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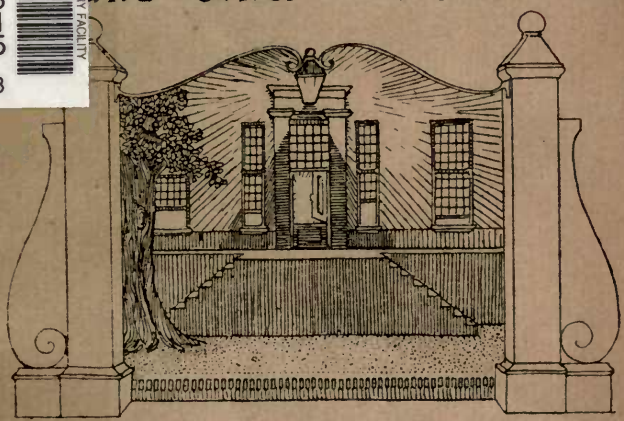
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THE  
ARLIAMENT  
OF - BEASTS.  
and - other - Verses.

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BY  
RIP VAN WINKLE

*Si qui forte mearum ineptiarum  
Lectores eritis manusque vestras  
Non horrebitis admovere nobis*

CATVLLXIV.

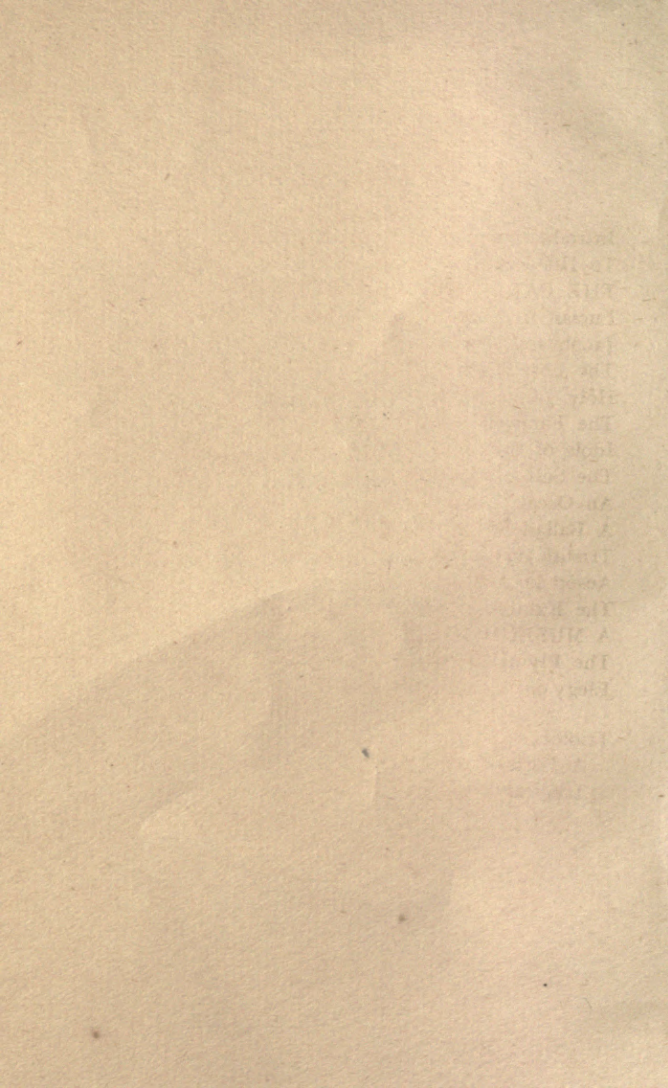
Cape Town

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TO MY GOOD FRIENDS  
AND  
FELLOW-PROGRESSIVES  
M.H.P. AND G.H.W.  
THESE WAIFS AND STRAYS OF POLITICS  
ARE DEDICATED.



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## INTRODUCTION.

If I dared say with Horace (whom we all worship), *Haec decies repetita placebit*, I could let these trifles go without a preface ; as it is I cannot serve up my "twice-cooked cabbages" without some sort of an apology. Some of my friends have been good enough to say they would like Rip Van Winkle in a book. If the public has the same taste I shall be gratified ; if it has not I shall think none the worse of my friends. Alas ! some at least of my poetical blossoms are now, even to my partial eyes, somewhat faded. Perhaps it is not altogether the poet's fault ; the subjects were of perishable stuff. I have therefore left out one or two, "Aut Canzius aut Nihil" and "The Friend" for example, though I should like to have retained the first, were it only for the line—"Captain Canzius Peter von Blommestein B." which, to my mind, is as fine as anything in Homer's list of ships. But, as the Persian proverb has it, even the dust of the rose-petal is dear to the heart of the perfume-seller. For the rest they must take their chance with all their imperfections on their head. If any are offended I am sorry ; but I trust to the spirit of humour, of which our side has not an entire monopoly, to heal any little hurts they may have caused.

## INTRODUCTION.

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To my friends the editors of the "Cape Times" and its Christmas Number and Mr. Fred St. Leger, I offer my best thanks for their kind permission to republish. The "Museum Idyll" is shorn of more than half its charm by the exclusion of Mr. Smithard's illustrations; but I have to thank that artist for beautifying my title page, so that at least it may be said of my book that the cover is worth looking at.

RIP VAN WINKLE.



TO HIS READERS

WHERE o'er smooth floors of violet seas  
Long wedges of black duikers fly;  
Where on the mountain's mighty knees  
The mists of the Antarctic lie;

Or where beside the furrow'd stream  
The vines their purple harvest bear;  
Where through green oaks white gables gleam—  
Meerlust, Dauphiné, Morgen Ster;

Or where upon the wide Karoo  
The lonely shepherd, far withdrawn,  
Beholds—monotonously new—  
The rose of sunset and of dawn.

'Tis all one land; one people we—  
If not completely reconciled,  
If we must quarrel, let it be  
But "as a lover or a child."

On the contracted brows of hate  
Let our satiric sunbeams dance,  
And if the frown is obstinate  
Let's laugh it out of countenance.



THE PARLIAMENT OF BEASTS.



## THE PARLIAMENT OF BEASTS.

Christmas Night at Schoongezicht.

URBANE and affable, with courtly charm,  
He did the honours of his Sabine farm ;  
Politely smiling at M-lt-no's wit,  
As if he really saw the point of it ;  
Condoling with F—m—tle on his case,  
And listening with an interested face  
While B—k, with eloquence—and wine—imbued,  
Wallowed from platitude to platitude ;  
Now covering over with a tactful art  
A lapse in etiquette on B-rt-n's part ;  
Now greeting with appreciative laugh  
The imbecile inanities of Gr—f ;  
And still again exerting all his power  
To soften the asperities of S——r ;  
The while he guided with a juggler's ease,  
The placid flow of talk on generalities.

What depths of truth ! What heights of eloquence !  
What wealth of words ! What poverty of sense !  
Shall I repeat the oft-repeated views  
That daily find oblivion in the " News " ?



Immortalise the sentiments by S——r  
Already made immortal—for an hour ?  
How, in the country none should have a say,  
Except the residents who mean to stay  
(And then 'tis necessary they should be  
Bondmen or members of the S.A.P.) ;  
How millionaires are always vile (although  
F—m—tle made a special case for St-w) ;  
How Africa is Dutch by right and grace,  
And how the British are a sordid race,  
Lost to all honour in the love of pelf  
(F—m—tle made exception for himself) ;  
And why the people of the town have rights,  
Since they are unproductive parasites.

“ Ah ! ” said the host, who liked to air his store  
Of illustration apt and classic lore,  
“ The Tiber still Imperial sway might bear  
If Rome had not been situated there.  
And ancient Greece perchance might still be great,  
Had Athens not impoverished the State ! ”  
The further to illuminate his views,  
He mentioned Thebes and Troy and Syracuse,  
And would no doubt have indicated more,  
But Baby interrupted with a snore.  
S——r took his feet and M——n his head,  
And 'twixt them both they carted him to bed.

The host, returning, wished his guests good-night,  
Gave them their candles and put out the light,  
And then himself went wearily to rest.

Perplexed, he lay within his popped nest,  
And murmured with a sigh, "'Tis passing queer,  
That Christmas pies grow heavier every year."

What sounds are those?—he started to his feet—  
Of bray and neigh and yelp and bark and bleat?—  
A noise more dissonant than rends the ears  
Of members when, 'mid "cheers and counter-cheers,"  
The towering wrath of O-ts the chair defies,  
And loud M-lt-no "Order, order" cries.  
In bedroom slippers and with stealthy stride,  
The Opposition Leader stole outside—  
What forms are those beneath the ancient trees?  
The Late of Wodehouse crept upon his knees,  
Till, from the kindly shadow of a wall,  
Himself unseen, he saw and heard it all.

He rubbed his eyes at the amazing scene—  
The farm's whole stock was gathered on the green;  
In ordered rows, divided by a space,  
Two hostile parties squatted face to face.  
Along one side were Afrikander sheep,  
Bullocks and horses, several benches deep,

Led by a grizzled, lean and ancient goat,  
Who sometimes "Order!" cried and sometimes  
"Vote!"

Across the way were ranged imported stock—  
His Jersey cows and choice Merino flock,  
His shorthorn bull and high-bred English mare,  
A Catalonian jackass filled the chair.

Amidst a cackle of applause arose  
The goat, and, nicely balanced on his hinder toes  
Discoursed as follows:—

" Long this Afric soil  
My party has made fruitful by its toil ;  
The Afrikander bullock, sheep and goat—  
These, and these only, once enjoyed the vote ;  
These ploughed the land, these drew the wain along,  
These made the farmer veldschoens and biltong ;  
Ah then content reigned in a simple land,  
Plenty and virtue then went hand in hand ;  
No scab inspector then annoyed the flock  
And no immoral farmer crossed his stock.  
The shepherd then, content with dirty clips,  
Had never heard of these new-fangled dips.  
Now all is changed ; a sheep of foreign strain  
Devours the pasture and invades the plain,  
And foreign kine, too proud to till the land,  
Are housed in tin-roofed sheds and fed by hand.

The farmstead grows apace : the pastures wane.  
Impoverished by the economic drain.  
How can the land, I ask you, long endure  
That's spread each year with chemical manure ?  
The frugal virtues all must pass away  
When stock is fed on oilcake and on hay.  
Alas ! Alack ! my native land, I fear  
That universal bankruptcy is near."

Loud cries of " Hear ! " his peroration drown  
And cheer on cheer goes up as he sits down.  
The listener murmured his surprise to note  
Such powers of dialectic in a goat.

An Irish terrier on the other side  
Arose amid the din and thus replied :  
" I've been from Britstown to Saldanha Bay,  
And, let me tell you, never till this day  
Have heard such nonsense talked in dorp or town  
As by the billy-goat who's just sat down."

At this a heavy bullock bellowed " Chair ! "  
The dog proceeded : " I am not aware  
Of breaking any precedent or rule ;  
But let me tell you, sir, that you're a fool.  
I challenge any honourable goat  
To bring this vital question to a vote.

My honourable friend I plainly see  
Counsels rebellion 'gainst the Powers that be,  
But while upon Imperial ground I stand  
No internecine war shall vex the land.  
I know there are conspiracies afloat  
To fan the flames of strife 'twixt sheep and goat ;  
But while I've tongue and teeth I shall not cease  
To speak and fight for friendliness and peace."

He ended, and a collie by his side,  
A dog of well-bred nose and well-groomed hide  
(His thankless task it was to guard the flocks  
'Gainst the fierce jackal and the prowling fox.  
No pains he spared, no guerdon sought, for he  
Had no base taint of personality.)  
Unmoved by jeering cries and hostile groans,  
Took up the tale in soft melodious tones :  
" This is the night, let me remind you all,  
The Prince of Peace was cradled in a stall,  
When lowly ox and ass lay down beside  
The Babe whom mortals after crucified.  
Is this the time for bitterness and hate,  
For spiteful gibe and rancorous debate ?  
Then close your quarrels with the closing year,  
Let sheep draw near to sheep, and steer to steer,  
What need for rivalry ? The land is wide,  
There's room for all, and many more beside :



Each has his sphere—the Afrikander breed  
To draw the plough, and on the veld-bush feed.  
Their work to till the soil, and in the wain,  
Bring home at harvest time the golden grain,  
While English stock to sale and market go,  
Or win our master medals at the show.  
With the dead past forget your ancient strife,  
Let the New Year begin a happier life.”

In vain he spoke ; the night was hideous made.  
Some shouted “Doornkop,” others bellowed “Raid.”  
The noble dog, disdainingly to reply,  
Relapsed to sleep and silence with a sigh.

Beside the goat arose a clumsy steer,  
Whose grating voice with anguish filled the ear,  
As when two sawyers with a cross-cut saw  
Through timber green and hard their screaming  
    weapon draw,  
Or as when in the dentist’s awful throne  
The patient lies with faint and gurgling moan,  
The while the dentist with electric drill,  
Gouges the hollow tooth he means to fill.  
Such was the sound : “ Conciliation now,  
How can you speak with Cain upon your brow ?  
Can we forget, though long ago, the harm  
You wrought upon a peaceful neighbour’s farm,

When to assist some other dogs like you,  
You chased his sheep and even killed a few?  
Forget it! Would the Bond remain afloat?  
Forget it! while it serves to catch a vote?  
No, never! Slaughter's Nek we may forget,  
But the perfidious Raid we will remember yet!"

At these wild words a wilder tumult rose.  
Some took to kicks, and others came to blows.  
The terrier caught the bullock by the nose.  
Then M—r—n with righteous wrath aglow,  
Cried out: "You worse than beasts, to quarrel so!"  
They vanished, and he started up in bed,  
The room was dark and silent as the dead,  
Save, faint and far, M—lt—no's nasal snore.  
Once more he cursed the pies, and went to sleep once  
more.

## LUCIAN IN AFRICA.

## THE FRUIT-SELLER.

*Characters :*

AJAX MERRIANDROS.

PLUTUS.

*Scene :*

Stellenboskos Railway Station : Ajax Merriandros on the platform in the garb of a fruit-seller, with a basket of peaches in his hand and a garland of violets on his head. Plutus, as he leans out of saloon window, smoking a cigar, looks carelessly at him.

AJAX (*singing*).

PEACHES ! A shilling for a box ! Who'll buy ?  
Ripe, sir ? Of course they are ! Take one and try !  
Rotten ! With due politeness, sir, you lie !

*(Soliloquising).*

'Tis thus I spend the evening of my days,  
Selling my fruit to such as take their ways  
'Twixt Cape Town and the Rand—a sordid crew  
How I detest them ! Plutocrat and Jew.

How wise the Brahmin doctrine seems to me  
That holds it for a crime to cross the sea !  
Base sojourners ! Without a pang they sail,  
Nor blush to book a passage by the mail ;  
Tip stewards with my bleeding country's loot  
And spend on bridge what might be spent on fruit.  
'Tis thus they draw the riches from the land  
And only leave the tailings on the Rand.  
They are the cause of all my country's woes—  
Through them our mingling races came to blows.  
They guide the Chinaman's invading feet  
And bring the snails to Green Point and Retreat.  
Ill fares the land whose people deal in shares,  
Whose citizens buy scrip instead of pears !  
For what the pains of colic to the fate  
Of those who on a rising market wait ?  
Like pots upon a river floating down  
They shatter and incontinently drown !

## PLUTUS.

Hullo, old bird ! What are you grumbling at ?  
See, let me drop a shilling in your hat.  
Don't sulk, old fellow, let me buy some fruit.  
Great Scot ! Can I mistake that face, that foot ?  
'Tis Merriandros ! My dear boy, your flipper !  
You ran Langlaagte when I was a nipper.

---

I knew the "Gem"! That was a corker! Snakes!  
What days were those! What booms! What  
slumps! What fakes!

You don't remember? Plutus is my name,  
Stock-broker and mine-owner, yes, the same.  
I always took you for a clever fellow  
And though you've entered on the sere and yellow,  
I'll make you gaffer of a high-grade mine.  
Ten thousand quid a year! Just make the sign!

AJAX.

I know you not, you vulgar plutocrat!

PLUTUS.

You're stuffy, are you? What's the cause of that?

AJAX.

I scorn to talk with such a low-bred hog!

PLUTUS.

My eye! You're putting on a lot of dog!



## AJAX.

Thou thrice-accursed minion of the Rand,  
Thine is the race that vex my native land !  
Base parasites who suck my country's blood,  
And blast its growth ! A canker in the bud !  
The birthright of our fathers ye have sold,  
And bartered peace and happiness for gold.

## PLUTUS.

Go easy, mate ! I've heard your talk before,  
It sounds O.K.; but when you crush the ore,  
I'll bet a sugared bride-cake to a bun  
It will not yield a pennyweight the ton.  
Miner, concession-hunter, pioneer,  
I've known your " bleeding country " thirty year,  
I've washed the gravel in the Vaal and spun  
For the first mining claim at Barberton.  
In every blooming rush I've had a hand,  
From Delagoa to Namaqualand ;  
And let me tell you when I came along  
Your bleeding country wasn't worth a song.  
The Dutchman had been sitting on his claim  
A hundred years, and it was just the same  
As when he pegged it out ; a fire of *mist*,  
A *vrouw*, a piece of biltong in his fist,

---

A naachtmaal twice a year, 'twas all he asked ;  
At night he slept, and in the day he basked.  
Then came the miner and the mining camp,  
First pick and shovel, then electric stamp ;  
Great cities rose at seaport and at mine,  
Storehouse and harbour-work and railway line.  
Like a great driving wheel the humming Rand  
Drove all the cranks and pistons of the land.  
The sleepy Dutchman didn't like the din,  
To stop the row he put his finger in.  
He's howling now, but when he's quite awake  
He'll thank his stars the engine didn't break.  
We've made his market : all he's got to do  
Is just to waken up and settle to.  
Who buys your peaches, friend ? Just answer that ?  
Then why abuse the bloated plutocrat ?

AJAX.

Base parasites !

PLUTUS.

Base parasites, I guess,  
Don't have to find themselves in skoff and dress,  
Nor yet buy peaches from the beasts they prey on.

AJAX.

You do but sojourn in the land, we stay on!

PLUTUS.

Sojourners don't build fifteen storeys high,  
Come up to Jo'burg, friend.

AJAX.

What! I—I—I!

Johannesburg! My country, let me die!

[Falls into the arms of a neighbouring porter,  
as the train steams out of the station.]

## JACOB AND ESAU.

## A PARABLE.

The interests of the living are more pressing than those of the dead.—“*South African News,*” on the proposed memorial to Esau.

ALL those who know their Bible will agree  
That there is nothing you will not find in it ;  
Old Kruger used to place it on his knee,  
And anywhere it opened, he'd begin it,  
As if it were a kind of lottery.

If bent on war it told him he would win it.  
If the first passage was not to his mind,  
He'd scan the page before it or behind.

And from the Bible predikants can tell  
That there is high authority for treason ;  
That it is righteous conduct to rebel.

They'll give you verse and chapter for the  
reason.

That every Britisher is bound for—(Well,  
The dash put any reading that you please on,  
Or if you cannot guess its meaning, try a  
Good red-hot page or two from Jeremiah).

There are some sayings scattered here and there,  
In that part of the Bible called the New,  
For instance, there's an awkward passage where  
We're told to give to Cæsar what is due,  
And when we're struck, the other cheek to bare—  
All that is very well and very true,  
But you can carry it too far—you see  
They had no Englishmen in Galilee.

But I have gone a little off my track—  
My purpose was in sitting down to write,  
To tell a little tale of white and black,  
Or, if we go by merit, black and white.  
As in the Bible they have got a knack,  
Of telling parables, I thought I might  
Just imitate the method of the Bible,  
And thus perhaps avoid a suit for libel.

To speak in parables has always been  
The method of the preacher and the sage,  
For you can say exactly what you mean,  
And put your adversary in a rage.  
He feels, and writhes beneath the satire keen,  
And yet he cannot well take up the gage,  
For if you're threatened with unpleasant friction  
You merely need to say it was a fiction.



Well, Jacob was a bright and clever lad,  
And Esau an uncouth and hairy boy ;  
J. had the best instruction to be had,  
His tutor's darling and his mother's joy ;  
In dainty raiment he was always clad ;  
But Esau went about in corduroy,  
And friends were even known to show surprise at  
The fact that Esau was the son of Isaac.

The best blood of the house of Abraham  
Ran in the veins of Jacob ; and his mother  
Would often kiss and hug her little lamb,  
And tell him he was better than his brother.  
For Esau had the looks of Uncle Ham,  
And was not near so handsome as the other :  
He had no proper pride of race or history,  
And how he got his birthright was a mystery.

Well, Esau went about with fellows low—  
Folks held him in no sort of estimation—  
As I have said before, he did not know  
The greatness of the history of his nation—  
Picked up a meagre living with his bow.  
Jacob was shocked to have such a relation,  
And often used to wonder how his dad  
Could condescend to father such a cad.

And now it came to pass, the tribe of Oom,  
That lived upon adjacent territory,  
Had treated ill some sons of Isaac, whom  
I need not mention further in the story ;  
When Isaac tried to save them from their doom,  
The tribe upon his pastures made a foray—  
(I can't imagine how this conflict tribal  
Has come to be omitted from the Bible.)

The Oomites knew exactly what to do,  
Isaac was old and blind and would not bother,  
They swept the country almost through and  
through—  
Jacob was safe in hiding with his mother,  
And looking, I have heard, a trifle blue ;  
But all this time his black and hairy brother  
Was standing up and fighting Isaac's battles,  
Or mounting guard upon his goods and chattels.

They caught him and they bound him hand and foot  
And took him out and flogged him every day ;  
They promised if he'd show them where to loot,  
They'd cut his bonds and let him go away.  
He clenched his teeth and grimly muttered—  
" Shoot,  
For I would sooner perish than betray ! "  
They shot him and they left him lying still,  
Beaten by his unconquerable will.

He did not know the greatness of his race,  
As Jacob did ; but this at least he knew—  
The way to meet his foemen face to face,  
To suffer death and torture and be true ;  
They've not yet raised a stone to mark the place,  
And Jacob does not think a stone is due—  
'Tis sad ; but let me whisper something sadder—  
The men he fought are raising Jacob's ladder.

## THE LOST LEADER.

## A POST-MORTEM ADDRESS.

I can respect your Bondmen, and I can fight your Bondmen. I am a Progressive—with the Progressive party—and I am going to fight with them, whatever my position may be. But these Independents! I cannot stand them.—*Cecil Rhodes, at Port Elizabeth, September 17th, 1898.*

CECIL, if you were living now,  
 How would you view the situation?  
 What principles would you avow?  
 What leaders have your approbation?  
 Would Sprigg or Douglass get your vote?  
 Or Merriman, the arch-designer?  
 Or would you row in the same boat  
 With Schreiner?

As you've been dead two years or more,  
 You will permit me to explain sir,  
 The state of things is as before  
 You left this vale of sin and pain, sir.  
 The Bond is still the same old Bond,  
 The Mole is always excavating.  
 And still Lord Milner they are fond  
 Of baiting.

---

The D.R.C. the same o'ld cant  
Is preaching in and out of season ;  
And still the " youngster " of " Ons Land "  
Is toying with the name of treason ;  
The " News " still grinds the same old mill  
With leader changed but Sauer ascendant.  
An Independent, sir, is still  
An Independent.

And still they strive with honied phrase  
To fool the dear old British nation,  
And still as in the ancient days,  
Are set at their own valuation ;  
And still they keep their ancient pact  
And call the Englishman their brother ;  
And still they say one thing, and act  
Another.

And still they love the British flag  
And praise the British Constitution,  
And still they talk the same old gag  
About the naval contribution ;  
And (at elections) still they try  
To elevate and teach the nigger :  
And still they wink the other eye,  
And snigger.

The other side we now approach—  
They're just the same old weary jumble ;  
You shove them in the party coach,  
And lift the reins—when out they tumble ;  
They've led your friend no end of jigs—  
The Doctor is a patient drover ;  
But I would rather shepherd pigs  
In clover !

Their leader tells them what to do,  
They mutter of De Beers dictation ;  
The League, they say, is Colonel Crewe  
And Jagger the Association ;  
They'll have their Petersens and Bams,  
They'll follow nothing but their noses,  
To them the Israelites were lambs  
With Moses !

At Wynberg, Thompson, you should know  
Is kicking o'er the party traces ;  
He'll split the vote and let in Louw  
Dii avertant ! as the phrase is.  
You see it is the same old game  
Being fought out in the same old way, sir,  
So I suppose you'd think the same  
To-day, sir !



HOLY JAMIE'S PRAYER.

[With apologies to the shade of Burns.]

O H, Lord, Thou'st gien me gear an' gold ;  
Wherever I hae bocht an' sold  
Thou'st heapit profits manifold :  
To Thee the glory !  
So twa three maitters I mak' bold  
To lay afore Ye.

Thou kenst I'm piously inclined ;  
That gift o' land Thou'lt ca' to mind,  
I've got the contract a'most signed  
To big a store  
(Virtue and profit are combined)  
Just by the door.

Twa vessels o' Thy chosen nation  
Have aye enjoyed Thine approbation  
(The ither Jamie is a caution,  
He dings us a').  
Thou'st raised us to our lofty station,  
We dinna crawl.

Canty and croose we pu'd thegither,  
 Workin' as brither works wi' brither,  
 We even trusted ane anither,  
     Or verra near.  
 To help oorsels ilk helped the tither  
     An' didna spier.

An' a' oor doin's wrang or right,  
 Have aye fand favour in Thy sight,  
 Noo I'm a laird an' he's a knight ;  
     But still a drappie  
 Add to my cup, for I'm no quite  
     Completely happy.

Thou kenst I'm noo an M.L.C.,  
 I signed the pledge, an' I agree  
 The Bible reprobates a lee ;  
     But after a'  
 Sic a sma' thing 'twixt You an' me  
     Is nocht ava !

I canna' thole the Doctor's way,  
 He treats me as inferior clay,  
 He'll neither daff wi' me nor play  
     A game o' cartes,  
 Oh, Lord, confound and blast, I pray,  
     His takin' arts !

Forbye, they didna' treat me fair.  
That railway business fashed me sair  
An' the Excise on drink was mair  
    Than I could stan'  
Thou kenst I had a muckle store  
    O' dop on han'.

The Party I wud like to wreck  
An' wring the sneering Doctor's neck  
Guide me, I pray, to this effec',  
    Is my petition.  
An' troth, I'll gie a thumpin' cheque  
    Tae Kirk or Mission !

## THE FAREWELL.

[Lord Milner has sailed for Eastern Europe.—  
Daily Paper.]

FAREWELL! Ægæa's skies are blue  
And sapphire is its ocean ;  
There take the rest that is your due  
Far from the world's commotion ;  
Where Homer's wine-dark billows lave  
Their million sun-bright channels,  
There sojourn : you may seldom shave,  
And always dress in flannels.

There with a flask of Chian wine,  
'Mid asphodel and crocus,  
Forget the Magnate and the Mine  
And all their hocus-pocus ;  
Or browse where Pelion props the skies  
On Sophocles and Byron,  
Oblivious of this land of lies  
And corrugated iron.

---

And yet I know your mind will turn  
From honey-sweet Hymettus ;  
You cannot wholly seal the urn,  
You cannot quite forget us ;  
So deep upon your heart and brain  
The lessons we have taught you,  
That you can never be again  
As when the whirlpool caught you.

You've learnt that Race is more than Mind  
And blood is more than water ;  
You've learnt that England is as blind  
As we have always thought her ;  
You've learnt that sentiment is strong  
And prejudice is stronger ;  
You've learnt that Lib'ral tongues are long,  
And Lib'ral ears are longer.

You've learnt, however straight the way,  
That it is hard to take it ;  
You've learnt the strength of Habit's sway,  
How difficult to shake it ;  
You've learnt that he who seeks the right  
Must go where few will follow ;  
You've learnt that promises are light  
And protestations hollow.

You've learnt that principles are things  
Of less account than money ;  
That Duty has got many stings  
And very little honey ;  
That men are quick to cherish lies  
And slow to follow reason ;  
That truth is met with more surprise  
Than trickery or treason.

You've learnt that Englishmen forget  
The things Het Volk remembers,  
And that a spark is glowing yet  
Beneath the sullen embers ;  
You've learnt how patriots are flung  
To the wild beasts of faction ;  
You've learnt the strength of slander's tongue,  
The venom of detraction.

And yet the lessons you have found  
Are not entirely bitter,  
For in the barrenest of ground  
You've seen the jewel glitter,  
And here and there a friendly hand  
Has touched you in the mire,  
For there are some who understand,  
And Truth is not a liar.



Farewell ! We've watched your stedfast course,  
The manner straight and thorough  
In which with unrelenting force  
You've ploughed your lonely furrow :  
Like the good knight who turned his eyes  
From pleasure, ease and beauty,  
You've followed as your only prize  
The Holy Grail of Duty.

*IDOLS OF THE MARKET PLACE.*

“ Cecil Rhodes, an interesting stockbroker of a type to be met with every hundred yards or so in Wall-street.”

“ Lord Milner appears to have the hastiness and prurience which are the besetting sins of journalism, with none of the calm, the wisdom, the insight of statesmanship.”

—*The Professor at the Breakfast Table.*

**P**ROFESSOR, I have often thought  
How painful it must be for you  
To see the public fancy caught  
    (Save only an enlightened few)  
By men of quite inferior worth  
And infinitely humbler birth.

The flaunting roses take the eye  
    (Rhodes, Milner, Jameson and Mills),  
While on the ground forgotten lie  
    The poor, neglected daffodils,  
Though daffodils are sweeter far  
Than the more showy roses are.

That metaphor was rather fine ;  
It comes from Herrick, as you know ;  
But then, the application's mine,  
You are the daffodil ablow,  
Or modest violet that grieves  
Beneath its counterpane of leaves.

There's Rhodes : the fellow handled pelf  
And dealt in vulgar stocks and shares,  
Not half so cultured as yourself,  
Nor used to professorial chairs,  
And yet, the public—strange, but true—  
Preferred that sordid soul to you.

Or take the Doctor—as you've said  
At least a thousand times, I'm sure—  
There's really nothing in his head—  
A trifler and an amateur,  
And yet the people call him Jim,  
The idiots simply worship him.

Again, take Milner ; as you say,  
He'd neither honesty nor sense,  
And in his journalistic way  
Showed "hastiness and prurience"  
(Though what by "prurience" you mean  
I must confess I cannot glean).

Complacent and self-satisfied,  
He takes the popular applause,  
While you, poor drooping violet, hide  
Your head beneath your modest paws.  
(Excuse the vulgar phrase ; but rhyme  
Sometimes descends from the sublime.)

'Twas ever thus, for man is prone  
(So blind and foolish is the race)  
To leave the Truly Great alone  
For Idols of the Market Place,  
The thief he crowns, the prophet kills  
(Thus Uitenhage prefers its Mills).

But dry those tears ! As I have said,  
You're cherished by the cultured few,  
So raise that shy and drooping head  
And drink of St-w's refreshing dew.  
Go, modest, unassuming flower,  
To grace the buttonhole of S——r.

## THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

[" If the critics would see the latent power in the grandchildren of the Ghetto, let them contemplate the power of Isaac Zangwill, one of the acknowledged masters of English letters, or of the distinguished philologist, Israel Gollanz," etc.—*M. Rabinowitz*.

A very considerable proportion of the Aliens entering the Colony are Russian and Jewish Aliens. During the period May to June, 641 such Aliens were landed, and during October to December 2,033, making a total for the eight months of 4,982 Russian and Jewish Aliens.—*Cape Immigration Report for 1903.*]

THE Jews, as every one admits,  
 Are all you say, Rabinowitz,  
 The noblest and the best of races  
 Whose kindly hearts belie their faces.  
 They've made in music, art and letters  
 The nations of the world their debtors.  
 Who can deny it when they own  
 A Heine and a Mendelssohn,  
 Or, in the realm of thought and prose, a  
 Colossal genius like Spinoza ;  
 Nay—proudest boast of all their nation—  
 \* F——le as a blood relation ?

\*" It would be impossible for me to attack a man for having Jewish blood. . . . I am myself proud of a somewhat remote ancestor on the maternal side, who makes me a connection of that race, and whose services to England were recognised as being of the highest order."—Mr. H. E. S. Freemantle to Sir Henry Juta, October, 1903.

Then in the law their work we see :  
The Sabbath and the I.D.B.  
In politics, who greater than  
Their Beaconsfield or Liberman ?  
They'd give the warlike Togo tips  
In floating mines and sinking ships ;  
In fact, there are not any flies  
Upon their business enterprise.

All this, my dear Rabinowitz,  
The world, as I have said, admits.  
In metaphor to state their worth,  
The *salt*, I'll call them, of the earth.  
Of this same salt I'd like to tell  
A useful little parable.

In Scotland, as you know or should,  
Where porridge is the staple food,  
They "sup them"—*vide* Scott or Galt—  
With no concomitant but salt.  
(The Southron, poor misguided soul,  
Puts sugar in his porridge bowl.)  
Well, the good people of my tale,  
Who lived on porridge, scones, and kail,  
Had but one maid to wait and cook—  
A slattern grimy as the "crook,"  
A "fashionless" and "feckless" creature,  
Without one grace of mind or feature.



Now, one " braw morn " the lass forgot  
" Tae pit the sawt until the pot."  
In consequence the breakfast table  
Was turned into a Tower of Babel.  
The " big anes " " girmed," the " wee anes "  
" grat."  
The " guid-wife " tasted " them " and spat,  
And (this sad fact I state with pain)  
The " guid-man " " took His name in vain."

Next morning, going to the byre,  
The farmer passed the kitchen fire,  
He saw the porridge on the crook,  
The salt box in the chimney nook ;  
(The servant lassie wasn't nigh,  
She'd gone outside to milk the " kye "),  
" I'll no hae cause again to sin,"  
He said, and dropped a handful in.  
The farmer's daughter next came " through,"  
She dropped a little salt in too ;  
The farmer's wife, the farmer's son,  
These also did as those had done.  
Lastly the servant girl came back,  
" I'll teach them I can parritch mak',"  
With her left hand the salt she shook,  
And in her right the " spurtle " took.

The lassie brought the porridge "ben,"  
With conscious rectitude, and then,  
With folded hands and pious face,  
The farmer rose and said the grace,  
Next tucked a napkin 'neath his chin  
And all were ready to begin.

\* \* \* \* \*

What followed next I will not state,  
It is too painful to relate ;  
But this they all agreed upon  
That *too much salt is worse than none.*

## AN OCEAN EREMITTE.

[To my friend Captain Voss, bravest of mariners, who sailed round the World in a boat compared with which the galleons of Ithaca were towering ships.]

**B**RAVE Captain, you have sailed away,  
And now you rest upon the billows,  
As unconcerned, I've heard you say,  
As we who sleep upon our pillows ;  
Beneath your feet the shark may swim,  
While overhead the petrel screeches,  
You care no more than Dr. Jim  
For Burton's or Molteno's speeches.

You heed not though the thunder peals,  
The lightnings flash : you do not worry—  
No more the tranquil Doctor feels  
The ignominious snarl of Currey ;  
The rain may hiss, the billows crash—  
You slumber, just like him, unwitting  
When Cronwright Schreiner's balderdash  
Streams down upon the midnight sitting.

I wonder, Captain, why you chose  
To bid farewell to ease and pleasure,  
The snug fireside, the soft repose—  
All that your fellow mortals treasure.  
Was it misfortune's icy breath  
That gave you first the inclination ?  
And did you brave a liquid death,  
Because you dreaded liquidation ?

Or was it unrequited love ?  
And did she jilt you for another,  
Or murmur, gently as a dove,  
" I look upon you as a brother " ?  
Or are you married to a wife  
Whose tongue and temper drove you frantic,  
And made you seek a quiet life  
Amid the storms of the Atlantic ?

Or happiness perhaps you find  
Rests on a philosophic basis,  
And think, with stoics, that the mind  
The sum of human life embraces,  
And all the joys that men surround  
Are hostages to fortune given,  
So, like Diogenes, you found  
A tub is all you need to live in.

Ah, tranquil hermit of the sea—  
A change of wind your only sorrow,  
A gale your only enemy,  
No wife to spend, nor friend to borrow,  
The waves your only bull and bear,  
And reckonings your only losses—  
What wonder that you do not care  
For life's poor game of noughts and crosses!

## A BALLAD OF ONE IDEA.

[Monomaniacs cannot reason about their infirmity,  
or perceive that it is abnormal.—*Hawthorne.*]

**W**HO schemes to bring the Chinese here ?  
Who makes rents high and labour dear ?  
Who tries to corner tickey beer ?  
De Beers !

Who spreads the scab and blights the grain ?  
Who sends the frost and stops the rain ?  
Who inundated Bloemfontein ?  
De Beers !

Who urges men to awful crimes ?  
Who writes the leaders in the "Times" ?  
And who indites these horrid rhymes ?  
De Beers !

Why has Colonial stock decayed ?  
Who was it organised the Raid ?  
Who slumped the ostrich feather trade ?  
De Beers !



Who is the worker's deadly foe ?  
Who makes the wild south-easter blow ?  
The same old answer, don't you know :  
De Beers !

Who brought the railway earnings down ?  
Who says that I'm a silly clown ?  
Who chucked me out of Graham's Town ?  
De Beers !

Who gives my head this awful pain ?  
Who works like madness in my brain ?  
Help ! Murder ! There they are again !  
De Beers !

## TRISTAN DA CUNHA.

[“ Living in honesty, sobriety and harmony, free apparently from all crime, vice, dissension, or double-dealing, they seem to have unconsciously carried out the purpose entertained by the original settler in 1811, Mr. Jonathan Lambert, by keeping themselves ‘ beyond the reach of chicanery and ordinary misfortune ’ ; but they must also have lost the instincts of suspicion and circumspection, which, unfortunately in less-favoured countries, are necessary in order to carry on successfully the struggle for existence.”—*Mr. Hammond Tooke’s report on Tristan da Cunha, 1904.*

I’M tired of town and suburb life,  
Of sermons dull and dinners witty,  
I loathe the bustle and the strife  
And strain of this infernal city—  
The bolted breakfast and the run,  
The morning trains, the evening papers,  
The listening when the day is done  
To Mrs. Rip Van Winkle’s vapours.

What matters that the sea is blue,  
What skills it that the sun is shining,  
I only know that bills are due,  
That trade is dull and stock declining,  
And if I breathe the word "advance,"  
Or overdraft I dare to mention,  
My bankers look at me askance,  
Or feign abstracted inattention.

But sometimes when a good cigar  
Has charmed my fancy into dreaming,  
I see a little isle afar,  
In sparkling sea and sunshine gleaming.  
Tristan da Cunha! Had I wings  
Like the proverbial dove's, I'd hurry  
To thee, where life has got no stings  
And duns and debtors do not worry.

There (*vide* Mr. Hammond Tooke),  
The people live in peace together,  
Their sermon is the running brook,  
Their sole anxiety the weather ;  
Their only altar—to the sky  
The hearths smoke upward like a censer,  
Their only law the family tie,  
As taught by Mr. Herbert Spencer.

For if there ever are disputes  
    Amongst this happy little nation,  
They never think of bringing suits,  
    But settle them by arbitration ;  
And if a whale is washed ashore  
    They do not fight about the blubber,  
But pool it in the general store,  
    So no one loses in the rubber.

In politics this pleasant place  
    Has got no Merriman or Sauer ;  
There are no jealousies of race,  
    There is no rivalry for power ;  
There argument is not abuse,  
    Nor obstinacy resolution ;  
For treason they have no excuse—  
    You see they've got no constitution.

They dress exactly as they please,  
    Flannels are *de rigueur* on Sunday ;  
And lovers wander at their ease,  
    Without a thought of Mrs. Grundy,  
For spite and slander are not known,  
    And no one thinks of asking whether  
There's an attendant chaperone  
    When Jack and Jill go out together.

There gossips are not heard to say  
That " Mr. Brown is blind and stupid,  
Or he would surely see the way  
His wife goes on with Captain Cupid."  
There ladies do not draw aside  
And murmur with an air of mystery :  
" You see that person on the ride,  
Hers is a sad and shocking history."

There charity is not for show,  
And friendship does not rest on money,  
And there the people do not know  
The art of catching flies with honey ;  
They have no Ghibelline nor Guelph,  
Nor class nor clique nor clan nor party ;  
Their welcome's simply for yourself,  
And 'tis invariably hearty.

I see thy cliffs, thy shining sand,  
Thy long fields sloping to the ocean !  
Oh, happy people, happy land,  
Far from the world's insane commotion !  
Thy seabirds wheel, thy grey rocks gleam  
Soft as the shades of evening falling—  
Am I awake, or do I dream ?—  
*Yes, yes, my dear, I hear you calling !*

## ÆSOP IN AFRICA.

## THE BULLS AND THE LION.

**A**S I peruse from day to day  
The sullen growls of Kimberley,  
While loyal Mafeking allows  
De Kock to violate his vows,  
And threats smoke upward from the Bay,  
The patient Treasurer to slay,  
Or cook the goose of Dr. Smartt,  
And overturn the apple-cart—  
Unless the Government abates  
The burden of the railway rates,  
The while East London grinds its axe  
And Cape Town wants a diamond tax,  
I think upon a fable old  
By the sagacious Æsop told.

Four bulls—'tis thus the story goes—  
Were troubled with the worst of woes,  
A lion, wily, fierce and strong,  
A tireless foe had plagued them long,  
Now preying on their tender calves,  
Now frightening their better halves ;



---

And haunting all the cattle ways  
Till the poor beasts dared hardly graze.

Thus by oppression forced to act,  
They entered on a solemn pact,  
To join their forces and unite  
The common enemy to fight.  
'Twas done : four pairs of horns prevailed  
Where one alone had surely failed ;  
Scatheless upon the veld they fed—  
As safe as in the cattle-shed ;  
Their sides grew fat, and sleek their skin.  
The lion now was growing thin.

Thin and more thin the lion grew,  
He muttered, " This will never do,  
I must contrive to drive a wedge  
Of discord through their plaguey pledge,"  
He roared : his herd of jackals came  
And cocked their ears to hear the game—  
Then bull by bull they singled out,  
Hinted a fear, conveyed a doubt—  
" This pledge is very fine, my friend,  
But where do all the favours tend ?  
Your neighbours have the bottom grass  
While you eat thistles like an ass,  
With rich lucerne their stalls are full,

---

While you, poor dear neglected bull  
(Our hearts with soft compassion melt),  
Have nothing but the barren veld."

Bulls are a most suspicious clan,  
They have more jealousies than man ;  
Indeed, so great is their distrust,  
That they are prone to be unjust,  
Taking their comrades for their foes  
And dealing friends mistaken blows ;  
In every passing shade they see  
A menace to their liberty.

In this case, then, where you and I,  
Like men of common sense, would try  
To find how matters really stood  
Ere screaming for each other's blood,  
And settle by arrangement wise,  
If wrong there was, a compromise,  
These foolish bulls at once began  
Their friends with hostile eyes to scan.  
In every shake of horn or hoof  
Suspicion found convincing proof,  
And so, to make my story brief,  
The bulls' alliance came to grief,  
And soon their plight was just as bad  
As 'twas before ; I need not add,  
As they grew thin, their ancient bane  
Began to put on flesh again.

## AT THE EXHIBITION.

YOU have observed, no doubt, that different men  
Have got their different ways of taking pleasure ;  
Some love to hoard their wealth and some, again,  
Seem to prefer to dissipate their treasure ;  
Some haunt the racecourse ; some, I grieve to say,  
Pursue a transient happiness in drinking—  
Each to his taste : my own peculiar way  
Is to engage in philosophic thinking.

I love to saunter in the crowded street  
And read the features of each face that passes ;  
Wisdom I note in some of those I meet,  
Others are just as obviously asses ;  
There walks a man who loves the human race,  
And there a misanthrope who hates his brother ;  
There goes a Jew—one can't mistake the face—  
And there—this must be Plein-street—goes  
another.

But nowhere else am I so prompted to  
The bitter-sweet of mental parturition  
As when with devious feet I wander through  
The crowded alleys of the Exhibition.

See how the crowd for Pleasure's Dead-sea fruit  
Jostle and crush in a perspiring welter,  
Some chasing Folly on the Water Chute,  
Others pursuing her on the Helter Skelter.

Look, how they mount the scaffold's dizzy height  
At vast expenditure of time and power  
To snatch a fevered moment's brief delight—  
A whizz, a scream, a splash, a muddy shower.  
'Tis thus we climb the arduous stairs of life  
To gain a seat upon the stern-sheets cushion.  
Ah, vain ! Before there's time to murmur " knife "  
We bump upon the shores of dissolution.

Again, how parabolical the Maze !  
Note with what confidence the people enter,  
And how invariably they take the ways  
That lead them anywhither but the centre,  
The while successful searchers from the tower  
Delude with false advice and witticism,  
As hollow as the barren gibes of Sauer  
Or Merriman's " destructive criticism."

Or would you have the shape of Truth defined ?  
Then please inspect the room of looking-glasses ;  
Thus through the shifting mirrors of the mind  
The Actual preposterously passes.

To such Man bends adulatory knee  
    And calls it Ordination and Hereafter.  
Ah, fools ! 'tis your own shadows that you see,  
    And Life is nothing but a " Hall of Laughter."

This corrugated caravanserai  
    Is an epitome of life in little ;  
Its switchback progress, its ambitions high,  
    Its vain desires and its enjoyments brittle ;  
For a brief hour bright rockets mount the skies,  
    And all is joy and light and animation ;  
And then " the tumult and the shouting dies,"  
    And naught remains but dust and desolation.





A MUSEUM IDYLL.



## THE DEDICATION.

(TO F.M.D.)

*SOME happy olden story would I tell,  
Or sad romaunt wrought of a poet's sighs,  
Then list for your soul's answer, as one lies  
Upon the brink of a deep, silent well  
Wherein long moments since a pebble fell,  
And hearken as the sounding echoes rise,  
So tears would ripple up into your eyes  
Or laughter ringing like a golden bell.*

*A golden bell; but swung from what sad deeps!  
Even so a trembling water lily makes  
Through glimmering floods her wavering pilgrimage,  
Until at last a golden crown she takes  
And samite robes, but still her glad heart keeps  
The memory of her silent anchorage.*



## A MUSEUM IDYLL.

**R**EADER, when you've wandered o'er  
The dim Museum's cumbered floor,  
And seen the grim and ghastly shapes,  
As skeletons of Men and Apes,  
Scorpions' tails and serpents' skins ;  
Nightmare beetles stuck on pins ;  
Stalactites and fossils all  
Ranged in cases on the wall ;  
Corals, sponges and the weeds  
The silent floor of ocean breeds ;  
And the reptiles of the prime  
That floundered in creation's slime ;  
Bushmen's skulls and meteorites  
And all such weird and uncouth sights—  
Have you never longed to see  
Some relic of Humanity—  
Something that would bring to mind  
The form and vesture of Mankind,  
Something with the bloom and scent  
Of sweet human sentiment ?

Seek, then, the doorway where one sees  
"Colonial antiquities,"  
There the cabinets and walls  
Sparkle with antique bocal,  
Dresden shepherdesses fair,  
Old blue Delft, and priceless ware  
Brought by Dutch East Indiaman  
From the ports of old Japan.  
Diaz's croziered pillar there  
Stands by wicked Van Noodt's chair,  
And the plate that graced his board  
Is guarded by Van Riebeck's sword.  
Near an old bronze Buddhist bell  
Graven with an Eastern spell—  
With its *Mane padme om* ;—  
Near a Chinese ivory comb,  
Near an idol grinning white,  
Cased in ocean stalactite  
Which has "suffered a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange";  
Near a grim terrific God;  
Near a teapot with an odd  
Chinese dragon trailing round  
Golden folds on copper ground,



There's a tiny English shoe  
Of Morocco, cream and blue,  
Made with all a cobbler's skill  
By "Sam Miller in Cornhill."

Nothing more the legend says  
But I, in love with bygone days,  
Look until I hear it tell  
(Like the murmur in a shell)  
Many a story quaint and sweet  
Of the Lady fair whose feet  
Twinkled with a charm divine  
Beneath her ample crinoline,  
Making her tortured lovers dream  
That heaven itself was blue and cream.

As down the Heerengracht she went  
Each hat was doffed, each head was bent,  
Envied the slave who held the red  
Umbrella o'er her queenly head!  
Envied the mastiff on whose back  
One fair and slender hand lay slack!  
Even the Fiscal pressed his hat  
With fervour 'gainst his lace cravat,  
And swept the pavement with a bow  
Before the lovely Jonge-vrouw.

When Swellengrebel gave a ball  
He led her foremost down the hall ;  
Her lightest word or look was law  
At picnic or at Wapenschaw ;  
In Church distracted beaux gave scant  
Attention to the Predikant,  
But read their sermon in the smile  
That shone like sunshine down the aisle,  
And once at least upon the lawn  
Beneath the Castle walls at dawn  
Hard-breathing men with sword to sword  
Trampled a circle on the sward,  
Athirst to make a rival feel  
The cruel chastisement of steel.

But now, I prithee, tell me Muse  
How came she to wear English shoes ?

An English ship one summer day  
Let fall her anchor in the Bay,  
Answered the Castle gun for gun—  
The " Walpole " or the " Addison " <sup>3</sup>  
Laden with sandalwood and spice  
And other goodly merchandise.  
Ah, how the crew praised God to see  
The welcome green of grass and tree  
And, oh, how pleasant was the sight  
Of shady streets and houses white !

A boat was manned and brought a score  
Or so of invalids ashore,  
With fever pale, with scurvy black,  
Or yellow with the Yellow Jack.  
Some went where by the old Canal  
Stood Van der Stel's sick hospital ;  
But one, of gentle birth and mien,  
Was by the lady's father seen  
And lodged and nursed a month or so  
Within their house in Brommer's Row.  
(Old English travellers agree  
To praise Cape hospitality.)  
She nourished him with jellies fine,  
Custards and rich Constantia wine ;  
And when he went to take the air  
She used to walk beside his chair.

He told her stories of the East  
Of savage man and savage beast ;  
Of palms that waved o'er coral isles  
And rivers full of crocodiles ;  
Of marble tombs with gems inwrought  
And sacrificial Juggernaut ;  
Of jewelled Begums and Bashaws,  
Rodgers, Nabobs and Sabberdaws ;  
Of pirate Angria and the fray  
'Twixt Great Mogul and Grand Sedey ;

Of Hindu widows burnt alive  
And how he'd fought the French with Clive.  
He watched her cheek go red and pale—  
The light and shadow of his tale—  
And on her eyelid shining clear  
The crystal candour of a tear.

Ah, gentle reader need I tell  
The story that you know so well,  
Of tender looks and stifled sighs,  
Of ardent vows and soft replies?  
It is, I think, enough to say  
They loved as lovers love to-day,  
And in the way of lovers swore  
That no one ever loved before,  
For centuries may come and go,  
But Love and Youth are always so.

Nor need I rend your hearts to tell  
The passion of their sad farewell.  
But he, a moment to beguile  
The April sunshine of a smile,  
Asked for her choice 'twixt hat and gown,  
A gift to bring from London Town,  
And she although her cheeks were wet  
Was in a moment all coquette—

“ Your English fashions would, I fear,  
But ill become my homely sphere,—  
Besides, you know not how to choose—  
Bring me instead a pair of shoes.”

With leaden feet the days passed o'er  
The maid who watched upon the shore ;  
A piteous calendar—her cheeks  
Grew paler with the passing weeks.  
Her father marked the absent mood,  
The tears, the pensive attitude,  
And with affection's swift surmise,  
He guessed the reason of her sighs,  
And tried to lock the stable door  
(As parents oft had done before.)  
A husband (to himself he said)  
Will drive this nonsense from her head,  
But which fond suitor should he bless—  
'Twas an *embarras de richesse*  
'Twixt Van der Merwe, Jacques Theron,  
The Captain of the Garrison,  
Petrus de Witt or Van Breda,  
Or Cloete of Constantia.  
And then the Fiscal—fat and old—  
What matter?—he had power and gold—  
A farmstead bowered in oak and vine,  
The fairest in the Drakenstein,

Coffers of dollars and doubloons,  
Gold mohurs, pagodas, ducatoons,  
And in his cupboards stored away  
The priceless treasures of Cathay.

Straight to the Fiscal's house he went,  
Nor paused to ask the girl's consent,  
Arranged the match without delay,  
Drew up the deeds and named the day.  
In vain the tears that fell like rain  
The prayers, the protests, all in vain.  
The Fiscal forced a loathed caress  
With elephantine playfulness.

'Twas now a twelvemonth since the day  
Her English lover sailed away,  
And 'neath the Garden oaks, forlorn,  
A week before the wedding morn,  
She sat—a book upon her knee,—  
Alone in pensive reverie.  
The menace of the old bridegroom  
Was dreadful as an open tomb,  
It yawned so imminently near,  
Poor dove! she sickened with the fear!  
“My heart has called so loud,” she said,  
“He must come if he be not dead.”



A sudden step—a look—a cry—  
“ ’Tis thou!” and—with a kiss—“ ’Tis I!”  
“ See, I have brought thine English shoes!  
Said’st thou I knew not how to choose?  
These for thy feet—this golden band  
Will grace the whiteness of thy hand.”

From Signal Hill to Witteboom,  
From Kirstenbosch to Roodebloem,  
With canon, bugle, bell and horn,  
They ushered in the wedding morn.  
The Fiscal went with stately stride  
To wish Good-morrow to his bride;  
But he was greeted with a groan—  
Alas! Alack! the bird had flown.

Far out beneath a cloud of sail  
A ship bowed to the favouring gale.  
They heard above the ocean swell  
Ring faint but clear a wedding bell,  
And where the boat put off they found  
A tiny shoe upon the ground.

As scent of faded rose-leaves dead  
With dreams of summer fills the head;  
As the faint murmurs in a shell  
Of green foam-crested surges tell;  
So this forgotten little shoe  
Told me the tale I’ve told to you.

## THE FLYING DUTCHMAN.

WHEN they sailed out of Amsterdam  
'Twas Christmastide, and now 'twas June ;  
For seven long weeks they had not seen  
Nor any star, nor sun nor moon.

When they put out of Amsterdam  
A hundred women waved goodbye ;  
Now scarce two score could handle a rope,  
The others were dead or like to die.

The watch lay on the after deck,  
Longing amain for the night to pass.  
“ Oh, would that we might make the Cape !  
Our very bones yearn for the scurvy grass.”

Their eyes glowered out like fire from a pit,  
They scarcely looked like mortal men.  
“ If I press my fingers into my skin,”  
Said one, “ it will not rise again.”

“ My flesh is sodden like salted meat,”  
Another said, “ See that running sore !

“ 'Tis black and livid a span around,  
“ 'Twas a little scratch that a handspike tore.”

They were beating up against the wind,  
With the great seas smashing under the prow.  
“ I fear me much,” the Captain said,  
“ The timbers will start at the weather bow.”

“ Oh, Van der Decken,” the boatswain cried,  
With this contrary wind we make no speed.  
When all things fail, I have heard men say  
That a prayer is good in the hour of need.”

“ Old Van der Decken looked stark and black.  
He said : “ I know not how that may be ;  
I have sailed with Masters that sang and prayed,  
But they never did good that I could see.

“ I have seen men pray in the Church at home,  
Fat and black like penguins they stood ;  
They had everything that their hearts could wish,  
But they whined by the hour for their daily food.

“ If I had been master of such a crew,  
“ I'd 'a laid about with a stout rope's end.  
If a man is a man he will stand and take  
With a laugh or a curse what God may send.”

But the boatswain rose and prayed aloud,  
And the men all struggled upon their knees.  
" Oh, God, make an end of storm and cloud !  
Let the stars shine out and the tempest cease !

As he prayed a squall came along the sea,  
And struck the ship like an open hand.  
The topmast split and swung by the shrouds,  
Like the broken top of a fishing wand.

And a racing wave came over the ship,  
From the poop to the bows there was nothing seen  
But the white sea washing round the masts.  
There were twelve men now where a score had  
been.

The good ship staggered and stopped awhile,  
And then she rose and shook herself free.  
" All hands on deck," the Master cried,  
" To cut the wreckage into the sea.

" See now how your prayer has served, ye fools !  
To swear in fine weather and pray in a gale,  
Is a coward's game that God sees through.  
Never tempest was brewed that would make  
me quail.

“ A curse is as good as a prayer they say ;  
Now hear, Oh God, now mark me well !  
I'll bring this good ship into the Bay  
In spite of the power of heaven and hell ! ”

Then the clouds were drawn from off the sky,  
As a fisherman draws his net from the sea.  
Lo, the dawn had broken ! Lo, and was night !  
And the waves were sparkling merrily.

“ See the long black mountain round the Bay !  
See Van Riebeck's fort and his garden green !  
Now, listen, I hear a pealing bell,  
'Tis the holy Sabbath morn I ween.”

“ And look, the folk are going to the Church !  
What think ye men, have I brought ye in ? ”  
The boatswain clutched the Master's arm,  
“ Now Christ forgive us for our sin ! ”

“ Why look ye strange ? ” the Master cried ;  
“ Why cover your eyes like a man struck blind ? ”  
“ Look, look, how the square sails bear on the mast !  
God's wounds ! We are sailing against the wind ! ”

The ship was sailing out to sea,  
The wind was blowing upon the land ;  
“ Now, bring her round,” cried Van der Decken,  
She heeded not the helmsman's hand.

Now the gardens green were far away,  
And faintlier sounded the Sabbath bell ;  
Never a word the mariners spoke,  
As one by one on the deck they fell.

\* \* \* \* \*

And still in the storm, as sailors say,—  
Sere and worn and white as a bone,  
The phantom ship drives against the gale,  
And an old man stands on her poop—alone.



ELEGY ON A CITY CHURCHYARD.

[On the second reading of Colonel Crewe's Bill to deal with the disused cemeteries in Somerset Road.]

DUSTY, neglected quarter of the dead!  
Upon whose half-obliterated stones  
From year to year no mourning tear is shed,  
Whose monuments are crumbling with their bones,  
And death himself has fled  
To find new habitations more remote,  
Thine end is near, for even graveyards die,  
And mine, the only tributary sigh,  
Poor unregretted victim of a vote!

*Memento mori* to the city clerk  
In his diurnal journeys on the car;  
The trysting-placc of tabbies after dark,  
Scene of fierce love and unmelodious war;  
The temporary ark  
Of some poor tattered Romeo down at heel,  
Who shelters in thy "detestable maw"  
From the more real terrors of the law  
And colder welcomes of the ne'er-do-weel.

And in the spring, when the geranium throws  
A flush of scarlet on the dismal scene,  
In white and gold the arum lily glows,  
The dingy cyprus takes a livelier green,  
The yellow cactus blows,  
Then young invaders clamber from the street  
To snatch the fragrant harvests of the grave,  
Till, spite of best endeavours to be brave,  
They scatter in precipitate retreat.

But, save for these rash visitants, thy ways  
Are all untrodden, and the sculptured fane  
Flaunts to the desert air its empty praise,  
And all thy flattering epitaphs are vain,  
No need for weather stain  
To blot inscriptions that are never read!  
None cares to know who lies beneath the stone,  
Whether it be a Darby or a Joan,  
Or whether Brown or Robinson be dead.

Yet these unmarked *Hic Jacets* are the sign  
That some once breathing pinch of valiant clay,  
With thoughts and feelings just like yours or mine,  
Hoped, loved and hated in his little day.  
Danced, courted, and drank wine,

Played cards, backed horses, even as you or I,  
Engaged in every whirling chance of life,  
Schemed to win wealth or pleasure or a wife—  
Poor devil! never dreaming he would die!

Commingled in this mortal dust-heap lies  
Another Cape Town, huddled layer on layer,  
Inextricably mixed—the fools, the wise,  
The rich, the poor, the beggar and the Mayor,  
Grey hairs and beauty's eyes!  
Whate'er they were they came to the same end;  
And we must follow in a little while  
Like answered letters stuck upon a file  
And docketed by some officious friend!



TRIOLETS.









## A PORTRAIT.

YOUTH and years well met  
In those clear blue eyes!

*Châtelaine et bachelette!*

Youth and years well met!

'Neath breasts not rounded yet,

A mother's heart lies.

Youth and years well met

In those dear blue eyes!

## TRAGICAL PASTORAL.

He plucked the flower and, Lo, the blood !  
He grieved—a pretty idyll spoiled,  
And it was such a tempting bud !  
He plucked the flower and, Lo, the blood !  
Now it is lying in the mud,  
And his glove-tips a trifle soiled,  
He plucked the flower and, Lo, the blood !  
He grieved—a pretty idyll spoiled !

[AD COLOPHONEM.]