

UNACCUSTOMED AS I AM

MORRIE RYSKIND

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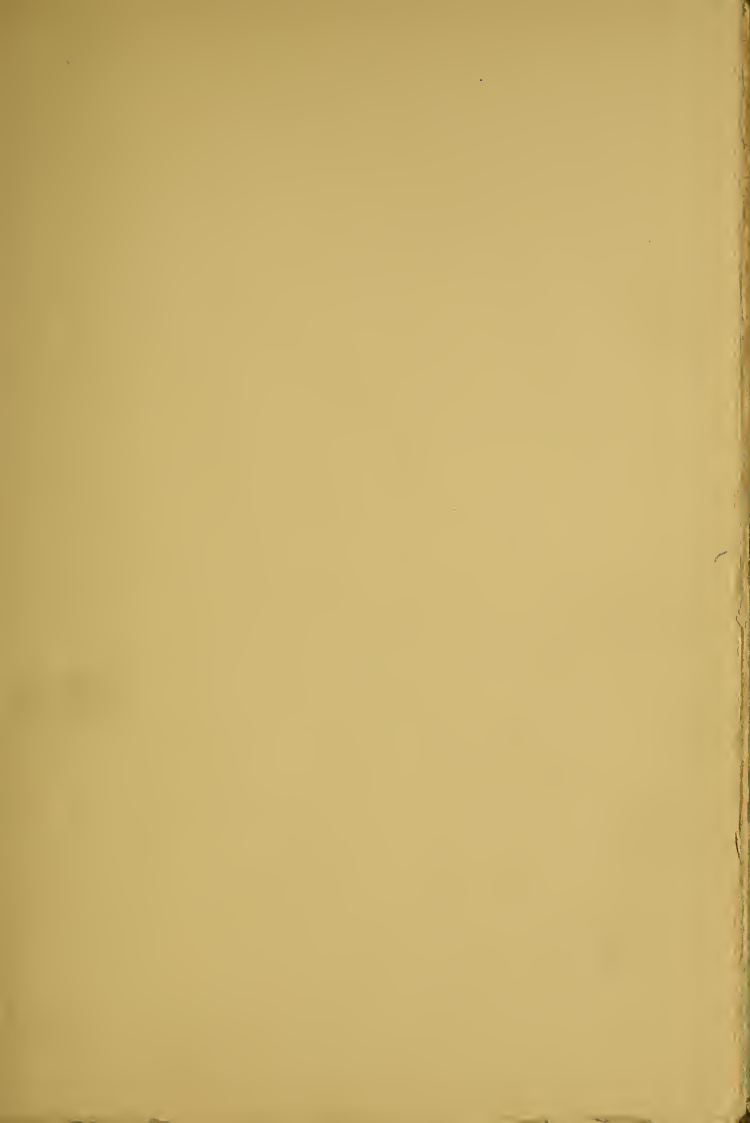


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UNACCUSTOMED
AS I AM

NEW BORZOI POETRY
SPRING 1920

IN AMERICAN

By J. V. A. Weaver

MEDALLIONS IN CLAY

By Richard Aldington

THE MYSTIC WARRIOR

By James Oppenheim

RESURRECTING LIFE

By Michael Strange

THE SACRED WOOD

Essays on Poetry and Criticism

By T. S. Eliot

UNACCUSTOMED AS I AM

BY
MORRIE RYSKIND
"



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1921

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Dedicated
to the Great American Democracy
— may it bring me Royalty

CONTENTS

APOLOGIA 3

OPENING CHORUS 4

RANDOM RHYMES ON LOVELY LADIES

ADELAIDE 7

To SILVIA 8

CONCERNING A CRITICAL MAID 10

To JUNE, DESIRING A POEM 11

To NATALIE 12

FRANCES 13

"O MY AMY, MINE NO MORE!" 14

FOR A VERY PRETTY LADY WITH A VERY
PRETTY NAME 15

CONSTANCY 16

THE CYNIC SPEAKS 17

To A FRIEND 18

LOVE SONG OF A YOUNG CYNIC 19

OFFERING

OFFERING 23

SONG 24

TRIOLET 25

WITH A SAPPHIRE TO HIS LOVE 26

TO THE UNUSUAL HER, DEPARTING 27
THE HIGHER CRITICISM 28
FAITH 30

LITERARY FOOTNOTES

LINES ON HEARING WALTER DE LA MARE 33
CLEARING IT UP 34
JANE 36
IF WORDSWORTH HAD BEEN IRVING BERLIN 37

A HANDY INTERLINEAR

LINES ON READING HORACE: BOOK I, ODE 22 41
HORACE RAPS THE CO-EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM 42
HORACE THE WISE 44
HORACE ANSWERS A FOOLISH QUESTION 45
HORACE COMES OUT WITH IT 46
HORACE PROVES HIMSELF A GOOD LOSER 48
HORACE MORALIZES 50
INTEGER VITTLES: THE WOLF SPEAKS 52
HORACE DELIVERS A MONEY-LOG 54
HORACE PROPOSES 56
HORACE JOINS THE PROHIBITIONISTS 57
PERSICOS ODI: ANOTHER VERSION 58
HORACE DELIVERS A LECTURE 59
THE DEMOCRACY OF DEATH 60
CANNY CATULLUS 62

CAPSULE CLASSICS ,

CAESAR'S "DE BELLO GALLICO" 65
CICERO: IN CATILINAM I 65
GRAY'S "ELEGY" 66

INCLUDING THE MISCELLANEOUS

- TRIOLET ON INFORMALITY 69
- APPEARANCES 70
- APRIL 72
- TRIOLET 73
- REGARDING A SENSE OF HUMOR 74
- CREED 77
- WHICH MAINTAINS THAT SPEECH MAY BE GOLDEN 78
- BALLADE OF IMMODESTY 80
- FIAT JUSTITIA 82
- LIFE 86
- HAPPY THOUGHT FOR SOME STRUGGLING NATION 87
- THE GLADIATORS 88

AN AVIATOR'S WAR GARDEN OF VERSES

- I. A THOUGHT 91
- II. WHOLE DUTY OF AIRPLANES 91
- III. HAPPY THOUGHT 91
- IV. UNHAPPY THOUGHT 91
- V. SYSTEM 92
- VI. LOOKING FORWARD 92
- VII. TIME TO *Rise* 92
- VIII. FOREIGN LANDS 93
- IX. THE PLANES 93

IN MEMORIAM:

JAMES SAUNDERS O'NEALE, JR. 94

THE ROGUE'S GALLERY SEAT

THE THEATRE: A THEME WITH VARIATIONS

- I. Walt Mason 97
- II. Walt Whitman 98

- III. Hughie Fullerton 99
- IV. Robert Louis Stevenson 100
- V. Irving Berlin 101
- VI. Rudyard Kipling 102

THE TANGUAY TO FORTUNE 103
TO DOROTHY BEATRICE NICHOLS 104

LINA CAVALIERI 106

GEORGE M. COHAN 107

DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS 108

BILL HART 110

AROUND OUR STUDIO

- I. The Director 113
- II. The Star: Female of the Species 113
- III. The Star: Male of the Species 114
- IV. The Camera Man 115
- V. The Studio Child 115
- VI. The Ingenue 116
- VII. The Vampire 116
- VIII. "Props" 117
- IX. The Studio Dog 117
- X. The Casting Director 118
- XI. The Technical Director 119
- XII. The Press Agent 119

ASK ANY AUTHOR 121

UNACCUSTOMED
AS I AM

APOLOGIA

What though we dream our dream?

What though we fight and rage?

What though we strive and scheme?

This world is but a stage!

And yet — the spotlight lures,

And so we force a smile

And seek fame that endures —

Only a little while!

OPENING CHORUS

A *triolet's* a pretty thing
To open up a vol. with.
Oh, who can blame me if I sing,
“A *triolet's* a pretty thing!”
With it a frail may cop a king —
It's good to make a moll with!
A *triolet's* a pretty thing
To open up a vol. with!

RANDOM RHYMES
ON LOVELY LADIES



ADELAIDE

Blow, bugles, blow for Adelaide!
Pay ye the tribute that I owe her:
For though I dine with that there maid,
It's Dutch: she will not let me blow her.
And since somebody ought to do it,
I pray ye, bugles, please go to it!

TO SILVIA

Many maidens have I known,
 Maids of varied shapes and sizes —
Some of brawn and some of bone;
 Sadies, Charlottes, Janes, and 'Lizas.
Some had looks; some were not blest;
 Some were stupid; some were witty —
But not one would let me rest
 Till I dashed her off a ditty.

Take it from a bard who knows:
 Hard his lot who likes the ladies
If he does not stick to prose! . . .
 I supplied the Janes and Sadies
With the poems they would ask,
 But I thought some thoughts satiric.
Fervently I cursed my task
 And the subject of each lyric.

Long the path that never ends;
 Long the lane without a turning.
It's some time that we've been friends,
 Yet you've not expressed a yearning
For a poem that would praise
 You, and tell how you delight one;

Though you claim to like my lays,
You have not asked me to write one.

Lady, that is not a bar.

When I find a sweet and pretty
Maid and clever — which you are —

I can't help but write a ditty
To her. Lady, take this song

As it's meant: it is not merely
That I want to get in strong,
But a tribute paid sincerely.

CONCERNING A CRITICAL MAID

Come on and help me, Muses Nine,
To sing my Ethel's praises.
Inspire me with a lilting line,
And help me make this lyric shine
With scintillating phrases!

What time I sing about her eyes,
And say I love them dearly:
She says, "How prettily he lies!"
Wherefore I ask ye put her wise
That I am Hers Sincerely.

And when I dare to lift my voice
And praise her lustrous hair,
Does she, the maiden of my choice,
Appear to hearken and rejoice? . . .
Well, not that *I'm* aware!

At times she says my rhythms err,
Wherefore I promise ye:
I'll bring ye frankincense and myrrh
If these lines look as good to her
As *her* lines look to me!

TO JUNE, DESIRING A POEM

Is it wise to gild the lily?
Or put perfume on the rose?
Lady, that were far too silly!
Better I should stick to prose
Than that I attempt to paint you
And your wondrous, winning way.
You're a pippin, you are, ain't you?

* * *

So you were *before* this lay.

TO NATALIE

Although your charms are many,
Although you're sweet and cute,
Although you equal any
Magnetic little beaut,
I'm sick of reading matter
Your many beaux turn out
In re your charming chatter,
In re your pretty pout.

I wish they'd stop their praising
Your eyes, your nose, your smile;
And cut their lyric phrasing
For just a little while.
I know their verses grip you —
But put them on the shelf! . . .
You see, I want to slip you
A verse or two myself.

FRANCES

No wonder that
I'm fond of Frances:
She doesn't make
Me go to dances.

“O MY AMY, MINE NO MORE!”

Lady, once we hit the trail together,
Once we used to pull the double play.
Mattered neither money nor the weather —
We would be united every day.

Had you but a toothache or a cold, I,
By request, would come to read my rhymes.
Lady, you'll admit it was some hold I
Had upon you. Them was happy times!

But, my lady, times have changed — nor slightly —
I have been discarded — put away.
Comes another lad to see you nightly.
(Maybe still another in the day!)

Oh, but he's the cute and handsome chappie!
Oh, but he's the arrow-collar guy!
Yet, I wonder, lady, are you happy?

* * *

Girlie, need I say it? *So am I.*

FOR A VERY PRETTY LADY WITH A VERY
PRETTY NAME

Of all the girls I know
 Somehow I take delight
In only one. Although,
Of all the girls I know
Some men are fond of Flo,
 While some think Ruth just right,
Of all the girls I know
 Somehow *I* take Delight.

CONSTANCY

I had vowed that my love was eternal,
And I had believed it.
But she, woman-wise, had said that I would forget. . . .

“A year,” she said, “is a long time
To be faithful to a memory —
And I shall be gone for a year.”

So she had not let me kiss her good-bye
When her steamer left:
“When I come back,” she said,
“If you still want me —
But you will forget.”

Every Sunday morning I write her a letter
That tells of my constant love. . . .
Yesterday, as I cleaned my desk,
I came across the picture of her
I used to carry with me.

THE CYNIC SPEAKS

“Scorn we scoffers! Scorn we fate!
Love like ours can never die!” . . .
Would 'twere so! Yet, sad to state,
Scorn we scoffers, scorn we fate,
Even we shall separate —
Matters not how loud we cry,
“Scorn we scoffers! Scorn we fate!
Love like ours can never die!”

TO A FRIEND

You laugh at me
Because I "take it so seriously."
"Cheer up, old man,"
You tell me,
"There are as good fish in the sea . . .
You remember
How I felt about Ethel. . . .
And there was Sylvia, too . . .
But one gets over it:
There's probably a new one
Waiting around the corner."

Maybe there is "a new one
Waiting around the corner."
At any rate,
I hope so.
But though I thank you for your interest,
I can't help thinking of you
As a barber,
Who is always welcoming a customer,
And at the same time
Calling "Next!"
To another.

LOVE SONG OF A YOUNG CYNIC

I know there isn't one of 'em who's true;
I know there isn't one who's worth the while.
Oh, I've been fooled by eyes of brown and blue,
And paid my tribute to a dimpled smile
Too long! I'm wise to every trick they know —
I'm proof against the darts that they may hurl.
But summertime is calling me, and so
I guess I'll go and get myself a girl.
The summertime is calling me — and so
I guess I'll go and get myself a girl.

They play the game, but never play it fair;
They poison every arrow that they use.
There's never one of 'em who's on the square;
So, win or not, a man is bound to lose.
I learned the truth about 'em long ago,
Since when a lot of things have come to pass.
But summertime is calling me, and so
I guess I'll go and land myself a lass.
The summertime is calling me — and so
I guess I'll go and land myself a lass.



OFFERING



OFFERING

Only my songs I bring to you —
 But songs that come from the heart of me.
No gold is mine to fling to you:
Only my songs I bring to you,
Songs that I always will sing to you
 While life and love are a part of me.
Only my songs I bring to you —
 But songs that come from the heart of me!

SONG

*I kissed my love in the morning, O,
And her lips were wondrous sweet.*

I have kissed my love in the month of June,
'Neath a starry sky and a smiling moon,
And I thought my joy complete.

*But I kissed my love in the morning, O,
And her lips were wondrous sweet.*

The kiss that brightened the livelong day,
And sent dull care and pain away.

*I kissed my love in the morning, O,
And her lips were wondrous sweet.*

TRIOLET

'Tis winter — ah, yes! — and I know it
 (But here in my heart it is Spring).
The snow and the wind seem to show it:
'Tis winter — ah, yes! — and I know it.
But what would you have of the poet
 Who feels that he cannot but sing?
'Tis winter — ah, yes! — and I know it:
 But here in my heart it is Spring!

WITH A SAPPHIRE TO HIS LOVE

I wondered what to give you as a token,
And, thinking earth
Held no such worth,
I looked above and saw the sapphire skies —
And then it seemed to me that God had spoken.

TO THE UNUSUAL HER, DEPARTING

Till you return,
The heart of me
Shall always yearn.
Till you return,
My soul shall learn
What aches there be —
Till you return
The heart of me!

THE HIGHER CRITICISM

It was a Saturday evening in July,
And I was in the poet's house
(By request) . . .
And the poet and I were talking of Life and its Mean-
ing. . . .
And watching the people that passed and re-passed in
the street below. . . .
And I felt that the crowds were thrilled with the joy of
Life,
And I said, "Let us go for a walk, and study the folk
that we meet,
For among them the meaning is hidden."
But the poet said, "First let me read you my
poem." . . .

It was a good poem — as poems go.
But it was a long poem
(It took him an hour, I think, to read it).
And, while he read,
A girl, passing fair, walked slowly by,
Looked up and smiled. The poet read on. . . .
A lover and his lass walked hand in hand,
Unmindful of the folk that saw and smiled . . .
A father, with a little one in his arms,

Bent down and kissed the flesh of his flesh
With the dear, fierce joy of fatherhood . . .
And then, somehow, I thought of Her . . .

The poet read on, but I heard nothing . . .
And I stared at the people in the street, but I saw them
not . . .

For I was thinking of Her

“Well,” said the poet, “what do you think of it?”
I started. . . . “The best thing you have ever done.”
And the poet blushed, and modestly added
He thought so, too.

FAITH

I have been wary, cynical and wise:

I have laughed hugely at the Scheme of Things —

The faith of peasants, and the fate of kings —

That was before I looked into your eyes.

LITERARY FOOTNOTES



LINES ON HEARING WALTER DE LA MARE
DELIVER A LECTURE

I like the verse you put across
So vaguely and mysteriously . . .
But I would like to ask, "Old Hoss,
Why take yourself so seriously?"

CLEARING IT UP

Why are the things that have no death
The ones with neither sight nor breath?
Eternity is thrust upon
A bit of earth, a senseless stone.
A grain of dust, a casual clod
Receives the greatest gift of God.
A pebble in the roadway lies —
It never dies.

The grass our fathers cut away
Is growing on their graves today;
The tiniest brooks that scarcely flow
Eternally will come and go.
There is no kind of death to kill
The sands that lie so meek and still. . . .
But man is great and strong and wise —
And so he dies.

—“Irony” by Louis Untermeyer.

Louis, I've listened to your shout
And — here's the way I dope it out:
The bit of earth, the senseless stone,
Do nothing that they dare not own.
The grain of dust (compare line five)
You say will always be alive
Has never told a single lie —
Why should it die?

The grass that grows so green to-day
Has always gone the righteous way.
The brook that flows eternally
Has never been upon a spree.
The sands, the hillside, and the dale
Have never told a naughty tale . . .
But Man! — he swears and drinks and smokes —
And so he croaks.

JANE

In the Manner of the "Others" School of Poetry.

I looked into her eyes —
And I said, "Look straight into mine!"—
But she could not —
She was cock-eyed!
Bah!
I hate cock-eyed people.

IF WORDSWORTH HAD BEEN IRVING BERLIN

*"When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils."*

— *Wordsworth.*

Honey, I been thinkin' just of you,
Hitchy Koo! Hitchy Koo! Hitchy Koo!
As I took a stroll, Tootsie Roll! Tootsie Roll!
Through Central Park for a lark,
Then —
All at once I saw — Lawdy me, I saw
A bunch of prancin', dancin', romancin' daffodils —
Boom! Boom!

CHORUS

O! O! That daffodil rag!
O Mag! Everybody's crazy, daffodil, daffodil.
They twinkle like the stars on the Milky Way,
They rag together in a silky sway
As they do — Hip! Hip! As they do — Hip! Hip!
As they do that daring, scaring, flaring, dippy, zippy
Daffodil Rag.



A HANDY INTERLINEAR



LINES ON READING HORACE: BOOK I, ODE 22

Written on being expelled from Columbia University for commenting editorially — and adversely — on Nicholas Murray Butler.

A bard of simple life and pure,
Who writes of Lalage — and others,
May go his way serene and sure
And gain the praises of his brothers.
But if he dare to write a wheeze
Against the well-known Powers That Be,
Does he still tread the Path of Ease?
. . . Well, look at *me!*

HORACE RAPS THE CO-EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Book I, Ode 8

“*Lydia, dic, per omnis —*”

Why, Lydia, where's all your college spirit!
If you have *got* to play the Theda Bara,
Pick out some guy who bats around .120 —
Sybaris is needed.

Syb used to have the speed of Walter Johnson —
That in of his had all the batters batty!
To-day, the subs got to him for three homers.
Oh, he was *rotten!*

He's getting fat — he doesn't run his hits out.
He doesn't even argue with the umpires!
There's something in the woodpile — and it isn't
A *colored* lady.

He's broken training — oh, I know — I've *seen* him:
Seen both of you come reeling out of Riker's.
It made me mad! — that big brute munching chocolates
And cooing at you.

He wasn't born to be a dancing-cootie!
Why don't you pick yourself a frantic fusser,

Some frat man who has lots of clever small-talk,
And *loads* of money?

We're playing Princeton on this coming Thursday.
You know how bad we want to trim the Tigers!
Well, we can do it, too — *if* Sybaris pitches.
. . . You know the answer.

HORACE THE WISE

Book I, Ode 5

"Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa —"

O, Pyrrha, tell me who's the guy,
The boob, the simp you've got a date with?
(Well I recall what time 'twas *I*
You'd tête-à-tête with!)

I saw him in the barber's chair:
His face perfumed with scented water,
And oil upon his shoes and hair —
Dressed for the slaughter!

I do not know this kid whose goat
You've got by saying you adore him.
But, take it from this famous pote,
I'm sorry for him!

The Fates deal kindly with the lad!
This crush of his — how he will rue it!
He'll call you everything that's Bad —
Ain't *I* been through it?

HORACE ANSWERS A FOOLISH QUESTION

Ad Leuconoen

Book I, Ode 11

"Tu ne quaesieris, scire nefas—"

Don't ask how long you have to live —

You'll die before you know it.

This little counsel let me give:

Don't ask how long you have to live;

It shows your mind is like a sieve —

Accept it from this poet.

Don't ask how long you have to live —

You'll die before you know it!

HORACE COMES OUT WITH IT

Ad Lydiam

Book I, Ode 13

"Cum tu, Lydia, Telephi—"

Lydia, I don't care a cuss
For the charms of Telephus!
He may have it on Apollo —
But his praises I shan't swallow.

When I come to call on you,
Won't some other topic do?
Can't we spill some conversation
On the Horace Situation?

What! he bit you in the neck!
He must be a nervous wreck!
Further, take it from this writer,
He's a bum and a backbiter!

Lydia, listen to my words:
Guys like them are fickle birds.
Life with them ain't half so quiet
As an Emma Goldman riot!

Triply happy is that wife
Whose beloved sticks for life!
Hate nor jealousy can reach her.
. . . . Lydia, shall I call the preacher?

HORACE PROVES HIMSELF A GOOD LOSER

Book I, Ode 19

"Mater saeve Cupidinum —"

I said to Love, "Get out — I'm wise!
I will not listen to your lies.
I've been a sucker long enough,
But now I know you're One Big Bluff.
You've fooled me once too often, damn you!
Get out — get out, before I slam you!
I'm through, you hear? I'm through — Good Night!"
. . . Love said, "A' right, a' right, a' right!"

So I was free a little while —
Till Glycera slipped me a smile.
But now my nerves are on the blink —
Last night I couldn't sleep a wink!
I've got some sonnets to indite,
A lot of articles to write —
But though I try, it's all in vain —
For I've got Glycera on the brain!

Well, here's to make the best of it:
I will not sulk the littlest bit.
I'll go to Love and ask his pardon;
I'll blow him to some nice roof-garden.

He'll have the best that wealth can buy,
While I shall dine on humble pie.
And he'll concede, when he has eaten,
I'm a good sport when I am beaten.

HORACE MORALIZES

Book I, Ode 22

"Integer vitæ scelerisque purus —"

Fuscus, the free-and-easy life
Is, generally speaking, cheesy.
But, if you're free from crime and strife —
The rest is easy.

The man who shuns the Primrose Path
Knows that no boor nor gun can bore him.
He doesn't fear Olympian wrath —
The gods are for him.

I walked the Sabine wood one day
Totally unprepared for danger,
And met a wolf upon the way —
A perfect stranger.

I had no gun; I had no gang.
But was I frightened? Nope! The merest
Glance I bestowed on him — and sang
About my dearest.

He beat it back into the woods,
Saying, "Excuse me, please, your Honor." . . .

But had I dealt in stolen goods,
I'd been a goner.

Place me where Peary found the pole,
Or let the desert sun inflame me:
Still Lalage shall claim my soul —
And can you blame me?

INTEGER VITTLES: THE WOLF SPEAKS

I'm breezin' through the woods one day —
And, gee! but I was hungry, Mawruss —
And spies a little up the way
This poet Horace.

"Ah-ha!" says I. "Here's where I feed."
I hid behind a tree and waited.
This Horace guy don't show no speed —
He's easy-gaited.

But then at last he passes by —
I'm poised, you understand, for springin'—
And then he turns and gets my eye
And starts in singin'.

That saved his life, take it from me —
Consarn the thought that made him do so!
His verses may be good, but *he*
Is no Caruso.

You know the way a barker speaks?
The way that cats at night start yellin'?
You know the way a huskster shrieks
His "Wat-er-melon!"?

Well, that's the way this Horace sung —
Thinks I, "Here's food that I had best shun."
The way those lyric notes were strung
Caused indigestion.

Let Horace, if he will, rejoice
Because his virtue made me fear him.
As long as he retains that voice
I'll not come near him.

HORACE DELIVERS A MONEY-LOG

Book II, Ode 2

"Nullus argento color est avaris—"

Sallust, listen while I sing:

After all, what's gold amount to?

Money isn't everything —

Though you've more than you can count to.

Proculeius will be known

For his disposition sunny,

Even if he doesn't own

Such an awful lot of money.

Blesséd he who doesn't aim

To be wealthy as a waiter!

He shall have a spotless name —

Is there anything that's greater?

Eating, drinking all the day

Is a recipe for dropsy.

There's the deuce — and bills — to pay

When the liver's tipsy-topsy.

Phraates now holds the job

That was held before by Cyrus.

Is he popular as Cobb —
Irvin S., Corn-on-, or Tyrus?

Nix! The boob has got his eyes
On the money it will net him.
But the Common Folk are wise —
They and Fame will both forget him.

HORACE PROPOSES

Book I, Ode 23

"Vitas hinnuleo me similis, Chloë —"

Come, Chloë, why are you so shy?
Why do you blush when you behold me?
And if I talk of love! — you balk
And even scold me.

That such a maid should be afraid
To grant a kiss — and almost twenty!
Come, marry me, and I shall see
That you get plenty.

HORACE JOINS THE PROHIBITIONISTS

Ad Puerum

Book I, Ode 38

"Persicos odi, puer, apparatus —"

Go! take away that Persian stuff —
I'll stick to Roman candles.
I guess I've had about enough.
Go! take away that Persian stuff —
I care not for their silken fluff,
Their gay life and their scandals.
Go! take away that Persian stuff —
I'll stick to Roman candles.

PERSICOS ODI: ANOTHER VERSION

The Persian pomp I *do* detest —
Those guys ask nothing but the best.
 Democracy is not *their* line:
 They only drink imported wine —
They wouldn't even smell the rest.

They know the way to treat a guest.
So much must really be confessed —
 But yet, somehow, I must decline
 The Persian pomp.

In roast beef rare there is more zest
Than caviar. A bird who's dressed
 In evening clothes may be a shine.
 Yep! Make it ham and eggs for mine!
No frills, there, waiter. It's a pest,
 The Persian pomp!

HORACE DELIVERS A LECTURE

Book III, Ode 15
“*Uxor pauperis Ibyci*—”

Chloris, cut the cabaret;
Drop the dance and stop the song:
Shun the lights of Old Broadway —
Home's the place where you belong!
Home is where a woman's place is —
After she has lost her graces.

Yes, your daughter's rather gay —
But that's no excuse for *you*.
Don't forget you had your day —
But, old lady, now you're through!
You're a pretty agéd dame —
Ain't you got no sense of shame?

When a woman's fifty-four
It is time she settled down.
She should roam around no more,
Cutting up all over town.
'Stead of joining the carousers,
Mend your ways — and hubby's trousers!

THE DEMOCRACY OF DEATH

Dedicated to Dr. Berthold A. Baer

(Rondeau Redoublé)

Horace: Book II, Ode 3

"Aequam memento rebus in arduis —"

*You've got to go across the Styx
When Charon calls out "All aboard!"
Although you own a Super Six —
Although you can't afford a Ford.*

Death is the Ultimate Reward
For City Folks and Country Hicks;
And, though it's much to be deplored,
You've got to go across the Styx.

So what's the use of kicking? Kicks,
You know, are sure to be ignored:
You can't escape by any tricks
When Charon calls out, "All aboard!"

Suppose you've saved a little hoard —
It will not save you from your fix.
For Death refuses to be floored
Although you own a Super Six.

Life is a game in which Death picks:
Riches may not avert the sword —
Nor poverty — you can't say "Nix!"
Although you can't afford a Ford.

So bring the wine and have it poured!
For — darn the metaphors we mix! —
No one but hears the fatal chord,
And, when your Final Second ticks,
You've got to go!

CANNY CATULLUS

Ode 70

Myrtilia swears that I'm the chappy
She loves the bestest in the land.
That *sine me** she won't be happy.
(*You understand?)

Not Johnny D., that wealthy sinner,
Nor any other guy of note —
Not even Jove himself could win her
From this here pote.

She says so — BUT — the hurt of it! —
The vows of her whom I so prize
On wind in water should be writ —
In short, she lies!

CAPSULE CLASSICS



I

CAESAR'S "DE BELLO GALLICO"

Well, Rome really needed the money;
And, further, the Gauls got too funny.
So we sent out our legions
To conquer those regions.
J. Caesar? Yep, he was there, sonny.

II

CICERO: IN CATILINAM I

Say, kiddo, we know what you're after,
You dastardly Tammany grafter!
Get out of this city
The while we have pity —
Or else we will smother your laughter!

III

GRAY'S "ELEGY"

We're fools if ambition can fret us.
If we would live happily, let us
 Cease all our worrying,
 Hurrying, scurrying —
Death in the end's sure to get us.

INCLUDING THE MISCELLANEOUS



TRIOLET ON INFORMALITY

In ragged togs and tattered,
 Let's laugh and dance and shout!
In dusty shoes and battered,
In ragged togs and tattered —
As though the clothing mattered!
 Let's cut the full dress out:
In ragged togs and tattered
 Let's laugh and dance and shout.

APPEARANCES

To look at me, you would not guess
I had the girlies on the go;
That sixty sirens — more or less —
Would wade for me through fire and snow;
That I get letters every day
Addressed, “My dear,” “My one and only”;
Instead, it’s ten to one you’d say
That I was lonely.

To look at me, you would not think
That I had broken up a home;
That I drove one poor girl to drink
And forced another one to roam.
You’d introduce me to your dame
Without a doubt upon your mind,
And think, “The girl that wants *his* name
Is surely blind.”

In short, I am not one who looks
As though he had the girlies crazy.
You’d think I’d never get my hooks
On any frail you’d call a daisy.

Off-hand, now, tell me, would you *dream*
I go a-calling every night?

* * *

Well, things are *sometimes* what they seem:
Your guess is right.

APRIL

April, it's to you I lift my praises,
And it seems to me that I have reason:
Month of many moods and many phases,
Don't you usher in the baseball season?
Further, month that is now sad, now merry,
How I longed for you in January!

April, they say you're a gay deceiver;
Claim you give us too much rainy weather;
Say that you're the cause of "that spring fever"—
But you bring the Giants and Cubs together!
Also, month of April, I might hint
That my odes to you get into print.

April, for the reasons that I've noted
And one other that I soon will mention,
To you, April darling, I'm devoted—
April, may I have your kind attention?
Sweetest month of all, you give a fella
Hopes of swiping somebody's umbrella!

TRIOLET

All I asked was her hand —
 But she added her heart.
Did she then understand
All I asked was her *hand*?
For she said, “*You* command
 Until death do us part!”
All I asked was her hand —
 But she added her heart!

REGARDING A SENSE OF HUMOR

A sense of humor is all right
In its place. . .

The Most Wonderful Girl
And I
Were dining at the Dutch Oven
(The Most Wonderful Girl
Comes from Texas,
And she had never been to the Oven before).
And she waited in vain for the appearance
Of a Windsor Tie.
But she *did* see Soft Collars,
And Tortoise-Shell Glasses
Other than mine.
And I pointed out Max Eastman to her,
And Walter Frankl of the Washington Square Players;
And the meal was a good meal. . . .

So the Most Wonderful Girl was very happy,

Almost as happy as I was
Because I was sitting opposite her.

And the Most Wonderful Girl
Said, "I thought everybody talked to everybody else
here,"

And I answered,
"If any man talks to you here,
He does it over my dead body!"

There is such a thing as being Too Radical. . . .

The Most Wonderful Girl laughed,
And said, "But there *ought* to be a place like that!
Let's start one."

And we grew merry discussing our plans
For a *real* Bohemian restaurant. . . .

One man sat at a corner table,
Alone,
And the Most Wonderful Girl said,
"Look at him, Morrie.
We're *so* happy here,
And he's all alone;
Can't we ask him to sit with us?"
And a great lump rose in my throat,
Because no one but the Most Wonderful Girl would have
thought of that.

Just then some one sat down with the man at the corner
table,
And he missed knowing the Most Wonderful Girl. . . .
But I didn't care about *him*;
I was thinking of the Most Wonderful Girl,
And how wonderful she was. . . .

Over our coffee, she asked for the poem
I had promised to show her . . .

I had written her a love song,
In rather a breezy, light-hearted vein,
But I meant every word of it . . .
So I passed her the poem,
With my heart in my throat as she read it. . . .

At first she laughed,
And I grew furious
Because she wouldn't take me seriously.

Then over her face there passed a quizzical look,
And she grew pensive
While I waited for my answer.
She leaned over and said,
"Morrie."
"Yes," I said hoarsely.
"Tell me," she said,
"Isn't this trochaic tetrameter?"

A sense of humor is all right —
In its place.

April, 1916.

CREED

Whatever the Soul in me will, so be it the Mind in me
can,
I shall write — but always and ever the theme of my
songs shall be Man.

WHICH MAINTAINS THAT SPEECH MAY BE
GOLDEN

There is,
As old Ed Masters has pointed out,
In vers libre fully as rhythmical as this,
Though not quite so clever
(E. g., the next line),
Something to be said for silence.
For certain crises,
Silence is the Correct Thing.
But for Life's Greatest Moments,
The tongue finds utterance.

When Her letter came,
The letter that meant everything to me,
It contained the one word,
"Love,"
And I could not speak.
A lump came to my throat,
And tears to my eyes,
But no words to my lips.

So, too, when at the Polo Grounds
While the Giants were breaking the record for consecu-
tive wins,

A rainbow appeared in the sky
With all the regulation colors,
My heart broke the world's record for leaping up,
Though I said nothing. . . .

But the moment after,
When Fletcher made a miraculous stop of a scorcher,
And caught the runner at the plate,
I found my tongue
And uttered two words pregnant with meaning,
" Oh, boy! "

Sept. 1916.

BALLADE OF IMMODESTY

Sing me not Marlowe's praise;
Nor say that Chaucer's fine;
Why quote from Shakespeare's plays
When newer stars now shine?
Old words, unlike old wine,
Grow stale and lose their tone.
To use them *I* decline:
I like to quote my own.

Why go back to the days
Burns labeled "Auld Lang Syne"?
Why quote Bob Herrick's lays
About his Valentine?
Why not quote one of mine?
For, though I stand alone
(Like William Jennings Bry'n),
I like to quote *my own*.

There are some sixty ways
(*In toto*, sixty-nine)
Of polishing a phrase,
Of jewelng a line.
Some rave of Gertrude Stein;
While some like Georgie Coh'n;

Yet, as you may divine,
I like to quote my own.

L'ENVOI

Friends, come with me to dine,
But be prepared to groan,
To languish and repine:
I like to quote my own.

FIAT JUSTITIA

*The God of Things-As-They-Are, He maketh man from
dust,
And He smiles as He works away — for the God of Gods
is just.*

A man there lived, and he sang. And his songs were
praise of the Lord:
He praised His truth and His wisdom — and he warned
of His righteous sword.

And he counselled men to turn them away from the
things of earth,
And to open their hearts to penance — and to cast from
them folly and mirth.

But still his fellows followed the road that their hearts
had made,
And frolicked with Laughter and Love — and sweet was
the game they played.

So, seeing his efforts were fruitless, he made him a her-
mit's den,
And gave up his life to God — far, far from the haunts
of men.

And so, when the good man passed, no mortal tear was
shed;
For men had forgotten he lived — and how should they
know he was dead?

But the God of Things-As-They-Are — Who maketh man
from dust —
He smiled in a whimsical way — for the God of Gods
is just.

And He spake: “This man hath followed the blessed
ways of the Lord,
Believing in Heaven and Glory. Lo, he shall have his
reward!”

And He gave him a harp to play on, and He added a
pair of wings,
And now, as on earth, so in Heaven, the praise of the
Lord he sings.

*The God of Things-As-They-Are, He maketh man from
dust,
And He smiles as He works away — for the God of Gods
is just.*

A man there lived, and he sang. And Man was the
theme of his song;
He sang of his fights and his loves; of the deeds of the
weak and the strong.

And he told the truth as he saw it of the ways his fel-
lows trod,
And pinned his faith to the hearts of men — and denied
his God.

And gladly his fellows listened, whenever a tale he'd tell
Of Man in his might and his glory, who feared neither
Heaven nor Hell,

And, being void of all fear, whose heart was free from
hate,
With only contempt for the craven who bowed to the
whims of Fate.

And gladly his fellows listened whenever a tale he told
Of the way of a man with a maiden, the tale that shall
never grow old.

And as the tale that shall never grow old was the teller
thereof,
For Time had destroyed not his faith, nor his songs, nor
his fellowmen's love.

But Time, though it hurts not the soul, the body is ever
its prey,
And when his eightieth year was come, it took his body
away.

And the God of Things-As-They-Are, Who maketh man
from dust,

He smiled in a whimsical way, for the God of Gods is
just.

And He spake: "The Glory of Heaven this man hath
ever denied.

He hath sung of the ways of the earth — on earth shall
his soul reside."

And he hath no harp to play on, nor hath he a pair of
wings,

But his soul lives on forever in the lyrics man still sings.

*The God of Things-As-They-Are, He maketh man from
dust,*

*And He smiles as He works away — for the God of Gods
is just.*

LIFE

The sun shines brightly this fair day;
The birds sing lyrics to the skies.
A hound who hears them starts to bay —
Frightened, two horses run away —
And so a statesman dies.

And Fate, whose hand it is that rules,
Who ends Life — as she does begin it —
Sharpens anew her merry tools. . . .
And O! she laughs at all the fools
Who read a meaning in it.

HAPPY THOUGHT FOR SOME STRUGGLING
NATION

Though the privates may never return
To the hearths and the homes that were theirs,
Since the dukes and the viscounts are safe,
Need we burden the Lord with our prayers?

THE GLADIATORS

The blood of peasants is not red
A hundred miles away.

— *Alfred Noyes.*

Said the bold and daring Kaiser to the stalwart Russian
Czar,

“ You must learn your proper station. *I* will teach you
who you are.”

*So he ordered all his troops out and he sent them to the
front.*

That's the way the fearless Prussian would accomplish
that there stunt.

Spoke the stalwart Russian Czar then to the dauntless
Prussian King,

“ Who's afraid of *you*, Herr Wilhelm? You will not do
no such thing! ”

And to show the Hohenzollern that he didn't give a hang,
*Ordered out five million soldiers for to lick that German
gang.*

August 24, 1914.

AN AVIATOR'S WAR
GARDEN OF VERSES

*With What Apologies
Are Necessary*



I

A THOUGHT

It doesn't seem exactly right
To kill small children in the night.
But German airmen on a raid
Don't act like Christians, I'm afraid.

II

WHOLE DUTY OF AIRPLANES

An airplane's duty is to do
Just what its pilot wants it to,
And keep its e-qui-lib-ri-um:
Or it will go to Kingdom Come.

III

HAPPY THOUGHT

The world is so full of a number of planes,
We'll soon ride in airships instead of in trains.

IV

UNHAPPY THOUGHT

The world is so full of a number of Germans,
Bombarding them's better than sending them sermons.

V

SYSTEM

Every night my prayers I say
That I may live another day;
And every day that it is fair
I go a-flying through the air.

The man who doesn't land a Zep
Is certainly devoid of pep.
He is a pacifist, I'm sure —
Or else his aim is very poor.

VI

LOOKING FORWARD

When I have learned to sail my plane,
I'll fly to France — and back again.
I'll fly all over land and sea,
And people will look up to me.

VII

TIME TO *RISE*

A birdie perched upon a tree
Hopped into the seat with me,
Cocked his shining eye and cried,
"Take me with you for a ride?"

VIII

FOREIGN LANDS

Up into the big blue sky
With my little plane I fly.
I hold the wheel with both my hands
And travel over foreign lands.

IX

THE PLANES

The planes are flying all around,
They fly o'er land and sea.
And Uncle Sam is sending some
To fly to German-ee.

Oct. 1917.

IN MEMORIAM: JAMES SAUNDERS O'NEALE, JR.

Wounded in action, August 27, 1918; died October 2, 1918.

There were so many battles to be won;
So many joys and sorrows to discover;
And we had need of you, O laughing lover
Of Life, to do the things that must be done—

We could not think that Death would claim you yet:
We were so careless of his constant warning—
Oh, he would come, but this was Life's gay morning!
And we forgot the thrust behind the threat.

Now we must be content with memories—
But, oh, a precious heritage is ours:
Your laughter, vivid as an April breeze;
Your tenderness, quiet as April showers;
Your friendship, firm as earth; and, more than these,
Your courage, radiant as grass and flowers.

THE ROGUE'S GALLERY SEAT



THE THEATRE: A THEME WITH VARIATIONS

The Theme: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players."—Shakespeare.

I

As Old Walt Mason, who doesn't get paid by the line, might chortle it:

We must agree, it seems to me, that all the world's a stage. The spotlight calls and each one falls, no matter what his age. Some ginks there are who think to star, although they're shy the goods; they soon will find the world's not blind — they'll go back to the woods! Oh, any loon can exit soon — it takes a man to stay! If you won't quit, you'll make a hit, no matter what you play. Oh, no one starts in leading parts, but any man who works will find his name achieving fame — but woe to him who shirks! So play it fair; be on the square — don't trifle with your morals. The villain guy is bound to die; the hero lands the laurels. Oh, it's a great old game of Fate, this show we all are playing; and I and you both get our due, and that there's no gainsaying. So let us then act like real men and proudly we can sing with Avon's Bard, "Although it's hard — hail ho! — the play's the thing."

II

Old Walt Whitman plucks some "Leaves of Grass," à la Hughie Jennings, and "Chants Democratically" as follows:

O shows! O theatres!
O actors legitimate, actresses illegitimate, motion picture
stars, and Theda Bara!
O critics and criticasters! O Alan Dale, George Bernard
Shaw and George Jean Nathan!
O American flag floating proudly in the breeze, Some-
where in France, and in Geomcohan's early plays!
O Heaven! O Hell! O Tempora and O Mores! O
Boy!
Hail, camerado! Star, character man, heavy, or co-
median!
Hail, sister! Leading lady, ingénue, soubrette or chorus
man!
I, Walt Whitman, salute you!
For we are all actors,
And all the world is a stage!
Yes, New York, Chicago, Baltimore, Kankakee, Berlin,
Paris, Petrograd, Yonkers, Providence, and other one-
night stands —
All the world is a stage!

III

Hughie Fullerton proves his point by some irrelevant, incompetent, but mathematical testimony:

I have witnessed 22,097 shows in 8,043½¹ theatres. In these shows, 376,650 actors, slightly more than the population of Providence, R. I., have taken part. There have been present on these occasions 2,462,843 persons, more than twice the number of readers of Dr. Berthold A. Baer. Taking the average family as numbering about five and making all due allowance for the number of married people who are compelled to attend the theatre together, it is evident that 9,043,628 persons, more than the population of New York, Yonkers and several points north, have been directly or indirectly interested in the theatre.

These are the experiences of but one man. If we make note of the numerous matinées I have been compelled to miss because of the baseball season, it is clear that 968,876,543 individuals of all sizes, shapes, and colors are in some fashion connected with the drama. Or, in short, if *all* the world is not a stage, we are indubitably justified in assuming that a considerable portion of it is.

(Watch for Mr. Fullerton's article on "Burlesque Show Figures," an interesting statistical compilation of especial interest to the Tired Business Man.)

¹ Little theatres count as ½ in these figures.

IV

Robert Louis Stevenson squats nonchalantly on a dead man's chest and quotes from a "Child's Winter Garden of Verses":

HAPPY THOUGHT

The world is so full of a number of shows,
We all should be jolly enough, goodness knows!

V

As Irving Berlin might have tampered with it in his early days:

A sweet little girl, with a dear little curl,
Climbed up on her daddy's knee.
Daddy stole a sweet kiss from the cute little miss,
And said, "Come, tell your troubles to me."
Jenny sighed and said, "Pa, could you make me a star?
On the stage I am longing to go."
Daddy kissed his dear child as she winsomely smiled,
And then he whispered low:

CHORUS

"All of the world is a stage, my dear,
And actors alone are not stars.
We must all play our parts in this age, my dear;
Some play tragedy, others play farce.
Some are the leaders the spotlight is for,
Others are birds in a cage
Who are breaking their hearts — but we all have our
parts,
*(The final line is considerably higher than the costof-
living)*
For all of the world is a sta-a-a-a-a-age!"

VI

Joseph R. Kipling, retaining all royalty rights, psychoanalyses the female of the species:

I've travelled around with the ladies,
And, take it from one in the know,
There's never a girl or a woman
But is eager to join a show.
Waitress or barmaid or servant,
Spinster or widow or wife,
They think — maugre their age — they were born for the
stage,
And the lot of an actress's life.

When they are frying the bacon,
When they are kneading the dough,
It's shillings to peanuts¹ they're thinking
How good they would be in a show.
When it comes to ambitions that stick,
They all have the self-same schemes;
Both the Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady
Play Juliet in their dreams.

¹ *Editor's note to printer:* If exchange situation does not clear up, make this read "It's peanuts to shillings."

THE TANGWAY TO FORTUNE

She had nothing to wear —
So she went on the stage.
I have heard people swear
She had *nothing* to wear
When she sang "I Don't Care!"
And became all the rage.
She had nothing to wear —
So she went on the stage.

TO DOROTHY BEATRICE NICHOLS

On making her stage début in "The Happy Ending."

Dot, do you remember all the dreams we used to weave,
Fairy dreams and airy dreams, spun o' Make-Believe?

You would be an actress and would set the world afire;
I would be a poet, and the world should praise my lyre.

Cynical we were — how we used to mock the scheme o'
things!

Cynical and wary — but how we used to dream o' things!

How we used to laugh at the people who had "mis-
sions"!

How we mocked each other and clung to our ambitions!

Mocked each other's struggles — and urged each other
fight —

Jeered at all the Moral Codes — and wondered which
was Right.

Jeered at all the Moral Codes — called believers fools;
Said the Game was rotten — and followed all its rules.

Earnest were we when we held the Game up to derision,
Meant it, every sneering word — and yet we kept our
vision.

So, to-night, you hit the trail — the trail that leads to
where?

Does it lead to Happiness — or ends it in Despair?

Wheresoever it may lead, only Fortune knows,
But — the Gods of Chance be praised! — it's the road
you chose.

Long the path and difficult — but with the gods attend-
ing,

May you finish as you start, with THE HAPPY ENDING.

August 21, 1916.

LINA CAVALIERI

Crash, cymbals, crash! Sound, concertina!
Uke, ukeleles! Organs, grind!
Let's get together and tell Lina
What's on my mind.

You do not understand? Oh, let me
Admit my meaning wasn't plain.
But Lina isn't either! Get me?
She's on my brain.

She's got me dizzy, dazzled, dippy!
She's got me roped and thrown and tied!
Fate, serve me with a girl as zippy
To be my bride!

GEORGE M. COHAN

A real live man
Is George Co-*han*,
Who's known from Maine to Far Japan.
A rollicking
And frolicking
But never alcoholic King!
Who's written many a well-known air
Sung over here and "Over There."

DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS

Five smashing, dashing, crashing reels
With Douglas Fairbanks as the hero;
A girl whose winsomeness appeals;
A villain who is worse than Nero.

Take these and mix them thoroughly
(Doug's always ready for a mix-up)
And scatter them o'er land and sea —
But you can't break what Doug can't fix up!

You ought to see how Douglas climbs!
Some acrobat? You said a face full!
Unlike these somewhat labored rhymes,
His manner's easy, lithe, and graceful.

He climbs up roofs; he climbs up trees;
He climbs in any sort of climate;
He climbs upon his hands and knees;
He climbs so well that I can't rhyme it!

He gets the villain — and his goat —
He also gets the girl he's after;
Besides, he gets the People's Vote
Because his middle name is Laughter.

He puts the jinx upon the blues
And is the public's benefactor —
Which is the reason why they choose
Him as their favorite movie actor.

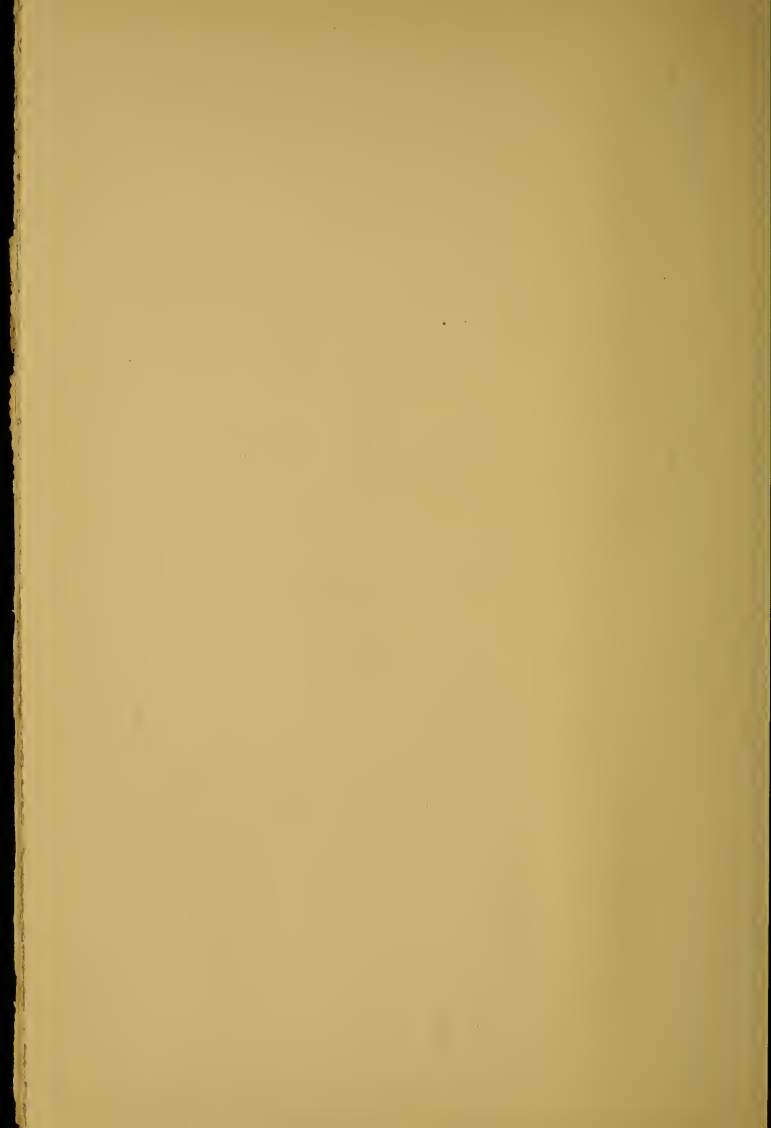
BILL HART

What time he roams the well-known plains
And makes a living robbing trains
Until some female vamps his Hart,
He holds us with his — call it “art.”

And yet we'd have you understand
That Bill's not limited to land.
We've seen him play a husky sailor
Aboard a North Pacific whaler.

*Oh, put him on the land or sea —
But show the five-reel film to me!*

AROUND OUR STUDIO



I

THE DIRECTOR

Directors, so it seems to me,
Are just as grand as they can be!
They never talk in quiet tones —
You see, they all use megaphones.

They know what's what; they know who's who;
They tell the stars just what to do!
And when they talk, the stars are mute! . . .
They tell the camera when to shoot.

They're fond of laying down the law,
And, oh! the salaries they draw!
I'll say they lead a grand existence. . . .
The work is done by their assistants.

II

THE STAR: FEMALE OF THE SPECIES

It's terrible to be a star —
Some of them only have one car!
And where's the woman could take pride in
Her work with but one car to ride in?

Each morning at the stroke of ten
They 'phone that they'll be late again.
They make the studio by two
And work an hour before they're through.

So don't you think it's better far
To be a salesgirl than a star
Who gives her life to art for merely
A paltry half-a-million yearly?

III

THE STAR: MALE OF THE SPECIES

Two hundred perfumed notes a day
He gets — I speak of Wally Ray;
And though the weather's down to zero,
These notes bring warmth unto our hero.

He holds the female population
Completely under subjugation;
They *love* his pictures on the screen,
And clip 'em from this ¹ magazine.

He's married — happily, they say.
But still they hope — do Sue and May. . . .
Oh, would *I* had a handsome chin
That showed a dimple when I'd grin!

¹ Photoplay.

IV

THE CAMERA MAN

And now, dear friends, come let us thank
The camera man who turns the crank;
Who gives us close-ups, and whose soul
Meets unafraid the dual rôle.

If incomplete the picture drama
Without a city panorama,
He hops into an airplane and
Takes photographs to beat the band.

He never boasts, but I, for one,
Say *he's* the Man behind the Gun.
And that's a fact there's no disputing:
For doesn't he do all the shooting?

V

THE STUDIO CHILD

Though I am young, I work each day;
I'm seen in every picture play.
My parts, like me, are rather small;
Sometimes I grin, sometimes I bawl.

I am the heroine, aged three;
The leading man, at two — that's me!
Sex doesn't bother me at all;
They say it doesn't when you're small.

But though I only have a bit,
You bet I make the most of it!
Although the plot makes people hoot,
They always say *my* work is cute.

VI

THE INGÉNUÉ

Behold our little ingénue
With golden hair and eyes of blue.
She's pretty, charming, dear and cute —
Or, if you'd rather, she's a beaut!

She is the hero's leading lady,
Is Maude (whose parents named her Sadie);
And in the fifth and final reel
Their clinches make the "heart appeal."

Maude seems so young . . . and yet they say
That she was not born yesterday.
I looked it up — and it is true:
She has a daughter, twenty-two.

VII

THE VAMPIRE

Here's she whose sacrifice to Art
Has left her with a broken heart;
Though she is known from Maine to Cal.,
It's as a "downright wicked gal".

She may not drop a single tear,
But always wears a baneful sneer;
She hypnotizes every male,
And sends the boob to death — or jail.

While others know what joy and bliss is,
She only draws the people's hisses. . . .
Yet would you not draw hisses gaily
If you drew ninety dollars daily?

VIII

"PROPS"

His name is never on the screen
(Which he regards as rather mean),
And yet without his help, I'll bet
The picture would not boast a set.

Without his necessary work,
Alas! Miss Billie could not Burke;
Without him, Charlie could not Ray;
Without him, Doris could not May.

Unsung, unhonored and unknown,
He may not climb to screendom's throne. . . .
Yet drop no tear upon these pages
For him; he draws the union wages.

IX

THE STUDIO DOG

He doesn't see the sense of it,
The how or why or whence of it.

But heartache — he has none of it,
And his is all the fun of it.

The pleasure of the chase he gets,
And cares not for the space he gets.
He doesn't scan the papers, O!
For records of his capers, O!

In danger he's heroical;
His attitude is stoical:
Let others draw the salaries —
His pictures fill the galleries!

X

THE CASTING DIRECTOR

He's very popular, is he,
With all the movie coterie.
In fact, he is more pop-u-lar
Than even any movie star.

The greetings that he gets are hearty;
He's asked to every single party.
They tell him stories to delight him,
And never, never, never slight him.

They cast their bread — you get my meaning —
And he casts them — that is, for screening.
Time was the movies had no caste —
But that day, as you see, is past.

XI

THE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

He makes most intricate designs
And worries over curves and lines.
And while the supers roll the bones,
He's puzzling out the shades and tones.

If there's a trap-door that they need,
They call on him for double speed.
What hats they wore in '94 —
He knows all that and much, much more.

He works so hard on every fillim,
His tasks, I fear, will some day kill him . . .
And when the picture's done and ended,
The people say, "The *star* is splendid!"

XII

THE PRESS AGENT

A man of superhuman knowledge,
With six degrees from every college;
Who knows the stars well, and can speak
Of them in Latin and in Greek.

He tells the world about the stars —
Some day he hopes to send to Mars
A piece of real important news:
Some star has bought herself new shoes.

He never, honest-hope-to-die,
(Take this from him) concocts a lie.
Yet there are times, I've heard it stated,
When he has — well — exaggerated.

ASK ANY AUTHOR

When I write a song with a ring to it —

With a lively dash and a swing to it,

Or a musical line full of babbling and rippling,

My friends will say with a cheering smile

That they knew I could do it all the while —

“It’s great, boy, we swear — it reminds us of Kipling!”

And often when I am in pensive mood,

And think how wondrous strange the scheme of things,

And ponder o’er the mysteries of life,

And blindly guess at that which lies behind,

Then strange thoughts come to mind, unto the which

I give expression in this heavy verse.

And friends, what time they read the same, will say:

“’Tis good. Methinks it has some Shakespeare in’t.”

But when I write a meaningless line

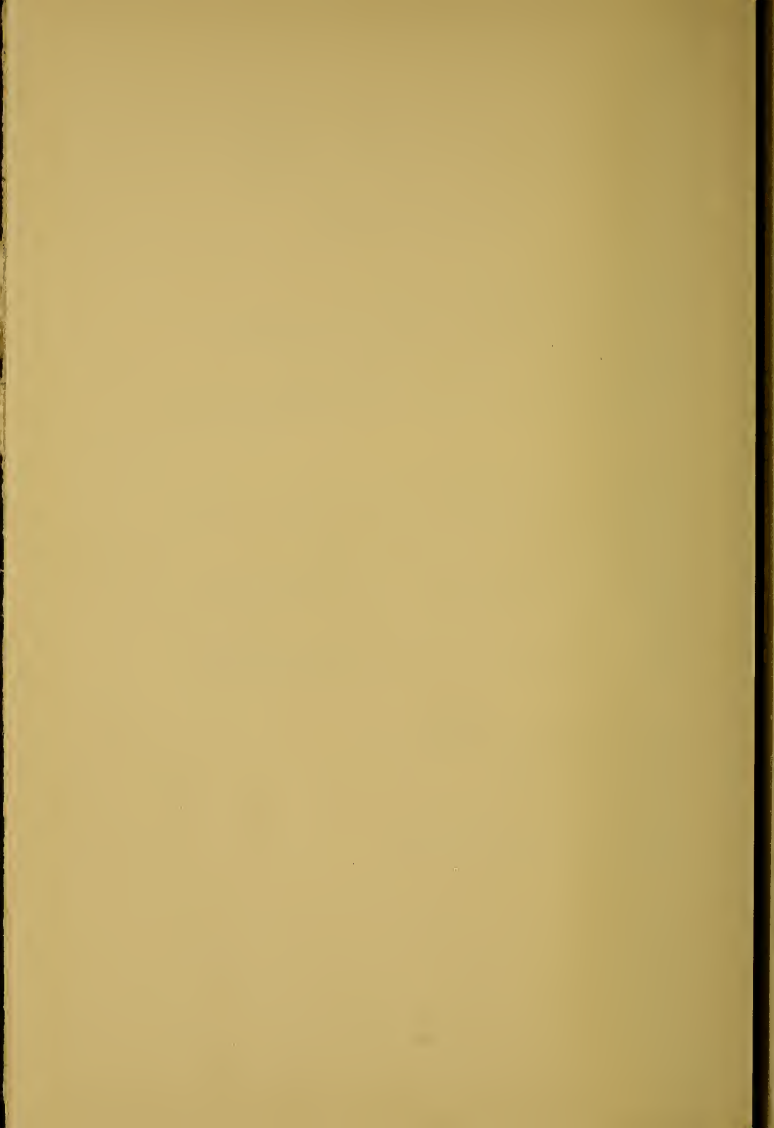
Or two, with a fearful rhyme,

And the meter halts,

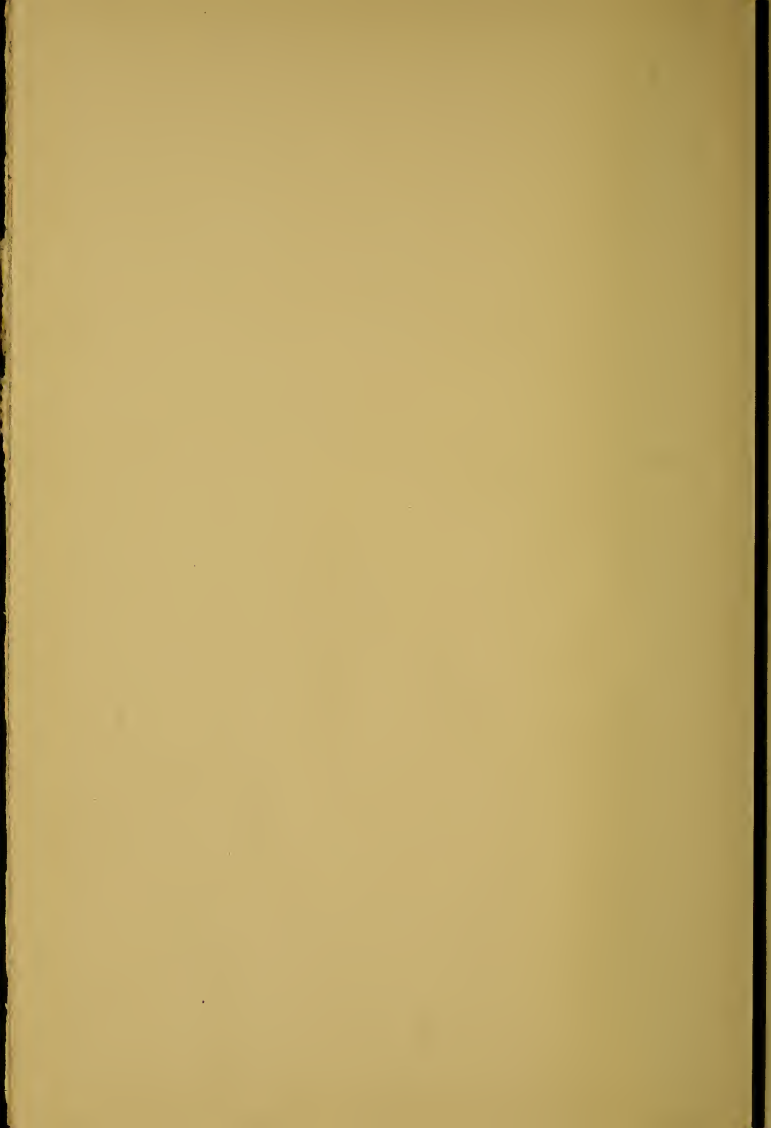
And there are a couple of other faults,

My friends will sneer and say:

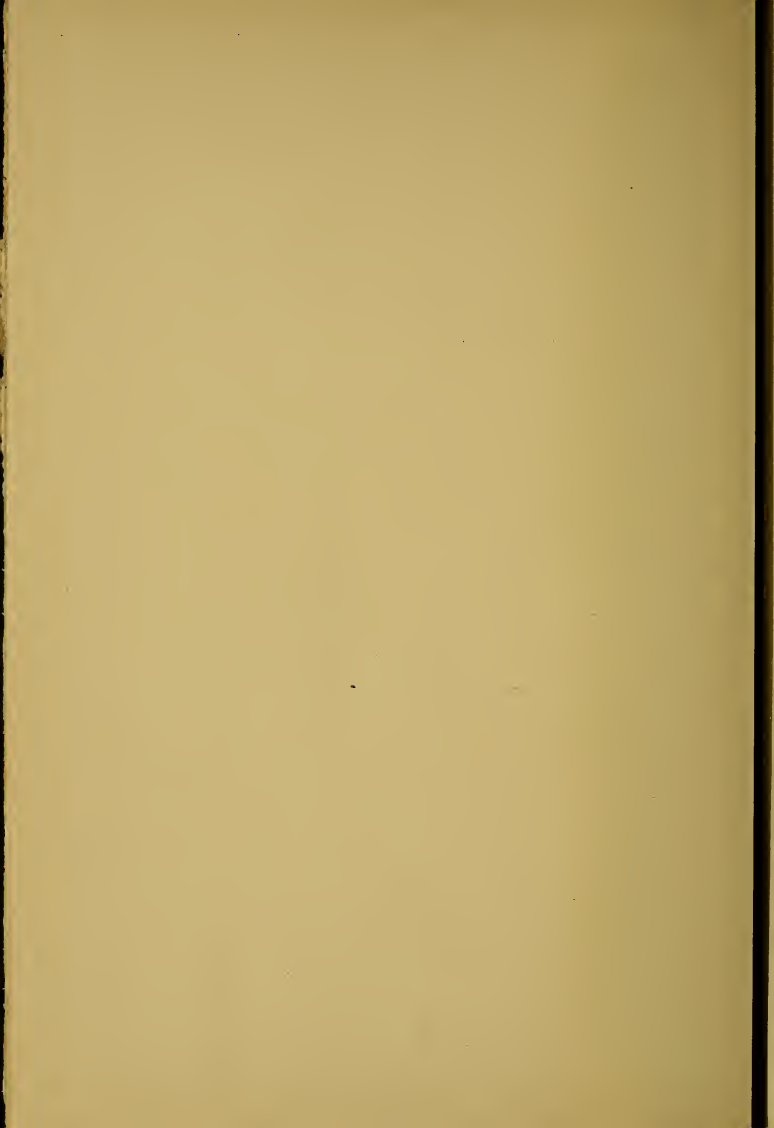
“Huh! That sounds like *you!*”

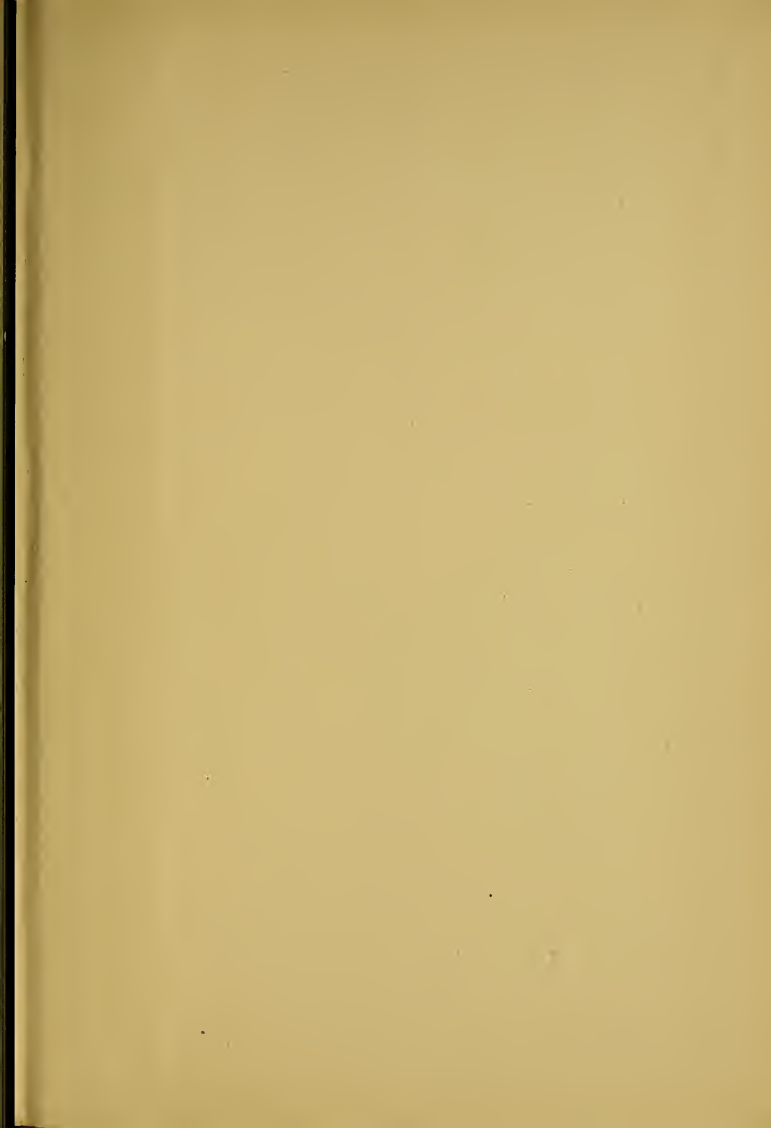




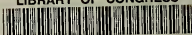








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