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Other People's Wings

T. W. H. Crosland

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Other People's Wings

First Issue (in loose wrapper), July 1899.

Second Issue (in stiffened cover), September 1899.

Certain of the following pieces have appeared in the 'OUTLOOK,' the 'ACADEMY,' and the 'PALL MALL GAZETTE.' The writer's acknowledgments are due to the Editors of those journals.

Other People's Wings

Parodies and Occasional Verses

By T. W. H. Crosland,

Author of Literary Parables.

London :

At the Sign of The Unicorn,

vii Cecil Court, W.C., MDCCCXCIX.

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MINOR.

(With acknowledgments to Mr. Rudyard Kipling.)

I WENT into a publisher's as woeful as a
 hearse,
 The publisher he ups and says, 'Why *will*
 you chaps write verse?'
 The girl behind the Remington she tittered
 fit to die,
 I outs into the street again and to myself
 says I :

O it's verses this, and verses that, and
 writing 'em is wrong ;
 But it's 'special type and vellum' when
 you hit on something strong,
 You hit on something strong, my boys,
 you hit on something strong,
 O it's 'signed large paper copies,' when
 you hit on something strong.

I calls upon an editor—a very nice young
 man—
 Says he, 'Send in your stanzas and we'll use
 'em if we can' :

Of course I sends 'em to him in the usual
 bloomin' way,
 Of course he keeps and keeps 'em, and he's
 got 'em to this day!

And it's verses this, and verses that, and
 verses for to burn ;
 But they set 'em up in pica when the tide
 begins to turn,
 The tide begins to turn, my boys, the tide
 begins to turn,
 O it's 'Two-twelve-six a sonnet' when the
 tide begins to turn.

I prints a little book and puts it round like,
 for review,
 Which—when you come to think of it—is the
 proper thing to do :
 ' We have upon our table Mr. Blanky's *Leaves
 that Fall,*
 And 'Another little ship of song! Wants
 ballast,'—that was all.

And it's verses this, and verses that, and a
 par to say you've sinned ;
 But it's fine fat full-page notice when you
 hit 'em in the wind,
 You hit 'em in the wind, my boys, you hit
 'em in the wind,
 You're a 'owlin', 'eavenly Milton, when you
 hit 'em in the wind. . . .

We aint no 'eavenly Miltons, nor we aint no
idiots too,

But plodding men with fam'lies, and a pile to
make, like you ;

And all the time you see us down-at-heel and
looking weak

We're a-casting of our bread upon the waters,
so to speak :

For it's verses this, and verses that, and
things run pretty rough,

But there's Albert Gate in verses if you only
write the *stuff*,

If you only write the stuff, my boys, if you
only write the stuff,

O it's yachts and rows of houses if you only
write the stuff.

TO JOHN BUNYAN.

JOHN, it was sweet of thee to be a tinker,
 For poor men need a trade,
 And of all the trades that picture well with
 art, John—
 Intuitive, innocent art, John—
 It is the tinker's.

And it was sweet of thee to go to gaol, John,
 Even unto Bedford Gaol :
 Why may not all of us forthwith repair, John,
 To some such sunless fastness,
 And dream large dreams, John ?

And sweet it was of thee to make and write,
 John,
 A sweet and decent book
 That hath an honest savour, like good bread,
 John,
 And keeps the general palate, though their
 fictions
 Do come, and go, John.

Ah! who would not, to author such another,
Take thy extremity,
Thy petty craft, thy gross, implacable doctrine,
Yea, even a threadbare, 'treatise-dowered'
spouse, John,
And thank his stars, John?

ULTIMA THULE.

(*With acknowledgments to Mr. Stephen Phillips.*)

O, THOU art shaping into greatness, boy !
 Thy book is pretty sure to surge next Spring :
 And then ! . . .

Huge stacks of thee will to the libraries go,
 And all the virgins for a copy run :
 And then ! . . .

Thy tumbling hair will in the West be seen,
 An oriflamme at plutocratic teas :
 And then ! . . .

Thy portrait in the salons shall be hung,
 Thy picture laugh from hot-press'd magazines :
 And then ! . . .

Thy soul shall be upon vast serials spent,
 Thy mystery spread upon the evening prints :
 And *then ? ? ? ?*

NOCTURNE : IN HARNESS.

(With acknowledgments to Mr. W. E. Henley.)

AT the sultry hour of midnight,
 When we keep the door propped open
 For the little boys with flimsy,
 I can hear our presses whirring.

Whirling, whirring, in a rhythm,
 Steady, rational, persistent ;
 Churning out the first edition,
 To illuminate the counties.

Like the noise of many waters
 Broken on a weir of tea-trays
 Is the sound—a choppy droning :
 And it rather soothes my heart-strings.

Yet, at times, I can't help thinking
 How much of my life goes whirring,
 Whirling, whirring, whir, whir, whirring
 With the whirring of those presses.

A LITTLE LAY.

THREE poets came to London town,
 (Sing O for a crust and a stoup of ale!)
 All proper men and all unknown,
 (Sing O for patient merit!)

And one was a lovers' verse-maker,
 (Sing Ring-a-ding-ding and Ring-a-ding-dee!)

And honey-sweet his verses were,
 (Sing O for the pretty ladies!)

And one dream'd old-world dreams, God wot,
 (Sing O for the quaint pre-Raphaelite touch!)

And many a flashing ballad he wrote,
 (Sing O for fit and finish!)

And the third one was a man of might,
 (Sing O for the flush'd, fair, scholarly page!)
 And words of gold he did indite,
 (Sing O for the quotable passage!)

Now, these three go like fashion-plates,
 (Sing O for the pink, beneficent cheque!)
 And they lack neither wine nor delicates,
 (Sing O for English Poesy!)

KIPS.

After 'Bobs.'

THERE'S a little round-faced man,
 Which is Kips,
 Writes the finest stuff he can,
 Our Kips,
 Takes the cake fer fancy prose,
 Has the Muses by the nose,
 Makes us all sit up in rows—
 Don't yer, Kips?

An' 'e's travelled fur and far,
 This 'ere Kips,
 Seein' things just as they are,
 Straight-tale Kips;
 If it's bloo, or if it's brown,
 Kiplin' kindly shoves it down
 In a note-book of his own—
 Busy Kips!

O 'e's eyes right up 'is coat,
 Little Kips,
 An' a siren in his throat,
 Rudyard Kips;

An' when that there siren vents
 All yer ear-drum feels in rents,
 An' the listenin' continents
 Says, ' That's Kips!'

Wot 'e don't know about life,
 Mister Kips,
 You can arst a pleeceman's wife—
 Can't they, Kips?
 If the nation cheers and yells,
 An' its buzzim kinder swells,
 'E trots out Recessionals,
 Sined, ' R. Kips.'

'E went queer the other day,
 Poor old Kips,
 Cruisin' somewheres Noo York way
 Our Kips:
 Ses the Fates, ' Cum, Kiplin', sup
 Of this 'ere unpleasant cup!
An' he took it standin' up,
 Little Kips!

Nay—we couldn't let 'im go,
 Our Kips,
 'Cos we found we loved 'im so,
 Little Kips;
 'E has suffered grief and pain
 'Nuff to turn a feller's brain;
 BUT 'E'S GETTIN' WELL AGAIN—
 Aint yer, Kips?

So 'ere's to Kips Bahadur,
 Little Kips, Kips, Kips,
May 'e soon be on the larder,
 Fightin' Kips, Kips, Kips!
This ain't no sort of ode,
But you've help'd the white man's load,
An' fer benefits bestowed,
 Bless yer, Kips!

VERY LIKELY.

WHEN this man dies the world will say,
 ' Out on him for a witless knave,
 Who spent the morning of his day
 Wooing the workhouse and the grave.'

And men who held his hand in theirs,
 And drank with him, and lent him gold,
 Will take each other unawares
 With moralisings manifold.

And women whom he loved will hear
 Of his departure, thanking God
 They need not stand beside his bier
 In copyrightless widowhood.

Whilst for himself, he'll lie and rot
 As comfortably as the just ;
 With all his peck of cares forgot
 In the long silence and the dust.

THE ANCIENT CRITIC.

(With acknowledgments to Mr. Laurence Binyon.)

HE watches the newcomers pass and throng,
His eyes half-shut against the noontide sun;
The lean, the sleek, the futile, and the strong
Before him run.

Eager for praise and recognition, they
Bring him their dreams in gilt, and blue,
and red,
And stuff'd with purple patches; but all day
He shakes his head.

THE GOOD CONCEIT.

(*With acknowledgments to Mr. W. E. Henley.*)

OUT of the cloud that covers me
 And blots the stars and seldom lifts,
 I thank whatever gods may be
 For my indubitable gifts.

Under the whip—upon the setts,
 Men drive me many a galling mile,
 My stock of Editors' regrets
 Would fill a barrow, but—*I smile.*

Fast by this trade of wind and wit
 I mean to hold till life be done,
 And every year I stay in it
 Finds, and shall find me, tugging on.

It matters not how stiff and sheer
 The climb—how difficult the sum,
 I am the man they've got to hear!
 I am the man that's bound to come!

THE PUBLIC.

(With acknowledgments to Mr. Rudyard Kipling.)

*Oh, the years we waste and the tears we waste,
And the work of our head and hand
Belong to the Public that doesn't read verse
(And, probably, never will learn to read verse)
Which it does not understand!*

A fool there was and his youth he spent
(Even as you and I!)
Concocting rhymes that were excellent
(If the Public had only perceived what he
meant)

But the Public can't help its natural bent
(No more than you and I!)

*Oh, the toil we lost and the spoil we lost
And the beautiful things we planned
Belong to the Public that doesn't buy verse
(And has made up its mind it will never buy
verse)*

Which it cannot understand!

The fool was stripped of some foolish pence
(Even as you and I!)
Which he might have foreseen if he hadn't
been dense,

But fools, of course, have none too much sense,
 And, somehow, they suffer in consequence
 (Even as you and I !)

*Oh, it isn't the shame and it isn't the blame
 That stings like a white-hot brand—
 It's coming to know that your verses won't sell
 (Seeing at last that they never can sell)
 And beginning to understand !*

A fool there was and he wrote with care
 (Even as you and I !)
 And he carried his work to a publisher
 (Who gave him an estimate then and there),
 And he *dreams*, at times, there are profits to
 share
 (Even as you and I !)

FOR A' THAT AND A' THAT.

Air—' Dalmeny.'

Is there wha'd haver, i' a booth,
 O' poor men's joys, and a' that,
 And keek asklent at gear?—guid sooth,
 We daur be rich for a' that!
 For a' that, and a' that,
 The cares o' wealth, an' a' that,
 Gowd, mebbe, canna reese the deid,
 But gowd's the thing for a' that!

What tho', i' faith, we maunna dine
 But ance a day, and a' that,
 Oor thairms is streek wi' meat and wine,
 We fend along for a' that!

For a' that, and a' that,
 Dyspepsia, and a' that :
 A baggie fu's a baggie fu'—
 Let's pang 'em *fu'* for a' that !

Ye see yon birkie wi' a hoe,
 Wha earns his bread, and a' that,
 He's hale, ye'll note, frae tap tae toe—
 An's but a coof for a' that.
 For a' that, and a' that,
 His 'appetite' and a' that,
 The man o' independent means
 He looks and laughs at a' that.

The poor hae mony preevileges,
 Which—they may keep, for a' that ;
 They dinna ken what trouble is,
We'll no repine for a' that :
 For a' that, and a' that,
 Their blissfu' state, and a' that,
 The chiel wi' siller i' his pooch
 Aye gets the pu' for a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may—
 It *winna* come for a' that—
 That on this earth, a' men be worth
 Ten thousand pund, and a' that :

For a' that, and a' that,
'Twould mak a change would a' that,
And man to man, the world o'er
Might brithers be, *wi' a' that!*

ADVICE.

TIP no more deft phrase with rhyme,
 Fashion no further rhapsodies,
 Fit your thought to the flat of the time,
 And try to be opulent and wise.

How should a man with eyes and fists
 And brains to order and shape his strength,
 Fool with the accidental twists
 Of silver and gold in life's cable length;

To please mayhap a schoolgirl or two,
 Or furnish a critic with pegs for scorn,—
 Half a column of smart Yahoo
 Seasoned with gall from a cockney horn.

Wherefore, my boy, sing not at all,
 Let no note of your music drop;
 Wool up your ears to the Muse's call
 With briskness—say, in a grocer's shop;

Where you might compass bullion,
 Aided perchance by a thrifty mate;
 And, if you are lucky, who knows but your
 son
 May hornpipe the pinnacles kept for the
 great?

TO THE MINOR MUSE.

OUT of the light of the age,
An age of superior things,
I call unabashed unto thee
O little Muse of the valley.

Scorn for the simple pipe,
The trivial trite tune
That a man may make in his youth,
Is the fashion with all the world ;

A fashion dear to the cheap
Young supercilious scribe,
Also, to wits and wags
And every honest fool.

So that thy numerous sons,
Sired by the windy Spring,
Bristle, or blush, or blench
At a hint of their parentage.

But little Muse of mine,
They err who have shame in thee,
And grievously do they err
Who bandy thy name when they scoff.

For comely art thou, and wise,
And affluent of heart,
White are thy feet by the brooks,
And pleasant thy voice in the vines.

Thy Sister, the beautiful-brow'd,
Calm friend of them that endure,
Loveth thee from her heights,
And wherefore not we, who are naught ?

TO ERMYNTRUDE ———

MADAME or Mademoiselle, as the case may be,
Behold this chaplet—
Delectable, fragrant, mainly of roses—
Lo, 'tis for your incomparable brows!

Madame or Mademoiselle,
Your charming 'at homes'
Provide us with matter for many triolets,
Your wit is like an ever-living fountain,
The sparkle whereof makes one positively
wink ;
Your person,
From the sunshine that crowns it
Down to the ambrosial clock'd stockings
And microcosmic shoon that round it off, so
to speak,
Your person merits the Apple,
And Paris himself would have said so
Had he had the felicity to know you.

Consequently, Madame or Mademoiselle,
When next your lord or your love
Goeth forth to his labour,
I pray you hint to him

Of this mine offering,
 For, if you do so,
 He may be moved to thankfulness,
 And by way of a *quid pro quo*,
 Inform the gaping rabblement
 (From the vantage-ground of half-a-dozen
 high-class prints)
 That I too have managed to jam my knees
 Under the Olympian mahogany ;
 That I too am an improvement on Words-
 worth,
 Coleridge without chaos,
 Keats uncockneyfied,
 Shelley effectualised,
 Browning made obvious,
 The inheritor of the excellent habiliments of
 Tennyson,
 And a full-blown British poet !

ODE

ON THE DEATH OF THE 'SUNDAY
DAILY TELEGRAPH.'

(After Collins.)

How sleeps the sheet that sinks to rest
In innocent babyhood—supprest
Without a word, without a hint,
Excepting these two lines of print :—
' Our paper, published heretofore,
Will not be published any more.'

By bishops' hands its knell is rung,
By Hugh Price Hughes its dirge is sung,
There Harmsworth comes, a pilgrim gray,
To wipe th' unbidden tear away,
And Rosebery shall oft repair
To do some private smiling there.

By the same Author.

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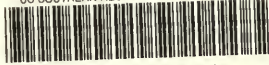




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