London, Jan. 10, 1920. An Exchange Telegraph dispatch from Genoa today said the liner Princess Mafalda from America, had struck a mine and sunk. An unconfirmed report said 700 were lost.

“Men s evil manners live in brass.” Tis sad  
The words of poet-prophet are fulfilled,  
And poison for the chalice is distilled.  
For evil genius of a race gone mad,  
And blind to right or wrong or good or bad,  
Hath brewed this deadly potion, and hath willed  
That enemy and friend alike be killed,  
Now and in time to come; and then it seeks to add  
The malediction of blind chance, that they  
Marked for destruction shall themselves invite  
Their untoward fate, and even then obey  
The mandate of their murderers. Such ghoulish spite  
Hath nowhere parallel. In evil day  
And evil dark they wait with fiend s delight.

“Men s evil manners live in brass.” Behold  
This blind destroyer, filled and primed and charged  
With fierce explosive and projectiles gorged,  
Freighted with terror and with woe untold  
For innocent and helpless, young and old.  
(In furnaces of hell the shell was forged,  
And by the devil s hand twill be discharged.)  
This hath the maniac set, in easy hold  
Of anchored cable, and with cunning skill  
Brought just below the surface, out of sight,  
And left; a blind reminder of the German will.  
This hath he planted in the roadstead, quite  
In line with passing ships, and it is still  
In evil-mannered brass, and deadly bright.

“Men s evil manners live in brass.” And lo!  
A good ship sailing from another shore,

With thousand precious lives and precious store  
Of succor for the starving people who  
Hold out their hands, imploring. Ah, twould do  
A world of good, this cargo carried o'er  
To such; and with the will to carry more,  
This ship returning all the season through.  
Twould do a world of good, to whom? Ah, well,  
To any needing succor; for the war,  
With all its million hates, is past. And let us tell  
The Germans that we hold no grudge, no bar  
To future friendship. May The hounds of hell  
Have struck! we sink! And is this peace or war?

# Ingersoll

By the old women of the twirling flax  
Another task is done; the thread is dipt,  
The distaff spent; and Ingersoll is dead.  
Say that the ancient servitors of Fate  
Have wrought exquisitely; and that mankind,  
With hands uplifted, hold the noble skein.

Twice happy, in his life and in his death.  
Unflecked by age, unflawed by waning powers,  
His work is ended as it was begun,  
And stands to human freedom consecrate;  
Freedom from hoary tyrants of the past;  
Freedom from superstition and blind creed;  
Freedom from bigotry and "Christian" hate;  
Freedom from rack and fagot of the mind.  
And for this freedom millions call him blest?  
Millions will bless in ages yet to come.

Ingersoll is dead. But what is death to him?  
Only the closing of a well-read book,  
Filled with good thoughts and pleasant memories.  
Mayhap he takes another from the shelf,  
And in a fresher and a happier mood,  
Pursues the theme beyond. Mayhap he  
Has read enough already; (who can tell?)  
And, in his cushioned ease, sublime repose,  
He sleeps and sleeps forever. Either wise  
Tis well; for at the last he hath the better part.

Los Angeles, August 3, 1899.

# Little Messenger Of Love And Death

Oh, little messenger of Love and Death,  
Oh, Babe, thy mother s bitter, bitter-sweet,  
Whose soul went out upon her parting breath,  
Thy soul to meet;

Born of an agony without assuage,  
Born to the anguish of our bitter tears ;  
Oh, little one, is this thy heritage,  
The burden of thy years?

Where is the heart that yearned for mother-right?  
The breast that throbbed to greet thy natal day?  
The hands outstretched, appealing in the night?  
Oh, Baby, where are they?

What knoweth thou of grief or pain or care?  
What knowest thou of either help or harm?  
Ah, helpless little stranger, nestling there  
Upon thy nurse s arm!

Still art thou held in ever fond embrace;  
Still art thou compassed by her mother-thought;  
The fleecy draperies of thy nesting place  
Her loving fingers wrought.

Sleep, Baby, sleep within thy cozy nest;  
Thine the long, dreamless sleep of babyhood;  
And never know the heart-aches and the rest,  
But only know the good.

\*NOTE: A message to his wife and by her transmitted to the Proximo Club  
his last  
word to fellow-members: "Register joy, for I am free from pain."  
July 22. 1899.

# The Black Star

In retrospect I see a race bound down.  
Made in God s image, ask you? Why then yes,  
If God be black. And can he see distress  
So abject on the earth, and not a frown  
Darken his visage? Cares He for his own  
But lightly, as we oft so ill profess,  
This race of men to curso, and that to bless?  
And on the one made black, the thorny crown  
Of martyrdom to place, and rest his hand?  
Oh, ye of little faith and lesser claim  
To justice, that ye hold divine command  
Is thus fulfilled, and sanctioned in his name!  
Oh, ye of senile creed and craft, who stand  
For prayer in market-place, forshame, forshame!

I see a race neath tropic skies, that dwells  
In jungle fastness and on desert sands,  
By Art and Craft untaught in head and hands;  
Children of Nature, made as she compels,  
All in the rough, like gems or shells  
Whose polished glint the craftsman s skill demands.  
Unground, uncouth; but ground, in beauty stands  
Her handicraft revealed. Thus she compels  
Man s service to complete the whole design,  
And show what God hath wrought. How then shall we  
Withhold from man the helping hand benign  
We give to shells and rocks, and fail to see  
That all the roughness covers up the fine?  
The Grinder shirks; who is at fault but he?

I see a race deep sunk in barbarous ways,  
Coping with club and spear as best they can  
In wilds with savage beast and savage man,  
Tribe against tribe, and all within a haze  
Of fear. As ever, since the primal days,  
As ever since the ceaseless strife began,

With things that stung, or struck, or crawled, or ran,  
The savage stands transfixed with frightened gaze.  
And this poor, trembling wretch is set upon  
By savage e'en beyond his wont or ken;  
Another reign of terror is begun;  
By whom? Ah, friend, let's hide our shame again.  
The deed by men full civilized was done.  
Is then our boasted culture all in vain?

A race of naked savages I see;  
Naked and afraid, and to and fro they run,  
As from some enemy, a fearsome One  
That threatens all. And snugly hidden away,  
Within the shelter of yon placid bay,  
A monster of the deep, all set upon  
With leafless trees and vines; a monster none  
Have seen the like before. In strange array,  
Men with white faces, all behaired, come forth  
And slay, and slay again, and still pursue,  
And those they capture and deem better worth  
Into the monster's belly go. The few  
They leave are scattered far, in caves of earth  
Or jungle hiding; a piteous thing to view.

I see a mass of wretched human-kind,  
Like beasts ensnared and sobered of their rage,  
Cowed, dumb and hopeless in a cage.  
Cowed, deaf and dumb, these creatures all,  
Of every sense appealing to the mind  
From outer world bereft; naught to assuage  
Their terror, or their vague, wild thoughts engage  
Save horrid mystery. And they who bind  
This suffering, sodden mass, and take them hence,  
Are civilized, we said a while ago;  
Are civilized mayhap, and make pretense  
Of some religion; be it one or none,  
They call each other Christians, reasoning hence,  
In some way followers of the Lowly One.

I see the remnant of that sodden mass,  
Starved, gaunt and bleary-eyed, that issues forth  
From stinking hold; most abject of the earth;  
Chained each to his fellow, as they slowly pass  
Along the plank to land all strange. Alas!  
The lot of those that died were better worth;  
(Why were they punished by the fate of birth?)  
Or, eaten with disease and poison-gas,  
Pitched overboard in passage. Here they are,  
Good men and brothers all, my Christian friends,  
A lucky cargo; the fat chance of war.  
A kindly Providence conserves our ends;  
For we have brought from heathen lands afar  
Choice goods to buy for him that hath, and spends.

I see a race bowed down in servitude,  
Bearing full patiently the yoke that galls;  
Bearing with fortitude the lash that falls;  
In service hopeless, under drivers rude  
And pitiless; and no vicissitude  
Can change this hateful lot, that calls  
For all their dauntless courage, and appalls  
The hearts of them and all their hopeless brood.  
I see the fields of cotton and of rice  
Yielding the wealth their masters take and hold;  
I see of sweat and blood the minted price,  
In plundered silver and unhallowed gold,  
Given to luxury and unhindered vice;  
The whole scheme followed till it s worn and old.

I see a slave in punishment condign,  
A being born to this from shameful bed,  
Master and slave, unmatched, unloved, unwed,  
A being snatched by ravishing rapine,  
A being, Master, not her son, but thine,  
Snatched from the mother s womb, and on his head  
The curses of his mother s lot are shed,

The profit going to the father s line.  
I see this being sold for further pelf,  
And from the mother snatched a second time.  
I see the Master selling, what? himself,  
To swell his hoard. The grizzly scheme is prime  
And pregnant of ill-gotten sin, and Sin himself  
Holding the scale of justice. How sublime!

I see this being of unhallowed birth,  
The son of infamy and crime and shame,  
Robbed of himself, his birthright and his name;  
I see this hapless creature issue forth  
And prostrate fall upon the lap of earth.  
Ah! But he rises, for his heart s aflame  
With courage and undaunted will. His no tame  
Submission to the wrongs imposed. His worth  
Transcends the color of his skin accursed,  
And stands he forth full measure of God s span.  
And he shall face his fate, and dare the worst,  
As heroes dare it since the world began;  
And his own bonds of slavery shall burst;  
His name is Douglass; Now behold the man.

I see another of that prostrate race,  
In which the mother breeds, the father owns:  
Enough of this sad theme. Let s talk of stones.  
I see a mighty rubbish-pile in place  
Dumped willy-nilly high, and without grace  
Of this poor aftermath of trash and bones  
And human things discarded. No one owns  
The wretched mess; let s talk of this a space.  
And from this pile a little stone rolls out  
(Set going, mayhap, as some heedless one,  
Indifferent to pebbles, moves about)  
And this small stone, its travels once begun,  
Gains as it goes, and far the pile without,  
Is now a polished gem, a Washington.

I see a people ever making plea  
For succor from the bonds that hold them sore;  
I hear their plaint for freedom o'er and o'er.  
I see a Nation, claiming to be free,  
(And offering to the world this pleasantry)  
Holding the gyves upon its suffering poor,  
And shutting tight the very prison door  
It claims to open for all men. I see  
This perverse Nation given a warning due  
By God's own messenger, who to and fro,  
Moves o'er the land, and searching through and through,  
Proclaims the threat that he was sent to show;  
Leaves marks upon the lintels, fell and true.  
I see the warning filled; God's heavy blow!

I see a Nation plunged in deadly strife,  
Friend against friend, and brother holding forth  
Hand against brother; and o'er all the earth  
There's carnage and destruction. Pillage rife  
Takes vengeance, loss for loss, and life for life;  
Lays waste the fields and homes, and South and North,  
Drinks up the treasure it were better worth  
To sink in sea without the bloody knife.  
I see this Nation whelmed beneath a flood  
Of fell destruction, with its double flow  
From right and left, on evil and on good,  
A red engulfment do the surges show,  
And all the meaning now is understood;  
Perverse and stubborn, let my people go.

I see a race in tears and blood set free;  
Empty of hands and cowering in affright  
Left to their own between a day and night;  
And on them cast a hard perplexity  
To live or die, whichever it might be,  
With slight consideration for their plight  
From those who'd lost their whilom master's right;  
(Or wrong, twere better said). And now I see

This race courageous bending to the load  
Of their deliverance, and meeting fate  
As struggling freemen do and ever should;  
And with the Law to give an open gate,  
They pass, to claim at last their share of good,  
And Freedom comes to them full consecrate.

I see a people made of good and bad,  
As other peoples are; if they were worse,  
What wonder, coming from the age-long curse  
Of slavery? Ah, reasoning friend, tis sad,  
From vicious systems vicious men are had.  
“We burned the nigger-fiend; why, yes, of course,  
But then he well deserved it.” Tis a verse  
Oft quoted; you have heard it. But, my lad,  
The Law is made to meet such cases. Hold  
Thy hand till it is proven; even then  
Withhold and let the Law prevail. Untold  
The rank injustice, cruel suffering, when  
Thy hasty hand goes wrong, avenger bold.  
“Vengeance is mine,” saith One who speaks again.

“Vengeance is mine,” saith God; and if thy hand  
Would wrest from His this dire prerogative,  
Stop for a moment, angry friend, and give  
This matter some reflection. The command  
Goes e en beyond this word if closely scanned,  
And it is ominous and positive.  
“For I will repay.” And all His sons that live  
Should harken to this warning, stern and grand.  
Think of thy mother, sister, wife, with child,  
To whom the impress of this day descends;  
Think of proclivities so fierce and wild  
For which no afterthought can make amends;  
Think of the vengeance, all unreconciled,  
That God on thine for generations sends.

I see a people struggling ever on

Midst all the trials of a strict regime;  
Struggling with hope and confidence sublime.  
Their long-time shackles, it is true, are gone,  
But in their hands, and in their hands alone,  
(Soiled, mayhap, with the muck and grime  
Of toil) their fate for this and future time  
Is solely placed. And in this mighty struggle I m  
Disposed to grant them just as much acclaim  
As granted others, likely better fit  
And entering fuller-handed in the game.  
Room for the colored brother! Lots of it!  
And wholesome air to breathe; the very same  
That we have. Give him hope and wealth and fame.

I see a new-built ship slide from her berth,  
And dip into the waters of the bay.  
I see, upon her masts a proud array  
Of bunting ; and there, grandly waving forth  
The Stars and Stripes. Another, emblem of its birth,  
Is just a little somber, yet tis gay  
A lissome flag with which the breezes play  
With Star that s Black; proclaiming to the earth  
That Hope has risen for this long-held race.  
And on her deck the officers and crew  
Are ranged, in seamen s garb and proper place,  
As orderly as one would ask to view,  
And all these sailor-men are black of face;  
And here I find my prophecy come true.

Oh, Ship that bears the freedmen s flag a-mast,  
Sail on across the sea and carry far  
The word that s emblemed in thy glistening star!  
That opportunity has come at last,  
In place of gyves and shackles of the past:  
That to a race of workers further bar  
Shall not be suffered; and proclaim afar  
That in all lands, and o er the oceans vast  
Freedom shall reign for all the sons of men;

And be they white or yellow, black or brown,  
The God of Justice gave a message when  
He called them all his children. Carry down  
To future ages God s decree again.

# Moving Pictures On The Great White Way

T Oh, Little Girl, in woman s plumes full-fledged,  
H Child of mine own and child of Passion fell,  
E Endowed with all the graces that compel  
Willing devotion, plighted oft and pledged  
V By arrant son of man, whose unassuaged,  
A Inherent instincts, lettered all, doth spell  
M His ardent love, and slavery as well;  
P Oh, Little Girl, his birthright is engaged  
I That he may leave all else and follow thee,  
R O'er hill and dale, to meet thine every whim!  
E Hold forth the suppliant hand and bend the knee;  
Hang on thy changing mood, or gay or grim,  
Thy servitor most humble e'er to be;  
How hath thou charmed this man, and mastered him?

I Ah, well, it is an age-long story; and to tell  
N Its deeper import man should need to know  
The scheme of human being, through and through,  
A The plan of his Creator; and tis well  
We know not everything; for what befel  
G Those in the Garden, when the race was new,  
A Who ate of fruit forbidden, in their view?  
R Was t not the curse of toil and death and hell?  
D And yet the fruit was most alluring, and the Snake  
E Knew well of human instincts when he held  
N In tempting reach, and urged them then to take  
The fruit of knowledge. And twas self-impelled  
That sin of Eve and Adam. For their sake  
All of their sons and daughters have rebelled.

A So Little Girl, if from the Tempter now  
N You take this luscious apple, and hold forth  
D To Adam, with all the sweetness of the earth  
And hopes of heaven combined, pray tell me how  
H He can refuse thee, and himself avow  
I A Super-man, above the claims of birth

S And all tradition since the new-made race  
In Eden set example! Adam ate;  
F His son eats also, following the plan  
A That Nature gives, (or cursed or consecrate)  
L For her chief handiwork, her creature, man;  
L Saying that in this act, to procreate  
Is her supreme decree; and not her ban.

A Ah, Little Girl, but hear me not amiss;  
N I said tis Nature s plan; but pray observe  
Plan for a purpose; plan that doth subserve  
T The Law of Being, in that age and this;  
H And, willy-nilly, what the pretext is,  
E Not to be trifled with; and when you swerve  
R From Nature s fruitful law, and only serve  
Your pleasure for the passing hour amiss,  
C You help to bring another curse, more dire  
U Than that upon our parents, fall n from grace,  
R Than that which brought the stern Creator s ire,  
S With maledictions on the coming race.  
E This means Extinction; not a threat of fire.

A For, Little Girl, you have a part to play  
Along with men and women, creatures all  
P Of Nature. If they rise or fall,  
A Survive or perish, it is theirs to say.  
R And shall this gift be lightly thrown away?  
T Life, with its hopes and purposes, and all,  
The bauble of a moment s hasty call,  
T Discarded plaything of a child so gay?  
Ah, Little Girl, a moment stop and think!  
You are but one; if all of woman-kind  
P Were like to you, and all the men would drink  
L The cup of wanton pleasure that you give,  
A The race would soon be hovering on the brink  
Y Of sheer destruction. Shall it die, or live?

A But some icere born for mothers, some were not;

I think I hear the petulant retort;  
R And some for serious things, and some for sport  
I Mayhap; and for the concubine, I wot,  
S Some valued service consecrates the lot,  
K By reasoning of this easy-going sort,  
Y And makes it all conveniently comport  
With Nature s plan. And yet I like it not.  
G For Nature makes her creatures fruitful; then  
A Determines the survival for her use  
M And leaves no trifling option open when  
E Her precious gifts are squandered by abuse.  
Twere better far to say her gifts to men  
Are not for them to frivol or refuse.

A And if she place on some the hapless seal  
Of barrenness, perchance it is her sign  
J That, at a station just adown the line  
U Her gift was scorned; and thus doth she reveal  
D Her mandate, signed and shut; and no appeal  
G Shall mitigation give from her design;  
M The punishment s conclusive and condign:  
E Weighed in the balance, and found wanting; thine  
N The end appointed for this rank offense.  
T And no contrition serves, no faith can give  
For thee a smug, vicarious pretence.  
Thine executioner is sure and positive;  
He is thyself; and for thy untoward vice  
The line that waited on thee shall not live.

A So, Little Girl, if barrenness thy claim,  
Tis not a license given thee by Fate  
S For pleasant dalliance. Through the gate  
A Thou may st be passing, for another s blame,  
D To such foredoomed extinction. If it came  
Through thy misdeeds, twere sad enough; but  
P wait,  
A Not jeering at thy sister s doleful strait;  
R Nor ey n pretending tis a merry game;

A Nor seek to gather others in thy train,  
D And swell the ribald throng. But bow thy head,  
E My girl, in contrite spirit, for the vain  
Hilarity s unseeming; and instead  
The March in Saul were better played again,  
For those who might have been, and now are dead.

A Oh, Little Spider, with thy filmy net  
Athwart the tree s outreaching branches here,  
S With parts concealed, and others that appear;  
P All cunningly devised, and neatly set  
I To catch the ever-vagrant roamer; yet  
D Not too obtrusive; lest, or far or near,  
E The danger of the trap should be too clear,  
R And warn the stranger it is made to get;  
Oh, little huntress, crouching in thy den,  
To satisfy thy appetite and greed,  
And sally forth upon the victim when  
His wings are snarled; and then in eager speed  
Enwind him more and more, and wind again,  
And at thy pleasant leisure do the deed;

A Oh, Crafty Trapper, ever is thy skill  
N Too subtle for the roaming gnat or fly,  
D And for the beetle, swiftly shooting by,  
Or even for the sluggish worm that still  
A Wiggles in hopeless bondage at thy lure.  
For all are subject to thy scheming will,  
F And all thy studied torture must endure.  
L And e en the mate that seeks thee thou shalt kill,  
Y After the nuptials only, to make sure.

A Oh, Plotting Female, of the demon-kind,  
How fares it that thy gossamer device,  
F So infamous, so deadly and so nice,  
E Withstands the winds that blow where e er inclined,-  
M The winds of heaven, just but ever blind  
A To thy misdeeds? And can it be that vice

L Must always stay, to take its wonted price?  
E And hold we still that Providence is kind?  
Oh, small exemplar of the Devil's hold  
D Upon the hapless human-kind afield,  
E His luring traps unrecognized, untold;  
V The pleasure only, not the pain, revealed;  
I Why is it that his schemes, so sly, so bold,  
L Are not by Heaven sundered, shut and sealed?

A Oh, Motherhood! And is it just a bane,  
Part of the primal curse, with toil and death,  
M Sent as a penalty? And doth the breath  
Of new-born babe wail out the woe and pain  
T Of punishment, inflicted once again,  
H To satisfy an angry God? So saith  
E The preacher, mayhap; sadly blinded with  
R Too close a scrutiny of myth inane,  
And book and text construed with thought severe,  
To find some pretext for his endless hell.  
And heaven is far away, and hell right here  
If all be true we hear the preacher tell.  
But Nature makes both pain and joy appear;  
And Nature knoweth her own purpose well.

A And she that holds the right of motherhood,  
And prizes not the blessing, though disguised  
L With suffering and constraint, and penalized,  
A Mayhap, with endless care and toil, hath understood  
D But ill her mission; knowing not the good  
Y Outweighs the travail and the pain. Unprized  
God's gift most precious; and unrecognized  
Her debt to Nature. Think you, then, she could  
Allay the lingering qualm by act so base  
As taking to her arms a fawning beast,  
A little dog, let's say, and in the place  
Of Baby, hold it to her breast,  
And call this Mother-love, by act of grace,

And satisfy her being s first request?

H A lady with her little dog in arms!  
E (And Solomon, in most exalted hour,  
R Was not arrayed like one of these!) Our  
Deference to her! We proclaim her charms,  
D And tip the hat, and bow; for sure it harms  
None to defer somewhat to wealth and power!  
G But do you know? There now; no gossip! Bower  
So ornate and so sacred, nothing harms!  
A husband? Well, I think so; yes somewhere,  
In fond retirement of his own device!  
(Such gorgeous creatures cannot live on air.)  
And, do you know, a husband s really nice,  
(If he be nice,) to make a handsome pair,  
And pay the bills; and sometimes give advice?

S A Gorgeous Creature, in her limousine!  
With all that luxury and wealth can give,  
C And living as the rich alone can live,  
I And free to go, (whatever that may mean;  
E The easy import you can catch between  
T My random words,) as she elects; and give  
Y Her time to pomp and show. I m positive  
In high society she is the Queen.  
Q And of what service to herself and kind?  
U You ask. It is a useless question, quite.  
E Of all the foibles that possess her mind,  
E That is the very slightest to invite  
N Her fond attention, or her life to bind  
In narrow groove. She s just a pretty sprite!

A And hath the Maker use for such fine birds,  
To flit about the world, and sing and dance,  
F And preen their plumage? Yes, by happy chance,  
I He hath, for birds. But can his solemn words  
N To Man be thus construed? And how accords

E Such life with earnest aim He doth advance  
For human being? How shall it enhance  
B The sum of all? Alas! it but affords  
I Another instance of a life gone wrong,  
R And flung in face of Giver. 'Tis defeat  
D Of purposes benign; a dance and song,  
When labor is commanded to complete  
The beauteous plan He gave to help along  
The mighty Structure for the Mercy Seat.

A And will the Giver treasure such as this,  
Tendered as service mete for beings here;  
G Brought to his altar with a trifling leer?  
A And, think you, there s reserved a state of bliss  
R For those in pandered idling, not of his  
M Commanding? Would it not, instead, appear,  
E For earnest mission a return so queer  
N Demands both like and equal offices?  
T Ah, here s a garment made of wondrous cloth,  
With laces, flowers and jewels set thereon,  
A thing so beautiful and useless both,  
Yet out of fashion, and completely gone  
For service in the after-life, forsooth;  
Twere better laid away, as food for moth  
Of all eternity to feed upon.

C How of the Man, Ihou caviler? I hear  
In querulous complaint against this strain  
M Of evil conduct, charged and charged again,  
P Against the Female of the species. Dear  
A And mischievous they are, it would appear,  
N Therefore more deadly. And, my friend, tis plain  
I That courtesy s fair sequence in this train  
Should grant the woman first. The man is near  
N You may be sure; and in our modern way,  
S He comes full soon; but generally behind.  
And so, in war, in peace, in work, in play,

In conquests of the heart and soul and mind,  
They are together, following the way  
That Nature points for all of human kind.

A And if a frailty lies in one of these,  
Shall we not look to find it in the mate?  
L Where s the philosopher to estimate  
I The difference in their fault ; or set at ease  
T The quibble of so many, (hard to please,)  
T Of who s the greater sinner? Let them prate  
L And put the matter, proof and predicate,  
E But it shall ne er be settled. Cavilers like these  
Are hard to reconcile. I mind the flow  
F Of old Castilian humor: "Man is Fire:  
I "And Woman (fine and fluffy creature), Tow:  
R "The Devil, (coming at their fond desire,  
E In stertorous breath) goes whiff, and gives a blow!"  
(The Devil is a friend I oft admire.)

A And, of the man who owns the limousine,  
N And finds the Gorgeous Creature and her pet,  
D And the free manners of her social set  
Much to his liking, (haply in between  
T Matters of greater interest): What is seen  
H In him to give us better thought? Or yet  
E A higher estimate, in gross or net,  
Upon his value to the race, I ween?  
M For his chief purpose is to scatter gold,  
A That others digged and earned, and to maintain  
N For gaping throng of strangers to behold,  
A pomp and circumstance as idly vain  
As hers. The dog, her pet, is all he hath to hold;  
His name, his line aborted; and what gain?

A I see a youth, just stepping on the sill  
Of Manhood. O er the way is grandly placed  
Y A word, let s hope, shall never be erased,  
The legend Opportunity. With will

U And courage all his part to fill,  
T The future of this Lad s already traced;  
H And, let us hope, twill never be disgraced  
By act unworthy of this day. And still  
S I see beside the road, on either hand,  
T In beauteous foliage, and full well disguised,  
E A million cobwebs, and each filmy band  
P A trap for him, full cunningly devised,  
S For his destruction. Can he move and stand  
Mongst fruit and flowers the cobwebs recognized?  
F Find pleasant rest, when worn by travel long,  
And in his hours of pleasure and of ease,  
R Enjoy the beauty only, and the song  
T Of innocence, and be content with these?  
H

H I see this youth, is he your son, or mine?  
I His face a-smile, in confidence sublime,  
S Take to the road, and dare the test of time;  
Dare as the hero dares who answers call divine  
C To action ; with no time to falter or repine,  
H And up the hill of conquest he would climb.  
A Now can st thou say, in reason or in rhyme,  
N Why he should not attain his goal, and shine  
C As conqueror, upon its lofty crown?  
E And yet, this son of yours or mine, my friend,  
Hath many chances now to him unknown.  
For, at beginning, who foresees the end?  
Life tells her tale in chapters; and not shown  
Too soon the fate the Author minds to send.

N This youth of ours is born to good estate,  
A With circumstance bespoke in his cause,  
T And every needful aid around him draws  
U For his achievement. Faithful friends await  
R To help him on, and keep him in the straight  
E And hobbled path of virtue. Here let s pause  
To say that he is Nature s child, by laws

S Immutable and urgent; just as great  
As ties of kin, religion, duty; all  
C The moral virtues; bring them all, enlist  
H In common cause to master or forestall  
I The pull of Nature. If the boy resist  
L That pull by all these aids, then we may call  
D Him hero, and his name shall head the list.

N For Nature hath her way throughout the earth,  
A With beast and bird and reptile; fish and all  
T Her creatures animate. To Nature s call  
U The trees and shrubs and flowers respond, in birth  
R From seed all fertilized; and prove their worth  
E By yielding seed again. Or great or small  
In Nature s plenteous lap they fall,  
S And pay her tribute. Thus she holdeth forth  
From age to age, and life perpetuate  
C Is granted in return for service done:  
A And every kind and species animate  
L Is charged with its own duty, one by one,  
L To save its own; to serve the ranks that wait  
A-down the centuries, from sire to son.

S And Nature calls for tribute when tis due;  
E Not at convenience of the life in bond;  
R Not leaving option open, to respond  
V Or send regrets; but, preparation through,  
I And full equipped; why, that s the thing to do:  
C Pay tribute: And the urge is all around  
E In Nature s realm; in sea and air and ground!  
Pay tribute: high and low and through and through!  
Think you, my friend, our boy doth hear this call?  
Oh, yes; of course; but then the boy must wait;  
There s yet four years of college; after all  
The discipline is good; he ll get his gait  
When fitted well for life; there s Virtue s wall  
But, friend, will Nature halt or hesitate?

My Christian friend, you know just what we do;  
U I shut my eyes and fondly trust to fate;  
R You shut your eyes and fondly pray and prate;  
And both are hypocrites! In heart we two  
B Are hoping that the boy will struggle through,  
L And with his instincts just procrastinate;  
E Keep out of trouble, and at any rate  
S Avoid a scandal; be discreet; from view  
S Of family and friends keep closely hid  
I His little peccadilloes, if they come;  
N And not get tangled with some Bowery kid,  
G And after marriage bring the hussy home.  
(That heinous sin we strictly now forbid.)  
And thus we turn our hero out to roam.

W If he gets through his college course quite free,  
E We are devoutly thankful, and we say  
L He s had his trial, and has learned the way  
L To dodge such mischief; and we straight agree  
He knows a thing or two; and can be trusted free  
S To play the game as other dodgers play,  
T And hold Dan Cupid further still at bay,  
A Until his Mother and his Dad agree  
R It s time to marry. This depends, of course,  
T On business or profession. Further years  
E For this, and further still to gain a source  
D Of income; for this youngster, it appears,  
Must furnish home of elegance, no worse  
Than that She lives in. Thus the sequel nears.

A Oh, Superficial Planners of the day!  
Oh, Purblind Parents, thinking you can bend  
C The laws of Nature to conserve your end,  
A And sweep her sovereign edicts all away,  
R To satisfy your fond ambition! Stay  
E To see the evil that your plans portend;  
F The punishment that Nature s wont to send  
U In retribution; for there blocks the way

L Ten thousand chances of a sore defeat  
At some unguarded angle. Soon or late  
P The boy may break from such an indiscreet  
L And irksome tutelage; and then your great  
A Air-castle tumbles. Should you ev n complete  
N Unhappiness, divorce and wreck await.

A I saw your daughter, Madam, on the street.  
A winsome girl indeed, and I would say  
F Favors her father in a certain way,  
I With all her mother s graces; and complete  
N In every detail was her costume; mete  
E For ball-room, or for other gorgeous-gay  
Society affair; that is, I mean to say,  
C She looked most grandly elegant and sweet!  
R (I am so awkward in descriptive phrase  
E Of woman s dress and finery and style!)  
A A simple walking costume? yes; the praise  
T Is due her mother I am sure! Her smile  
U Was so bewitching! Her unconscious ways  
R Disclosed her innocence! No thought of guile  
E Belongs to her in these most guileful days;  
With others on the street I gazed a while.

A Her bodice, I am certain, was cut square,  
And low; just reasonably, you know, and fine  
C To show a bust with grace in every line,  
So far as it was shown, for with a wondrous care  
Y The line was drawn; yes, certainly, just there!  
A graceful compromise, as I opine  
G Between your stricter notions, ma am, and mine;  
I Not quite so low, perhaps, as she would dare.  
R There must be something undisclosed, I know  
L To whet the fancy, else no witching charm  
Invests the draperies that coyly flow  
Against the tempting bust or leg or arm.  
Her hose, I m sure, could little farther go;  
Pink and diaphanous, transparent, warm.

A I saw your daughter, Madam, at the show.  
It was a vaudeville; the common mix  
F Of movies, dancing, music, circus tricks  
E And so forth. I was seated in the row  
T Assigned to men of sober years who grow  
C But little hair a-top; and five or six  
H Rows back, as I remember if I fix  
I The place aright, the two were there, you know;  
N She and my son. Oh, well, twas good enough;  
G The same old story; something pretty raw  
Worked in between the music, and the stuff  
S That lovers want; and ever there we saw  
H The villain still pursuing, coarse and rough  
Pursuing what? The Maiden? Yes; oh, pshaw!  
W

T I saw the pair anon down in the grill,  
H In flush of light and glare of grand array;  
R And they were there the gayest of the gay.  
I To see the throng disport in merry mill  
L Would charm the gloom of anchorite, and fill  
L His head with antics. Feasting and the play  
I Of all the senses in one grand array;  
N Women, wine and song, as suits the will  
G Of those already surfeited, who seek  
To add to surfeit yet another thrill!  
S And girls with painted lips and painted cheek  
C Were mingling in the throng at will,  
E With men of painted eyes and painted beak,  
N The garish painted programme to fulfill.  
E

A I saw your daughter, Madam, much enthused;  
N My son, I thought, was just a bit blase;  
D For, though at times affecting to be gay,  
His gayety seemed forced; as if twere used  
A To stronger spice than this, and felt abused

At so much fol-de-rol for merest play.  
G And then I thought perhaps in other way  
H His fervor had been sated. If refused  
By her beside him in this merry mock  
S Why there are others, surely, that invite  
T To amplest satisfaction; and that stock  
Is never far to seek for one who s quite  
In tune for revel. Now let s stop the clock  
For our fell ghost has risen, wan and white.

A You know we chuckled when we found our boy  
Had dodged the mischief of the plotting crew;  
T And then concluded that the lad would do  
H To face the world, and ever be our joy  
I In strict propriety. But morals cloy  
N With over-worked command. Remember, too,  
G And never let this fact escape your view,  
That Nature pulls the other way: Ahoy!  
And heave, ho! And the pull she doth engage  
R Warps our good ship leeward, far away,  
From course we re steering, and from anchorage  
T That we selected. Say to Nature, Nay,  
W Thy course is wrong; then vainly curb thy rage!  
This “thing or two” the boy hath learned at play.

A And if I thought the youngster somewhat cold,  
When merrily was running all the play,  
M And she beside him was so very gay,  
I Perchance the reason now is plainly told,  
G And any further moral to unfold  
H Were quite superfluous; but still we may  
T Hold just a little moment more to say  
Y The trick of female charms so very bold  
We also noted, is the female urge  
P Prompted by Nature, to allure the coy,  
U Elusive lover running still at large;  
L And all the scenes of revelry and joy;  
L And song and dance and story, charge on charge,

Are Nature pulling at the girl and boy.

W But, this, our boy who “knows a thing or two,”

H Finds just a mere diversion, mainly meant

Y To keep his fancy flowing; his intent

Is marriage sometime, yes, of course; but who

H Wants marriage, with the splurge it means in view,

E Unless he has the cash? If this be sent

Together with the girl, it s easy spent

H And he is ready both to dare and do.

A But, for your daughter, Madam, who, he knows,

L Hath not the wherewithal, it s not so clear.

T He couldn t earn enough to buy her clothes,

S Say nothing of the other things, so dear,

So necessary for herself and those

She loves; and breach-of-promise suits are queer!

A I see a youth arraigned for grave offense

Against the laws, made and provided all

C To safeguard what we most delight to call

R The crown of womanhood. We make pretense

I Offending majesty of virtue hence

M Of guarding that which needs but to install

I Its own defender. Better than stone wall

N And military post is Common Sense.

A Here for seduction stands the boy arraigned,

L And he is dumb before a grave-faced throng.

Guilty? Oh, what odds if only end attained

Is virtue s vindication? And how long

Must virtue wait? The thing is all explained

If we but sing to-day the same old song.

The boys at fault, of course; and much is gained;-

Let all seducers go where they belong.

K But not so fast, oh, Outraged Justice, hold

N Thy withering hand a moment; let us see

Wherein the measure of his guilt may be

T Greater than hers. This boy s not worldly-wise, I m

T told;  
Y While she is older, and a trifle bold.  
Who did the tempting here? Was t he or she?  
P Let s view the matter calmly and agree  
R The fault was hers, the greater, many fold.  
And such the product of our hectic life,  
B With everything to stimulate the young  
L And surging passions! And the cause of strife  
E May seem at last to equally belong  
M To false conditions and to Nature, rife  
For what she claims; albeit right or wrong.

A But let the case proceed. I m fain to say  
Justice is justice, and the courts must give  
S Protection. Let the wayward learn to live  
Within the law, for law must have its way  
R Or all our safeguards tumble in a day;  
E Thus pleads the prosecutor, who must strive  
And in the law s complexities contrive  
D To bring conviction; gaining thus his pay.  
I But still, my legal friend, a human life  
L Hangs in the balance, and this boy consigned  
E To prison means his end; and rope or knife  
M Might bring a better. Ere the shackles bind  
M Let s bring to view the stricken man and wife,  
A His parents; Keep their punishment in mind.

T But let the case proceed, may t please the Court,  
H For we have much to do to vindicate  
E This much abused young woman. Let me state  
It is my solemn duty; and retort  
C That others grief, or any other sort  
Of plea for sympathy cannot abate  
N The Court s prerogative. And now the great  
F Contention s on; it is a public sport;  
L The room is filled with eager auditors;  
I Women and men, and girls, if they re allowed;  
C And prurient details that the soul abhors

T Are brought before the evil-minded crowd;  
And life of culprit and progenitors  
Laid bare. This makes the prying lawyers proud.  
N

A And prurient Press takes up the eager chase,  
And spreads before its readers, old and young,  
B Delicious morsels, (rolled beneath the tongue)  
A Of all salacious details, every base  
N And scandalous thing developed in the case,  
Q And such insinuations slyly flung;  
U As any snake that ever hissed and stung  
E Might claim for fellow. Readers in their place  
T Of fond security, and smug and sure  
Within their sanctity, may at their will  
Revel in banquet spread of this impure  
Turkey, with trimmings, and their stomachs fill,  
As they may cram or relish or endure.  
And this, for most, completely fills the bill.

E And if the pabulum the press purveys  
N Be somewhat heavy, or too quickly gorged,  
T The theme's inviting, and may be enlarged  
I To quantum suff. in movies, books and plays  
C And recreation for both nights and days  
I Supplied ad lib. The prices charged  
N Within the reach of all; and thus is urged  
G The poison-potion in a million ways;  
Quick and most pungent, if one chooses so,  
T Or long drawn out in ravished anguish, still;  
H Three Weeks or more, if one should choose to go  
E So far to reach erotic end, and fill  
M With many thrills the writer cares to throw  
E Into the rotten story. Thus they flow.

F Oh, age lascivious, oh, groveling throng,  
E That find men's evil conduct thy delight,  
A And feast upon it morning, noon and night,

S And prop it up, thy other food among,  
T And taste another flavor that is sprung  
From crime and scandal, If I read aright  
The sign of this thy morbid appetite,  
W The fruits are yours, the faults to you belong.  
A Thus have they gone, the peoples in decay  
R Who passed and are not, save in monument  
N They left, forbidding, vast and grey,  
I To show the world perchance which road they went;  
N For it was down this broadening Great White  
G Way;-  
Their one-time greatness now forever spent.

A I see a mad, amusement-seeking race,  
In hectic fever pressing to its goal,  
K And grasping pleasures, all of sense, not soul.  
I I see a Clown installed in market place  
N Outmidasing old Midas by the grace  
G Of all who hang upon his antics, pay his toll,  
And then in mighty spasms sway and roll.  
C This lofty mummer makes the fool s grimace;  
R And holds his servitors with easy rein.  
And if the one they serve by right appears  
W Their beau-ideal of life, why then it s plain  
N They are a race of mummies, and the shears  
E Are mine: and I, the Timid Barber, whisper plain:  
D This vaunted King of yours hath Ass s ears.

R Thou flaunting beauty of the vaudeville,  
E Displayer of thy charms in dress undress,  
T Purveying to the throng thy loveliness;  
A A word with thee would do but little ill,  
I Or little good, because thy wont is will  
L To lead this hectic life. But couldst thou guess  
The end impending, it would suit thee less.  
T Down in the slums are led the lives that kill!  
R A girl like thee I saw the other day,  
A Fashioned as fine, and once as debonair;

D Who danced and sang adown this broad highway;  
E But she is in a little crib down there,  
And selling to all comers, if they pay ;  
But retail, mind you, each his single share.

A Thou, flaunting beauty of the higher grade,  
N Doth hold the wholesale market for a while,  
D Selling thy body, with thy song and smile,  
To please the leering crowd; and in the trade  
W A weekly stipend, looming large, is made  
H For shameless show and antics that beguile,  
And cause the prurient thought and smirk and  
L smile.

E There s all the difference, my buxom maid.  
S Plain language this; and such I apprehend  
A You seldom hear from those who keep the pace,  
L And travel with thy dalliance. Not a friend  
E Would dare or care to utter in thy face  
A hint of such a shame or such an end  
Or say thy glory, girl, is thy disgrace!

A Whence comes this modern craze for nakedness?  
Is here produced in life the artist s dream,  
B Art for Art s sake portrayed, not as they seem,  
A But as they are, and seeking to express  
R The chosen forms of human loveliness,  
E All in the nude? Then has the artist s scheme  
Been carried to its logical extreme,  
I And nothing s left his craving soul to guess,  
D If theme unhackneyed he would fain disclose,  
E But to revise his theories entire,  
A And paint his human beings wearing clothes.  
L Ah, then the thought artistic may aspire  
To show the things of life he really knows,  
And paint the smoke that partly hides the fire!

A And still the question stands: Whence comes the craze?  
For surely tis not based on bare ideals;

D No sublimated standard e'er appeals  
I To the chic maiden of these stylish days  
C Or her fond mother. Regulate their ways  
T By anything but Fashion? Why one feels  
A Preposterous upon the very heels  
T Of such a limping thought. The eyes and nays  
Are called instanter. Then it's Fashion's word  
R Decides the issue what and when and how,  
And whether garb is charming or absurd.  
And who is Fashion, dearest? Answer now,  
Who's the dictator? Has it e'er occurred;  
Paris? Her demi-mondaine? Well, I cowl

A But Autocrat of Paris rules by grace  
Of greater powers than his, and if we will  
D The end that he's appointed to fulfill  
U Looms large upon us; for his reign hath place  
M In comprehending, overmastering grace  
M That orders human action, good or ill,  
Y To work at last its written, sovereign will.  
Change is predestined for the human race,  
K As 'tis for all creation; and this change  
I Means making over; and in tearing down  
N No less than building up it finds its range  
G For Evolution's plan, the Maker's own  
For conservation of his forces strange  
That men engage, as yet but illy known.

T Afar, afar, against the northern mist  
W I see two mighty caravans that march  
Contra-wise; one headed for the arch  
Of rising sun, the other to the west;  
C And both these columns seem in eager quest  
A Of goal beyond horizon of their search.  
R And one doth bound and roll and heave and lurch  
A In great commotion, antic-joy possesst.  
V The other moves more surely, soberly,  
A As if for earnest search their course they wend

N And when I look more closely still I see  
S Much joy of quiet sort doth these attend,  
And Evolution s written large and free.  
The other, Devolution, and The End.

T And not alone in the affairs of men  
H Such mighty columns show, but all through space  
E The centra-movements may be seen apace,  
Building Destroying. In telescopic ken  
L Are misty spheres new-born; and turn again,  
A Are old ones going out, their day of grace  
W Concluded in a blaze; thus giving place  
To newer orders. Evolution s gain  
Is Devolution s loss; and thus is set  
The vast creative plan that carries on  
The universe of universes. Yet  
We fail so oft to see the words upon  
God s handiwork before us, signed and set  
Too large to read, until our chance is gone.

Oh, age uncanny, times all out of joint!  
Tempora, Mores. Custom s Law!  
T The Senate knew this and the Consul saw!  
E Yet, in an age degenerate, who could point,  
M What Prophet doth the Centuries anoint  
P And charge with warning that can overawe  
A people plunging to their fate below;  
R For pointing vainly is to disappoint.  
A Oh Times, oh, Customs! I have shown ye all  
The issues that arise twixt Nature s Law  
And man-made practice; and in great and small  
The conflict rages, and the Furies draw  
M Their meshes for thy capture and thy fall;  
The Senate knew this, and the Consul saw!  
R  
E  
S























































