

PS 1953

.D4

**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**



00002902515











Gems

FROM

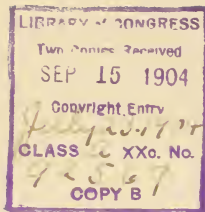
Holmes



Gems  
from  
Holmes



Boston  
De Wolfe Fiske & Co



PS 1903  
114

Copyright



Boston · 1904 ·





## First Day.

—Don't flatter yourselves that  
friendship authorizes you to  
say disagreeable things to your  
intimates. On the contrary,  
the nearer you come into relation  
with a person, the more necessary  
do tact and courtesy become.

Except in cases of necessity, which are rare,  
leave your friend to learn unpleasant  
truths from his enemies;  
they are ready  
enough  
to tell them.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*



## Second Day.



BUILD thee more stately mansions,  
O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler  
than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's  
unresting sea!

*The Chambered Nautilus.*

All economical and practical wisdom  
is an extension or variation of the  
following arithmetical formula:  $2 + 2 = 4$ .

Every philosophical proposition has the  
more general character of the expression  
 $a + b = c$ . We are mere operatives, empirics  
and egotists, until we learn to think in  
letters instead of figures.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*

## Third Day.



AS to clever people hating each other, I think a little extra talent does sometimes  
make people jealous.  
They become irritated by perpetual attempts and failures, and it hurts their tempers and dispositions.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*

Ah! many lids Love lurks between,  
Nor heeds the coloring of his screen;  
And when his random arrows fly,  
The victim falls, but knows not why.

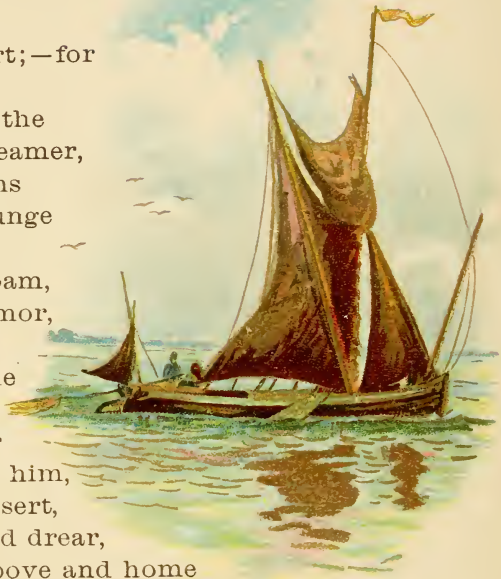
*The Dilemma.*

O lady! there be many things  
That seem right fair, below, above;  
But sure not one among them all  
Is half so sweet as love;—  
Let us not pay our vows alone,  
But join two altars both in one.

*Stanzas.*

## Fourth Day.

'Tis here we part;—for  
other eyes  
The busy deck, the  
fluttering streamer,  
The dripping arms  
that plunge  
and rise,  
The waves in foam,  
the ship in tremor,  
The 'kerchiefs  
waving from the  
pier,  
The cloudy pillar  
gliding o'er him,  
The deep blue desert,  
lone and drear,  
With heaven above and home  
before him.



*A Good Time Going.*

Alas for those who never sing,  
But die with all their music in them!

*The Voiceless.*

## Fifth Day.



FAMILY men get dreadfully  
homesick. In the remote and  
bleak village the heart returns  
to the red blaze of the logs in  
one's fireplace at home.  
"There are his young barbarians  
all at play,"—

if he owns any youthful savages.—No, the  
world has a million roofs for a man but  
only one rest.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*

At thirty we are all trying to cut our names  
in big letters upon the walls of this tenement  
of life; twenty years later we have  
carved it, or shut up our jack-knives.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*

Stick to your aim; the mongrel's hold will slip,  
But only crowbars loose the bulldog's grip.

*Urania.*



Sixth  
Day.

That one  
unquestioned  
text we read,  
All doubt  
beyond,  
all fear above,  
Nor crackling pile  
nor cursing creed  
Can burn  
or blot it:  
GOD IS LOVE!

*What We All Think.*

## Seventh Day.

A still, sweet, placid, moonlight face,  
And slightly nonchalant,  
Which seems to claim a middle place  
Between one's love and aunt,  
Where childhood's star has left a ray  
In woman's sunniest sky,  
As morning dew and blushing day  
On fruit and blossom lie.

*A Portrait.*

She knew not love, yet lived in maiden fancies,—  
Walked, simply clad, a queen of  
high romances,  
And talked strange tongues  
with angels  
in her  
trances.

*Iris, Her Book.*



## Eighth Day.



HAT you bring away from  
the Bible  
depends to some extent on  
what you carry  
to it.

*The Professor at the Breakfast Table.*

The gay grisette, whose fingers touch  
Love's thousand chords so well;  
The dark Italian loving much,  
But more than one can tell;  
And England's fair-haired,  
blue-eyed dame.  
Who binds her brow with pearls;—  
Ye who have seen them, can they shame  
Our own sweet Yankee girls?

*Our Yankee Girls.*

The axis of the earth sticks out visibly  
through the centre of each and every  
town and city.

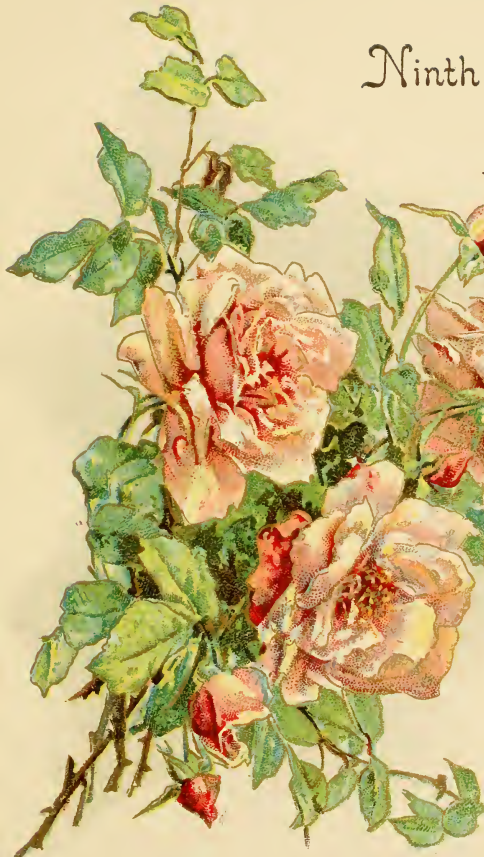
*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*



# Ninth Day.

As o'er the glacier's  
frozen  
sheet  
Breathes soft  
the  
Alpine  
rose,  
So,  
through  
life's  
desert  
springing  
sweet,  
The flower  
of  
friendship  
grows.

*A Song of  
Other Days.*



## Tenth Day.



WORD of all life, below, above,  
Whose light is truth, whose  
warmth is love,  
Before thy ever-blazing throne  
We ask no lustre of our own.

Grant us thy truth to make us free,  
And kindling hearts that burn for thee,  
Till all thy living altars claim  
One holy light, one heavenly flame!

*A Sun-Day Hymn.*

Do you want an image of the human will,  
or the self-determining principle,  
as compared with its prearranged  
and impassable restrictions?

A drop of water—imprisoned in a crystal;  
you may see such a one in any  
mineralogical collection. One little fluid  
particle in the crystalline prism of the  
solid universe.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*

# Eleventh Day.

People that  
make puns  
are like wanton  
boys that put  
coppers on the  
railroad tracks.

They amuse themselves  
and other children, but  
their little trick  
may upset a freight train of  
conversation for the  
sake of a battered witticism.

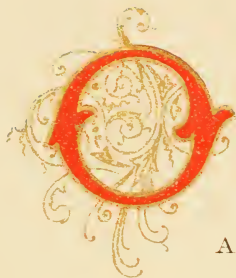
*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table.*

Our brains are seventy-year  
clocks. The Angel of  
Life winds them up once for  
all, then closes the case, and gives the key  
into the hand of the Angel of the Resurrection.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table.*



## Twelfth Day.



ONE of my friends had a little  
marble statuette of Cupid  
in his country-house,—bow,  
arrows, wings, and all complete.  
A visitor, indigenous to the region,  
looking pensively at  
the figure, asked of the  
lady of the house “if that was  
a statoo of her deceased  
infant?”

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*

Oh, tell me where did Katy live,  
And what did Katy do?  
And was she very fair and young,  
And yet so wicked, too?  
Did Katy love a naughty man,  
Or kiss more cheeks than one?  
I warrant Katy did no more  
Than many a Kate has done.

*To an Insect.*



## Thirteenth Day.

I care not much for gold or land;—  
Give me a mortgage here and there,—  
Some good bank-stock, some note of hand,  
Or trifling railroad share;—  
I only ask that Fortune send  
A little more than I can spend. *Contentment.*

You don't suppose that my remarks made  
at this table are like so many postage  
stamps, do you,—each to be only once  
uttered? If you do, you are mistaken. He  
must be a poor creature that does not  
often repeat himself.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*

## Fourteenth Day.



DON'T ever think the poetry is dead  
in an old man  
because his forehead is wrinkled,  
or that his manhood  
has left him when  
his hand trembles!

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*

Where, oh where are the visions of morning,  
Fresh as the dews of our prime?  
Gone, like tenants that quit without warning,  
Down the back entry of time.

*Questions and Answers.*

“Boston State-House is the hub of the  
solar system. You couldn't pry that out  
of a Boston man if you had the  
tire of all creation straightened  
out for a crow-bar.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*

## Fifteenth Day.



IN has many tools, but a lie  
is the handle  
that fits them all.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table.*

Be firm! one constant element  
in luck

Is genuine, solid, old Teutonic pluck;

See yon tall shaft; it felt the earthquake's  
thrill,

Clung to its base, and greets the sunlight  
still.

*Urania.*

—Buckwheat is skerce and high.—

she remarked.

[Must be a poor relation sponging on our

landlady,—pays nothing,—

so she must stand by the guns and be

ready to repel boarders.]

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table.*

## Sixteenth Day.

When turning round their dial-track,  
Eastward the lengthening  
shadows pass,  
Her little mourners, clad  
in black,  
The crickets, sliding  
through the grass,  
Shall pipe for her  
an evening  
mass.

At last the rootlets  
of the trees  
Shall find the  
prison  
where she  
lies,  
And bear  
the buried dust they seize  
In leaves and blossoms to  
the skies—  
So may the soul that warmed  
it rise!

*Under the Violets.*





## Seventeenth Day.



O brag little,—to show well,—  
to crow gently, if in luck,—  
to pay up, to own up,  
to shut up, if beaten,  
are the virtues of a  
sporting man.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table.*

Where, oh where are life's lilies and roses,  
Nursed in the golden dawn's smile?  
Dead as the bulrushes 'round little Moses,  
On the old banks of the Nile.

*Questions and Answers.*

It is better to lose a pint of blood  
from your veins than to have a nerve tapped.  
Nobody measures your nervous force  
as it runs away, nor bandages your  
brain and marrow after the operation.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table.*



## Eighteenth Day.

I have been through as many hardships as Ulysses, in the pursuit of my histrionic vocation. I have traveled in cars until the conductors all knew me like a brother. I have run off the rails, and stuck all night in snow-drifts, and sat behind females that would have the window open when one could not wink without his eyelids freezing together.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table.*

But here's to our boyhood, its gold and its gray!  
The stars of its Winter, the dews of its May!  
And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,  
Dear Father, take care of thy children  
the Boys.

*The Boys.*

## Nineteenth Day.



ONCEIT is just as natural a thing  
to human minds  
as a centre is  
to a circle.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table.*

I gave her once a locket,  
It was filled with my own hair,  
And she put it in her pocket  
With very special care,  
But a jeweler has got it,—  
He offered it to me,  
And another that is not it  
Around her neck I see.

*Lines by a Clerk.*

What a comfort a dull but kindly person is,  
to be sure, at times! A ground-glass shade  
over a gas-lamp does not bring more  
solace to our dazzled eyes than such a one  
to our minds.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table.*

## Twentieth Day.

O Nature! bare thy loving  
    breast  
And give thy child one hour  
    of rest,—  
One little hour to lie  
    unseen  
Beneath thy scarf of leafy  
    green!

So, curtained by a singing  
    pine,  
Its murmuring voice shall  
    blend  
    with mine,  
Till, lost in dreams, my faltering lay  
    In sweeter music dies away.

*Midsommer.*



## Twenty-first Day.



PUT not your trust in money,  
but put your  
money in trust.


*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table.*

That one unquestioned text we read,  
All doubt beyond, all fear above,  
Nor crackling pile nor cursing creed  
Can burn or blot it:  
GOD IS LOVE.

*What We All Think.*

There stands the old school-house,  
hard by the old church;  
That tree at its side had the flavor of  
birch;  
O sweet were the days of his juvenile tricks,  
Though the prairie of youth had so many  
"big licks."

*Lines.*



## Twenty-second Day.

—I find the great thing  
in this world  
is not so much  
where  
we  
stand,  
as in  
what direction  
we are moving.

To reach the  
port of Heaven,  
we must sail  
sometimes with the  
wind and sometimes  
against it,—  
but we must  
sail, and not  
drift or lie at anchor.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table.*

## Twenty-third Day.



HERE lies the home of  
school-boy life,  
With creeping stair and wind-swept  
hall,  
And, scarred by many a  
truant knife,  
Our old initials on the wall.

*Mare Rubrum.*

I hear the whispering voice of Spring,  
The thrush's trill,  
the catbird's cry,  
Like some poor bird with prisoned wing  
That sits and sings, but longs to fly.

Oh for one spot of living green,—  
One little spot where leaves can grow—  
To love unblamed, to walk unseen,  
To dream above, to sleep below!

*Spring Has Come.*

## Twenty-fourth Day.

O my lost Beauty!—hast thou folded quite  
Thy wings of morning light  
Beyond those iron gates  
Where Life crowds hurrying to the haggard Fates,  
And Age upon his mound of ashes waits  
To chill our fiery dreams  
Hot from the heart of youth plunged in his  
icy streams.

*Musa.*





## Twenty-fifth Day.




OD bless the ancient Puritans!  
Their lot was  
hard enough;  
But honest hearts make iron arms,  
And tender maids  
are tough;  
So love and faith have formed  
and fed  
Our true-born Yankee stuff,  
And keep the kernel in the shell  
The British found so tough.

*A Song.*

Oh, what are the prizes we perish to win,  
To the first little "shiner" we caught with  
a pin!  
No soil upon earth is so dear to our eyes  
As the soil we first stirred  
in terrestrial pies!

*Lines.*



Twenty-sixth Day.

Call him not old, whose  
visionary brain

Holds o'er the past its  
undivided reign.

For him in vain the envious  
seasons roll

Who bears eternal summer in his soul.

If yet the minstrel's song,  
the poet's lay,

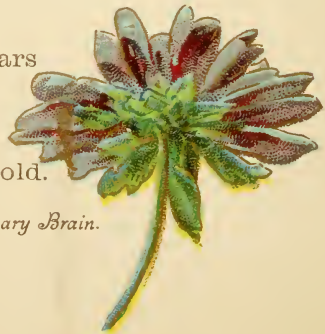
Spring with her birds, or children with their play,  
Or maiden's smile, or heavenly dream  
of art

Stir the few life-drops creeping round  
his heart,—

Turn to the record where his years  
are told,—

Count his gray hairs,—they  
cannot make him old.

*Call Him Not Old, Whose Visionary Brain.*



## Twenty-seventh Day.

I look upon the fair blue skies,  
And naught but empty air I see;  
But when I turn me to thine eyes,  
It seemeth unto me  
Ten thousand angels spread  
their wings  
Within those little azure rings.

*Stanzas.*

O for one hour of youthful joy!  
Give back my twentieth  
spring!

I'd rather laugh a  
bright-haired boy  
Than reign a gray-beard  
king!  
Off with the wrinkled spoils -  
of age!  
Away with learning's crown!  
Tear out life's wisdom-  
written page,  
And dash its trophies down!

*The Old Man Dreams.*



## Twenty-eighth Day.




UN, if you like, but try to  
keep you breath;  
Work like a man, but don't  
be worked to death;  
And with new notions,—  
let me change the rule,—  
Don't strike the iron till  
it's fairly cool.

*Urania.*

O Father! grant Thy love divine  
To make these mystic temples Thine!  
When wasting age and  
wearing strife  
Have sapped the leaning walls of life,  
When darkness gathers over all,  
And the last tottering pillars fall,  
Take the poor dust Thy mercy  
warms  
And mould it into heavenly forms.

*The Living Temple.*



Twenty=  
ninth  
Day.

Let Friendship's  
accents cheer our doubtful  
way,  
And Love's pure planet lend its  
guiding ray,—  
Our tardy Art shall wear an angel's wings,  
And life shall lengthen with the joy it  
brings!

*A Sentiment.*

How patient Nature smiles at Fame!  
The weeds that strewed the victor's way,  
Feed on his dust to shroud his name,  
Green where his proudest towers decay.

*A Roman Acqueduct.*

## Thirtieth Day.




MY blank check book  
seemed to be a dictionary  
of possibilities,  
in which I could find all the  
synonyms of happiness,  
and realize any of them  
on the spot.

*The Professor at the Breakfast-Table.*

But when the patient stars look down  
On all their light  
discovers,  
The traitor's smile, the murderer's frown,  
The lips of lying lovers,

They try to shut their saddening eyes,  
And in the  
vain endeavor  
We see them twinkling in the skies,  
And so they wink forever.

*Album Verses.*



The very  
flowers that  
bend and meet,  
In sweetening  
others,  
grow  
more  
sweet;

The  
clouds  
by day,  
the stars  
by night,  
Inweave  
their floating  
locks of light.  
The rainbow,  
Heaven's own  
forehead's  
braid,

Is but the embrace of sun  
and shade.

*The Philosopher to His Love.*

## Thirty-first Day.



VERY event that a man  
would master must be  
mounted on the run,  
and no man ever caught the reins  
of a thought except  
as it galloped by him.

*The Professor at the Breakfast-Table.*

Shalt thou be honest? Ask the worldly schools,  
And all will tell thee knaves are busier fools;  
Prudent? Industrious? Let not modern pens  
Instruct "Poor Richards," fellow-citizens.

*Urania.*

And if I should live to be  
The last leaf upon the tree  
In the 'spring,  
Let them smile as I do now,  
At the old forsaken bough  
Where I cling.

*The Last Leaf.*  
W 13









WERT  
BOOKBINDING  
Grantsville, Pa  
Nov-Dec 1988  
We're Quality Bound

