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MIXED GRILL





ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS.

Presented by the author,

Dr.W.Edgecombe, F.R.C.P.

March 1935.

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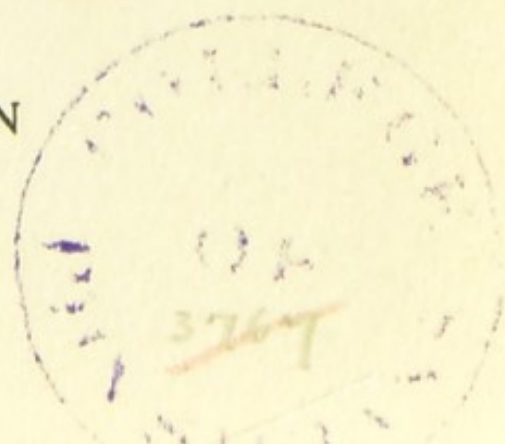
A
MIXED GRILL

OF
VARIED VERSE
ON WINTER SPORTS AND OTHER TOPICS

BY
W. EDGECOMBE
(JUDEX)



ENGADIN PRESS Co., SAMADEN
1914



STA COLL

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS LIBRARY	
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DEDICATED
TO THE MANY FRIENDS I HAVE
MADE DURING MY YEARLY VISITS
TO ST. MORITZ

PREFACE

OF the following verses the majority (those on topical subjects) have appeared from time to time in the pages of the "Alpine Post;" one set in "Punch," to the proprietors of which I tender my cordial acknowledgements for permission to reproduce them here; others in various papers, and the remainder are now published for the first time.

It is in response to the kindly wish expressed by many of the habitual visitors to St. Moritz in winter that these verses are collected together in volume form.

W. EDGECOMBE.

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MAXIMS FOR ST. MORITZ

WHEN first you stand in Switzerland
For health or recreation,
Your eager thoughts to Winter Sports
Turn in anticipation.
Of course you'll join (if you've the coin)
In all the exercises
With dark or fair—with all, whate'er
May be their sex or sizes.
How dull a dog you be, so wide a choice
Infallibly must make your heart rejoice,
But e'er you try your skill at one or more
Take tips from him who has "been there before."

The choice, I say, is wide; you may
Fulfil your predilection
To bob or curl, to skate and whirl
In this or that direction.
Tobogganing perchance may fling
You headlong to perdition;
Skikjöring, too, may do for you
And smother your ambition.
They all have idiosyncrasies which you'll
Observe, unless you're keen on ridicule;
So in whichever sport you may take part,
These hints (set forth below) just lay to heart.

Thus; if your legs are merely pegs,
 In shape not ornamental
 You'll be sedate and will not skate
 In manner Continental;
 For snowy lights on skinny tights
 Expose their limitation,
 And freakish tricks on slender sticks
 Command no admiration.

The lion tamer's costume I confess
 To few is given to wear with much success;
 The common ruck should clothe their sportive deeds
 In shorts (or longs) of homely Harris tweeds.

Per contra: if your limbs are stiff,
 Their suppleness abating,
 It would be wise to patronise
 The English style of skating;
 For there you see rigidity
 In all its grace and beauty;
 To keep your knee eternally
 Unbending is your duty.

Until you're fairly expert you will find
 It wiser not to venture on "combined;"
 So lest your disabilities intrude
 You'd better skate, at first, in solitude!

Again: 'tis true that none wear blue
 Except the swells, when ski-ing:
 To scorn this rule denotes the fool
 In aspect, clothes, and being!

If you're a nut, then do it, but
 If not among top-notchers,
 You'll live and learn, and fitly earn
 The gibings of the watchers.
 I rather fancy, too, a single stick
 By cognoscenti is considered chic;
 To carry two, where one alone would serve,
 Betrays a lack of balance—or of nerve.

If you should go, alert to show
 Your aptitude for curling,
 And join the throng who all day long
 Their hefty stones are hurling,
 Then clothe your feet, however neat,
 In shapeless, ugly gouties:
 They may not fit, but, frankly, it
 Not wise to be without is!
 Some day you'll take a most unholy toss
 And anxious friends may mourn a sudden loss;
 One fall at first, and all will let it pass,
 But two or more, they'll write you down an ass!

To merit fame at Scotland's game
 First learn to soop like Hades;
 (That is to say, not in the way
 Of dilettanti ladies!)
 Don't blame your luck if you are stuck
 At "lead" for all the season;
 If you feel sore, be sure it's for
 A most convincing reason!

For novices must never, never grouse
 If not selected once to boss the House:
 Be vigilant and patient—take my tip,
 In time, with luck, you may become a skip.

When, full of beans, your pleasure leans
 To active things like Bandy,
 You will be taught that such a sport
 Is no game for a dandy:
 You'll have to buck up quick and chuck
 All tendencies to slackness,
 Or your reputation is buried, mute,
 In deep Cimmerian blackness.
 And if you can't resist the plaintive way
 Of charming ladies asking you to play,
 At least remember that the men expect
 You will not every day their game neglect.

If you are bold—and not too old—
 Permit me to suggest a
 Delightful way to spend the day:—
 Toboggan on the Cresta!
 To tackle it demands some grit:
 If you would not your nob slay
 Be reticent, and stay content
 With the commodious bob-sleigh!
 The former gives you tosses all alone,
 Which may, or may not, fracture every bone:
 With bobbing, on the contrary, you will
 Have comrades in affliction when you spill!

And now, my son, I've nearly done
These desultory verses.

What though my song be somewhat long,
The moral short and terse is!

To one and all—to short and tall—

To corpulent and lanky—

To thick and thin—avoid like sin

The status known as "swanky."

For sidy ways will ultimately end

In social ostracism, and may tend

To add to your unenviable repute

Deservedly—The Order of the Boot!



THE SKI-ING OF PATER FAMILIAS

Well be it so my boy; but first explain
 (For so by right of skill your privilege is)
 How I'm to don, and how to make remain
 Upon my feet, these fearsome-looking sledges.
 Expound to me again
 Which are the out, and which the inside edges,
 And how my equilibrium to maintain
 When leaping over ledges.

Tell me the way successfully to cope
With all the hidden pitfalls of obstruction
Encountered on the journey down the slope;
And how, when speed is up, to make reduction.
So primed and full of hope,
I, who have ne'er conspicuously for pluck shone,
Will hide my trepidation and elope
To glory or destruction.

No plausible excuses for delay
Remain, alas, since you have done equipping
Your rashly pliant pater for the fray;
So, in each hand, a ski-stick tightly gripping,
At length I am away,
The flight of wingéd Pegasus outstripping.
And vowing this delightful mode of play
Indubitably ripping!

At least it was at first! I'd have you know
I kept along as far as I intended;
When, even as I was about to show
A Christiania swing, abruptly splendid,
Those skis declined to go
My chosen path, but most perversely wended
Their way towards a deep abyss of snow
And suddenly up-ended!

Into the frigid snowdrift, straight and true
I burrowed, headfirst, like a blithesome bunny;
A pleasing spectacle that all of you
Appear to think superlatively funny!

I take another view;
And all your blandishments and words of honey
Shall ne'er persuade me to this game anew,
No! not for any money.

ANNO DOMINI

(With apologies to the shade of C. K.)

WHEN all your limbs are young, lad,
And all your sinews green;
And all your edges true, lad,
And all your turns are clean;
Then hey! for boot and skate, lad,
And round the rink away
To try at topmost rate, lad,
The "B" and "D" and "A."

When all your limbs are old, lad,
And all too well you know
You cannot pass the tests, lad,
You skated years ago;
Creep round the rink and wait there;
Perchance, with luck, you'll find
Three oldish men to skate there
A veteran's "combined."

THE VICTIM

THOU false inhuman friend who didst beguile
Long months ago, while yet 'twas summer grass-
time,
Myself, when winter came (the overcast time)
To try this vastly over-rated pastime,
And I consented, diffident the while;
Know now this is the first and very last time
I'll face the fat humiliating smile
That mocks my middle-aged attempts as infantile.

Yes, Thou, who lured me on this hateful ice,
(Whose frozen surface cruelly contuses
My nether limbs, what time my skate refuses
To bend its will to mine, but rather chooses
To trace its own strange unforeseen device)
Survey with me this multitude of bruises
And marvel not that nothing shall entice
Me on the rink again—no! not at any price!

Not that I grieve unduly at the pain,
Though well I wish my tender thews were
tougher,
Or that I could contrive some sort of buffer
To mitigate the tortures that I suffer;

No! If I'm granted respite to explain
 It's merely that I hate to seem a duffer,
 So hopelessly unable to maintain
 My b—b—balance; d——n the thing, I'm down
 again!

A horrid purler this, upon the flank;
 Gratuitously further stimulating
 The very spot whose tingling was abating
 Occasioned by my previous gyrating!
 I'd tell Thee what I murmured when I sank
 And what I really think of figure skating
 In terms that should not fail in being frank
 If only, only, I could safely reach the bank!



A BALLADE OF DREADFUL WEATHER

(Dedicated to all the Officials of all the Sports)

WHEN weary of work and of waiting
You fly to St. Moritz for rest,
To revel in curling or skating,
To ski and toboggan your best;
You join in the sports with a zest,
You welcome the mountains you know,
The Rosatch and Julier dressed
In virgin, immaculate snow!

The climate is keen and elating,
In sunshine your hopes you invest;
Its powers no whit under-rating,
You caper with frolic and jest;
When lo! your delight is suppressed!
Gymkhana day comes and the show,
As usual, by luck isn't blessed
For down comes the pitiless snow!

Anon when the storm seems abating,
The wind leaves the treacherous west,
Fine weather in hope you're awaiting,
Again by mischance you're distressed;

For more competitions are pressed,
In seemingly limitless row,
And they are the cause, we suggest
Of this endless iniquitous snow!

L'ENVOI

Officials! pray heed our request;
Revert to the state long ago:
Bid all competitions arrest,
And give us a respite from snow!



L'ENTENTE CORDIALE

(With apologies to the shade of Lewis Carroll)

THE English skater gazed upon
Those Continental tricks,
And wept like anything to see
Such quantities of kicks;
"In every three, or eight," he said
"There must be five or six!"

He thought he saw a semaphore
Of arms and legs awhirl;
He looked again and saw it was
The Continental twirl;
"This may befit a man," he said,
"But surely not a girl!"

The Continental skater said;
"Although it may seem rude,
I cannot help but weep to see
That rigid attitude;
'Tis well, indeed, they mostly skate
In abject solitude."

He thought he saw a set of pales
Erect upon the rink;
On second glance, he said, "It is

The English style, I think;
If this be grace and skill, from all
Such oddities I shrink."

"The time has come," both skaters said,
"To talk of many things;
Of B's and Q's and rocking turns
And acrobatic flings;
Let's mix the methods, just to see
What strange result it brings."

"Agreed," they said, and set to work
With beatific smile;
Enthusiasm held them, for
They laboured quite a while,
Until at length the two evolved
A Contin-English style!



R. I. P.

AH! sad indeed it is to contemplate
The decadence of what was once so great!
That none should be at hand and have the will
Its dying glory to resuscitate!

Here, in this home of skating, shall they say
The English style at length has had its day?
That quiet unassuming stately art
Has lived its little hour and passed away?

The facile grace, the unpretentious skill,
That seeing minds with admiration fill,
Who reverence the art that art conceals
And, understanding, know a good thing still!

The style the unskilled public fail to heed;
For their distorted taste they rather need
Spectacular performances; to them
The English style is caviare indeed!

I seem to hear the trite suggestion rise
To blend the styles, effect a compromise;
As well mix oil with water, wine with whey,
As clinch the matter in such hapless wise!

Of old the English method led the van,
But since the sorry rivalry began,
With all the best intent it never may
Assimilate with tights and astrakhan!

With sorrow fraught, the fact confessed must be
The English style is moribund; and we,
Its devotees, deplore the sad demise
And on its tombstone blazon R. I. P.!



THE STORY OF CURLING

GATHER, men of every nation
 At our yearly celebration
 Round your president, and lend him your support;
 Give a miss to youth and beauty,
 Come along and do your duty
 To the sterling
 Game of Curling
 If you love it as you ought
 For the priceless prince of all our winter sport.

Though you own I care not *what* land
 You must yield to bonnie Scotland
 The pride of place, the honour of its birth,
 For a cannie Scot began it
 With a polished lump of granite
 In the ages
 When the sages
 Found an outlet for their mirth
 In the neolithic epoch of the earth.

In their skins of browns and yellows
 We can picture those old fellows
 Semi-naked, how with eagerness they came

From their huts and rockbound caverns
 Or their low primeval taverns,
 Wildly whooping
 At the sooping
 In their prehistoric game
 Which was apt to pan out anything but tame;

For the vision lies before us
 Of the playful pleiosaurus
 Or the mammoth, looking on with hungry eyes
 At the prospect of a dinner
 Off some luckless new beginner
 Meekly bleating
 At the eating
 He will furnish when he dies
 As the mastodon entraps him by surprise.

Little recked they of the danger
 From the hairy-coated stranger;
 'Twas not theirs in frightened agony to blub;
 With their stones they fell upon her
 And, to all their lasting honour,
 Never trembled
 But assembled
 In the local village pub
 Where they formed the first recorded Curling Club.

In the fleeting course of time it
 Spread abroad to every climate
 Where the emblem of the Union is unfurled;

Every blessed country sees 'em
 With their tammy and their besom,
 Getting frisky
 On the whisky
 As the epithets are hurled,
 For the Scottie with his besom rules the world !

It's the sport to make the lungs stir
 Of the graybeard and the youngster
 As they gather cheek by jowl upon the rink;
 And before the bottle passes
 Fill again your empty glasses
 To the glory
 Of the story
 Of the finest game, we think,
 Ever fashioned; come you curlers, let us drink!



THE JULIER JUMP

NOW palpitates my heart with horrid thump,
Now rises in my gorge a most peculiar
Massive and quite unmanageable lump,
As tremblingly I stand upon the Julier,
A silly chump,
About to risk my neck and make a jump!

Write me not down as cowardly I beg
Nor stigmatise me as an abject squealer
If I suggest a fiery potent peg
Before I emulate the feats of K--ll-r,
Or hefty Gr--g
Who only got me here to pull my leg.

Thanks; now I feel less absolutely cheap,
Less rocky on the pins—a trifle better;
Able to take a comprehensive peep
Below me—Gott im Himmel, Donnerwetter!
How jolly steep!
Is that the beastly thing I've got to leap?

Which of you says I'm shaking in my socks?
Insinuations such as these I spurn hard!
What care I, priméd well, for any knocks,
For is there not a H-ll-nd, or a B-rnh-rd,
Devoted docs.,
To pick my bleeding remnants off the rocks!

But seemingly the run-out doesn't show
Completely from the place where I am standing.
Permit me just to wander down below
To mark the situation of my landing,
The depth of snow
About the spot where probably I'll go.

Yes, all seems very simplified and clear,
And yet—I've just remembered, to my sorrow,
I have a small engagement on I fear
And must postpone this meeting till to-morrow,
When, if you're here
My friends, (I do *not* think) I shall appear!



OUR LADY OF THE CRESTA

HOW the tide of pity ripples
At the sight of all our cripples
Limping sorrowfully round about the place;
Some in bandages enshrouded
And their countenances clouded
With a decorative plaster on the face!

Such a sight I bet my hat'll
Conjure up the thought of battle
In the minds of those who've never been before;
Knowing not the war we wage meant
Nothing more than an engagement
With the Maiden on the field of Battledore!

The significance of *this* dress
Lies in dalliance with the Mistress,
Our enigmatic Lady of the Run,
And this antiseptic raiment
Is the necessary payment
She exacts from those who look to her for fun.

Upon all who ride the Cresta
Soon or late will be impressed a
Small memento of her feminine estate;

Both the novice and the old'un
 Are in course of time beholden
 To her whimsical caprices for their fate.

Lying prone on our toboggan
 Down the Church's Leap we jog, an'
 We negotiate the cunning triple bank
 In inimitable fashion,
 As triumphantly we dash on
 With a bosom choked with confidence and swank.

And we speed away through Junction
 Stuffed with pride and full of unction
 But the kiss of Shuttlecock upon the cheek
 Nips our vanity until a
 Further reprimand from Scylla
 Makes a permanent impression on our beak!

After Scylla, on Charybdis
 We may possibly a rib dis-
 Locate, and fall a sorry crumpled heap;
 In her fury she'll defeat us
 With a delicate quietus
 On the adamantine slope of Cresta Leap.

Though uncertain in her temper
 She's supreme—eadem semper—
 And we're jealous of the honour of her name;

Though she black our eyes to blindness
It is just her loving kindness
As she schools us in the Spirit of the Game!

Thus we woo our Lady's favour,
Grudging nothing that we gave her
Of our substance—with no anger nor remorse.
Come and be enrolled amongst her
Devotees, ambitious youngster,
And be blooded to the Freedom of her Course!



THE BETTER PART

PRAISE me no more this tiresome Winter Sport;
 Conjure me not with all the charms of curling
 Bobbing or skating; nothing of the sort
 Suffices now to set my senses whirling.
 Whether it be the rigour of the clime
 Or, sad to say, the ruthless hand of Time,
 It matters not: I realise that I'm
 No more a giddy yearling.

Therefore I give these things a miss in baulk,
 Knowing it better, far, befits me seeing
 Youngsters perform—and not forget to talk
 About their deeds, tobogganing or ski-ing.
 I know a sport worth two or three of these,
 More suited to my dignity and ease,
 Played, as you will, with one or many shes—
 The ancient game of sheing.

Favour me then with some sequestered nook
 In whose confines a gentle gurgling rill is;
 Therein to ponder on her fondest look
 And marvel at her wealth of frocks and frillies.
 Thus restful and contented would I stay
 To while away the livelong happy day
 In this divinely fascinating play—
 Philandering with Phyllis!

THE BREAK OF AGE

HOW oft, though weighted with advancing years
I've sought, but unsuccessfully, to woo
The favour of that brace of pallid spheres,
And of their rosy-tinted sister too,
Enthron'd upon the spot,
From whose remote confines her distant view
Appears, to failing eyes, a reddish dot
Which I can sometimes hit but yet more often
not!

Much have I toiled with those elusive pills
Post-prandially, around the verdant board;
Marking with zest that no misfortune chills
The laggard points laboriously scored;
Hoping in vain to make
With all the aid that Fortune might afford,
Or else by skill—or even by mistake,
But, anyhow, someday to make a twenty break.

The goal of my ambition! Never yet
Have I achieved that satisfying feat
(Although I pride myself, when really set
My execution is distinctly neat,
But somehow seems to lack
The hefty vigour requisite to beat
The globules to submission, or the knack
Of downing them decisively within the sack).

Until last night, when I had totalled ten,
With nothing left, so blindly punched for luck.
But missed the object ball (the white) and then
Fortuitously smote the red and struck
Her straight into the hole;
Rebounding on the pallid one I stuck
Him swiftly in, and down my pillule stole
From sight—to make a ten shot, twenty break,
and goal!



PLOUGHED

ONE more unfortunate,
 Brimming with zest,
 Rashly importunate,
 Up for his test.

Laudably emulous,
 Longing to please,
 Albeit tremulous
 As to the knees,

Comes on assertively,
 Clad in his tights
 (Tried them on furtively
 Often at nights);

Judges are sceptical,
 Audibly sniff
 "Limbs cataleptical
 Attitude stiff;

Harsh angularity,
 Of grace bereft,
 Too much disparity
 'Twixt right and left."

Sharply censorious,
All of them say
"Unmeritorious,
Take him away."

Mark him disconsolate
Full of distress,
Pallid and wan, so late
Sure of success!

Sadly importunate
Skated his best,
One more unfortunate
Pilled in his test!



TO ANY RINK INSTRUCTOR

EXPONENT of the florid style of skating,
 Engaged the livelong day upon the rink,
 Displaying limbs of contour undulating,
 Unmarred by angularity or kink,
 Oblige me with a pause in your gyrating
 And tell me, on the quiet, what you think
 (You in the bulgy Astrakhan-trimmed kit)
 Of your pursuit: expound your views on it.

Resplendent in your atmosphere of glory,
 The cynosure of all admiring eyes
 (Some critical, some frankly amatory)
 It would, I think, occasion no surprise
 If there were spicy chapters in your story.
 Whose full narration were perhaps unwise.
 Though clearly you're a nut and "très moutarde"
 Your life, at times, appears a trifle hard.

Teaching the art to Ethel, say, or Alice
 Who dare not take a single step alone
 Upon the Kulm rink, or perchance the Palace,
 Lugging her round, with faint dyspnoeic moan,
 Can you affirm your cup of bliss, your chalice,
 Is full when she weighs close on twenty stone?
 And what, precisely, is your point of view
 When inadvertently she falls on you?

You murmur: there are vivid compensations
 To cheer in turn each tight-enveloped limb,
 In frequent, almost daily, assignations
 With maidens young, divinely fair—and slim;
 Not wholly disinclined to hot flirtations
 As hand in hand (or closer still) you skim
 Supremely beatific o'er the ice;—
 I'm with you there—that notion's rather nice!

But when the time is up and you must hurry,
 To fill the next engagement on your plan,
 Into the arms of something fat and furry,
 A hapless helpless creature of a man,
 I mark the traces, ill-disguised, of worry
 As furtively your countenance I scan,
 And say it for you—fervently; I guess
 Exactly the extent of your distress.

Considered contemplatively, your billet
 Does not attract me greatly; I refrain
 From envy of you; you are free to fill it
 Provided that you kindly will explain
 Just how it's done (verse IV); and so instil it
 That I may, with the feminines, attain
 The willing power your labours to reduce;
 The men are yours—for them I have no use!

MENS INSANA IN CORPORE INSANO

NO jocund singer I! Not to the moon,
Nor yet to Love, and leafy days of June,
When sentimental idiots love to spoon,
I pitch my tune.

The dancing wavelets of the summer sea,
The scaly denizens that therein be,
Such fishy things do not, apparently,
Appeal to me.

The Harvest Home, the way that swallows fly,
The gorgeous sunsets of the autumn sky,
All have their claims to melody; but I
Shall pass them by.

Nor can my present frame of mind support
The mere suggestion of this winter sport;
Such futile exercise does not, in short,
Engage my thought.

And, similarly, sing I not of arms
And of the man, engaged in war's alarms;
These bellicose and sanguinary harms
Have lost their charms.

To waken me to song; and also if
 I tell you that tobacco's fragrant whiff
 Merely provokes a supercilious sniff
 And bores me stiff,

You'll realise at once that I am not
 In quite my usual form (or off my dot
 You may remark!) to stigmatise the lot
 As silly rot!

Time was when such-like rhapsodies inspired
 A flow of verses, suitably attired
 In metric garb; but themes I once admired
 Now make me tired!

Rather in pain than poetry I shout,
 And if perhaps my sanity you doubt,
 I'll tell you frankly what its all about—
 I've got the gout!



EUCHRED

PAULINE was her name: how should she be
 In justice accounted to blame
 Because of her likeness to Phoebe
 In figure and frame?
 Twin sisters, replete with the graces
 So singularly like in their faces
 (As twin-like, not seldom the case is)
 They seemed absolutely the same.

When costumed for bobbing or skating,
 Or fashioned at night to bewitch,
 It needed no end of debating
 To say which was which!
 My love for them both over-bubbled,
 And in my dilemma, sore troubled,
 I ventured on hearts and was doubled
 And that was the cause of the hitch.

For if I had any preferment
 It was for Pauline, I confess;
 But any devotion for her meant
 Or tender caress,
 Would seldom get home unmolested
 By Phoebe, who hotly contested
 Embraces which finally rested
 With whom, 'twas beyond me to guess.

Though P2 was constantly thwarting
The plans of P1 in the strife,
I had in this duplicate courting
The time of my life!
But soon yet I grew meagre and thinnish,
My ardour began to diminish,
When Phoebe chipped in at the finish
And now, to my cost, is my wife!

iii

AT THE BAL MASQUÉ

HOW the thrilling tremors come
 In my pericardium
 When I gaze in spell-bound rapture through the slits
 That give exit to your glances
 As we sit out all the dances
 And my heart bids fair to palpitate to bits!

Through the depths of that recess
 'Neath your mask I can but guess
 At the fathomless delights that lie within;
 If your face but match your figure
 My insistent need grows bigger
 To explore beyond that fascinating chin!

Fairest lady, dare I ask
 Will you take away your mask
 For a moment from its tantalising place;
 Will you deign my lot to leaven
 With a fleeting glimpse of heaven
 In the radiating beauty of your face?

In her graciousness she yields
 And I dream Elysian fields,
 But alas! not mine that vision to attain!
 Oh! the bitter disillusion
 As I murmured with confusion,
 Gott im Himmel, Madame put it on again!

REFLECTIONS

I like to sit apart at eventide,
 Between the hour of five o'clock and dinner,
 In idle contemplation, satisfied
 To ponder on the meaning and the inner
 Significance of many things that dwell
 Insistent on my mind at my Hotel.

Away from conversation's busy hum
 One thinks the sort of things one does not utter,
 But rather bottles up, discreetly dumb;
 For instance—why they put so little butter
 Upon the bread, and why on earth should we
 Remain content with weak and tepid tea?

How, if you're late for meals, the waiter man,
 Having informed you calmly "fish is off," he
 Annoys you subsequently all he can
 By being somewhat tardy with the coffee.
 In choice anathema however bold
 You be, you never get it till it's cold!

Again, why should we, pliant as a lath,
 Not pull ourselves together, and be firmer,
 And not pay two francs fifty for a bath
 Without remonstrance, or at least a murmur?
 At such a figure one might fondly hope
 The sum would be inclusive of the soap!

And wherefore should so wide a gulf be fixed
 Between the Restaurant and Table d'hôte room?
 And why one's clothes and gouties get so mixed
 Within the precincts of the hat and coat room?
 To questions such as these which I propound
 I live in hopes an answer may be found.

It pleases me, I say, to sit and muse
 On where the deuce this fellow raised his tailor;
 Which girl belongs to which, and who is whose,
 And whether that's a soldier or a sailor;
 And how that maiden sitting all alone
 Contrived to bilk her watchful chaperone.

And when she boldly takes the floor to dance
 I marvel at the very latest new step;
 Can it a maiden's modesty enhance
 I ask,—to see her do the one or two step?
 Though out of date I be, I gather not,
 Judged by the Judy waltz or Turkey trot!

Sometimes I'm forced to listen, unaware,
 When Madame so and so her view expresses
 Upon her rival's doubtful head of hair,
 And what she thinks about her latest dresses,
 Although it seems, to my untutored eyes,
 There's often not enough to criticise!

It's rather sport, too, watching from afar
 To see the men with crafty steps and feline
 By devious courses wander to the bar

Instead of boldly striking out a bee-line.
But once they're in, if you're disposed to wait
To see them out—you'll sit up very late!

Have you observed the calm mysterious way
In which, when left unguarded on the table,
Your private property declines to stay
Even when well protected by a label?
Such acts, in those responsible, incline us
To figure up their consciences at minus!

Reflections such as these I have set down,
And many more, afford me some amusement;
But softly, friend, what need is there to frown?
No single one of these remarks for you's meant;
Not blameless you, devoid of any flaw,
But those they haply flick upon the raw!



TO REGGIE, THE NUT

REGGIE, old man, your mode of life at home
 Is not renowned conspicuously for its
 Excess of piety, I'm told,
 But can it half a candle hold
 To that you lead when year by year you roam
 Abroad amid the pleasures of St. Moritz?

I trow me not, old sport, if all I hear
 Be true about your versatile achievement;
 Still if you go the sultry pace
 As heretofore, your little race
 Will all too quickly fizzle out, I fear,
 And I, your pal, shall mourn a sad bereavement.

For even if we grant these base reports
 Are calumnies, or highly coloured mock tales,
 How can I honestly dispute
 Your well—or ill—deserved repute
 For being, both when fit and out of sorts,
 A pretty hefty chap among the cocktails?

Rumour asserts (unless we may assure
 The sceptical that she a lying jade is)
 That few escape enslavement by
 The glances of your gladsome eye;
 In fact, the fair sex all admit that you're
 The nuttiest of nuts among the ladies!

Also the critics say you have some skill
At sport, whose realm you seem to be adorning,
But how the deuce d'you keep it up
When every night the cheery cup
Delays your progress bedroomwards until
The small and early hours of the morning?

I marvel not you suffer passing fears
That some confounded Harry, Dick or Tom may
Convey in compromising words,
Through eager mouths of little birds,
The story to your loving spouse's ears
And land you pretty deep in the *consommé*.

Play on, my Reginald, the giddy goat,
And worry not with needless funk to shiver
That I shall give the show away
At home, about your merry play,
For I am in the very selfsame boat
Upon, my friend, the very selfsame river!

TO THE CHAMBERMAID

NOT for languages distinguished,
 Not with learning overlaid,
 When I any needed thing wished
 I at first was half afraid
 How to state my oft requirements to
 the buxom chambermaid.

Was she French, or was she German,
 Maid of Italy, or Swiss?
 Nothing served me to determine
 How to place the doubtful Miss;
 So I fired away at random and we got
 along like this.

Buon giorno signorina,
 Guten Morgen Ma'moiselle;
 Pourquoi donc, Sie haben been a
 Pretty longish time my gel;
 Il y a vingt cinq minuten since I rang
 the blessed bell.

Portez moi das heisses Wasser
 Pour le bain, verstehen Sie,

Mach' Sie mir a small thalassa
 (That is Greek, you know, for sea);
 I would bathe my sylph-like figure, maiden,
 unobserved by thee.

Tous les matins, in my Zimmer
 Faites das Bad, le petit bain;
 Nicht vergessen, bring' Sie immer
 Beaucoup grosser essuie-mains;
 Auch le savon, quel vous voulez, oder
 parfumé or plain.

Bitte brossez meine Kleider,
 Faites nettoyer mes bottines
 While je reste beneath the eider-
 down complètement serene
 Till the clock in yonder steeple strikes
 the hour of nine fifteen.

Je désire, pour mich erwachen,
 Schnell, le petit déjeuner;
 Let no sloth your footsteps slacken,
 Hübsches Mädchen haste away,
 Allez vite, I languish fainting for my
 morning tasse de thé.

Thus we talked; all comprehending
 She would deftly come and go

With a wealth of gesture lending
Picturesqueness to the show,
Murmuring at all my orders "Presto,
subitissimo."

Thus my sprightly faithful Hebe
Sought to mitigate my lot;
Yours will do the same if she be
Able to survive the rot
You, like me, will hurl upon her in this
hopeless polyglot.

iii

ODE TO ANY HOTEL MENU

WHEN you're seeking some refreshment to
sustain you,
Having spent a trying morning on the ice,
And at déjeuner you scan the varied menu
In the hope of finding something rather nice,
Subtle gastronomic problems you get thick in,
While the garçon waits impatiently your word,
As you meet with the inevitable chicken
And your cerebrum with wonderment is stirred
At the ways of that chameleonic bird.

There are times when he is designated "poulet,"
Whilst at others he's transmuted to "volaille,"
And its rather more than ten to nothing *you* lay
That the difference is, briefly, "all my eye."
If unguardedly you single out "dindonneau"
As among the listed articles you prowl,
Having settled that's the dish to fix upon—oh
Simple youth!—a glance beneath the saucy
cowl
Will reveal the hoary old Protean fowl!

If your gastric expectations faintly *do* stir
At perceiving "pintadon" (or pintadeau)
Do not marvel if the antiquated rooster
Should familiarly greet you with a crow!

And when craftily they serve him up as
"chapon,"

Have a care; its but the ruse of artful men
To beguile an unsophisticated chap on
To anticipate a luring dainty, when
It is still that ancient, prehistoric hen!



LINES TO THE FLAG ON THE GRAND HOTEL

WHEN I lean from my window each morning
 On waking, to spy out the land.
 And gaze on you proudly adorning,
 As usual, the roof of the Grand,
 Do you think you are subtly appealing
 To waken a patriot's pride?
 Not a bit; I am conscious of feeling
 No flutter inside.

Be you German, American, British,
 Or Switzerland's Federal Cross,
 No transports, elated or skittish,
 Affect me:—I don't care a toss.
 Such minor affairs I've no thought of,
 I merely inspect you to see
 The signs of the times and what sort of
 A day it will be.

Whenever your arrogant bunting
 Floats brazenly out in the wind,
 A gruesome and guttural grunting
 Expresses the state of my mind;
 And when the breeze hails from Maloja
 My pent up emotion I cram
 Into one little word—and employ a
 Demonstrative d--n.

The zephyrs that blow from Samaden
 Are mostly from evil exempt:
 I grant them a tentative pardon
 And treat them with silent contempt;
 For whether they make their intrusion
 With soft insufflation or strong,
 My cocksure omniscient conclusion
 Is sure to be wrong!

What time you droop listless and limply
 I feel for you deeply, my boy;
 But, nevertheless, I am simply
 Delighted and jumping for joy;
 And if, you old reprobate Banner,
 You're needing a cocktail—it's mine,
 For it's fifty odd quid to a tanner
 The day will be fine!

Buck up, gay old sport, at your tether
 Relentlessly nailed to the mast,
 And try in foretelling the weather
 To bury your dissolute past.
 But and if you're deploring the function
 And splendour you once used to see,
 To your soul lay the flattering unction
 You are useful to me!

iii

TO EROS, AN APPEAL

EROS, it seems, not only in the Spring
 You ply your deft vocation,
 Twanging with zest the taut unerring string
 To launch your fatal bolts, on amorous wing,
 Each to its destination.

Not solely in the budding time of year
 You bid the feathered splinter
 Fly in its reckless transit here and there,
 But also, fickle god, you would appear
 To revel in the winter!

For when I note how numberless the darts,
 Swift in their flight and whizzy,
 That speed their way to unsuspecting hearts,
 (Missing the hard, less vulnerable parts).
 Eros, my lad, you're busy!

Many's the victim of your subtle craft
 Whose bleeding heart and sore racks
 In blissful torment, piercéd fore and aft,
 Unskilled to hide to stark unbidden shaft
 Sticking from out his thorax

Something there is in this delightful clime
That stimulates your duty ;
Sunshine, or snow, or evanescent rime,
I care not which, for at the moment I'm
Impervious to beauty,

Having no instant, pressing wish to pry
Into the charms of mating ;
Among the hosts of other fish to fry
Just now my one ambition is to try
And cultivate my skating.

Therefore, good Eros, take it not amiss
If I should gently mention
I have no use for archery like this,
And beg of you to leave me in my bliss
Without your kind attention.

But, should I fail to pass my coming test
Through some strange aberration,
If you've a real stunner to suggest,
Then you may pink me lightly on the breast
By way of consolation!

ODE TO THE BYLANDT MEMORIAL

GRIM and implacable Bruin
 Furtively crouching alone,
 Fashioned so life-like and true in
 Cold and inanimate stone;
 Monument made to de Bylandt,
 Growl in your impotent wrath,
 Torn from the regions where icebergs in legions
 Summon you loud and insistently forth
 Back to the snows and the floes of your free
 land

Far in the North!

Ursus,—or can it be Ursa?—
 Sculptured in rugged relief,
 Take in this diffident verse a
 Twofold expression of grief.
 Yours not the springtime of mating,
 Yours not the joy of the chase,
 Sniffing and grunting whilst hungrily hunting,
 Scenting the prey with the skill of your race;
 Rather 'tis yours to stand patiently waiting
 Guarding this place.

What your particular species,
Brown bear or grizzled or grey,
Held in captivity's leashes,
None but the expert may say!
Whether you come from the Rockies
(Land of the freshets that foam)
Whether you're Polar, no ursine consoler
Ever may cunningly tempt you to roam
Back to the lair where the rest of your flock is,
Back to your home!

Be you a he or a she bear,
Monarch or cubling or wife,
Nought is your grief to that we bear
Brooding the loss of his life!
Bylandt the sportsman who never
Wanted for comrade or friend,
Who, on the Cresta, thus found his last rest—Ah!
Peace to his soul may the sanctified send!
Bruin, your lot is to stay here for ever
Mourning his end!



HIS GUARDIAN ANGEL

(An Ode to the Segantini Statue)

CREEPING homeward from Suvretta
 In the dead of night I met her
 By the roadside, standing mystical and mute,
 With the silver moonlight shining
 On her form, of chaste designing,
 Gleaming brightly
 As politely
 I put up the glad salute
 In a marvel at her sketchiness of suit.

Tell me philosophic maiden
 With what penalty you're laden
 Musing lonely there amid the silent snows;
 It would seem a trifle silly,
 Not to mention rather chilly,
 To be scorning
 Night and morning
 All the comforts of your clo'es,
 But you have some occult reason, I suppose.

From your aspect and demeanour
 You must be about nineteen or
 Perhaps a trifle more, a trifle less;

Are you spirit of the mountain
 Or a novel sort of fountain,
 Bright and cheery
 For the weary
 In your passing loveliness,
 Sculptured Maid, of the refrigerating dress?

Can it be excess of passion
 For the subtleties of fashion
 That has brought you, so to speak, upon the rocks;
 Are you working out your sentence
 In icicular repentance
 For the money,
 Little honey,
 You have squandered on your frocks,
 Or is this the latest mode (unorthodox)?

Came the stony frigid answer:
 Call yourself a gentleman, sir
 To address me as a fountain or a gnome?
 I am She who nightly watches
 Over you, of many Scotches,
 Lightly swaying
 And betraying
 How unsteadily you roam
 In your circumnavigation to your home!

TO THE LEANING TOWER

I am tired; I am bored to extinction: I glower
 Morosely from out of the tail of my eye
 At the futile, obtrusive, inebriate Tower
 That mars, to my optic, the line of the sky.
 If you ask me the cause of my vehement spleening
 I answer that never, though vainly I've tried,
 Can I fathom his presence at all, or his meaning,
 And why the old blighter should always be leaning
 With a kink to one side.

There is nothing retiring or decently latent
 About him. At which of the hostels you stop
 From its windows you see him unblushingly blatant;
 His photo confronts you in every shop.
 Everlasting his ugly old silhouette rises
 Before you, on all that you handle, in case
 You forget what he's like; and in various sizes
 He's embossed on all trophies and medals and prizes
 That encumber the place.

He is hailed, I am told, as a sight of St. Moritz,
 As something unique and remarkably chaste,
 But if that be the case I can only deplore it's
 Conspicuous lack of acumen and taste.

What's the use of that rampant stag-beetle adorning
 The head of a belfry devoid of a chime?
 And expound me the good of consulting each morning
 An inanimate clock contumaciously scorning
 The effluxion of time.

There are some who make bold to asseverate he's a
 Diminutive marvel, an object of pride,
 Not unworthy to rank with his cousin of Pisa,
 But that is for you, as you please, to decide.
 For myself, he is apt to disturb the refinement
 Of balance that graces my movements, and so
 I implore him to get into proper alignment
 Or to suffer the pangs of a daily consignment
 To the regions below!

Every year when I put in my annual visit,
 Expunging the stains of my multiple sins,
 I unconsciously find myself murmuring "Is it
 Laid low to the earth, or erect on its pins?"
 He's a worry, a source of anxiety: ergo
 T'would please me to death, and occasion
 renown.
 If I only could summon up courage and dare go
 To apply at his basis a mild *vis a tergo*
 Just to topple him down!

TO THOMAS, MY SON

THOMAS, my boy, your dishevelled
 Condition betokens a row,
 Degrading in kind
 Else why do I find
 The sleek of your hair so unlevelled,
 Such tortuous lines on your brow?

That dissolute collar surmounting
 A tie in extreme dis-array
 (Suggesting, you know,
 C2 H6 O)
 Needs more than a little accounting
 And gives you, my Thomas, away!

Some gay Bacchanalian scuffle
 Can only explain such a mess:
 What sort of a scrap
 Or horrid mishap
 Produced this indecorous ruffle?
 Come Thomas, you rascal, confess.

Yet may be in error I've reckoned:
 A calmer reflection insures
 Your pardon my son—
 I see it was done
 Through romping with Thomas II
 That mischievous man-child of yours!

THE RETURN OF THE JACKSON CUP*

GLORIOUS mixture of crimsons and yellows
 Paint we the Town in a riotous whirl;
 Filling with vast inhalation our bellows
 Ready in chorus to hurl
 Shouts of ecstatic delight at the jolly good fellows
 Who know how to curl!

Thrilling our great and triumphant emotion,
 Threatening instant disaster unless
 Wassail in frequent and liberal potion
 Lighten our urgent distress;
 Each one selecting his own and particular lotion
 To toast their success!

Curlers who smothered their rivals from Villars;
 Grindelwald next they decisively beat,
 Laid Adelboden out freely and still are
 Strangers to any defeat:—
 Lusty boys all, from the "lead" to the skipper
 and pillar
 Their triumph's complete!

* St. Moritz recovered the Jackson Cup from Grindelwald January 1913.

Vessel, since out of our keep, for a double
 Cycle of months, you have wantonly flown
 Pour from your bosom the Wine-with-a-bubble
 Time and again, to atone
 Freely to them, to the sportsmen who took all
 the trouble
 To get back their own!

Blood they were out for, as hotly your tracks on
 Sallied they forth with intent to regain
 You, fickle renegade trophy of Jackson;
 Thirsting to wipe out the stain
 Soiling your previous record; and now you are
 back, Son
 Right here you'll remain!



“NOT WISELY BUT TOO WELL!”

IT was after the Curling Club Dinner—
 A festive and sultry affair—
 And myself, though the merest beginner,
 Was courteously asked to be there.

'Twas the wine I'm afraid! On retiring
 I dreamt I was one of the team.
 To regain the Lost Trophy* aspiring;
 And this was my horrible dream!

The first stone I laid well down the Cresta,
 They sooped it too hard I suppose,
 For it leaped Shuttlecock and suppressed a
 Spectator who stood in too close!

Then the other lead brought his toboggan,
 Displaying remarkable nous,
 Laid it short, but got over the Hog, an'
 Obstructed the front of the House!

Number two thought he'd ski from the crampit
 In attitude blithesome and jolly,
 But his pace was so hot that to damp it
 He telemarked clean round the dolly!

*The Jackson Cup 1911 and 1912.

So their second man played with a bandy,
 Of which he avowed he'd the knack—
 But his swipe was a trifle unhandy,
 For the ball stayed concealed in the hack!

Number three by the skipper was troubled
 To cut out the shot with a wick,
 But the fool went three hearts and was doubled,
 And only just made the odd trick!

Their third man, with a back outside bracket,
 A port, with out-handle, then tried;
 But he tripped at the start in the hack; it
 Upset him so much that he cried!

Then our skip had a great inspiration!
 A bob-sleigh he rushed to the tee;
 Tipped his crew out with wild jubilation,
 A winner all over with three!

Nought was left for their skip but skikjöring
 Right through our defences he broke;
 Laid four hoofs in the house amid roaring,
 And then, thank the Lord, I awoke!

A SONG OF TRIUMPH*

HAIL to him, the elect, the victorious B-rn-ss
 Our hearty congratters his prowess acclaim;
 He is tempered in worth as the blade in the
furnace
 Who journeyed to Davos, upholding the fame
 Of St. Moritz; who vanquished the hardy Davosers,
 Defeating by apt circumspection the whole
 Of the subtly devised and the erudite posers
 That were fashioned to floor him; in short, you
must know, Sirs,
 He has lifted the Bowl!

Let the welkin, the sky, and the whole empyrean
 Resound to the din of your consonant shout
 In an orgy of triumph, a jubilant pæan
 To welcome the news of this resolute rout.
 They have taken their physic, to toast the unfurling
 Our flag of success, in a triplicate dose;
 Not at skating alone, but at bandy and curling
 By our merit and skill, undeniably sterling,
 We have jumped on Davos!

* Mr. A. R. Burness won the Davos Bowl in 1913 and St. Moritz beat Davos at bandy and curling.

TO A MASTERPIECE. I.

(THE VENUS OF MILO)

MYSTICAL marble of Milo,
 Born of Mythology's times,
 Sad is our heart and we feel low
 Penning these diffident rhymes;
 Verses indited in token
 Of your ineffable charms,
 Venus, almighty marine Aphrodite,
 Mourning your grievous and bodily harms
 In that you come to us cruelly broken
 Minus your arms!

Fairest in sculpture of women,
 Goddess emerged from the foam,
 Nevermore destined to swim in
 Seas that were erstwhile your home;
 You that were lithe and athletic
 Famed for your masterful jumps
 Forward to grapple for Paris his apple,
 Well may your spirits sink down in the dumps
 Mutely regarding your grimly pathetic
 Pitiful stumps!

Shorn of prehensile equipment,
 Void of your exquisite hands,
 How much the loss of your grip meant
 Only yourself understands.

Barred by misfortune from holding
 Welcoming arms to be press'd,
 Doomed when a mother to yield to another
 Child of your own to be croon'd and caress'd,
 Never to fathom the joy of enfolding
 Babe to your breast!

This your profound mutilation
 Fills us with pity and grief;
 Yet may some small consolation
 Bring you a moment's relief.
 Though your misfortune appal us
 All that remains we extol,
 Confident that you excel any statue
 Ever inscribed on antiquity's roll,
 How much the more would your beauty
 enthrall us
 If you were whole!



ICHABOD

HOT stuff was I; no little fame
 And court were mine until the game
 Completely failed me;
 Enforcing me to give a miss
 To skating, since the Nemesis
 Of age assailed me!

Not mine to rehabilitate
 The power to drive the wayward skate
 Whither it pleased me;
 To loaf around the rink, and while
 The time in crabbing others' style
 In part has eased me,

Dulling my bitterness of soul;
 And this amusement on the whole
 Amplly employed me;
 But now my precepts seem to pall
 For undiscerning skaters all
 Frankly avoid me!

iii

ON HER BIRTHDAY *

WHEN in the blush of maidenhood
 Your natal day comes round once more,
 And all you know of Life seems good,
 Upon the threshold of its door;
 When, crowned with joy and laughter-clad
 The day with radiant hope is lit,
 We join to wish you many glad
 Returns of it!

If in the yellow leaf and sere
 Your anniversary be passed,
 In tranquil peace, though touched with fear
 Lest it should prove to be the last;
 At such a time, rejoiced to see
 Another cycle filched from Fate,
 Why then, of course, we usually
 Congratulate!

But in the vague uncertain clime
 Environing the middle age,
 When, pitiless, the hand of Time
 Turns grimly down another page;
 Some message for the doubtful day
 We fain would send, ere it be done;
 Alas! we know not what to say
 To Forty-one!

* With acknowledgement to the proprietors of "Punch" for permission to reprint.

TO "THE VETERAN"

ON PASSING HIS TEST*

GRIM was his mien,
Shaw were his feet,
Never was seen
Skating so neat!

Third N. S. A.
Passed it with ease;
Hats off! Hooray!
Cheers, if you please!

Edges so true,
Crossroll immense—
(Gave us a few
Moments suspense):

Brilliant C turn,
Forward eight fine;
Nothing to learn
Skater divine!

On without pause,
Needing no rest
'Mid loud applause,
Romped through the Test.

* Mr. W. Grimshaw passed the third N. S. A. test in February 1911.

Fair sex in tears
(Not grief, but joy);
Banished their fears,
Sporting old boy!

Cock of the rink,
Skater so bold,
Next year, I think,
Up for his "gold."

Grim was his mien,
Shaw were his feet,
Never was seen,
Skating so neat!



AFTERMATH

HOME again from Winter Sporting
 Skating, ski-ing (query courting,
 For I'm told the cognoscenti say that "ski" is sounded
 "she")

In my Bathroom it amuses
 Me to contemplate the bruises
 That adorn projecting corners of my whole anatomy.

In their variegated colour,
 Some vermilion, others duller,
 From a deep cerulean purple to a bilious yellow-green,
 Every morn and eve inspection
 Brings a vivid recollection
 Of the many little mishaps and vicissitudes I've seen.

This, upon the great trochanter,
 Is no subject fit for banter;
 It recalls a swift encounter with a snow-enveloped rut;
 While that beauty on my shoulder
 Marks a mix-up with a boulder
 Adamantine in its impact on my bulging occiput.

These that seem to be abating
 Here and there, are due to skating
 And the acrobatic tosses taken executing threes,
 Theoretically splendid
 Though they practically ended
 In involuntary postures on my much-enduring knees.

Further intimate exploring
Finds the traces of ski-kjöring
In an iridescent hoof-print near the middle of my back;
And these livid scars suggest a
Disagreement with the Cresta
On my meteoric début down that unrelenting track.

But the horriddest contusion
Brooks no curious intrusion
Into details of the episodes in which it played a part,
For it lingers to remind me
Of the girl I left behind me
And is situated, roughly, in the region of my heart!



IN AN ALBUM

YOU plead for my autograph, Dolly
In accents so winning and nice
A churlish refusal were folly
And gladly I yield—at a price!
Not costly; no drain on your purse is
Entailed by a bargain like this;
No more I demand for these verses
Than one little kiss!

The payment shall be at your leisure
Some time when we're cosy and snug;
(By way of according full measure
You might as well throw in a hug!).
So base an example can't hurt e'en
The saintliest lassie or lad,
For you are just verging on thirteen
And I am your Dad!

HEL—P!

JOHN, I have known you of old as a gentle "tut-
tutter,"

Full of restraint in the laudable way you control
Feelings a lesser than you would most certainly
utter

Suddenly floored in a treacherous icicled gutter
Or snow-covered hole.

Prone to unbridled explosions, behold me your humble
Ardent admirer, not dreaming that sooner or late
You from a paragon's pedestal haply might tumble
Into the baser expletives that shockingly crumble
Your lofty estate.

Mild-mannered modes of expression are current in
legion;
Strangely perverse must the circumstance be to
compel
This from your lips; and I mourn, when you level
at me, John,
Murmurs that breathe of a torrid Tartarean region,
How greatly you fell!

"Is it," I ask, "a sufficient occasion for swearing"
"Merely because you have taken a toss on your
ski?"

"No," you reply, and admonish me softly by fearing
All is not perfect with ears that are sluggish in
hearing

The terminal "p!"

AN ODE TO THE WEATHER

O Chief of Olympian Powers
 Who looks to our welfare and bliss,
 O Lord of the sunshine and showers
 There's something amiss
 Up aloft, and we simply can't stick it,
 For this sort of thing isn't cricket
 To put it across us and come it so low down as this!

Are you sick with a kind of brain-storm
 Or is this your conception of fun
 To send a ridiculous rain-storm
 You son of a gun?
 When you bid us to like it or lump it
 You're barmy, old man, on the crumpet—
 You ought to know better, I tell you—the thing
 isn't done.

We pray you each morn for a dry day,
 Not comfortless, cheerless and bleak,
 And you send an iniquitous Friday
 Like that one last week,
 At a time of the year in St. Moritz
 When rain is unknown! why begorr! it's
 The absolute limit of brazen unparalleled cheek!

We don't mind a bit when it's snowing,
We like it and never complain
But I think that you really are going
Too far with your rain,
And I warn you, O Jupiter Pluvi,
That unless you begin to improve I
Am off to the land of my birth by the very next train!

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THE LADIES' CHAMPIONSHIP*

LADIES, I take off my hat in profound admiration.
Full of delight at your agile engaging display,
Filling me up to the brim with enrapt fascination,
Born at the sight of the thrilling superb revelation
I witnessed to-day.

Lightly you skim o'er the ice as a low-flying
swallow,
Supple and lithe as a panther you gracefully whirl,
Fired with an ardent ambition, as quickly you follow
One on the other, determined on vanquishing
hollow
Each challenging girl.

None can be keener than I in resounding your
praises,
Merited well for the worth of your skating—and
yet,
Frankly, the height of your studied perfection
amazes
Me, a beginner, to such an extent that it raises
A tinge of regret,

* Held at St. Moritz, January 1914.

Coupled with envy, that I should be fated to
know no
Dreams of a similar skill—in my middle-aged
state ;
I, overwhelmed with the charms of this afternoon's
show, know
Well my restrictions, and mournfully murmur
“cui bono
My trying to skate?”

Thus you perceive how my plaintive aforesaid
regret'll
 Doom me the pastime as profitless, sterile,
and stale.
 Ladies you've scurvily managed my hopes to
unsettle;
 These skates that were mine are rejected as
moribund metal,
 And offered for sale!



TO CERES, AN APPEAL

TOUCHING the matutinal bounty spread
 Fresh from your granary, o fecund Ceres,
 Crescents and rolls in divers kinds of bread,
 There are some pertinent and pressing queries
 That I would ask
 Of thee, to gird thee in thy future task.

Engagingly they one and all present
 A satisfying, promising exterior,
 But why is it their innermost content
 Betrays itself so hopelessly inferior
 In staying power
 That I must hitch my belt in half an hour?

Breakfast at nine, or thereabouts, a. m.
 Should fill a man with something like repletion,
 Calling him not, by subterfuge to stem
 The pangs of hunger's furious accretion;
 Not quite so soon,
 Dost think, as long before the hour of noon?

And even should I seek to fortify
 My frame with that thou servest up as honey,
 No help is here, and shall I tell thee why?
 Thou darest not, Ceres, make at even money
 A bet with me
 That it knows ought of bee-hive or of bee!

Give us some lusty victuals now and then;
 Cease in this way to tantalise and rack us
 With aching void, compelling hungry men
 To woo the favour of thine offspring Bacchus,
 And while the time
 Until the sound of luncheon's welcome chime.

Oddments like these serve nothing but to tease
 Our tums; and none that calls himself a *man* shall
 Subsist on such; so therefore, if you please,
 Good Ceres, bring us something more substantial
 When we appear
 A twelvemonth hence, before thy shrine, next year!



A SONG OF VICTORY*

THERE is joy in the heart of St. Moritz,
 There is glee in our dissolute fold,
 We are mightily jubilant, for it's
 An evening of radiant gold;
 And we're just on the point of beginning
 (What the end is to be matters not)
 Our triumphant carouse at the winning
 Of Jackson, his Pot.

Did we swagger unduly, or swank hard
 Last year when we collared him back,
 The chalice, the cup, or the tankard
 Endowed by the offspring of Jack?
 Not a bit!—he is ours for the asking
 Whenever we put up a fight,
 And behold him, contentedly basking
 Before you to-night!

Fill him over the pretty, the goblet,
 Drink deep of the liquor divine,
 And if anyone shrinks from the job let
 Him stump up a suitable fine;
 For to-night it is ours to make merry
 With reckless libation and song,
 And I'm dry as a wizened up berry,
 So pass him along!

* St. Moritz retained the Jackson Cup, February 1914.

Here's a health to the "lead," and a flipper
 Thrown out for a shake, number two;
For they curled so that three and the skipper
 Had little or nothing to do.
To Mac and to Levy and Martin
 A bumper—to Lawrie the same,
Who put all their soul and their heart in
 The glorious game!

Here's a health to the strenuous soopers,
 Salaams to the whole of the team;
May no shadows of bibulous stupors
 Disturb their post-prandial dream.
May no mishap occur to dishevel
 Their pride in the deed they have done,
The fellows who played like the devil,
 The curlers who won!



LINES TO THE RINK SWEEPERS

BLACK and swarthy, bronzed and bearded
Engadiner,
Knight Commander of the Order of the Broom,
There is something rather sad in your demeanour,
There is pathos in your settled air of gloom.
Your unending occupation's dull monotony
Has undoubtedly occasioned, I should think,
In your brain (that is, assuming you have got any)
A peculiar eccentric kind of kink
Which is mirrored in your aspect on the rink.

When with tiresome regularity your besom
Sweeps around in those eternal semi-circes,
It is not exactly humorous or gleesome,
And I marvel not it ultimately irks
When, along with your unprepossessing neighbour,
You are fated too familiarly to know
All the penalties of Sisyphean labour,
As with languid motion, rhythmical and slow,
You perpetually shovel up the snow.

Tell me something of your life, and why you *were* cut
Out by Fate for this uninteresting path?
And the reason why you never have your hair cut,
And (forgive me) why you never have a bath?
How you occupy your scanty hours of leisure,
If you seek to liven up your dreary lot
With the tango and with kindred modes of pleasure,
For your gait about the rink from spot to spot
Would suggest that in this line you're pretty hot!

But no doubt you have some stout bucolic Phoebe
 To beguile your hours of idleness instead!
 Let us hope you have, for where, I ask, should *we* be
 If the vacancies occurring were not fed
 By successive little sweepers (when you marry,
 And for luck in Hymen's lottery you toss)
 Coming annually after you, to carry
 On the pious work whose (absit omen!) loss
 Would mean, alas! our sport must be imposs!

Clad in sack-cloth are your feet, and there are ashes,
 I feel certain, strewn in plenty on your soul;
 Yet I gather there are compensating splashes,
 And your life is not so dusty on the whole.
 As for instance when we show that we are grateful
 For your labours, as you pile the snowy banks,
 And you get a fairish helping from the plateful
 That we heap with ready unreluctant francs
 To express, in terms of chink, our hearty thanks.

And when, my friend, the time shall come to lay low
 Your implements, and sink beneath the sword,
 You shall have a saintly scintillating halo
 (Semi-circular in shape) for your reward!
 On your tomb-stone shall this epitaph be graven:—
 "Here reposes, down below, a man of price,
 Unsophisticated, toil-worn and unshaven;"
 And beneath shall be the heraldic device,
 Besoms, rampant, on an argent field of ice!

No slavish demand of convention
 Upset our Bohemian pose;
 No need of attracting attention
 Or swanking arose;
 But to count as a nut you must now, Sirs,
 Convey in the scheme of your trousers
 A delicate hint of your tie and the hue of your hose!

Such faithful old pals to disown as
 Unworthy (betraying me keen
 To out-filbert the smart Barcelonas)
 Were paltry and mean;
 Do not think you are callously slighted;
 Fact is, my affections are plighted,
 And *she* has condemned you, not I, as unfit to be seen!

This new and unwonted parade is
 The sign of a renegade's fall
 Beneath the delights of the ladies'
 Seductive enthrall.
 Old comrades, a final saluting!
 To-morrow I don a new suiting
 Of priceless description, for Daphne is coming to call!

AN ODE TO SPRING

SEEK not to lure me with the charm of Spring,
 The mystic mating season,
 When Nature blooms and little he-birds sing
 Their captivating songs of love to bring
 A she for each to freeze on.

When to the greening woods and upland leas
 The poet pens his ballad,
 Lauding the baby lambs, in twos and threes,
 Which, subsequently sacrificed (with peas)
 He munches with his salad;

And April showers, giving little heed
 How carelessly they soak us
 As though we were some common sort of weed,
 Pour gently down to satisfy the need
 Of daffodil and crocus.

For me such emblems of the budding year
 Have no mysterious meaning;
 Rather they conjure up the lurking fear
 That soon inevitably will appear
 The symptoms of "Spring Cleaning."

When I am ousted from my cosy digs
 Because, forsooth, a raid is
 In process by a regiment (in rigs
 Of overalls and duster-covered wigs)
 Of char- and other ladies.

When all the air is redolent of paint
 And wheresoe'er I may go
 In vain endeavour to escape the taint
 Damp-laden draughts bring on the old complaint
 My annual lumbago!

This, and the goods and the chattels that I love,
 All huddled topsy-turvy,
 Defiled by drops of whitewash from above,
 Renders my temper (placid as a dove)
 Abominably nervy;

Jumpy, in fact, at this supreme defeat
 Of my austere sedate ease;
 Provoking an insane desire to beat
 To smithereens the Vandals who ill-treat
 My Lares and Penates.

No, Sir! The spring's an over-rated show.
 To you her flowers and clover;
 For me, ere yet the summer roses blow
 To miss the dreaded orgy I shall go
 To bed until it's over!

TO AN ACORN

YOU plump pachydermatous seedling
How little you ever can know
The infinite coaxing and wheedling
It cost her to get you to grow;
When Maisie, determined to make ornamental
her gardening plot,
Interred you, obese little acorn,
Deep down in a pot!

With pabulum daily she plied you
And watered with sedulous care,
Persuaded that something inside you
Would some day win out to the air;
But, age-long, you uttered no warning
That still you continued to thrive,
When lo! a wee budkin this morning
Proclaims you alive!

The sight of that lone little leaflet
Uprearing its chlorophylled head
Awakened her fancy;—in brief let
Me tell you the destiny spread
Before you when duly you've thrown up
Your branches for Nature to cloak
Umbrageous with leaves—when you've grown up
A lusty old oak!

Her child-vision sees you embedded
Years hence, in the succulent earth,
When she is a woman and wedded
Who tenderly reared you from birth;
That through the long summer she may be,
For all her care, amply repaid,
To lie with her first little baby
And rest in your shade !



A BALLADE OF SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

UNWELCOME and frequent our meeting
Whenever I hie me to bed;
I give you no courteous greeting
But hail you with loathing instead!
Of such lusty breed are you bred
I fain would take refuge in flight;
Your coming in terror I dread
Oh! Pestilent Fiend of the Night!

The prospect of sleep is but fleeting
For I am to furnish your bread;
I'm said to be succulent eating,
Your nightly collation is spread;
And when to repletion you've fed
You speedily vanish from sight
Engorged with good blood that is red
Oh! Pestilent Fiend of the Night!

Too often these meals you're repeating,
Too often my body you tread;
Revenge is forthcoming in Keating,
At last little fiend you are dead!

When shadows of darkness have fled,
Exposed to the grey morning light
Your corpse all its terrors has shed
Oh! Pestilent Fiend of the Night!

ENVOY

Oh! Pulex for whom I have bled
To slay you is certainly right!
By greed to your doom were you led
Oh! Pestilent Fiend of the Night!



TO A MASTERPIECE

(The Laughing Cavalier, by Franz Hals)

SIR Cavalier, resplendent in your glory,
 Recalling divers routs and carnivals,
 Suggestive, too, of dalliance amatory
 In company with other kindred pals,
 Tell me, old sportsman, something of your story,
 Why you are thus immortalised by Hals,
 And why it is incumbent all the while
 To wear that subtle enigmatic smile.

Elucidate for me that play of feature,
 Let me at length discover what you're at;
 Is it the conquest of some lovely creature
 Arrayed superbly in a picture hat
 The like of which, in modern style, would beat your
 Be-feathered mediæval headgear flat?
 Are you, Good Sir in gala dress, about
 To cut thereby, the other fellow out?

Smile you because the rash obstructive lubber
 E'en now has fallen to your trusty blade;
 Or can it be you're just a money-grubber
 Emboldened by success to make parade,
 Having achieved a deal in oil or rubber,
 Gloating serenely o'er a fortune made
 Superlatively quick upon a strange
 Antique precursor of the Stock Exchange?

At lesser sport—e. g. at pool or snooker—
 (Assuming such were current in your day)
 Haply you may have gathered filthy lucre,
 Assisted by your questionable play
 In some anachronistic game of euchre,
 Ecarté, Bridge—or was it lansquenet?
 This vaunting truculence is too sublime
 For aught but “no trumps”—doubled every time.

At sport of Kings I trow you're no beginner;
 Behind that veil of satire let me peep,
 Tell me the price you backed the Derby winner,
 Or have you won the great Calcutta sweep?
 Even as Fortune smiles upon a sinner
 Had you the luck to buy the ticket cheap?
 O happy One! enlighten me I pray,
 Why, in the name of Jupiter, so gay!

Your silence bids me not to press too nearly
 Into the heart of this mysterious thing;
 But, after all, I vow that grin is merely
 The supercilious smirk that “chestnuts” bring;
 Ancient and fish-like japes—the sort that clearly
 Are over-honoured by your simpering!
 Unbend, you dashing roysterer, revoke
 Your reticence, and tell me—what's the joke!

LINES TO HER ALBUM

(L. W. her book)

QUAINT little volume, most engaging book,
 Attractive in your many-coloured binding,
 You have an air of happiness, a look
 Which somehow makes me confident of finding
 That you are not
 Entirely discontented with your lot!

A thing of ease, a richly pampered tome
 You seem to be—caparisoned in *this* dress;
 Permitted oft to stray abroad from home
 By her, your gentle, too indulgent mistress,
 As when she sends
 You out to gather tokens from her friends.

Soothly you have a very pressing need
 To thank the gods and fishes for their mercies,
 In that your task is limited in deed
 To gathering and not creating verses,
 Which rather strain
 The psychologic functions of the brain!

Maybe at times you go upon the spree
 When out on a collecting expedition;
 Not so to-day—you come, young man, to me
 Engaged upon a most important mission,
 Namely, to tell
 Your lady, through these lines, I wish her well!

Speed, little book, upon your homeward way;
Return to crave her gracious absolution,
Bearing to her my compliments; and say
"Behold I bring the humble contribution
That I annex
From him who owns the pseudonym—Judex!"



TO THE GREAT EVENT *

IN couples, in threes and in singles
 They gather by thousands to wish
 Good luck to the two little Inglis
 Engaged in their great competish!
 Their fond and benevolent Pater
 Has offered a prize, or a badge
 To settle on who's the best skater
 Or Harry or Madge!

Stupendous the concourse of people
 Amassed round the edge of the rink,
 Excitedly asking "Will she pull
 It off, or will he, do you think?"
 In keenest suspense do they revel,
 For Jack is as clever as Jill;
 The odds on the couple are level
 So equal their skill.

The tension is great as they open
 The strenuous contest and keen;
 So thrilling the moment that no pen
 Can fittingly picture the scene.
 The cheers of beholders unheeding,
 Intent on the struggle instead,
 Now Madge by a fraction is leading,
 Now Harry's ahead!

* February 1912.

What need o'er the details to tarry,
Describing how close was the fight?
Suffice it to tell you that Harry
Was beaten—to Madge's delight.
He knew jolly well he was pitted
'Gainst one of his own kith and kin,
And like a good sportsman permitted
The lady to win!



ON HIS BIRTHDAY

ALL we who are "common or garden,"
 Who make up Humanity's ruck,
 Resignedly struggle to harden
 Our hearts at our luck;
 Condemned to grow feeble and rusty,
 Ill-favoured, ill-tempered and crusty,
 While you, with the years, remain lusty,
 A middle-aged evergreen buck!

The somnolent gods of Olympus,
 To whom our complaining uplifts,
 Have taken the pleasure to skimp us
 In spreading their gifts.
 Our wholly inadequate ration
 They doled in so grudging a fashion
 To swift dissolution we dash on
 When Nature our weaknesses sifts.

But you, highly favoured of mortals,
 (Heaven only knows why) would appear
 To enter longevity's portals
 With nothing to fear!
 Old Time and his ravages scorning,
 Your sphere of existence adorning,
 As fresh as the milk in the morning,
 You seem to grow younger each year!

In envy we smile and look pleasant
But take the precaution to say
That if you're expecting a present
To swell your display,
Our answer emphatic and terse is;
Ungarnished our indigent purses,
Nought else can we send but these verses
To wish you good fortune to-day.



But the praises we fling them with reckless and
 prodigal waste Are misplaced,
 When we know, as they smother their rival who
 patiently plods, That the odds
 From the first are mysteriously cast in their favour,
 And their prowess would seem of enchantment to
 savour,
 For they owe their success not so much to them-
 selves as the Gods!

All our sympathy surges, and with it the cry of
 "hard luck," For the pluck
 That is shown by the fellow compounded of rugged
 and rough Tempered stuff;
 By the second-rate man who, though scarcely a
 flyer,
 Is with dogged and ceaseless persistence a tryer,
 And whose best, though it always is good, is just
 not good enough!

Though he knows he is destined to gather nor
 laurels nor fame At the game,
 Still he plays it for all he is worth like a sterling
 good sort, And in short,
 Though his skill mediocre and lacking his pace is
 He's the instinct, the spirit, the ultimate basis,
 The heart and the sinews, the thews and the back-
 bone of Sport!

THE WORKER

YOU say I am slack and a sluggard,
Inclined to be lazy and shirk
All effort and never to plug hard
At strenuous work,
You deny my self-evident fitness
And vow I have never borne witness
Of the manifold powers within me that
silently lurk.

Come, stay with me here now and then, man,
When sloth is consigned to the shelf;
You shall see I'm a deuce of a penman
When writing for pelf.
You shall mark how I revel in forcing
The pace when I'm busy endorsing
Fat cheques—it's a work that I love—when
they're drawn to myself.

ODE TO AN OLD SILK HAT.

WHERE is your pristine immaculate glossiness?
 What has become of the shape of your crown?
 Why is your nap so suggestive of mossiness?
 Why has your blackness so faded to brown?
 Is it because I have treated you shabbily,
 Brushed you in haste, or exposed you to rain,
 That when I doff you your brim wobbles flabbily?
 Say, can it be your career's on the wane?

Sadly, unbidden, my thoughts retrospectively
 Turn to the day when I made you my own;
 When, with discernment, I chose you selectively
 Out of a dozen or more that were shown.
 Memories surge of the days in your company,
 Episodes riotous, decorous, gay;
 Now in your stock there's an obvious slump; any
 Beggar who wishes may take you away!

Doubtless it seems to be shocking ingratitude
 You with the worn-out, effete, to enrol,
 Since you have figured in débonnaire attitude
 Time and again on the top of my poll.
 Granted; but you must admit it's excusable
 (Nought it avails to regret or repine)
 Certain it is you are no longer usable,
Sine quâ non is a hat with a shine!

Sadly I muse on your ultimate destiny.

Knowing your first, what will be your last state?
 Sometimes I think you would surely look best in e-
 quipping the head of a black potentate!
 Other times, dreaming, I picture you, saucily
 (Charming t'would be to encounter you thus)
 Decking the nob of a driver dressed horseily
 Perched on the seat of a Hammersmith 'bus!

If, when we meet, it should in Piccadilly be,
 —I on the pavement and you up on high—
 Pausing expectantly shall I ask "Will he be
 Keen to remember or will he pass by?"
 Pardon, my friend, for this wanton dubiety,
 Knowing you well I should be but a brute
 Ever to doubt that with strictest propriety
 Gravely you'd rise and return my salute.

Farewell, old comrade! No thoughts that are
rancorous

Ever need enter your vacuous head
 Too many dubious memories anchor us
 Firm to the altar of Friendship instead!
 Whose be the brow you adorn in futurity,
 Whether your exit be sombre or gay,
 Trusting your honour I rest in security,
 Knowing you never will give me away!

IN WINTER

STRANGE paradox that Thou shouldst wake in me
At divers times such diverse sentiment!
When close of daily toil has set me free
To muse beside the fire in calm content,
With pipe and book, my placid lot
Is good, till stern Necessity
To go to Thee
Impels me, yielding, when I love Thee not!

But when the long oblivious hours have shorn
Resentment from me, and the horrid shock
That heralds the inevitable morn,
With loud, insistent, oft-repeated knock,
Intrudes the theme of daily bread,
More gladly were I yet unborn
Than rudely torn
From Thine embrace when most I love Thee,
Bed!

TO AN OLD PHOTOGRAPH

(accidentally unearthed)

QUAINT spectre of the distant past
 Emerging needlessly at last
 With brazen heart, devoid of ruth,
 Relentless in my teeth to cast
 The plain unvarnished truth
 About my youth,

'Twere surely kinder to remain
 Dust-laden in your drawer than strain
 Your maiden modesty, to win
 Your way into the light again
 And, much to my chagrin,
 To rub it in

Thus wantonly about the traits
 That marked my graceless hoyden days.
 When lineaments like these I see
 I ask myself, in blank amaze,
 Did such a travesty
 Resemble me?

If so it was not yours to fan
 The flame of love when he began
 To woo, for had you once been shown
 Would he, or any other man,
 Have sought me for his own
 If he had known?

Quite otherwise I think; in fact
Small blame to him if he had lacked
The pluck to make the final bid
Were't not for your consummate tact
In lying deftly hid
Until he did!

Rather (on second thoughts) than chide
Your re-appearance—since you tried
To save me from a life's distress—
I lay you lovingly aside
And in contentment bless
Your cleverness!



A BIRTHDAY ODE

(To C. B. K.)

O Day of Days, O one in three six five,
 O Thou of great, of almost priceless worth Day,
 Who, with the Fates, didst cunningly contrive
 To bring him naked, kicking and alive
 Into this Vale of Tears—to cut it short,
 O Birthday,

Thou hast, me thinks, displayed indecent haste,
 Ignoring the old tag “festina lente,”
 To lay another precious year to waste,
 In that Thou has incontinently raced
 And led him on so soon from seven to eight
 and twenty!

It seems but yesterday since Thou didst goad
 The halting bard to fashion in his honour
 The annual commemorative ode;
 And now another milestone on the road
 Looms up and, flitting by, is presently a
 gonner!

Throughout Thou hast been more than common
 kind
 In bountifully yielding up thy treasure,
 But O Thou thoughtless Birthday have a mind
 Lest in thy breathless hurry Thou mayst find
 In granting him the goods Thou dost forget
 the leisure,

The span of time essential, to enjoy
His little whack of fun and frolic wholly.
Attend to this, I pray Thee, and employ
A brake on thine excessive speed, my boy,
And recollect in future years to foot it slowly!



FINIS OMNIUM

WHEN the last competition is over,
The End of all Things is in sight,
And the last of Earth's winters has vanished
Away in the long Ewigkeit,
Then the Monarch of Sport shall hold Council,
The Just God of Games shall preside
At the Last of all Tests, and the Greatest,
Our ultimate fate to decide!

There are some who played merely for shekels
Who set out to win, foul or fair;
For the Spirit of Contest they knew not,
They all had some grievance to air;
Who eternally cackled and grumbled,
And uttered their pitiful bleat
If there were'nt any prizes to play for
Or when they encountered defeat.

Their Reward shall be endless competing
In contests that never are done,
'Mid perpetual disputing and wrangling
For stakes that can never be won!
They shall play in the Outermost Darkness,
On pitches of cinders and coals,
Until ages and ages of striving
Have chastened their poor little Souls!

There are some "played the game" through
their lifetime

For sheer pure delight of the Thing;
Never hankered for honours nor prizes,
Nor kudos achievement might bring;
Who could take nasty knocks without flinching,
Not grousing should ill luck begin,
And who put all their worth into trying
But knew how to lose as to win!

These have earned the Great Chief's invitation
To meet the past Heroes of Sport:
To foregather together, recounting
The clean honest fights they have fought!
They shall enter the Innermost Circle,
For them there are niches in store
In the mighty majestic Valhalla,
To dwell there in peace evermore!





