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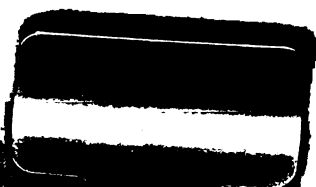
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LAYS OF IND.

BY ALIPH CHEEM.

Captain Walter Yeldham

SECOND SERIES.

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TO THE
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P R E F A C E.

*His maiden venture having fared
Far better than he'd reckoned,
'Your's truly, Alipb Gbeem,' has dared
To launch upon a second.*

*He hopes, kind Pub, you'll deign to laugh
At what are trifles merely.
And, critics! in a bag of chaff
Don't look for grain too nearly!*

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LAYS OF IND.

SECOND SERIES.

PERFIDE ALBION.

(A hitherto unwritten chapter of Oriental history.)

DID you e'er meet a Gaul patriotic in ton
Who didn't call England 'perfid Albion' ?
If you haven't as yet, you are certain to hear him
Whenever you mention the taking of Perim.

This Perim's an island,
Devoid of a tree,
A baked bit of dry land
Below the Red Sea.
No Government owned it
A few years ago,
Till Great Britain boned it,
As soon I shall shew.

It's dreadfully rocky, and frightfully hot ;
And out of it not e'en a weed's to be got ;
In fact, upon islands at large it's a blot ;
And I'd rather be shot
Than be told that my lot
Was to dwell on that desolate desolate spot.

But it stands in a strait at the Red Sea's mouth,
 Commanding the passage or North or South ;
 And should matters in Eastern parts ever be critical,
 Perim might prove of some value political.

At all events this was the statesmanlike view
 That was taken by each diplomatic Mossou.
 " Ne possèdent ils pas Aden, ces Anglais, mon Dieu ?
 " Oui ; nous aurons Perim. Pourquoi non ? Sacre bleu !"

This was what the bureaux designate une idée,
 And the next thing to do was to make it un fait.
 That's the usual course in affairs continental,
 So why not adopt it in things oriental ?

' Ces Anglais' might swear,
 Crying out 'twas unfair,
 And a robbery bare ;

And ' The Times' in a leader might offer a prayer
 For a country so greedy and mad as to dare
 To maraud in the East, for the world was aware
 That the East was Old England's peculiar care ;
 And ' The Times,' as ' The Times,' would have Frenchmen beware,
 For that Perim might prove, after all, but a snare,
 Entailing an outlay they couldn't well spare ;
 That France had already far more than her share—

Bourbon, Pondicherry, and Chandernagore—
 And 'twas monstrous to think she could want any more ;
 That another encumbrance might drain, couldn't better her,
 And the sooner she dropped it, etcætera, etcætera.

Thus argued Mosscoo
That Old England would do ;
But he added a pregnant corollary too :
“ Let her talk if she likes ;
“ She looks fierce, never strikes,
“ For John Bull is the servant of Mr. Bill Sykes.
“ She may swagger, and bluster, and warn us, but we
“ Will inform her the thing is a fait accompli ;
“ And you’ll probably see
“ That, although very hurt,
“ She will let matters be,
“ And will swallow the dirt.”

The project thus having been carefully hatched,
‘ Un ordre’ was to Bourbon or somewhere despatched,
Telling Monsieur le Chef to send off a fast frigate
To Perim, and, ere that the British could twig it,
To hoist the French drapeau upon it, and prig it.
So a frigate was sent
With this wicked intent,
And with gaudy new drapeaux was heavily laden ;
And the ship on her way
Just put in for a day
At the British adjacent possession of Aden.

Now of course what the rôle
She should play, or the goal
She’d in view, not a soul
On this freebooting ship
Gave the slenderest tip ;
She might have been trying to find the South Pole.

The sailors were fêted,
And some got elated,
And Frenchmen and Englishmen a-malgamated ;
But never a word
Of their mission was heard ;
And this silence you'll think neither strange nor absurd,
When I tell you they none of them knew. It was wrapped in
The innermost cell in the breast of the Captain.

The name of this Captain was François de Bonheur,
Of, I hardly need say so, the légion d'honneur ;
And our Gov'nor's name was Sir John Thomas, he
Being, ça va sans dire, a distinguished C. B.
The latter invited the Captain to dine,
And placed on his board some uncommon good wine.

Now whether 'twas due to the port or the sherry,
Or high-seasoned fare,
Or British ' portare,'
Or the tropical air,
I cannot declare ;
But somehow or other they grew pretty merry.

Sir John Thomas, rising, rejoiced beyond measure,
In fact it was hard to express all his pleasure,
To see at his table,
So gallant and able,
So brave and devoted,
So noble and noted,
A sailor of France as the guest on his right.
And he felt, with a kind of prophetic foresight,

That the object,—he hoped they'd excuse the remark,—
The object they kept so remarkably dark—
Be it fishing for turtles, or finding new seas,
Or searching the East for proscribed refugees,
Or trying a gun on some beggarly village,
Or practising hands at a wee bit of pillage—
Would, unless some unfortunate accident dished it,
Be crowned with the thorough success that he wished it.

Then the gallant Mossoo,
With his hand on his star,
Said—"I tank you, parbleu,
"Varee moash, de ma part;
"C'est défendu de dire
"Ce que nous allons faire,
"J'ai juré par l'Empire
"Ma patrie, et ma mère,

"Mais"—... perhaps 'twas the port had relaxed his discretion;

Perhaps he conceived
We'd be better deceived

By a make-show of candour, a touch of confession;
Perhaps he felt sure 'twas too late in the day
To matter if now he disclosed le secret;
However it came about, this much is certain,
He raised for a moment a bit of the curtain.

For he went on to say,
In a nonchalant way,

That although 'twasn't proper to flash his objet,
He was bound, in his quest of it, up the Red Sea,
To some place which was only conjectured to be;

That he hadn't in view any war or alliance,
That his mission was purely connected with science,
And that simply to fill up a page in his log,
And look at a shore which to him was incog,
He intended to order his master to steer him,
En passant, quite close to the island of Perim.

Then he grew sentimental, and red in the face,
And smothered an Aide-de-Camp in an embrace,
And swore he thought Aden a glorious place,
And kissed "Sir Jhon Thomars" (who made a grimace),
And called that brave soldier a vare joli tar,
And wound it all up with a 'heep heep hourrah !'

At the mention of Perim, Sir John nearly rose
From his chair, but recovered by blowing his nose.
He blew it a good twenty minutes at least,
And appeared to have done himself good, when he ceased.
For there seemed something like to a wink in his eye,
As he whispered some words to an Aide sitting by ;
Which Aide, when he heard, looked half funny, half grave,
As a man meditating a pun or a shave ;
Stole a glance at the Captain, then one at Sir John,
Then seemed most intently the ceiling to con ;
Then stared in his wine-glass right down to the bottom,
As though there were flies in his wine and he'd got 'em ;
Then fidgetted, jerkily looking behind,
As if to skedaddle occurred to his mind ;
Then, finally, vanished in haste from his chair,
As if he'd the tooth-ache or needed fresh air.

When he got well outside,
Where the darkness could hide,
He walked down the hill out of sound of the revel,
There his cap up he shied,
And he laughed till he cried.
Then he took to his legs, and he ran like the D..... 1—
Ran till he stood, void of breath, on the poop
Of a nice little tight little British war-sloop,
And the message he gave, amid roars, to the skipper,
Was, just as that worthy expressed it, a clipper.
The night was still young, when the snug little ship
Left Aden, as on some mysterious trip ;
And the Aide saw the Rock sinking down to a speck,
As he danced an expressive pas seul on the deck.

The feed came of course, like all feeds, to a close.
Potations concluded, the Frenchmen all rose.
There were farewells ecstatic, embracings convulsive,
And kisses—eugh—slobberings, that is the word ;
Sir John thought Le Capitaine highly repulsive,
Le Capitaine thought Sir John highly absurd ;
But they hugged, and they shrugged,
And they parted in sorrow,
And spoke very huskily both of the morrow,
As if it would dawn on twin hearts rudely cleft,
And it wasn't all humbug and over the left.

Well, the morrow did dawn, and the jaunty French ship
At the first streak of light gave her moorings the slip.
De Bonheur arose too betimes from his bed,
With a dolorous sense of possessing a head.

But he said to himself as he fixed his two eyes on
The island of Perim, just on the horizon—
“ Sir Jhon Thomars, when he shall hear of my prize,
“ Will possess a head too, and will flatter my eyes.”

Then his sabre he buckled,
And swaggered and chuckled,
And got the new drapeaux all out of the hold,
And ordered the gunners
To fire off some stunners,
That the glory of France might be properly told.

Soon the desolate shore
Topped the waves more and more,
Till the land, red and bare
In the pitiless glare,
Became clear to the view
Of the gallant Mossoo.

He balanced himself with his glass and looked out ;
And, after a pause, put it down as in doubt.
Looked again ; took his mouchoir and polished the lens ;
Looked again ; pitched it down and took one of his men's ;
Looked again ; blew his nose, rubbed his eyes, and once more
Took a long steady look—same result as before ;
Laid it down, put his hands in his pockets and swore.
He sacrebleu-ed awful a minute or so,
And tapped at his brow, as he paced to and fro,
As if he half-dreaded his brains had got loose,
Or some fiend with his vision was playing the deuce.
At length, somewhat calmed, he returned to the charge,
This time with a telescope wondrously large.
He looked ; let it fall ; stared to landward a bit
With protruding blank eyes, and—fell down in a fit.

And now, gentle reader, it's time that you knew
What horrors had burst on Le Capitaine's view.
On a ridge on the island, which highest appeared,
A pretty tall flag-staff was solidly reared,
So tall 'twould have certainly shamed all the trees
Had there been any there : and afloat on the breeze
Streamed the swelling expanse of the glorious old flag,
Which English affection and slang calls ' the Rag ' :
While beneath, hat in hand, were a group of Jack tars,
Engaged evidently in shouting hurrahs ;
And astride on a rock, 'neath an umbrella's shade,
Like the sprite of the scene, our acquaintance the Aide.
Thus Perim was won,
And thus Frenchmen were done,
And if a bit shabby,
'Twas very good fun.

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THE LOAFER.

Who is that standing
Outside in the heat,
Gruffly demanding
A something to eat?
Rags on his body, no shoes to his feet;
Hair foully growing;
Disfigured past knowing;
Blistered and showing
Limbs shrivelled to tan;
Hangdog and scowling,
As under a ban;
Stay,—is that prowling
Poor wretch a white man?
English? O think to this.
Englishmen we!
How did he sink to this?
Who can he be?

* * * * *

Only a loafer, a beggarly vagrant,
Guilty of having no work and no purse.
Send him away, for the fellow's not fragrant.
Aiding these gentry but renders them worse.

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Who is that rascal
 Disturbing the peace,
 With struggles that task all
 The city police ?
 Whom are they hustling
 So roughly along ?
 Why all that bustling
 And jabbering throng ?
 Doubtless some vicious
 And half-drunken brute,
 Whom to cage were judicious
 And flogging would suit.
 Hark at his shouting
 And cursing, and—see—
 English past doubting !
 Now who can he be ?

* * * * *

Only a loafer, our people disgracing,
 Guilty of having no purse and no work,
 Taking to drink and his nature debasing.
 Give him hard labour, and don't let him shirk.

—

Who is that tramping
 Along in the dust,
 Hungrily champing
 His last bit of crust ;
 Staggering fearfully
 'Neath the sun's glare,
 Shining so cheerfully
 On his despair ;

Passing the village,
 The shop, and the farm ;
 Doing no pillage,
 Attempting no harm ;
 Weary miles trudging,
 With face to the West ;
 Foot-sore, and grudging
 The cowherds their rest ;
 Drawing their pity
 Or scorn on his head—
 Hopes fixed on the city
 Where vagrants are fed ?
 Vain, for he's sinking,
 Piteous to see !
He's not been drinking.
 Who can he be ?

* * * * *

Only a loafer, a spiritless creature,
 Guilty of having no work and no purse.
 Worthlessness branded in every feature.
 These sort of people are India's curse.

Who is that lying
 There all of a heap,
 As if he were dying,
 Or drunk, or asleep ;
 The morning sun glaring
 Right into his face,
 All fixed as if staring
 At yon busy place ?

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Doubtless he's wandered
For many a league,
And now, his strength squandered,
Has dropped from fatigue.
And what is this packet
That bulges his jacket?
Let's see what it's saying :—
“ Is honest, adept,
“ But the works are not paying,
“ Few hands can be kept.”
And look—'tis a station
Up-country and far.
Discharge meant starvation.
How hapless some are !

Bah—'tis only a loafer, a do-nothing wretch,
Who may have been honest, perhaps, at one time ;
Some fellow who couldn't work long at a stretch.
These rascals all swell up our journal of crime,

But stay—look intently ;
Let's cover his head,
And speak of *him* gently—
The loafer is dead !

* * * * *

Only a loafer ! an eyesore, and giving
Heathen occasion to blacken our name,
Lacking ostensible sources of living ;—
Clap them in prison, *they all are the same !*

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AS WISE AS A SERPENT.

A Bath-room Epic.

FROM time immemorial men have agreed
That serpents are very 'cute creatures indeed.
The notion as certainly got into vogue
As that every fox is a thief and a rogue.
And men not alone to this fancy inclined ;
Old Nick, 'twould appear, was of similar mind,
Or why, when he basely proposed to deceive
That nice little soft little sweet little Eve,
Did he get himself up as a sneak of a snake,
And not as a creature of handsomer make ?

I propose to narrate a remarkable case,
Which happened quite lately before my own face ;
And I think you'll admit, when my yarn has been spun,
That snakes are at all events hard to be done.

'Twas a very hot morning in Thingamypore ;
There had never been such a hot morning before.
I bawled for my tub. 'Twas the work of a minute
To rush from my bed-room and fling myself in it.

Well—I sat in the water, and revelled, and rolled,
Through my heat-thirsty pores deep inhaling the cold,
Dashing it down on my head, in my face,
With a whoop and a splashing all over the place,
When—and just at the ‘moment supreme’ of my joys—
I heard ‘neath the tub a peculiar noise.

The sound was a sound which makes guinea-pigs quake,
And men for the matter of that. ‘Twas a snake !
Slowly from under the tub he appeared,
Hissing—then stopped—and his angry crest reared ;
And I cannot declare I felt eased in my mind
When I saw ‘twas a cobra of deadliest kind.

He sat there erect, wide expanding his hood,
As if he’d get at me, if only he could ;
But I stuck to my tub, and its lofty green side
Was a bulwark from which his assault I defied.

A minute—two minutes—three minutes had passed ;
I wondered how long this was going to last,
When, perhaps sudden panic had entered his soul,
He wriggled himself to the waste-water hole ;
In he popped in a moment, and, lo and behold,
Was half through in another. But *wasn’t* he sold !

An impulse heroic coursed swift through my veins
To give that old cobra a dance for his pains.
From my tub like a burglar I noiselessly stopt,
Like an Indian stalking a chicken I crept,
With a grin of delight, I believe, on each feature,
At thinking what glory to diddle the creature ;

I stood by the hole—I stood over his tail,—
I seized it—and hauled as you'd haul at a sail.
He wriggled and hissed with a horrible sound,
But the hole was so small that he couldn't turn round;
So I held him there writhing, and laughed as he tried,
Half his length in the bath-room, the other outside.

“Low cowardly reptile ! O wriggle away !
“I've got you, friend scales, if you wriggle all day.
“There, that's for yourself”—('twas a pinch). “There's another ;
“O, didn't it hurt? and now one for his mother !”

I pinched till I tired, for my heart it was hardened,
And really I think I may ask to be pardoned ;
Comes but once in a life such a grand opportunity
Of bullying a cobra with utter impunity.

At length, wearied out, he surrendered himself,
Lay still as a bottled one up on a shelf,
Apparently careless of all that I called him,
And even the fact that my fingers had mauled him.

Suddenly—O my friend—wasn't he deep !
Possibly thinking I'd fallen asleep,
Summoning all of his wonderful strength,
He gave a huge tug, and nigh rescued his length.

Then recommenced our tremendous affray,
Both of us straining and twisting away ;
But his frantic attempts not a whit could avail,
For my grasp it was set like a vice on his tail.
The combat had reached now a furious stage,
The snake was half-mad, and I felt in a rage ;

I resolved, as I pulled with my might and my main,
To die, or to diddle him over again.
So I braced myself up, and I gave a fierce haul,
And flung him back, whack, 'gainst the opposite wall.

Down he came flop, and it must have been riling
To see me secure in my tub again, smiling.
"Sold again, scales!" cried I, growing quite cheerful.
Answered he nought but a hiss that was fearful;
Hiss? 'twas a sound would have made a mop bristle!
Hiss? it was only just short of a whistle!
It didn't mean simply dislike of *my* face,
It told of contempt for the whole human race—
A hatred implacable, born ere the Fall,
And lasting till one of us go to the wall.

But now to my point. He appeared to be thinking;
At least so I judged from the way he was blinking;
And, having concluded—it's true on my soul—
Retreated, quite coolly, *tail first*, to the hole.
Steadily, slowly, his face to the foe,
Showing his poisonous fangs, white as snow,
Proudly expanding his great spectral hood,
He backed, till in front of the channel he stood.
Pausing, he seemed to say—"Now, silly man,
Tread on my tail, if you like, or you can!"
Then, in the hole, he inserted his end,
And bobbing politely a 'good-bye, my friend,'
Vanished, me looking the while like a flat!
Hang me, if snakes are not 'cute after that!

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TEMPORA MUTANTUR.

IN India, of course, 'tis notorious that worth
Is the sole stepping-stone to a lucrative berth ;
That the parties who sit on the top of the trees,
Where the boughs almost droop with their load of rupees,
Are the parties who've marked themselves out from the rest,
The parties who've publicly proved they're the best.

 This point is a fact

 Which is never attacked.

The person who doubts it, no doubt must be cracked !

 But the case wasn't so

 In the days that are fled.

 Merit wasn't the go ;

 Something else was instead.

 People not at all clever

 Succeeded somehow ;

 A scandal that never

 Is possible now.

 Ah—we ought to be grateful

 We live in a day

 When a system so hateful

 No longer has sway ;

And should any now question the truth of my stricture,

 And think that I'm hard on the past in my rhymes,

I invite them to look at the following picture,

 Which wouldn't be true of these healthier times.

There lived once a Major named Cecity Mole,
A most unmistakeably common-place soul,
Intended by nature to play a dull rôle.
Notwithstanding all this, though, he rose to the top,
Steadily, surely, with never a stop—
Often, indeed, with a kind of a hop—
Skipping along on the tide of promotion,
Just as a sea-gull skims over the ocean.

First he was posted an A. Q. M. G.,
Having wriggled through somehow in Hindostanee;
A feat which astonished his intimates sore,
And even—he said so—astonished him more.

And how it, as such,
More than cramming High Dutch,
Rendered him specially fit for the Staff,
Was a matter I never could comprehend half.

Here he bore himself well to the general wonder:
That is, he committed no scandalous blunder.

He might have been brighter,

But, come, we'll be fair;

He'd a capital writer

Who kept him all square.

There was no little war with its gatherings of forces,

• No strain consequently upon his resources.

He moved a few corps

For the yearly relief,

And arranged 'le transport'

Without coming to grief.

No cholera happened just then to be rife,
So he wasn't removed, wiggled, or tried for his life.

The bandies he hired
Cost the usual double,
So he wasn't required
To explain and give trouble.

In fact his incumbency satisfied most
That there might have been even worse men for the post.

Having mastered the movements of biles and of men,
He was secondly dubbed a Judge Advocate Gen. :

Though, if asked the connexion
'Twixt this and that berth,
I am forced, on reflection,
To say "what on earth?"

The only solution which comes to the mind
Is, that, 'twixt the two sphères, there's a wonderful kind
Of link cabalistic,
Supernatural, mystic,
Which no common mortal can see, being blind.

Our hero now thrust into labyrinth legal,
Soon shewed that he had *not* the eye of the eagle :—

Played curious capers
With justice and law ;
Squashed court-martial papers
That hadn't a flaw ;
Writing notes on the finding
Or sentence, or both,
Very hazy, reminding
The court of its oath ;

For he couldn't dissemble
The fact that the court,
Which must now re-assemble,
Had quite set at nought
The drift of the evidence, customs of war,
And the principles most fundamental of law.

Then the members would meet,
And in wonderment learn,
From the ponderous sheet,
How they'd botched the concern.
But—from mere opposition
Of course—must adhere
To their former decision,
The facts being clear.
Whereupon the Judge Advocate went to the Chief,
Who declared, when he'd read it all, leaf upon leaf,
He was dreadfully pained,
But in duty constrained,
To agree with the court the proceedings were good,
And the court had decided as he himself should.

After this, our Staff officer shortly was made
Brigadier of a favorite Indian brigade ;
And the tricks that he played
With his troops on parade,
Putting all his Judge Advocate larks in the shade,
Weren't they writ in the hearts of the gunners, who fired
At the rear of their friends, as they slowly retired ?

Weren't they graved in the minds of the troopers, who tried
By a resolute charge to destroy their own side?
Weren't they grief to the Infantry Colonels, who swore
That the foe couldn't both be behind and before?
Weren't they scored on the brains of that Brigadier's Staff?
Aye, and didn't they serve as a garrison chaff?

Having thus set his mark as a Brigadier gallant
(For I *must* say he gave splendid dinners and wine),
And the big-wigs apparently scenting some talent
Which didn't come out in the tactical line,
He was suddenly, and to the general joy
Of the army, appointed to civil employ.
I wouldn't be guilty of illiberality,
But cannot help saying
'Twas rather dismaying
To see him the head of a municipality!

See! here was a man
Who in clover began,
And successively ran
Through a pretty good span
Of some pretty good things,
Just as if he had wings;
And yet he was only an average soul,
A most unmistakeably common-place soul—
A square man, in fact, in a circular hole.
Now what was the secret? Say, how was this done?
Had he merit? I *think* we might say he had none;

At least not enough
Of the genuine stuff
To push him along over other men's heads,
And drop him a-top of such feathery beds.

The reason now hear,
And the thing will be clear.
Mr. Cecity Mole,
Though an average soul,
A most unmistakeably common-place soul,
Married early in life
Quite a gem of a wife,
Who when he got in, pulled him out of, a hole :
A lady so clever
Folks wondered how ever
She'd yielded to such a ridiculous whim
As to swear any sort of obedience to him.
She was somewhat a belle,
Her connections were swell,
And *she'd interest all in the line that would tell !*

Interest, interest—that *was* the key,
Opening locks, sir, on both sides the sea !
Merit ? bah—interest, influence, birth,
He who had these, you might wager, had worth.

There is the picture ; and, reader, you'll own
That the world has, since then, much more virtuous grown.
The days of ' queer jobs ' are now happily flown,
And success is the guerdon of merit alone.
We live in the era of ' tests ' and ' selection ' ;
In fact we're as near as can be to perfection !

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THE LETTER FROM HOME.

ANOTHER to add to the cherished pile !
One echo more from the far-off isle !
May the hand that penned thee be spared to twine
Lovingly once again in mine.

The mother's writing!—my hide is tough,
And the road of life has been somewhat rough,
The fount of my tears, one would think, were dry,
But it always brings a mist to my eye.

For a letter from her is a murmur of love,
A gentle message, as from above,
A sweet pure breath, 'mid the world's foul strife,
Laden with good, and hallowing life.

How well I remember the first she sent,
Written, I fancy, the night I went ;
The anguish—the courage—the tender care—
The fond ambition—the blessing—the prayer !

It is many a year since that page was stirred,
But I've got it by heart, each line, each word ;
And it often rouses regrets that are vain,
And makes me wish I'd my time again.

And this, the latest ! I see her sitting,
The lamp green-shaded, the fire-flame flitting ;
The Dad in his deep old-fashioned chair,
Asleep, with his spectacles up in his hair.

The half-read journal across his knees ;
Old " Crib" on the hearth-rug taking his ease ;
The tea-things under the urn hard by,
Singing a sort of lullaby.

With her hand to her brow, and a stool at her feet,
She sits at her desk, all trim and neat.
Slowly, sedately, she fills the page,
And she writes a wonderful hand for her age.

And when she has given her soul to the ink,
She leans herself back, and seems to think.
Her lips just move, and her eyes are aglow,
And a tear drops on to the sheet below.

Then she chides herself for becoming so sad,
And calls in a cheery tone to the Dad,
Saying his love is as usual sent,
And he nods his head, to express content.

She is closing the letter—the cover is there,
When a step is heard outside on the stair,
And with cheeks all rosy and shining skin,
Old Parkes, the butler, comes softly in.

He knows at a glance, while he makes the tea,
That the mother's been writing to none but me;
And he whispers, passing behind her back,
“Respects if you please, m'm, to Mister Jack.”

Yes—there are the words in their own P. S.,
Simple enough, but welcome no less;
Familiar perhaps for a serving-man,
But we'd better take love in what guise we can.

It tells, this letter, the love oft-told.
But the writing is hardly so firm as of old.
It breaks upon me the more I look.
The hand, I'm afraid, not the table, shook.

It is what, I suppose, one is bound to expect,
But it gives a shock when we first detect;
And it wrings a man, when he's tied to a land
Where he's thousands of miles away from the hand.

The hand! whose lingering touch is still
Felt in mine with a fancied thrill.
The hand that caressed from the hour of my birth!
There are only two others as dear on earth.

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TWADDLE.

Two members of the Council were
Hot seasoning at Ooty ;
And often in their walks the pair
Conversed about their dooty.

" O Peter Straight," said John McDoo,
" I feel with deep contrition
" That all of us have been untrue
" To our exalted mission.

" This mighty land strange Providence
" Has given to our keeping ;
" And we appear at its expense
" Advantage to be reaping.

" 'Twas given us in trust, you know,
" To drill and educate it,
" And when the job is finished, go
" And straight evacuate it.

“ But—O— from this our conduct’s wide,

“ It doesn’t bear reviewing ;

“ It really makes me blush inside

“ To think what we are doing.

“ Of barracks we erect a lot

“ As if—the thought is humbling—

“ We meant to stay, and they were not

“ Perpetually tumbling.

“ We tell the natives to repair

“ In studious crowds to college ;

“ Then stick ’em into places where

“ They don’t require the knowledge.

“ We tell ’em to beware of rum,

“ And punish ’em for drinking ;

“ But cry ‘ pray grow your opium ’ !

“ Because it pays like winking.

“ We say—‘ You niggers, why object

“ ‘ To wife emancipation ?

“ ‘ How possibly can you expect

“ ‘ A decent population ?’

“ ‘ Ah—that,’ say they, ‘s a doubtful point,

“ ‘ Our women might be skittish’ ;

“ And then they lift a finger-joint

“ Contemptuous at the British.

" ' Come, fraternize, be one of us,'
 " We cry, ' what harm can skin do ?'
 " And yet our ladies make a fuss
 " At dancing with a Hindoo.

" O Peter Straight, bethink you, pray,
 " What wicked nonsense this is !
 " When shall we ever do away
 " With such like prejudices ?

" When we, the swells, the upper ten,
 " Shew to the humbler sorters,
 " That honest native gentlemen
 " Are free to wed our daughters.

" When we admit the claims of worth,
 " Remove official taboos,
 " And open each and every berth
 " To influential Baboos.

" Give clever men, though country bred,
 " Responsible positions ;
 " Put native generals at the head
 " Of stations and divisions.

" And in the civil branches do
 " Away with ancient grudges,
 " By giving amplest powers to
 " Our virtuous native judges.

“ When we shall reach the final day
“ Of working our accounts ill,
“ And start by cutting down the pay
“ Of us, the coves in Council ;

“ Then, Peter Straight, and only then,
“ Can we defend our dealings,
“ And boldly claim before all men
“ To have enlightened feelings.”

To John McDoo said Peter Straight—

“ This programme may be pleasant,
“ But I, for one, say, let us wait,
“ ’Twould hardly do at present.

“ It doesn’t me so clearly strike,
“ But mine’s a common noddle ;
“ It sounds to me, sir, very like
“ Unmitigated twaddle.

“ You say we hold the land in trust,
“ And for a little span, sir ;
“ The truth is, that we’ll hold it just
“ As long as e’er we can, sir !”

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THE CONTENTED SUB.

WHEN the island of Perim became British soil,
Many pounds on a light-house were spent ;
And to shew British power, and replenish the oil,
A sub, and some sepoy's, were sent.

But Perim is lonely, and barren, and hot,
Not a vestige of life in the place ;
And many who've seen it consider the spot
As a blotch upon nature's face.

So the duty, though simple enough of its kind,
Wasn't fancied as much as might be.
Sub the first—sub the second—went out of his mind,
Sub the third drank himself to D. T.

Sub the fourth, finding Christmas unbearably slow,
Very nigh brought his prospects to grief,
By signalling "stop" to the mail P. and O.,
And asking for "pudding and beef."

'Twas resolved then to send off a pair at a time ;
But, once tried, 'twas abandoned as cruel ;
For monotony drove them to quarrel and crime,
And they slaughtered themselves in a duel.

The Gov'nor of Aden, he raved and he stormed,
His mind with perplexity laden.
"A duty's a duty and must be performed,
"But how?" cried the Gov'nor of Aden.

"I don't like despatching young subs to their graves ;
"Still, a duty's a duty they'll own ;
"So send to . . . that little place over the waves,
"Lieutenant Mac' Odic' Alloan."

Lieutenant Mac' Odic' Alloan very soon
Took command of the feeders of oil :
And the Gov'nor wondered, as moon after moon
Found Mac' Odic' Alloan at his toil.

And he wondered the more when a letter from Mac
Informed that, so far from disliking
The post, he'd at present no wish to come back,
And considered the scenery striking.

"By Gad," cried the Gov'nor chuckling, "at last
"We have got the right man, I should say ;
"And what's more, as he likes it, we'll keep him there fast,
"As long as the beggar will stay."

At the end of six months or so, Mac again wrote

"That he liked his retreat even more.

"He could never again take to collar or coat,

"And trousers would prove a sad bore.

"He'd no letters to answer, no duns to cajole,

"No visits, no ponderous feeds,

"No trouble but now and then calling the roll,

"And the rest of the day to his weeds—

"Lounging about in a jolly long laze,

"Very like lotus-eating in fact."

Said the Gov'nor—"As long as it suits him, he stays,

"But I'm hanged if I don't think he's cracked."

Another six months, and a letter that said

That Lieutenant Mac' Odic' Alloan

Was quite ready to stop, a successor instead,

So attached to the island he'd grown.

"O pray let him stop," roared the Gov'nor,— "the muff—

"A successor 'd be awkward to find.

"Some day, I suppose, he'll be crying enough ;

"I wish they were all of his mind."

So Mac' Odic' Alloan stopped a couple of years,

"Which," he wrote, "had too rapidly fled."

And now very strong grew the Gov'nor's fears

That the lad must be wrong in his head.

And they grew and they grew till he swore by the Lord
That the youth must be mad as a hatter ;
And he sent off to Perim a medical board
To see him and settle the matter.

To Perim the cargo of Doctors soon ran,
But they found not a trace of the sub.
He'd been living, this very contented young man,
At home, for two years, at his club !

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THOSE NIGGERS!

OLD Colonel Thunder used to say,
And fetch his bearer's head a whack,
That if they'd let him have his way,
He'd murder every mortal black.

He knew 'em, that he did, by Gad ;
He twigged 'em from the very first.
The race was radically bad,
And his domestics were the worst.

They chattered, quarrelled, thieved, and lied ;
Their smiles and smirks were all a sham ;
To diddle master was their pride,
To drink his gin, and sell his gram.

About each other too they'd tell ;
Like crows they'd peck to death a brother ;
There wasn't one who wouldn't sell
For one or two rupees his mother.

“ Khoob malloom hi,” the bearer 'd say,
Not understanding him a bit.
He couldn't send across the way,
Unless he put it in a chit.

The cook bought fowls, and charged him double,
And purchased him inferior meat ;
'Twas only after endless trouble
He got a morsel fit to eat.

Great scoundrels were his ghorrawallas,
Lazy, noisy, careless, pert.
The dhobie ruined all his collars ;
He couldn't keep a decent shirt.

The barber smelt—O—like a stoat,
And with blunt scissors chopped his hair,
And often nearly cut his throat,
And would completely, if he dare.

In fact, throughout our whole dominion,
No honest nigger could be got,
And never would, in his opinion,
Until we polished off the lot.

THE BENEDICT'S DREAM.

LATE, as beside the camp-fire sitting
I watched the sparks, on the sad night-wind
Borne away, in the jungle flitting,
A vision rose before my mind.

I gazed and gazed till the fire before me
Flickered into a vacant gloom ;
And then a witchery settled o'er me,
Strange, and I stood in a quiet room.

Fingers soft into mine came creeping ;
A tender bosom pressed close to mine ;
We looked upon our children sleeping
Like two angels infantine.

We gently kissed the little faces,
And called a blessing down from above ;
And over the cot, in sweet embraces,
Murmured our pride and hope and love.

Then, with footfall light, descending,
We paced together the garden walk
Hand in hand, content, and blending
Our content in happy talk.

The moonlight sparkled amid the flowers,
Wet with dew, and through the tree,
And rained its silver in quivering showers
Down below on the placid sea.

Nature into our souls seemed breathing
Love and peace from everything.
Far in the night we loitered, wreathing
Fancies of what the years would bring.

* * * * *

I woke ; the fire was almost dying ;
The night-wind rustled by with a moan ;
No room ; no babes ; no wife soft-sighing ;
Jungle around, and I sat alone.

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THE TWO MACBETHS.

'Tis sweet, I think 'tis said in more
Than one poetic book,
To see men turn from fields of gore
To ply the reaping hook.

'Tis also sweet when soldiers brave
Doff regulation swords,
And, corked and rouged, sublimely rave
Upon the station boards.

The only drawback seems to be
This well-established fact,
That every amateur thinks he,
And he alone, can act.

And so it often comes to pass
That things go all awry,
And what should only be a farce
Becomes a tragedy.

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Now Major Swill and Doctor Pill
Were rivals on the stage,
And played with histrionic skill
Beyond the average.

But—so I'm told 't has ever been
With actors small and great—
They hated one another, e'en
With diabolic hate.

No stage committee's wheedling way,
No managerial art,
Could make them e'er together play,
Or take a minor part.

If Doctor Pill played Romeo,
Would Swill take Friar Lawrence?
"No—Pill be jiggered—not for Joe;
"The part was his abhorrence."

"With Box by Swill and Cox by Pill
"The cast would be so good."
Those vulgar farces made him ill—
Pill didn't think he could.

One day the corps dramatic tried
To settle on a play,
But failed the question to decide
In any sort of way.

At last said Major Swill—"I vote
"For Macbeth! What's the odds?"
At which a few the table smote
And cried aloud "Ye Gods!"

A member mildly said he thought
The heavy tragic line
Was one where—so experience taught—
Few amateurs could shine.

The manager protested too ;
He knew as much as most,
But wondered how they meant to do
The working of the ghost.

But most approved the bright idea,
And squashed the sceptic few,
And proved with logic very clear
'Twas not so hard to do.

Then Doctor Pill upraised his voice
In accents of contempt,
And said—"Well, gentlemen, your choice
"Beats all I could have dreamt.

"Will Major Swill now really deign
"As Macbeth to appear ?
"When next he favors us again,
"Perhaps he'll do King Lear."

Swill put his eye-glass to his eye,
And gave his foe a stare;
And said—"I can conjecture why,
" But Pill is scarcely fair.

"Why shouldn't others have their fling
" When he such credit got
" By his delicious rendering—
" Ha—ha—of Claude Melnotte?"

Now Pill felt gall within his soul;
This was a master stroke;
For Pill in that romantic rôle
Had been a station joke.

And matters looked a little queer,
And tended to a row,
When some one rose and said—"Look here,
" I think I've hit it now.

"Let's have Macbeth—'twill take no doubt,
" Though 'tis a boldish start;
" And Swill and Pill can, night about,
" Perform the leading part.

"Toss up for nights—there—that's your line—
" It's very often done.
" Thus both the stars will have their shine,
" And we shall have our fun."

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This sage proposal threw a gloss
Of concord on the scene ;
Swill said he would be glad to toss,
And Pill was quite as keen.

They tossed for nights. The Major won,
And chose the opening night,
And all agreed that what was done
Was very fair and right.

The bill was drawn—"the season starts
" With Macbeth—only twice,"
Et cætera—and then the parts
Were settled in a trice.

King Duncan, Pat O'Flynn would take—
" He'd throy it shure enough ;"
And Corporal MacBean would make
A natural MacDuff.

Brown, Jones, and Robinson would get
Up as the Scottish host ;
Biggs (Staff Corps, unemployed) was set
To represent the ghost.

The witches would, 'twas understood,
Be cast some future day ;
And Spinks, a new-fledged ensign, would
The Lady Mac portray.

The night came on, and Major Swill
Was glorious as Macbeth.
That dagger scene—it haunts me still,
And takes away my breath!

Some people said the audience jeered,
But that was clearly spite;
For Major Swill declared they cheered.
I did with all my might.

The only thing that made him go
Behind the scenes, and swear,
Was Pill, who from the stalls below
Looked up with stony stare.

“That stony stare, my Pill,” he said,
“Will bring you grief and sorrow”—
And wicked thoughts came in his head
With reference to the morrow.

The Lady Mac—that’s Spinks, you know—
Was rather fond of wine.
Said Swill unto himself—“Ho—ho—
“I’ll ask young Spinks to dine.”

He came, and Swill did never think
Of shame, remorse, or funk,
But basely made the Lady drink
Away till she was drunk.

Then ~~and~~ ~~drove~~ ~~her~~ ~~round~~ ~~in~~ ~~time~~ to meet
The prompter's final call ;
And, entering, calmly took his seat
In Pill's abandoned stall.

The curtain rose ; but why prolong
This history of spleen ?
Pill really came out very strong,
Till—Spinks came on the scene.

A lurch—a hiccup—more—and then
Pill saw the cruel sell ;
And Swill he whistled softly when
Spinks *and* the curtain fell.

This was the last attempt they made
At Shakespeare in that corps ;
And Messrs. Swill and Pill ne'er played
Alternate any more.

Indeed 'twas darkly given out
That, reconciliation scorning,
They had an unsuccessful bout
At pistol-shots one morning.

ARABELLA GREEN,

OR THE MERCENARY SPIN.

I'm going now to rhyme about
A most unhappy spin,
Whose crime was being too devout
A worshipper of tin.

We'll, firstly, drop a silent tear
On her untoward fate,
And, secondly, on her career
Regretfully dilate.

Her name was Arabella Green ;
A Colonel was her Pa ;
She was the sole pledge that had been
Presented by her Ma.

At six she went to England ;—that,
You know, is quite the rule ;—
And there her mother left her at
A Brighton boarding-school.

There she acquired what's often taught
 To girls who hope to charm—
 More grace of carriage than of thought;
 It pays, so where's the harm?

She sang, they say in tune, could dance,
 Spent much on dress and scents,
 Spoke French,—well, Brighton isn't France,—
 Forgot her parients.

Did all a girl should do, in fact,
 Her studies to complete,
 Or, what's more practical, attract
 A husband to her feet.

Sometimes her aunties called and took
 Her walking on the Steine.
 But home was an unopened book
 To Arabella Green.

"She's quite a woman," cried her Dad
 (He'd got her photograph)—
 "We'll have her out, we will, by Gad—
 "She's fifteen and a half!"

So Mrs. Green went home to bring
 Sweet Arabella out;
 And found the darling little thing
 Knew what she was about.

For on the voyage, when she told
Her what should be her game,
The artless creature did unfold
Opinions much the same.

She had of course a deal to learn
In matter of details,
But—she had such a business turn—
Soon rattled through the scales.

The pair upon the poop would sit,
And on the future feed ;
And, if your patience will permit,
I will recite their creed.

“ I do believe in dress and ease,
“ And fashionable dash.
“ I do believe in bright rupees,
“ And truly worship cash.

“ I do believe in marriage quite,
“ But don't believe in gents,
“ Unless you bind them pretty tight
“ By way of settlements.

“ I do believe entirely in
“ The civil service ranks.
“ The best are worth a deal of tin,
“ And none exactly blanks.

" But I do believe that marrying

" An '*acting*' man is fudge ;

" And do not fancy anything

" Below a '*pucka*' Judge.

" I do believe in scarlet coats,

" But chiefly at a ball ;

" For I have heard that ten-pound notes

" Are scarce among them all.

" Still I believe in Brigadiers,

" And Staff Corps Colonels, who

" Draw pensions in their waning years,

" And tidy pensions too.

" I do believe that if I'm smart,

" And do not lose my head,

" And cut that thing that's called the heart,

" I may a fortune wed.

" But if in love I weakly plunge,

" And break my golden rule,

" I may as well throw up the sponge,

" And write myself a fool."

With these ideas of life and bliss,

And many wrinkles more,

This interesting little miss

Approached our genial shore.

And when her Pa embraced his kid,
And heard her speak her mind,
He said he thought—by Gad he did—
Her notions most refined.

And, sitting in the garden cool
To drink his evening cup,
He thought how well that Brighton school
Had brought his daughter up.

Well—days flew by. Lieutenants sighed,
And Ensigns tried her much ;
Civilian griffins too ; but wide
The berth she gave to such.

A Chaplain, giv'n to croquet, and
Perhaps a little plain,
Was mad enough to ask her hand ;
He never asked again.

An honest coffee-planter came
And offered home and heart ;
But—no—she'd rather keep her name.
That was a likely start !

A smart Assistant Surgeon too
Appeared upon the field ;
But—O—that line would never do !
His fate was quickly sealed.

Then next was seen approaching an
Uncovenanted-wallah.

“Uncovenanted? Bless the man!

“Well now, what next would follow?”

Some real substantial offers came,
Which made her pause, but—“Pish,
“She’d time to play a waiting game,
“And land a bigger fish.”

She waited; but Collectors did
Not come in spooney shoals,
And Sessions Judges must have slid
On purpose to the Poles.

No sign of Brigadiers, and not
A Staff Corps Colonel! why,
It really looked as if the lot
Were growing scarce, or shy.

Or could it be they disbelieved
A Benedict’s enjoyment?
Or had no heart to spoon, aggrieved
At *having no employment?*

Whatever the cause, ’twas plain to sight,
Without a doubt or quibble,
The bigger fishes didn’t bite,
And didn’t even nibble.

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In fine, before two years were out,
It took no gumption nice
To see that if she'd wed, no doubt
She'd have to 'bate her price.

She did what braver folks must do—
She bowed to circumstance ;
But husbands still kept out of view,
By some unkind mischance.

The notion seemed to float abroad
Wherever she had been,
That no one underneath a Lord
Would satisfy Miss Green.

In launching this upon the wind,
Fate played a cruel trick ;
For Lords are somewhat scarce in Ind,
And 'Sirs' not overthick.

And now the humbler loves she would
Have scorned in former days,
The situation understood,
And went upon their ways.

Lieutenants, Chaplains, Captains gay,
No longer came in force ;
They didn't care, perhaps, to play
A hand at 'last resource.'

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In sorrow now, and soon in shame,
 Poor Arabella watched
The ruin of her little game ;
 O how completely botched !

And with this mental canker goes
 The colour from her cheek ;
The mouth gets pinched, and, O, the nose
 Looks very like a beak.

The eyes grow red with secret tears,
 And as the seasons pass,
Bad only turns to worse—she fears
 To gaze into her glass.

And then the crash, the final one,
 That smiting bitter blow—
The Colonel's Indian work is done,
 And home the Greens must go.

The General Orders praise her Dad ;
 The passages are booked ;
They sail ; and other spins are glad
 To see her goose is cooked.

O spins, be warned ere yet too late,
 To coin don't wholly lean,
Unless you wish to meet the fate
 Of Arabella Green.

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Don't think too light of honest bids;
And, mothers, make a rule,
That common sense be taught your kids,
If possible, at school.

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LE BEAU SABREUR.

Of all the sabreurs who the mutineers slew,
And sent 'em to blazes or further,
By chalks the successfulest I ever knew
Was distinguished old Colonel McMurther.

A dandy was he, curly-haired, and he stood
In his stocking six foot and a quarter.
Though sixty and odd, he was lusty, and could
Drink a gallon of brandy-and-water.

He told me one day as we sat in long chairs,
And I modestly listened and wondered,
Of a battle in which he'd destroyed 'em by pairs,
Till he'd slaughtered exactly a hundred.

"I rode"—he narrated—"slap bang at their front,
"Where a crowd of their horse pirouetted,
"And chopped 'em to bits till my sabre was blunt,
"And I galloped to get it re-whetted."

“ I went to my tent, gave a touch to my hair,
“ Just tossed off a brandy-and-soda,
“ And, when 'twas re-sharpened, I mounted my mare,
“ And back at the devils I rode her.

“ A troop of 'em charged with a rush and a yell,
“ And we met with a snorting and splutter ;
“ But I cut 'em all down, and I recollect well
“ That it felt like the cutting of butter.

“ Having slaughtered the most of this cavalry band,
“ To ease my old mare I alighted ;
“ And on infantry sepoy I practised my hand,
“ And—I think I was getting excited.

“ For they stood pretty close, and my cuts took effect ;
“ Heads flew like round-handers at cricket.
“ It was glorious ! only to swipe, and neglect
“ Altogether to think of your wicket !

“ For an hour and a half as content as a prince
“ I continued this easy employment ;
“ O never such moments of ecstasy since !
“ By Jove, sir, 'twas *thorough* enjoyment !

“ I couldn't help humming a favorite air
“ Through the yells and the roar and the racket,
“ And laughed, though the cannon-balls rumbled my hair
“ And I got a few spots on my jacket.

“ But suddenly up came the old Brigadier,
“ And he shouted—‘ Come out of that, Colonel !
“ ‘ You’ve slaughtered enough of these poor wretches here ;
“ ‘ It’s shocking—it’s simply infernal.

“ ‘ It ain’t *comme il faut* for a man of your rank
“ ‘ To be carving away like a private.’
“ My reply—yes, I think, we had better leave blank.
“ I hardly thought *he* would survive it.

“ ‘ Hold, Colonel McMurther,’ he cried ; ‘ it is time
“ ‘ That you ceased, for humanity’s sake, sir.
“ ‘ In a Christian such carnage as this is a crime,
“ ‘ In a Colonel it is a mistake, sir !’

“ But I heeded him not, as some answer I hissed,
“ And I gave it ’em hot, by the Lord, sir,
“ Till he roared at the top of his voice—‘ I insist
“ ‘ You immediately give me your sword, sir !’

“ I gave him my sword. ’Twas a terrible blow.
“ That order, by Jingo, did stab hard !
“ But—as soon as he left me, I rushed on the foe,
“ And I had my revenge with the scabbard.

“ It wasn’t so easy, I’m free to admit,
“ But right through their turbans I crashed it ;
“ Till I came to a nigger whose head *wouldn’t* split,
“ But rang like an anvil, and—smashed it.”

He ceased ; then he took from their place by his bed
The battered old friends that he cherished,
And murmured—" What oceans of blood you have shed,
" What a lot through you darlings have perished !"

From which you will see that the gallant sabreur,
After all, was immensely soft-hearted. .
There were tears in his eyes, I distinctly aver,
When I praised the old sword, and departed.

CUPID AFLOAT.

To see young Sniggles and Mary Jane,
His recently wedded wife,
On the voyage out, was a thing I must fain
Remember all my life.

'Tis good to contemplate human bliss,
For there's always enough of woe ;
But I never saw any that equalled this,
Or a couple that went on so.

At first their spirits appeared to droop,
For it wasn't agreeable weather ;
And they groaned and shivered upon the poop,
And went to the side together.

But when it calmed, and the bloom appeared
Again on the lady's cheek,
They loveyed and doveyed, and ducked and deared,
From end to end of the week.

They spooned from morn to eventide,
They lived and they breathed on spoon ;
When the weather forbad the spooning outside,
They did it in the saloon.

They never wearied ; they seemed each day
Fresh ecstasy to imbibe ;
And they gazed in each other's eyes in a way
That I really can't describe.

And once ere long 'twas my lot to see
What shocked my sensitive taste—
They were sitting as close as wax, and he
Had his arm about her waist.

They had quite forgotten the world and me,
Till I uttered a loud 'ahem.'
Ah—what were I and the ship and the sea
And the passengers all to them ?

And later on in the voyage, I grieve
To state that it got to this,
Before you could properly call it eve
They were seen and heard to kiss !

O lucky Sniggles—O happy pair !
'Tis pleasant to be adored !
But to do it in public's hardly fair
To the other folk on board.

And I hope when the flush of passion dies,
 And you're both a little older,
 That, only before third parties' eyes,
 Your spooning will be colder.

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A LIQUORISH LAY.

MORTALLY bad with an overcharged liver,
I lay on my back, almost hoping to die ;
Thinking to chuck myself into the river
I saw by my compound roll temptingly by.

Wearily, drearily, dragged the dull day along,
Only my bearer to sit by my bed ;
Nothing to do but to watch squirrels play along,
Chirruping, scrimmaging, round, overhead :—

Swear now and then pretty free at the blisters
They clapped on my side, but kept clapping in vain ;
Look till I tired at the cartes of my sisters,
And ask myself if they would know me again.

Then, in the afternoon, sink into slumber,
Fancying hundreds of curious things.
Sometimes that poochies of infinite number
Flitted before my nose, flapping their wings.

Beetles and flies, winged ants, caterpillars,
Monster mosquitoes annoying me much,
Cockroaches sailing about in flotillas,
All of them, hang them, evading my clutch !

Till nearly frantic I'd rise on my pallet,
Loudly declaring I'd croquet them all—
Seizing my hair-brush, just used, for a mallet,
And taking my bearer's thick head for a ball.

Then, quite exhausted, I'd scold at the Surgeon,
Who looked in to see how his poor patient did.
" Doctor, I hear the band playing a dirge on
" Some wretched full private put under the lid !

" There it comes growing and blowing quite near to me,
" Louder and hoarser the rum-ti-tum-tum ;
" Band-master, band-master, if you'd be dear to me,
" Just put your foot through that horrible drum !"

Then I would grasp the first boot that was handy,
And swear that I'd dash out the first fellow's brains
Who refused to supply me with soda-and-brandy,
To drown all my sorrows and heal all my pains.

And—as I drained a full glass to the finish
(*Water*—I know it, my medical friend)—
Gently he'd tell me my pegs to diminish,
Otherwise there could be only one end.

Just as if I'd ever liquored too royally !
Just as if I'd ever drunk myself tight !
I, who had always restrained myself loyally—
Ten pegs a day, and a couple at night.

Wasn't this language most highly injurious—
Fatal, in fact, to a man in my state ?
Is it surprising I grew a bit furious ?
Is it amazing that Surgeon I hate ?

Cruelly wounding my tenderest feeling,
Basely ascribing my liver to drink !
All the while in his coat-pocket concealing,
Bent on my torture—ah—what do you think ?

Instrument brutal of cruelty clinical,
Garment of dread, in the shape of a vest !
Didn't he harness me, fiendishly cynical,
Saying—"Old fellow, it's time you were dressed" ?

Didn't I lie in that scavenger's daughter,
Myrmidons holding me down as I fought ?
Didn't I bellow out vengeance and slaughter ?
Didn't I faint with a brain overwrought ?

Didn't I wake from my trance subsequently,
Feeling as lean and as weak as a rat ?
Didn't I ask myself, quite innocently,
What of the Dickens I could have been at ?

Didn't I promise, by all that's impressive,
I'd never take pegs for the rest of my days—
Not even tea in a manner excessive—
Altering wholly the drift of my ways?

Don't I now look on the past as a riddle,
A horrible dream which I cannot make out?
Am I not getting as fit as a fiddle?
Don't all my friends say I'm jolly and stout?

Don't I feel happy, and live just as merrily,
Now that I've cut that vile soda-and-B?
All of you fellows who nip may just verily
Ponder well over what happened to me!

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HOMeward BOUND.

So my name is in Orders, old friend, at last,
And the days of my soldiering soon will be past ;
And I think, if I hurry, perhaps I may
Be home with them all upon Christmas Day.

Thirty odd years is a longish span,
Making a gap in the life of a man ;
And it's thirty and odd since I looked on the face
Of the dear old Dad in the dear old place.

Thirty and odd, sir, and happily spent,
Taking the good and the bad that was sent :
Shadows and sorrows have crossed my line—
But where is the life that is *all* sunshine ?

Craving I've had, sir, for home and rest,
For my boys to be near, and my wife on my breast,
For a peep at the couple who gave me birth—
But isn't there craving all over the earth ?

Of deep disappointment, disgust, despair,
Sickness of body, I've had my share—
But India isn't the land alone
Where men dig for a nugget and find a stone.

Do the stones dismay the digger bold?
Aren't they forgot when he lights on gold?
Many a stone have I found, 'tis true,
But I've had my share of the nuggets too.

You may smile, and others may laugh in their sleeve,
And many there are who will never believe;
But the years that I've passed in this Eastern clime—
Thirty and odd—were a happy time.

I am one, as you know, of a bygone set;
Thirty-year men are not often met;
And India's been as a home to me,
As happy as mine had a chance to be.

For a man, who has pride and an empty purse,
May easily live in a land that is worse.
And now that the moment has come to part,
There's something resembling a pang in my heart.

I can scarcely credit the fact, old friend,
That my soldiering draws so nigh to the end;
That I, who have joked at the rest, myself
Am about to be finally placed on the shelf.

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Why, it seems as if many a sun hadn't set
Since the old Dad called me his smart cadet ;
And I see the tear in my mother's eye,
As she kissed and kissed me, and sobbed good-bye.

That soft sweet eye, with its lashes wet,
There it is, on my heart, sir, yet,—
There it is, set as a gem in a shrine ;
But never again will it look in mine.

For she died exactly ten years ago,
And she spoke of me in the final throe,
And she wished that *all* of the lads were near,—
That was one of my sorrows here !

The Dad, they tell me, is broken much,
Still you don't at his age see many such :
He toddles about in the open air,
Cheery, and busying here and there.

Now in the garden, now in the park ;
Now in the dairy, cool and dark ;
Now in the stable, fondling o'er
The favorite hunter he rides no more.

Then in the farm he potters about,
And has his chat with the steward stout ;
And every Sunday he walks to church,
Down the drive by the grove of birch.

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Mary trudges along by his side,—
She was always a pet of his, my bride,—
And they always stop at the mulberry tree
I planted a youngster, and talk of me.

And oft, as they walk, the story's told
Over again of the Colonel bold,
Who at Lucknow won his Mary dear—
That was one of my nuggets here.

And how he won in the mutiny's strife
Honour and glory, as well as a wife,
Medals and mention, and, last, a C.B.,—
Indian life *has* its joys, you see.

Then when the daylight dies into gloom,
The lamps burn bright in the dining-room,
And Dad and Mary each take their place,
At the long oak table, face to face.

And after dinner, a sudden din,
And two little urchins come romping in,
Climbing and rumpling grand-papa's shirt,
Loudly demanding a big dessert.

Often and oft, on India's plains,
Lone and dejected, racked with pains,
Lying awake in my tent at night,
Cheered have I been by these visions bright.

And I cannot, old friend, help wondering how
They look, the Dad and Mary, now ;
For they've got my letter in which I say
Perhaps they will see me on Christmas Day.

I think to the Dad 'twill be almost a blow—
Sorrow and joy commingled so :
Joy to behold once more my face,—
Sorrow that *one* isn't there to embrace.

Mary, dear Mary,—I see her start,—
Her face all pale with the joy at her heart ;
She holds the letter, and kisses the sheet,
Thanking God, in a murmur sweet.

And she runs, half-mad, to the nursery door,
And tells them papa is coming once more !
Kissing and hugging the urchins twain,
As if she had lost them, and found them again.

Then, breathless, she writes to my brother Jack,
To say that I really am coming back ;
And to Harry and Jane, to wend their way,
That we all may meet upon Christmas Day.

Jack has retired, you know ; but I'm told
He often regrets the day that he sold :
He's married a wife, and has settled down
To a box on the moors and a house in town.

He'd think he'd committed a dreadful crime
Not to visit the Dad at Christmas time ;
And I'm sure that he almost jumps from his seat
When he reads that we're going so soon to meet.

And Harry, the sailor,—who's always there
If leave's to be had, and he's cash to spare,—
How glad he will be ! I fancy half
That I hear the ring of his jovial laugh.

And Jane, who married the big dragoon,
What a fuss she'll make at my coming so soon !
All of them, bless them, they'll all be gay
To think of the meeting on Christmas Day !

Yes, we shall meet, and home has a spell,
Though I've loved the land of my sojourn well.
The work is over, the sojourn done,
Fare thee well, thou Land of the Sun !

Nothing but rest, and home, in store ;
Never again to wander more ;
Thanking God for the present, and yet
Linked to the past with a fond regret.

Note.—This lay appeared in the opening number of the *Chameleon*, 1872.

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AN OMISSION.

O THERE'S nothing in Ind half so sweet as a plunge
In a jolly big tub, with a jolly big sponge !
Lord Byron of sweets most enchantingly sings,
And mentions all manner of saccharine things,
Running all through the list in most masterly fashion,
From gondoliers' songs to the first thrills of passion ;
And, though many others, nigh thirty, approving,
Declares, to his mind, there is nothing like loving.
Tom Moore also wrote something gushing and neat
About love's young dream being awfully sweet ;
And most of the poets have rhymed about what,
In their private opinion, 's delicious or not—
But none, though they certainly haven't abused it,
Have lauded the tub. Let us hope that they used it.

O ye who are serving your country in Ind,
And know what is meant by a hot-weather wind ;
Who've melted from morning to evening, and wondered
You lived, with thermometer marking a hundred ;
Who've tossed about fretting, and scolding all night
Punkah-wallahs who snooze, and mosquitoes who bite ;
Who've risen at morn unrefreshed from your bed,
With a horrible temper, and terrible head,
A craving for liquor, a loathing for grub—
Ye know what delight's in a good roomy tub !

DECEITFUL JONES.

THE Indian sun was sinking down
Behind the toddy trees,
When Jones before Miss Adelaide Brown
Went down upon his knees.

Now, Jones he was a subaltern in
The Bundelcund Hussars,
And, like a man, he had spent his tin,
Or rather his dear Papa's.

And the worst of it was, that all the girls
That he loved—and they were many—
Though sweet as sugar, and fair as pearls,
Had never a single penny.

But Adelaide Brown, the freckley-skinned,
He had heard on trusty grounds,
If not the prettiest maid in Ind,
Had a thousand or so of pounds.

So Jones at a picnic said to himself,
As he picked her up a curl—
“I scorn a fellow who’d wed for pelf,
“But I really love that girl.

“She hasn’t the vacant eyes of the dove,
“And her hair may come from Truefitt’s;
“But if she doesn’t accept my love,
“I shall certainly die of the blue fits!”

The sun was sinking down, as I’ve said,
When the much-enamoured Jones
Removed the topee from off his head,
And went on his marrow-bones.

And Adelaide Brown, who got her hair,
Or a deal of it, from afar,
Lisped gracefully that she didn’t care
If she took her brave Hussar.

Old time, as usual, jogged along,
And Jones was kindly told
That the khubbur about the coin was wrong,
But—“he hadn’t proposed for gold!

“Could they possibly think that he’d behave
“To charming Adelaide Brown
“Like a mercenary and heartless knave?
“He’d live such calumny down.

“ He loved that girl with the fire of youth,
“ And he’d go and just inform her,
“ That, now he had learned the ridiculous truth,
“ His love was only warmer.”

He went, and he told her all his love,
The calumny, and his pain ;
And added, he’d heard that his aged Guv
Was anxious to see him again.

And he feared that duty must be done,
And ’twas bitter, of course, to part,
But Adelaide Brown was never one
To break a parent’s heart.

He would go and stroke that parent’s head,
Though his own poor heart should crack,
And a month or two would soon be fled,
And love would waft him back.

Young Jones he sailed, and Adelaide Brown
No more of her Jones did hear ;
For he spliced himself in a county town
To a couple of thou a year.

O spins, who list to a tale of love
In these outlandish parts,
If your lover must go and see his Guv,
Get married before he starts.

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THE COMMANDANT OF YEKGURGUL.

IRASCIBLE General Snawter was put

In command of the station of Jowtathabad.

A daughter had he with a very neat foot,
Who very soon drove all the garrison mad.

She had rich golden hair, at least *then*, I believe,

And her name—well, she always was called ‘*La petite* ;’

And before a month passed—to record it I grieve—

She had dared in the dark a young gunner to meet.

His name was Pat Rooney, from Oireland no doubt ;

He was poor as a rat, but as blithe as a lark.

And old Snawter one afternoon bowing him out,

He was dhriven to kissing his love in the dark.

When this horrible fact to the Dad was conveyed,

By some party who wasn’t considered a brick,

I cannot—no—cannot repeat what he said,

But he sent for his Adjutant General, slick.

And he asked if Pat Rooney could not be cashiered,
Or degraded, or somehow despatched to the deuce.
And the Adjutant General said that he feared
That the Queen's Regulations were framed very loose;

For they didn't provide for a crime such as this,
But he'd ask the Judge Advocate General too:
Who wrote a long memo., which shewed that a kiss
Wasn't penal, though highly immoral in hue.

Then said General Snawter—"What *is* to be done
"To suppress or to punish this penniless knave?
"This gunner, or rather this son of a gun,—
"He will bring the few hairs that I have to the grave."

Answer made the A. G.—"The important command
"Of the fort of Yekgurgul is vacant just now.
"Give him that. 'Tis a trump ready scored to your hand;
"You won't hear much then of Pat Rooney, I vow."

Now this fort of Yekgurgul's a vile dismal spot,
Nearly fifty good furlongs from Jowtathabad,
With a jungle about it, as swampy as hot,
And a Yekgurgul fever's not nice to be had.

Said the General—"Tell Mr. Rooney I've thought
"The command of Yekgurgul to him to present;
"As no soul but the Commandant lives in the Fort,
"'Tis important a trustworthy man should be sent.

“ Say my mind is made up, and I won’t take a ‘no’ ;
“ I’m aware that he’s modest, of course, and all that ;
“ Then put him in Orders, and tell him to go—
“ And I hope it’s the last we shall hear of the flat.”

Many months had elapsed, and Pat Rooney was still
In command of Yekgurgul as fit as could be.
“ The impudent scamp hasn’t even been ill,”
Said the General ruefully to his A. G.

“ And by Gad he’ll be writing for leave in a week
“ For the races and shows, and artillery ball ;
“ And he’ll see her again, the confounded young sneak.
“ If he ventures to write, take no notice at all.”

So when Rooney applied for the leave that he wished,
No notice was taken, no word in reply.
And he said—“ Shure, they fancy that I’m to be dished,
“ But, by Jabers, I’ll do them all yet in the eye.”

Again he applied, and no answer again.
Then he said to himself—“ Snawter, ’faith, you’re unkoind ;
“ I have asked ye for lave, and have asked ye in vain,
“ Shure, I’ve now got a noice little dodge in my moind.”

The races came off, and the ball it came on ;
All Jowtathabad was arrayed in its pride.
Like a star in the firmament ‘ La petite’ shone,
And before the first waltz Rooney stood by her side.

The General smothered the rage in his breast,
But he said to his Adjutant General—" Sir,
" Let that scapegrace to-morrow be placed in arrest.
" 'Gad—I'll teach him to come, without leave, courting her."

But ere that the sun of to-morrow had burned,
The scapegrace was safe enough out of the way ;
And the General's fury was vain when he learned
' La petite' and her lover were off to Bombay.

And a ' docket' informed him that, " having in vain
" Written letters, which seemed to be placed on the shelf,
" Mr. Rooney considered his duty was plain,
" And applied to the Commandant, i. e., himself ;

" And the Commandant promptly had written to say,
" Mr. Rooney of course was entitled to leave
" For a month, *upon private affairs*, to Bombay.
" And—he begged to report his departure that eve."

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OUR RIDE.

THE village cocks were crowing,
And the hungry eattle lowing,
 Waiting round the fastened gates for lazy
 Cowherds sleeping long ;
The sun was redly rising,
In their homeward prowls surprising
 Late hyænas, slouching by, as Smith
 And I rode swift along.

The morning air smote keenly,
And we gallopped on serenely,
 Drinking in the grateful freshness
 Of the peep-o'-day in Ind ;
We were bound to shew at muster,
So we gave our steeds a duster,
 And we swept across the jungle
 Like the monsoon wind.

Onward, onward, fast we clattered,
Under trees where monkeys chattered,
Over nullah, shallow stream, low marsh,
And sandy river-bed ;
Past old temples, where a Brahmin
Blew a blast that was alarmin'
On the sacred horn, to tell the land
The night was dead.

Past an ancient fort in ruins,
Rousing thoughts of bloody doin's ;
Past a bowrie yet untroubled
By the drawing of the day ;
Past a roadside camp of carters,
Trying to be early starters,
Urging bullocks with a shouting
To arise from where they lay.

Fainter grew the chinkle chinkle
Of their collars : and the tinkle
Of the louder bells of cattle
Travelled now upon the breeze :
For the morn was brighter beaming,
And the herds released were streaming
In long columns to their pastures
In the distant trees.

~~Then, the early village maiden,~~
With her shining pitcher laden,
 Moved with gait erect and stately
 To the well across the plain ;
And some swarthy magnate urban,
With a wrapper round his turban
 And his chin, rode jingling by us,
 With his motley train.

Then a group of woodsmen passes,
With the faggots on their asses ;
 And a drove of oxen plodding
 Each with grain-filled sack ;
And a postal runner ringing
All his little bells, and swinging
 With his measured trot, and letters
 In the leather at his back.

Sights that seemed an indication
We were drawing near the station ;
 And we held aright, for suddenly
 There boomed the morning gun ;
At the sound our eager horses
Seemed to feel replenished forces,
 And they tossed their crests, as knowing
 That their toil was nearly done.

Clomb the sun now swiftly higher,
Like a blazing ball of fire ;
 Frequent grew the roadside cabins
 And the cultivated plots ;
Market people townward walking,
With their wives behind, or talking
 At the cross-roads or the resting-stones
 In many-coloured knots.

Then a gaudy cart went creeping,
With its freight of nautch-girls peeping
 Through the parted curtains, shewing
 Saffron cheek and jewelled nose ;
And we heard their saucy laughter
At the sahibs, coming after,
 As we gallopped through their dust,
 Which high in whirlwinds rose.

Next a sahib and a lady
Riding where the trees were shady ;
 And we knew for certain now our course
 Was well-nigh run ;
And the station, from a turning,
We descried, already burning,
 With its glaring staring buildings,
 In the splendour of the sun.

We could see the sunlight quiver
Down below us on the river,
And glance on glitt'ring cupola
And mosque and minaret,
Where the native city teeming
With its thousands, and redeeming
All the landscape from its newness,
On the river bank was set.

Far beyond, the river faded,
In the depth of forests shaded,
And the eye on mountain rested,
Rising indistinctly blue ;
And I cried—" O Smith, old fellow,
" You may doubt it, but I tell you,
" You may travel many miles to find
" So glorious a view."

And Smith, not sentimental
Upon matters oriental,
Replied—" The panorama
" May perhaps your fancy suit ;
" And that dirty native city
" May to you seem rather pretty,
" But it only makes *me* think—
" ' O, what a splendid place to loot ! ' "

THE FAITHFUL ABBOO.

ABBOO was a trusty servant,
Trusted by his master much ;
And the latter's prayers were fervent
That he might have many such.

For whenever master thought his
Liquor disappeared a bit,
Abboo regularly caught his
Brother menials prigging it.

Always nailed some erring brother,
Got him sent away or fined ;
Abboo would have nailed his mother—
Abboo 'd such an honest mind.

And his master, Colonel Jervis,
Honored Abboo, raised his pay ;
Loved him for his faithful service,
Hunting all the thieves away.

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One by one they came and vanished,
One by one they came to grief ;
Maties, chockras, peons were banished ;
Still there always was a thief.

Mahleè, dhobie, cook, horsekeeper,
Each were to the chokee sent,
Last of all the wretched sweeper—
Still the Colonel's liquor went.

" Devilish odd this," said the Colonel ;
" What a land to soldier in !
" Abboo, this is most infernal—
" Who the blazes drinks my gin ?"

" How I tell, sar ? plenty thieves, sar ;
" Other servants bobbery pack,
" Drinking up what master leave, sar,
" Moment Abboo turn his back.

" Abboo found out plenty rogue, sar,
" Stealing, 'busing master's name ;
" Master taking same-like logue, sar—
" What I doing ? plenty shame."

One fine night a dreadful yelling
Roused the Colonel : by and bye,
Frightened servants ran in telling—
" Abboo—belly paining—die !"

In the pantry, groaning, shouting,
On the floor poor Abboo rolled,
And a bottle, past all doubting,
Abboo's sad disaster told.

Many bottles, on the table,
Odorous of gin were found ;
But one bottle, with the label
' Kerosine,' lay on the ground.

In the hurry of the minute
And the dark, he'd drained it clean,
Thinking master's gin was in it,
Dreaming not of kerosine.

For a space in sircar service
Abboo did his wits employ.
Never more will Colonel Jervis
Trust another native boy.

Note.—This lay appeared in the *Madras Mail*, 1872.

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THE LEGEND OF INDRA AND AHI.

No rain had fall'n for many a day,
The land was sore athirst ;
The mocking clouds swept overhead,
Storm-charged, but never burst.
The people flocked about the temples,
Praying Heaven for rain,
And cried—" Give rain or else we die !"
But all their cries were vain.

The harvest withered in the fields ;
Dust rose from every tank ;
With carcasses of cattle all
The arid country stank.
Last pestilence and famine strode
In village and in town,
And struck, with hand remorseless,
The wretched people down.

Then Indra rose, and girded on
 His sharp and flashing brand,
 And said—"Behold, 'tis Ahi who
 "Thus desolates the land!
 "The demon serpent Ahi, coiled
 "In far celestial mount,
 "With dire and rain-constraining fold,
 "About the water's fount.

"He hates the earth, and all thereon,
 "And so he guards the rain.
 "No drop will ever fall on earth
 "Till I have Ahi slain."
 And all the people answered—"Go,
 "For thy dear country's sake,
 "And take thy brand and save the land,
 "And slay the demon snake."

So Indra drew his flashing brand,
 And Ahi's ruin vowed,
 And hasted on his way to scale
 The demon-haunted cloud.
 He journeyed to a mountain crest,
 Wrapped round with mist, and there
 Stept forth upon the floor of space,
 And boldly trod the air.

'Twas sunset; cloudy range on range
Like hills in heaven stood,
With purple base and golden peak,
Against a sky of blood;
While darkly loured 'mid the rest,
With thunder growling loud,
The snake-girt fount of waters in
The demon-haunted cloud.

Now darkness fell; earth vanished; cold
The æther grew, and soon
Rose through the vapours far below
The pale and ghastly moon.
And lo! o'erhead—as Indra peered—
Lit by a straggling ray,
About the fount in monstrous folds
The demon serpent lay.

Then upward still he journeyed on,
With stealthy, painful toil,
And, ere the midnight, stood beside
The beast's gigantic coil.
Huge throbs of life pulsated through
The foul mis-shapen heap;
But unaware the creature lay,
Plunged in a mighty sleep.

Then Indra poised his flashing brand,
And, where the scaly skin
Uprose and fell above the heart,
He drove it fiercely in.
The monster writhed, and gasped, and lashed,
And, with a dying hiss,
Unclasped the pent-up fount, and rolled
Far into night's abyss.

Now surged the waters from their depths,
The prisoned deluge burst,
And, pouring downwards, saved the land
From its destroying thirst.
The springing verdure came again
On hill, and plain, and mead ;
And all the grateful people sang
The praise of Indra's deed.

A demon serpent, Ignorance,
In Ind still coils its fold
About the sacred fount of Truth,
And doth the rain withhold.
The hearts of men are parched and faint,
And Superstition dense,
With Bigotry, stalks blighting like
A moral pestilence.

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Anon, the sun of Progress, with
His bright and flashing ray,
Will penetrate the clouds, and drive
The demon snake away.
Then will Truth's pent-up waters pour
Upon the soil amain ;
And all the thirsty souls of men
Drink up the blessèd rain !

A TRUE REFORMER.

(Vide Tale 5th, Goolistan.)

A GANG of robbers stood before a king ;
A tender youth among the ruffian knot.
The monarch said—"The sword of justice bring
"And execute the lot!"

Then knelt the Vizier down and kissed the throne,
And prayed—"O world illumer, spare the child.
"With one whose facial herbage is not grown
"Be not so very riled.

"O Mecca of the world, recall thy ban ;
"Give me the kid, to teach him what is right.
"School, virtuous companions, and rattan
"Will soon reform him quite.

"Is it not writ, each newborn infant takes
"By natural bent to Islamism the true,
"And only warp of education makes
"The Christian or the Jew ?

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“The power of education who can doubt?
“The child, if left with thieves, of course would prig;
“But careful training, sire, will bring about
“A reformation big.”

The monarch frowned, and answered—“Fool, go home;
“The bad by nature ever will be bad.
“Thou may’st as well throw balls upon a dome,
“As educate the lad.

“What if, in quenching fire thy goods among,
“Thou leav’st a little spark upon the grass?
“To kill the mother snake, and spare the young,
“Were worthy of an ass!”

Then bowed the Vizier low, and moaned “wah-wah!”
And all the courtiers, joining, groaned “aië-aië!”
Until the king roared—“Idiots that you are,
“Take the young cad, and try!”

The Vizier took the trembling little cad,
And caned him well, and taught him what was right,
And turned him out a well-conducted lad,
With manners most polite.

And all the courtiers said—“By Allah’s grace,
“And favour of the Mecca of the world,
“The evil bent to good has yielded place;
“Straight is the hair that curled!”

But grimly smiled the king behind his hand,
And said—" O foolish Vizier, vain thy love !
" Thou can'st not twist a rope that's made of sand.
" Wolf's whelp yet wolf will prove !"

Two years had scarcely fled, when fresh dacoits
With rapine did the neighbourhood annoy,
And, lo, the wicked fame of their exploits
Struck fire within the boy.

With passion, that had slumbered, heaved his breast ;
He slew the Vizier kind, and seized his goods,
And, like a hawk long stolen from its nest,
He hooked it to the woods.

The monarch, hearing, bit his noble hand,
And wept—" O Vizier, how thy schemes are floored !
" How came it that thou could'st not understand
" Bad iron makes bad sword ?"

The moral of this tale it's hard to strike ;
Perhaps though *this* a modern truth may touch :—
Reform a jail-bird, if you can and like,
But don't expect too much.

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THE DICKEY BIRD:

KIND reader, I should like to tell,
If you would like to know,
A strange occurrence that befell
Upon a P. and O.

A Major O. Glendower Gwynne,
Of the Horse Marine Brigade,
Was berthed with Mither Patrick Quin,
Of the wholesale ginger trade.

At first they seemed to fraternize,
And grew exceeding thick—
Such friendships often do arise
When cabin mates are sick.

But when they'd both recovered near,
And dragged themselves on deck,
Their friendship had, 'twas very clear,
Received a sudden check.

The Major looked at Quin askew,
Whenever Quin went by ;
And fidgetted, as one who knew
Some awkward mystery.

The ship screwed on. Gib dwindled low,
Then Malta sank behind,
And Major Gwynne appeared to grow
More bothered in his mind.

They rattled through the Khedive's land,
And ploughed the hot Red Sea,
And still he seemed more gloomy and
More taciturn to be.

The isle of Perim rose and sank ;
Drear Aden came abeam ;
The Major's visage grew more blank ;
He sat as in a dream.

Across the Indian Ocean now
The ship pursued her way ;
More black and careworn seemed his brow
On each successive day.

At length they reached Bombay, and there
He said unto the Captain—
“ I will disclose the web of care
“ My conscience has been wrapped in.

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" You berthed me with a Mister Quin;
" At first we seemed to cotton.
" I've shunned him since as I'd shun sin,
" Or anything that's rotten.

" 'Tis not because he's coarse, or low
" In speech, or basely trickery—
" He's worn, this blessed voyage through,
" A *flannel* shirt, and *dickey* !"

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TO A GRIFFIN.

So you're bound for the country of curry and rice, sir?
Well, take on one point an old stager's advice, sir!
Just purge from your mind every English-formed notion
Of Ind, ere you get to the Indian Ocean.
The English are people—what thinker can doubt it?—
Who know and who care very little about it.
Just look at the way Members, even the best, shun,
In Lords or in Commons, an Indian question.
They're bound, once a year, to look into the budget;
They spare it one sitting, and most of them grudge it.
But talk about opening a park or a gutter,
The benches are crowded, and all in a flutter.
M. P.'s, as you know, are our ablest and best!!!
So what do you think we can say of the rest?
Why, there's hardly a school-boy to whom Indian history,
Bar a few facts, isn't next to a mystery.
There's scarcely a man, if you ask unexpectedly,
Can tell how it's governed at present, connectedly.
You've heard the old jokes about truculent dhoolies,
The wild tribe of Hadjees, and ice-machine coolies,
Of paddy-fields meaning an Irish location?
They're samples of what is believed by the nation.

It wouldn't surprise me to hear that they've told yer
You'll live like a prince on your pay as a soldier ;
A sub—and you'll save something under a million.
Ah me, what a pity you're not a civilian.
It wouldn't surprise me to find you believing
That magnates still spend half their coin in receiving ;
Keep house in a style of Nabob prodigality,
And rival each other's profuse hospitality.
I'd venture a wager you think every native
Is either a toady or blood-thirsty caitiff ;
Uncov'nanted-wallahs some shady profession,
And Ind for Bengal but another expression ;
That cobras are found every day in your slippers ;
That horses are cheap, and all Arabs are clippers ;
That life in a station 's all romping and riot,
And curry and rice is your principal diet ;
That missionary hardships would move you to pity ;
That tigers are common, and ayahs are pretty ;
That sweet English girls, by the P. and O. carried
By hundreds, are no sooner landed than married ;
Et cæt'ra, et cæt'ra—all rank fal-the-lal, sir :
Just drop such ideas in the Suez Canal, sir !

THE GARRISON BELLE.

FELICIA SMIRK was the admiration
Of all the gentlemen in the station.

She'd a lovely complexion,

And, O, such a waist !

She dressed to perfection,

And sang with taste ;

She danced to distraction,

Drove partners mad ;

Magnificent action,

By Jove, she had !

And her conversation

Was charming quite ;

Such sweet animation,

Such coy delight !

Over every topic

How lightly she'd roam !

What a talent for making you

Feel at home !

And then, when she rode,
 How superbly she sat !
 And how nicely she'd smile
 As you raised your hat.
 O and out with the hounds,
 How it dazed all your senses
 To see how she skimmed along
 Over her fences !

There wasn't a man worth his salt in the place,
 Who didn't extol all her pluck and her grace.
 She was pleasant to all, even liked by the dames,
 And called all the men by their Christian names ;
 Had her Jack, and her James, and her Tom, Dick, and Harry,
 And yet, on the top of it all, didn't marry.

Well, what was the reason of course you will ask me,
 And there I confess that you nigh overtask me.
 I only conjecture, know nothing for certain—
 My answer shall be then a safe and a curt 'un.

I *fancy*, mark, *fancy*—I do not *assert*—
 That Felicia Smirk's a professional flirt.
 She is rather too much Mr. Everyone's friend,
 For the serious attention
 Of *one* I could mention—
 He vows she's adorable—there it will end.

THE SENSITIVE FAKEER.

On the bank of a river in Hindostan—

The 'Bagh-o-Bahar' relates—

Lived a very hairy and holy man,

Who cured the sick at his gates.

He would shut himself up for the space of a year,

And study the state of his soul,

And only on Sheevrat days would appear

And make the sufferers whole.

Then at dawn he would plunge in the river, and swim

Like a fish with sportive mind,

While the fishes would wonder much at him,

With his long hair streaming behind.

When of this diversion he'd had enough,

To a shallow part he came;

And smeared some ashes and oily stuff

All over his skinny frame.

Then full in the reverend gaze of all
Who were huddling there for the cure,
He made what *we* will his toilet call—
It was rather light, to be sure.

On a shoulder he laid a towel spare—
It was all the linen he'd got—
Next shook the wet from his matted hair,
And twisted it up in a knot.

Then stood on the steps, and cleansed his feet
From the river's clinging ooze,
Then twiddled and made his whiskers neat,
And shuffled into his shoes.

Some spots, of the size of four-penny coins,
On his forehead he made with clay,
Then fastened a string about his loins—
And, lo, he was dressed for the day!

In another minute or so his prayers,
With mysterious signs, were done;
And then he slowly ascended the stairs,
And the doctoring begun.

He took from his nose a jewelled pen,
And wrote a prescription clear,
For every one of the women and men
And children pressing near.

Now, on one occasion a patient came
With something wrong in his head.
The Fakeer's eyes burst into a flame.
" 'Tis a Kunkhujoora !" he said.

" A worm that preys on the human brain—
" Cerebral maggot, no doubt.
" The horrible thing is there, 'tis plain.
" Young man, we must cut him out !"

So he took the youth, and his friend as well,
While the rest remained spell-bound,
To his operating chamber, a cell
In a rock, deep underground.

Then he seized an instrument, sharply steeled,
With a semi-circular shank
And a pivot, such as carpenters wield
In boring a hole in a plank.

And he bored away at the patient's head,
Till he drilled right into the brain.
" Behold the Kunkhujoora !" he said.
" He never will vex you again !"

Then he grasped his pincers to pull it out,
But the friend in amazement cried—
" O holy Fakeer, what *are* you about ?
" You'll be drawing the brain beside !

"The animal dies on the topmost fold,
" Curled up, and sticking like glue ;
" And if you pull him, he'll only hold
" The tighter, and drag it too.

" Just heat the pincers a minute or so,
" And apply to the creature's back ;
" No injury then to the brain you'll do,
" And the worm will out, in a crack !"

The holy one pitched away pincers and shoes,
And hurried forth into the air,
And, twining his long locks into a noose,
Straight, hanged himself in his hair.

Of the fate of the youth, by the ' Bagh-o-Bahar'
No information's supplied ;
But perhaps it would hardly be going too far
To conclude that ' the beggar died.'

* * * * *

The story's a story, and that is all,
But a truth is underlaid—
Woe to the wretched people who call
A native quack to their aid !

And pity it is that all the clan,
Whom their countrymen well can spare,
Don't follow the line of this sensitive man,
And hang themselves in their hair !

One glorious blessing of English rule
Is—death to their tricks uncouth,
Through the silent work of the medical school,
And the spread of medical truth.

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THE HOLLOW TOOTH.

OR AN ILL-ASSORTED UNION.

MR. COMMISSIONER ICEY CHILL

Possessed a youthful wife,
An unbending neck, an inflexible will,
And gloomy views of life.

The height of his pleasure consisted in
Denouncing smiles and jokes,
And groaning and moaning over sin,
Especially other folks'.

He sat one day in his office seat,
With a frown upon his face ;
And at eventide, when he came to eat,
He sighed as he said the grace.

For hadn't his Ruth, so frivolous, been
To the recent bachelors' ball,
In spite of his saying a ball was a scene
He couldn't approve at all ?

And hadn't a Mr. Harvey Sauce
Called twice in the self-same week?
And wasn't it shocking? It was, of course.
And wasn't he right to speak?

For didn't all bachelor army men
Lead highly immoral lives?
And didn't they every now and then
Steal other people's wives?

And hadn't he many a time with force
Explained all this to Ruth?
And hadn't she said that Mr. Sauce
Was quite an exceptional youth—

A gentleman quite, from tip to top,
And as innocent as a mouse?
And hadn't he thought it wise to stop
His frisking about the house?

And hadn't he her severely chid,
And wasn't she underhand,
Talking away—yes, that she did—
To the rascal at the Band?

And hadn't he laid before her bare
The wickedness of her life,
And very solemnly told her where
Her duty lay as a wife?

And didn't he say that her pranks must end,
And her gadding about ; but he
Would allow her to ask a serious friend,
Or a clergyman, in to tea ?

And that, lest she'd be dull, he wished her soon
To make a regular rule
Of teaching every afternoon
In the neighbouring Mission school ?

And didn't she fume and chafe and fret
When he ventured thus to speak,
And work herself into an obstinate pet,
Which lasted the rest of the week ?

And didn't he patiently bear with her still,
Reading her sermons nice,
And praying aloud that her evil will
Might yield to his good advice ?

And didn't he even shew her how
That hers was a fortunate lot ?
And wasn't there then an awful row ?
And didn't he catch it hot ?

And now as he ate his dinner alone—
For Ruth avoided the room—
He sighed as he picked his chicken bone,
And his face was full of gloom.

For he couldn't and wouldn't to her give in,
Nor compromise with wrong ;
And he meant to be firm this time, and win,
Though the struggle might be long.

* * * * *

It was ; but woman, you know, is weak,
And abhors protracted strife.
Ruth suddenly seemed to grow quite meek,
And to change the way of her life.

No Harvey Sauce to be seen by her trap
In the evening at the Band ;
No novel at midday in her lap ;
No scented chit in her hand.

Propriety reigned in the bungalow
From morning unto night,
And she didn't appear to find it slow,
Though she very justly might.

Thought Chill to himself—" My duty's done—
" I've plucked out sin by the roots."
And over the victory that he'd won,
He rose an inch in his boots.

So time wore on, and exempt from blame,
And quite at her ease, seemed Ruth,
Till a cloud of trouble and sorrow came
In the shape of a hollow tooth.

* * * * *

It was white as a pearl ; not cankered a bit ;
Just like the rest of her teeth ;
But it pained, and the Doctor who looked at it
Said the hollow was underneath.

For a month she wriggled and writhed and groaned,
With a flannel bag at her cheek,
And Icey Chill was frightened, and owned
That she seemed to be getting weak.

Then a couple of learned Doctors met,
And, after debate and doubt,
They told the husband, with great regret,
They dreaded to pull it out.

'Twas a ticklish case of *internal* decay ;
Quite out of their line, they felt ;
And the only thing was to go to Bombay,
Where a regular dentist dwelt.

Then Icey Chill emitted a groan,
And dried a tear with his sleeve,
For his darling would have to travel alone,
As "he wasn't entitled to leave."

And his precious darling, she didn't lag,
She started without delay,
With her head tied up in a flannel bag,
On her journey to Bombay.

The sufferer travelled as fast as she could,
 And arrived in proper course,
 And on the platform a dentist stood
 Of the name of Harvey Sauce !

* * * * *

It was terrible work when Icey Chill
 Discovered the ugly truth ;
 And even now he will turn quite ill
 If you speak of a hollow tooth.

And time has failed to remove the sting,
 Though damages and divorce
 Made dentistry rather a costly thing
 For Mr. Harvey Sauce.

He had to borrow, and then to sell,
 Then went to the bottom, flop.
 And Ruth—of course she merits it well—
 Is making shirts for a shop.

In fact, the moralist stern of heart
 Herein may find relief ;
 Both played an extremely shady part,
 And properly came to grief.

And what of Icey, the victim ?—alas !
 The good oft suffer in life ;
 And a gloomy man is a terrible ass
 To marry a frivolous wife.

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THE PAINTING OF THE STATUE.

A GLORIOUS fellow was Colonel McWine,
Commanding the hundred and twelfth of the Line,
In the favorite station of Kleekeepore—
 So beloved by the corps
 That the Ensigns all swore,
 If he wanted to borrow
 A million to-morrow,
 And had to provide,
 By substantial security,
 That the bill wouldn't slide
 When it came to maturity,
There wasn't a subaltern wouldn't have stood for him.
 But one terrible folly,
 It must be admitted,
 This Colonel so jolly
 Not seldom committed,
Was this—he drank very much more than was good for him.

 At dawn a light nip—
 " But the veriest sip,
 " Just to moisten his lip,"
 And by way of a warming—
The air was so chill while the regiment was forming.

And after parade, in the hot (and cold) weather,
Another to cool him, and pull him together.
At breakfast some Rhenish, or quart of Bordeaux :—
“ There’s nothing so weakening as tea, sir, you know.

“ Why, by Gad, sir, it serves

“ To destroy all your nerves !”

And, after, a brandy-and-soda or so.

Towards noon, ere the sun

To its zenith could mount,

Perhaps two, perhaps one—

But then they didn’t count.

At tiffin, beer, porter,

Or whiskey-and-water ;

And, later,—he *did* get so dry after lunch,—

A sherry or two, or a glass of milk punch.

Some bitters, of course, while he waited for mess.

At dinner, a magnum, or more—never less.

But gracious ! all this was but skirmishing merely ;

’Twas now that the action began, and severely.

A bottle of brandy

Was placed very handy,

With six soda-waters in line on the table.

There he’d sit in his glory,

Telling story on story,

Till list’ners grew scarce, and his mem’ry unstable.

Then rising unwillingly, shaking his noddle,

And vowing the bloods of the present day

Were made of brown paper, or very soft clay,

With the help of his bearer, to bed he would toddle.

And, curious to say,
He would rise the next day,
Ere the sun o'er the land shed his earliest ray ;
On his face
Not a trace
Of the bout of the night,
And—after his nip—looking blooming and bright ;
While the Majors would say to themselves, as he passed
Down inspecting the regiment, “ how long will it last ? ”
And the youngsters would think, “ what a wonderful head !
“ If we drunk but a quarter *he* drinks, we'd be dead ! ”

But the Doctors well knew
That this very fresh hue
Was the flag that drink waves
O'er the heads of its slaves,
And flaunts, till it leads them right over their graves.
And the Colonel too felt that, for all his hale look,
His heart fluttered sore, and his bridle-hand shook.
And at night, as oft restless and wakeful he lay,
A something would seem to his spirit to say—
A something half-like to a grim shadow beckoning—
“ *Some day, my friend, we must come to a reckoning !* ”

Time fled, and the Colonel became very grumpy ;
He daily grew more and more shaky and jumpy ;
Till a certain occurrence upset him most direly,
And gave him a turn, which reformed him entirely.

Now, Kleekeepore is a place well known ;
Climate quite of the temperate zone,
Scarce harmful to health or to female beauty.
It boasts of a lovely public garden,
And ride, well, *Mall*,—I beg its pardon,—
• And crowds of gents upon general duty.
In fact so pleasant it seems in their eyes,
And each unemployed-wallah so surely applies
To be kindly allowed in that station to stay,
Doing his nothing, and drawing his pay,
That it isn't the least hyberbolic to say
It's a sort of field-officer's paradise.

A famous old Gen'ral once dwelt in the station,
Whose mem'ry is held in extreme veneration ;
And so 'twas agreed
'Twould be proper indeed,
Lest time should the sense of his merits efface
(And perhaps with a view to adorning the place),
To hoist him aloft, where he'd sit looking at you,
In the shape of a splendid equestrian statue.

The statue was reared, *having first been inspected* ;
No doubt, as the *soldierly* statue expected ;
Then covered up well, and with hoarding protected ;
And a grand parade fixed, with great pomp to unveil it,
And with trumpets, and drums, and salutings, to hail it.

But, lo, on the eve of that glorious morn,
Unseen, in the dark,—
By bad men, for a lark,—
Some pots full of paint to that statue were borne.

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In the dead of the night,
 When nobody knew,
They striped it with white,
 Red, and also with blue ;
Bedaubing, those sinners, that worthy old soul
With the colours you see on a barber's pole.
They also, to make the defacement more horrid,
Put Sammy marks three, very big, on his forehead ;
 Then putting the covering much as they found it,
 And leaving no signs of marauding around it,
 They slipped away safe, ere the red morning broke,
 And the very clouds blushed that had witnessed the joke.
Loud sounded reveillée, and trumpet and drumming
Announced to the world that the soldiers were coming.
The glittering troops were soon formed on parade,
And the sun flashed on bayonet, harness, and blade.
The ladies turned out in neat habited throng,
On their silk-coated Arab steeds cantering along,
 Or in carriage reposing,
 And some of them dosing,
Drew up, with the 'great unemployed,' in the shade ;
 While as far as the eye
 Could, unaided, descry,
Rose a dense mass of turbans, surmounting black faces,
Whose owners stood packed, or were fighting for places.
Old Colonel McWine
In full dress, very fine,
 Proudly sate on his horse
 At the head of his corps,
With his 'jumps' rather worse
 Than he'd felt them before ;

For he'd boozed very late overnight at the Mess,
Only leaving in time to allow him to dress ;
And he said to himself as he mounted, that morn—
"There's a screw out of order, as sure as I'm born.
"I cannot make out what's the matter with me—
"By Gad, one would think I was in for D. T.
"If I'd liquored up lately, 'twere likely—bah—stuff—
"It's mere weakness, I'm certain. I don't drink enough."
But he knew, poor old chap, that he did all the while,
And he tried, with such logic, his fears to beguile.

Well, the crisis was coming, the spectacle ready,
The ladies excited, the troops standing steady.
Save the surge of the crowd, not a sound could be heard ;
The guns all unlimbered, awaiting the word.
It was given, and then as the ears were assailed
With the roar and the crash,
And the band's brazen clash,
The shroud was removed, and the statue unveiled !

There, on weird piebald steed, and ablaze in the sun,
All red, white, and blue sate the much-honored one ;
While the staff looked dumbfounded and mute with surprise,
And the soldiers all giggled, and rubbed at their eyes,
And the crowd buzzed aloud, like a concourse of flies.
The jokers had won,
And considered it fun,
But the serious said 'twas atrociously done.

The hair of our friend,
Old McWine, stood on end.
He gave but one look
At the piebald erection,
Like an aspen leaf shook,
And, in utter dejection,
With strange altered face,
As with brains in an addle,
Rode straight from the place,
Sitting limp in his saddle,
Low mutt'ring the while, through the rum-ti-tum-tumming—
“ I knew it—I feared it—I felt it was coming:”

He heard not the hubbub that rose in his rear ;
The growls of the thousands so horribly sold ;
The big-wigs' ‘ confound it,’ the ladies' ‘ O dear’ ;
Or the ‘ Ah-bahs’ and ‘ Allahs !’ that *black* disgust told.

He heard not the parley that followed the diddle ;
The deep execrations on those who'd projected it ;
The useless surmises at solving the riddle—
‘ Whoever on earth were the rogues who effected it ?’

He heard not the word to dismiss the parade, and
The sudden renewal of blowing and drumming.
He rode grimly on to the house where he stayed, and
Dismounted, low mumbling—“ I knew it was coming.”

His bearer approached, but he shirked the man's glance;
He walked to his room, like a man in a trance;
He cast off his uniform, crept into bed,
And pulled up the counterpane over his head;
Then, in voice so sepulchrally pitched, 'twould have shocked a
Less scene-hardened bearer, said—"Fetch me the Doctor!"

The medico came in hot haste from the field,
And a comical sight to his gaze was revealed.
The Colonel rose up, like a ghost, whispering—"See—
"It has bagged me at last, Doctor!"

"What?"

"Why—D. T.!"

"The statue—the statue! O Lord, it's too true!
"It seemed to me speckled with red, white, and blue!"—
Then he covered his head, and sank back as before,
And the Doctor burst into a side-splitting roar,
And laughed till his tears fell like rain on the floor.

"O Colonel, forgive me—by Jove, it's too rare!
"Twas not an illusion that startled you there!
"It wasn't a thing of your brain mocking at you!
"Twas simply—some larkers have painted the statue!"

McWine ultimately believed what he said,
But 'twas only when others had gravely assured him;
And the practical joke, which thus sent him to bed,
Roused some sober reflections, which happily cured him.

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THE MIDNIGHT ROBBER.

" O JOHN, what is that stealthy noise?"
Says Lucy, in the night.

" I fear we have dishonest boys—

" O gracious, get a light !

" John—John—get up, for goodness' sake ;

" These sounds alarm me so.

" I really think we'll have to take

" Another bungalow !"

" O Lucy—you are nervous, dear !

" You'd hear a silk-worm creep !

" Just put some cotton in your ear,

" And try and go to sleep !"

" O John, I hear a scratching sound

" The dining-room within !

" I hear a footstep on the ground—

" Some thieves are breaking in !"

John listens, sitting up in bed.

He hears the stealthy scratch.

He takes his bludgeon topped with lead,
And goes the thief to catch.

He crawls along upon his knees ;

His heart goes pit-a-pat !

He sees, about to taste his cheese,
A dirty little rat !

The bludgeon flies, and, falling, rings

With noise to wake the town ;

He misses Mister Thief, and brings
His best decanter down.

A scream of terror splits the air,

And makes him lose his head—

The rat, in flying to his lair,
Has run across the bed.

John very sulky scolds, and vows

It's all her nonsense through.

Now thieves may safely gut the house
For aught that John will do.

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THE SUSPICIOUS JUDGE.

OR THE GEHENNA OF MISTRUST.

CHIEF JUSTICE SIR CRANBURY TART

Had expended the cream of his life,
When he gave his acquaintance a start
By espousing a juvenile wife.

Little Margaret—that was her name—
Was an innocent flirt, by the way ;
And encouraged the innocent flame
Of an innocent Mr. du Lait.

The Judge was, by common report,
As superior a Judge as you'd find ;
He would see through a wall in his court,
But at home was no judge of mankind.

For this innocent Mr. du Lait
He eyed with suspicious regard ;
And he put, when he left for the day,
An intelligent bearer on guard,

Who ought to have proved to the Judge,
By reporting each eve 'sub burrabur,'
That 'twas simply ridiculous fudge
Such degrading suspicions to harbour.

"Well, Ramsammy, what have you seen?
"Any news about Mr. du Lait?"
"No single one gentlemen's been;
"Missis sleeping the most of the day."

And a similar answer was given
By Ramsammy week after week,
Till at last the Chief Justice was driven
To look on himself as a sneak.

Which opinion he held for a space,
Till he learned, to his horror, one day,
That the bearer was tired of his place,
And was going to Mr. du Lait;

And that Mr. du Lait was to start,
In a sudden tourbillon of bustle,
For a place very deep in the heart
Of the solitudes of the Mofussil.

O what slender occurrences lead
To a world of suspicion and pain!
For distrust there was *really* no need,
But he never was happy again!

What more natural thing for a nigger
Than leaving old master for new,
Especially seeing the figger
Of wage was superior too ?

And it seems very hard that a gent,
Of repute such as Mr. du Lait,
Can't on duty be suddenly sent
Without being a ' villain suspect.'

O Elders ! your hell has begun,
If at sixty you marry with youth,
And can't be persuaded that fun
May be coupled with virtue and truth !

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THE BILLET-DOUX:

I SENT a letter home one mail
To her I'd left behind.
It told my oft-repeated tale
Of love and anxious mind.

Of how her image ever did
Most sweet emotions stir;
Of how I never closed my lid
Without a prayer for her.

How sorrow did my bosom fill
What time we twain did part;
And how I'd ne'er be happy till
I clasped her to my heart.

And then it ran :—" O Fanny dear,
" What joy and pride I feel !
" And how you will rejoice to hear
" The news I now reveal !

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My influential friends at last
“ Have recognised my worth,
“ And promised me, when I have passed,
“ A pretty tidy berth.

“ So come, my love, without delay,
“ Though formal aunts may carp ;
“ My agents will your passage pay,
“ And I will wed you sharp.”

My letter went ; eight-anna stamp ;
I did so love my Fan.
The answer came—O little scamp,
She'd ta'en another man !

WHO'S YOUR HATTER?

(Apropos of Parsees.)

If you've ever chanced to stay
In the city of Bombay,
You'll have noticed people hatted in a most peculiar way—
In a shiny thing of black,
Tall, receding to the back,
Like the sort of tile you'd wear as 'Abanazar' in the play.
A hat that sets you thinking, among other curious matters,
Who on earth can be that very funny-looking people's hatters;
What induced them to adopt it,
Why they've never changed or dropt it,
Or—for something more attractive architecturally—swopt it;
Whether lapse of time, which makes most human institutions
totter,
Will induce them to reject it for a helmet or a potter;
Or, through long association loving still the ancient steeple,
They will sport it to the end, a food for meditative people.

Being born in Western Europe, it has been my mournful lot,
From the time I donned a jacket, to sustain the chimney-pot;
And although I had to wear it,
In one sense I couldn't bear it,
And on civilised ideas always thought it was a blot;

Wondering often what the reason was
That Britons didn't scout it,
And why it such a treason was
To walk abroad without it ;
And how it was the Prince of Wales, or Duke of Edinburgh,
In the fashion didn't try to work a revolution thorough.
O that something would inspire them,
O that somebody would fire them,
To a fierce annihilation
Of the hatters of our nation !
O that I, a Briton, knowing
How the Parsee people hat them,
Could consistently be throwing
Stones of just derision at them !
O that they would smash their topees, from their yellow
foreheads take them,
Realising somewhat nearly what atrocious guys they make them !
There is ground for hopeful dreaming,
In the smartness of the breed ;
There is reason for my deeming
This may come to pass indeed !
I have seen them in the garments of a Nichol or a Moses ;
They may fancy solar topees ere the present era closes.
They have taken to our carriages, and ride in omnibuses,
And young Parseedom real go-a-headish principles discusses.
Ancient ties are quickly sundered, ancient prejudices wither,
In another twenty years they may be altered altogether ;
And I see them in the future, in a vision Tennysonian,
Promenading on the bunder in a tile à la Johnsonian,
Or in kilt and brogues attired à la Lorne parading on it,
In the glory and the comfort of a jaunty Highland bonnet.

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MY MONTHLY PAY.

(After Kingsley.)

"O, BUTLER, go and get my monthly pay,
"And get my monthly pay,
"And get my monthly pay,
"And bring it back to me!"
The cheque I gave him in the usual way,
And to the bank went he.

The Eastern sun went creeping up the sky,
And creeping down the sky,
And far below the sky;
Came tiffin, dinner, tea.
My wife was much alarmed, and so was I;
But never home came he.

"O is it brawling syce, or loafer low,
"A starving loafer low,
"A drunken loafer low,
"The bobbies bring along?"
My butler? yes! but ne'er a rupee, though,
The rascal's things among.

They took him up before the station beak,
The solemn station beak,
The awful station beak,
Who quodded him that day ;
But still to the Inspector do I speak
About my missing pay.

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