

A NEW ZEALANDER'S

Fancies in Verse

by Robert J. Pope

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POP

1945



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A NEW ZEALANDER'S

Fancies in Verse

SOME ARE PENSIVE,
OTHERS, GAY;
MORE, WITH A TWINKLE,
LIGHT THE WAY.

by Robert J. Pope

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TO MY DAUGHTER, EILEEN

PREFACE

A MOOT POINT

THOUGH CERTES, MANY PERSONS DUB ME 'POET',
I'M A VERSIFIER ONLY—AND I KNOW IT.

ASKS ONE: "WHAT PURPOSE CAN A FURTHER EFFORT SERVE?"
"PURPOSE," INDEED! MINE, TOO, THE MYST'RY *poets* GUARD,—

BUT HOLD! —

I DARE NOT 'BLOW IT.'

THIS IS THE second of two volumes of verse that I have published: In the first volume I had to be very circumspect, for various sound reasons; in this one no such restrictions hampered me; I was perfectly free, but, I trust, not too free. This second volume represents, approximately, three stages of my efforts in verse. These stages may be stated thus:

1. My early writings in the *New Zealand Free Lance*.
2. Contributions to various other publications, chiefly the *New Zealand School Journal*; and the *Free Lance* again, during the First World War period.
3. My share of contributions—and that a pretty large one—to the Wellington *Evening Post's* "*Postscripts*" column, forms the bulk of the third stage of my work, and is contemporaneous with the present great World-conflict still going strong; but now showing signs of coming to an end; and that end the one which we and all our Allies have so long fought for, unflinchingly and determinedly, with stout hopes and inflexible resolution.

In this book the allocation of my various contributions does not always adhere to the order herein specified, nor generally is the name of the publication stated, in which a particular item originally appeared. The limits of space and funds available, have prevented that being done.

It is to be hoped that the merits of the pieces here chosen as being worthy of the dignity of book-appearance, will justify the opinion of their author who, with the subscribers' kind help, is giving the selected pieces this opportunity of making a dignified public appearance.

Lastly, I have to thank very sincerely a small group of firm friends, Messrs. W. H. Olson, W. H. Denton, T. A. Fletcher, and last, but very far from least, E. N. Morris and his daughters, Miss Lilian Morris and Mrs. G. E. Moller, all of whom have, in various ways and on different occasions, removed from the path of my advanced age, obstacles which sometimes threatened, at this difficult period of life, to make the publication of this book an impossibility.

1945

ROBERT J. POPE

THE LITTLE SHIPS

The little ships, the gallant ships,
 That served our fathers' day,
 And stretched the Empire's bounds afar,
 And held her foes at bay—
 The little ships, the sturdy ships,
 Our fathers' boast and pride—
 Have had their sailing orders,—weighed,
 And gone out on the tide.

The little ships, the daring ships,
 That braved unchartered seas—
 The ships of Tasman, Cook, and Ross,
 And hearts as bold as these—
 Say, where are now those little ships,
 So fearless, staunch, and true?
 Gone—yet they left a wake of fame
 More lasting than they knew.

No little ships, no tall-sparred ships,
 (The swallows of the sea),
 From China now come racing home,
 Their holds ajam with tea;
 Nor now from far-famed Sydney's port,
 With cloud of canvas spread,
 Come little wool-ships speeding home:
 The little ships are dead.

Those graceful ships, those valiant ships
 All hazards laughed to scorn,
 Defied the "Roaring Forties'" rage,
 And battled round the Horn;
 Those silent ships, those dauntless ships,
 Of wind and wave the sport,
 In spite of gale, of hurricane,
 Triumphant made port.

Ye little ships, ye faithful ships,
 To you how much we owe,
 Who with our fathers nobly served
 New Zealand long ago;
 Like theirs, your task was stern and long,
 But ere your course was run
 You saw an infant nation rise—
 Our heritage was won.

Ah ! little ships, the tide of Time
Has borne you all away ;
Your beauty and your stately grace
Are now of yesterday.
Grieve not that you are laid aside,
Your sails for ever furled,
For fame undying doth reward
Your service to the World.

2

BEYOND THE VEIL

When I am gone beyond the veil,
And earth and all it holds a dream,
Perchance some flower these hands have idly set,
May bloom, and past neglect redeem.

A pebble flung into the pond
Sinks straightway, and is seen no more ;
The wavelet, born of that unpurposed plunge,
May bear some pregnant seed to shore.

In like, a word of sympathy,
A kindly deed, long since forgot,
May in obscure, inexplicable way,
Survive, and lighten some dark lot.

When we invoke the aid of Fame
To help us circumvent Death's plot,
'Tis but a barren victory we gain :
The name endures—the man's forgot.

No lettered stone need mark my rest ;
No useless railing guard the spot ;
Oblivion is our sure and destined end ;
Man cannot ravel* Fate's firm knot.

Yet one memorial I crave,
Though transient ; when I've played my part,
Be it alone my monument, to leave
A name enshrined in one true heart.

* Ravel : In this sense, untwist ; more often with
out. To ravel out a knot.

LIFE'S PINPRICKS

It's not the great misfortunes
 That man meets on his way,
 Which tend to break his spirit,
 And fill him with dismay;
 It's the niggling little pinpricks
 That follow him like flies,
 And never cease to buzz and tease
 Until Death seals his eyes.

To-day it is his collar stud
 That's left him in the lurch,
 Maybe just at the moment when
 He's bustling off to church;
 Tomorrow, it's his bootlace snaps
 While tearing for his tram,
 What, think you, are the words he'd use?—
 Nay! Far too gentle, ma'am!

The language of that harried soul
 All high-powered, terse, and solemn,
 Would shock the moral instincts
 Of the readers of this column;*
 A column whose high purpose is
 To raise the civic tone;
 So, solemnly, it bids you: "Leave
 Profanity alone."

And woman, too, is not immune
 From frets that may bring tears;
 She's lost her glasses, day by day,
 For five-and-twenty years.
 Bags, handkerchiefs and gloves are things
 Demanding endless care;
 Mislay them for one moment,
 And—they vanish into air!

It is indeed a trying thing
 To be a human being;
 For life is full of gins and snares
 There's no chance of foreseeing;
 But somehow, still we cling to it,
 And bear its burdens dire;
 Though here we're in the frying-pan,
 We're not yet in the fire.

* *Postscripts* in the *Wellington Evening Post*.

SPRING

(It is at this season of the year that our countryside appears at its very best. Nature has spread her green mantle over hill and valley and hidden the bareness of winter. The flowers with their delightful colours and graceful shapes, once more adorn both plant and tree, and the air is laden with their rich perfumes. All Nature seems glad that chilly winter has passed away. This thought is expressed in the following verses by Mr. R. J. Pope, a retired New Zealand schoolmaster. In them he paints a typical New Zealand landscape in Spring, with the trees and fields wearing their new green robes, while the forests are gay with the songs of our native birds.)

(Note by the editor of the *New Zealand School Journal*, in which the poem first appeared.)

Who comes smiling through the greenwood,
 Garlanded with vernal flowers,
 Where the blackbird loves to whistle
 In the sunlit morning hours?

Bud and blossom at her advent
 Cease from Winter's shafts to hide;
 And for chestnut, beech, and willow
 Dainty emerald robes provide.

See her through the meadows tripping!
 Lambs around her skip and play;
 Daisies wond'ringly behold her,
 As she passes on her way.

Who but Spring, the fair enchantress,
 Could such winsome guise assume?
 Who but she could mould the snowdrop?
 Who the violet perfume?

Faultless handiwork bears witness
 She has lingered in the lane;
 None but she could paint the foxglove,
 Or the honeysuckle train?

Now the forest bells* are chiming,
 As she wakes the tui's song;
 Now she lures the shining cuckoo†,
 Truant from our woods too long.

She beguiles the miser kowhai†
All his treasure to display,
Till the robber winds, assailing,
Snatch his hoard of gold away.

Here the fruit-trees, blossom-laden,
Stand as though in voiceless pride,
Silent wedding-maids attending
Spring, sweet Spring, the Year's young bride.

Even Age, though bowed and wrinkled,
Racked, it may be, too, with pain,
Lifts dim eyes once more to greet her
Whom it ne'er may see again.

But with Youth no shadow lingers;
Life is gold without alloy;
And with Spring for boon companion
All is promise, fervour, joy.

* One of the notes of the tui is like chiming bells.

† The shining cuckoo is a bird-of-passage which arrives in New Zealand in the early spring.

‡ The kowhai (pronounced ko-why) is a tree which bears masses of "old-gold" coloured flowers in the early spring; but too often, the violent spring winds strip it of its blossom almost immediately after it flowers.

5

WANTED A LEADER

Wanted, a leader staunch and true,
With stubborn, microcosmic view;
Not one with vision so warped and wide
As e'en to see his opponents' side;
And ponder with judicial mind
Things obvious to all mankind.
Can one whose nature plays such tricks
E'er lead in party politics?

Send us a leader strong and bold,
Who dares to do what he is told;
Whose conscience is his sovereign guide,
Except when party claims o'erride;
One skilled to plumb the public mind,
And learn which way his own's inclined;
While with a hold as strong as death,
He grasps each time-worn shibboleth.

CHRISTMAS TIME

O, Christmas is the joyous time
 (At least it is for some),
 When father buys his son and heir
 A whistle, train, or drum.
 At five a.m. his hopeful wakes,
 And to his glad surprise,
 That lethal instrument of youth,
 A trumpet, he espies.

Then like a rocket up he springs,
 His satisfaction deep,
 And Gabriel-like, with trumpet blast,
 Arouses them that sleep.
 And long, and loud, and often,
 He makes the welkin ring;
 While, as by magic, pals appear,
 Agog to blow the thing.

Then mother in the kitchen toils,
 With pots and pans around;
 While jars of this, and bags of that,
 And boys and girls abound.
 "We are busy helping mother,"
 With guileless charm they tell;
 But frequently, as Fortune smiles,
 They help themselves, as well.

With anticipation eager
 Of the good time just ahead,
 Young tongues are wagging endlessly,
 And no one thinks of bed.
 The "big ones" of the tribe agree
 Old Santa's powers in scorning;
 Yet hang their stockings up at night,
 And search them in the morning.

But as for me, I feel no joy,
 (And that with some excuse);
 My point of view is different—quite—
 I am the Christmas goose!

THE AFTERNOON CALLER'S GOOD-BYE

Oh, gracious me ! Is that the time ?

I'd really no idea ;

The afternoon just simply flies

Whenever I am here.

Dear, I must run and catch my tram,

For George thinks me a sinner

If on the stroke of six o'clock,

He does not get his dinner.

What, Daisy Bell ! Well, I declare !

I've long had my suspicions ;

I wonder whether it was fixed

On his or her conditions.

At Wilmot's did you ? What's the width ?

I cut mine on the cross—

If I were you, I wouldn't, dear,

I'd trim the front with floss.

That's three she has now, is it not ?

Is this a boy or girl ?

Another boy ! She won't like that—

Oh, yes, I'm fond of " Earl".

Now, good-bye, dear ; will Tuesday suit,

Or shall we make it Friday ?—

Yes, " Girls for me," I always say ;

Boys do get so untidy.

For twelve-and-nine ! You don't mean that !

Wherever did you get them ?

I think they look just simply sweet—

Oh, no, you haven't met them.

What, Charlie Dunn engaged at last !

(Did I bring my umbrella ?)

You know I always prophesied

He'd marry Isabella.

Now, good-bye, dear ; so nice of you—

I have enjoyed this chat ;

I didn't tell you, did I, though,

I'd got another hat ?

Oh, goodness me ! I quite forgot ;

I meant to get some ham—

There's five o'clock ! I heard it strike—

Dear me ! I've missed my tram.

WAITING

The night is dark, the air is still,
 And from the grey tower on the hill*
 The bells ring out. Their mellowed tone
 Falls where a woman sits alone.
 A wood fire casts its glow around,
 Its flickering flame the only sound.
 Clear from the bells—her eyes grow dim—
 "Abide with Me," his favourite hymn.

A vision floats before her eyes,
 The years turn back, the dead arise;
 She is again his youthful bride,
 And he her lover and her pride.
 Yet, ah! so soon, the war-drums beat,
 She sees him marching through the street;
 A troopship looms, and then her ears
 Ring with the sound of lusty cheers.

A message later, breathing cheer,
 Comes but to numb her heart with fear:
 "After long months of heat and sand,
 We're trekking to another land."
 He must not name that land, but she
 Knows now it was Gallipoli;
 A land where countless hopes lie slain,
 A land where heroes died in vain.

Again the bells—and "Absent" here
 Steals plaintively upon her ear.
 She lives once more those endless days
 Filled with anxiety that preys
 Like slow disease on heart and brain,
 And respite or relief is vain,
 Day follows day till months have flown,
 And lingering months to years are grown.

Once more the bells—*The Minstrel Boy*—
 It seems to her the knell of joy.
 She knows not where her lover fell,
 'Tis Death's own secret, guarded well†.
 The bells have ceased, the fire sinks low,
 The room grows chill—she does not know;
 All hope is gone, her soul seems numb,
 She does not weep—tears will not come.

* "The grey tower on the hill": Wellington
 (N.Z.) Carillon.

† The poem may end here if preferred.

A WARNING TO ALL MY READERS

I no longer apologise to any poet for parodying a poem of his. After a careful study of a poem, a parody of that poem is my highest token of admiration for both the poet and his work.

No. 1 Parody

THE HOUSEHUNTER

(Written at a time when a house to rent was unprocurable in Wellington.)

Not a house to let, not a shack or a shed,
Though for weeks and months we'd tarried,
Not a soldier discharged but wanted a home
For the girl he had recently married.

No useless coppers we spent on "ads,"
For futile long since we had found them;
But we tramped the streets in a profitless search.
Up and down, and across, and around them.

No part of our heavy task was done
When the clock struck the hour for retiring;
And we steadfastly made, with our sore aching limbs,
For the bedroom we pro tem. were hiring.

We thought as we looked at its narrow bed,
And tossed for the lonely pillow,
Of the landlady's nerve, for such service as this,
To charge us full price in the bill, oh!

Likely they'll talk in the servants' domain,
And for wanting late breakfast upbraid us,
But little we'll reck if they let us sleep on
In the crib where exhaustion has laid us.

See note preceding No. 1 Parody.

THERE ARE ROSES IN MY GARDEN

There are roses in my garden,
They are growing everywhere:
They have rambled to the housetop,
And their perfume fills the air;
There are roses in my garden,
Pink and yellow, white and red;
But the fairest flower I see there
Is a little golden head.

There are pansies in my garden,
 Both indigo and blue,
 Pansies mauve, and white, and saffron,
 Of varied shade and hue;
 There are pansies in my garden,
 And they seem to smile on me;
 But most winsome of the smilers
 Is a little maid of three.

There are songbirds in my garden,
 You may hear them oft at morn;
 For they sing their rarest melodies
 When day is newly born:
 There are songbirds in my garden;
 But the sweetest note's unsung,
 Till I catch the magic music
 Of a little prattling tongue.

11

BILLY'S TEA

Parody No. 9*

(In the manner of W. B. Yeats)

I will arise and go now, and go get Bill his tea,
 And a nice plate of toast make or buy some waffles made,
 Bloater paste will I have there, of Heinz or Maconochie,
 And add a jar of their jam (first grade).

And I shall have some eggs, too, for eggs are getting low,
 Dropping to the moderate figure that milder weather brings,
 And Bill, with midday dinner, and but a glass or so,
 At evening's keen on these tasty things.

I will arise and see now if Bill is on his way;
 (I fear, by low sounds now, the kettle's slopping on the floor),
 While I stand in the doorway and scan the pavements grey:
 I smell them frying fish next door.

* See note preceding poem No. 9.

NOTE.—Many persons, some of them Germans, would perhaps, detect a tinge of irony in the following lines; but no true Nazi could ever be guilty of so egregious an error.

A NAZI PRAYER

O Thou who, by our Fuhrer's grace,
Hast given to us Earth's foremost place,
Though modesty and silent merit
Disguise the talents we inherit;
Grant us, we pray Thee, further light
To value our great worth aright,
And help that darkness to dispel,
In which all other nations dwell.
When granting these petitions, pray
Let there be no undue delay;
And if our Fuhrer shall agree,
We'll grant some meed of praise to Thee.

THE TRIAL

I loved a fair maiden, she was but eighteen,
Her eyes were as blue-bells, she walked like a queen;
I loved her so fondly my heart was aflame—
It would not be seemly to tell you her name.

We went for a ramble one fine summer's eve,
She was sweet and confiding, too fond to deceive;
And when she felt weary (it chanced near a stile),
We sat on a step and there rested a while.

I told her I loved her—what else could I do?
Her lips were so rosy, her eyes were so blue;
I asked: "Will you wed me?" Said she with a smile:
"Perhaps I *might* love you; I'll give you a trial."

When years we'd been wedded, with Fortune our friend,
I asked her in jest when my trial would end;
"Why speak of an end?" said my saucy young wife,
"You surely must know you were sentenced for life."

The "Spring Clean" was a quasi-religious festival scrupulously observed by women of the Victorian Era. It was regarded by the men of that period with feelings of mingled awe and annoyance, interfering as it did with their conservative habits. The advent of the vacuum-cleaner has now almost completely abolished it.

THE SPRING CLEAN

When Spring returns to cheer us
 With the flower and busy bee,
 And the thrush pours forth its melody
 From many a leafy tree,
 Man feels no thrill of ecstasy
 As he muses on the scene,
 For he knows his wife's intending
 To commence the great spring-clean.

'Tis a time of trial and suffering
 For poor down-trodden man;
 A time when broom and scrubbing-brush
 Are ever in the van;
 No bit of friendly dirt he spies,
 And a fellow feels he's bound
 To loose his shoes from off his feet
 For he stands on holy ground.

And if perchance he comes home late,
 (Men sometimes do at night),
 Good generalship compels him
 To undress without a light;
 So he seeks his couch in darkness,
 But decides he's made a blunder
 When he lays him down on nothing
 With a crash that sounds like thunder.

The water-jug and basin lend
 Their aid to swell the clatter,
 And a voice in real alarm cries out,
 "Oh, Henry, what's the matter?"
 And when at length a candle sheds
 Some light upon the wreck,
 He wonders how in all the world
 He didn't break his neck.

For the wardrobe's where the sofa stood,
The carpet's in a heap,
The bedstead's turned completely round,
And chairs are piled two-deep;
The chest-of-drawers fresh woods has sought,
The towel-horse pastures new,
And ev'ry grim-crack on the walls
Has emigrated, too.

The washstand has adventured
To some far-off foreign shore;
The place that used to know it once,
Will know it now no more;
And all his friendly landmarks
Are scattered, far and wide,
And in cursing the remover
He has Scripture on his side.*

Oh, beauteous Spring! Oh, time of joy!
So fraught with sensuous pleasure,
Thy bursting buds and warbling birds,
Would gladden hours of leisure;
But man's no time for thy delights,
No time for birds and buds;
His whole attention's occupied
In dodging brooms and suds.

* Cursed be he who removeth his neighbour's landmark.

(Deut., Ch. 27, V. 17.)

BILL BUNTING

Bill Bunting was a sailor bold,
 Who round the world did roam,
 And never was he more at sea
 Than when he was at home.

When he one day from sea returned
 (Alas ! it proved too late),
 The girl he chose as mate in Ann,
 He found inanimate.

Then on the barque *Matilda Jane*,
 He shipped as an A.B. ;
 But soon an angry sea arose,
 And made Bill feel C.D.*

The ship lay off a rocky coast,
 And fierce the south winds blew ;
 The captain bade them heave the lead,
 And Bill, unbade, heaved, too.

And next it was to Suva far
 The ship her course did steer ;
 And there a savage spear gave Bill
 A lasting souvenir.

This savage, a fierce cannibal
 Not yet convinced of sin,
 Perceiving Bill a stranger there,
 Resolved to take him in.

Bill later loved a maid named Sue
 (She, too, untimely died),
 And many a day he sighed for Sue,
 And oft for suicide.

A widow kept the " Sailors' Rest,"
 And there Bill met his fate ;
 He logged himself as master, but—
 He was the master's mate.

* C.D.= "Seedy" ; unwell.

DICK SEDDON

(Air : *Tit Willow*)

Parody No. 3*

Explanatory Note :

It will be remembered that the coronation of Edward the Seventh of England was postponed owing to the King's sudden attack of appendicitis. Among the Colonial Premiers present at the coronation when it took place, was the Hon. Richard John Seddon, whose strong personality made him a conspicuous figure in any company. In this parody the writer humorously brings out this characteristic.

On a throne in Old England a monarch did sit
 Sighing, "Seddon, Dick Seddon, Dick Seddon!"
 And I said to him, "Edward, oh, why don't you quit
 Sighing, 'Seddon, Dick Seddon, Dick Seddon?'
 Is it weakness of intellect, Edward?" I cried,
 "Or has something gone wrong with your royal inside?"†
 With a shake of his care-stricken head he replied,
 "It's Seddon, Dick Seddon, Dick Seddon!"

He slapped at his breast as each earl made his bow.
 "Oh! Seddon, Ah! Seddon, Great Seddon!"
 And a cold perspiration bespangled his brow;
 "Fetch Seddon, Dick Seddon, Our Seddon!"
 He sobb'd and he sigh'd, and a gurgle he gave,
 And cast his eye down to the end of the nave—
 Then with joy: "I am saved from a suicide's grave!"
 There's Seddon, Dick Seddon, Great Seddon!"

"Now I feel just as sure as I'm sure that my name
 Isn't Seddon, Dick Seddon, Dick Seddon,
 That 'twas lack of his presence which filled me with shame.
 Oh, Seddon, Dick Seddon, Dick Seddon!
 And if he'd remained callous, and not come inside,
 They could never have crown'd me, however they'd tried;
 And uncrown'd I'd have probably reign'd till I died.
 Oh, Seddon, Good Seddon, Great Seddon!"

* See note preceding No. 1 Parody.

† See note above.

A BYRD IN THE ICE

I am Admiral Byrd, a name you have heard
 Proclaimed in the Press or the Pictures;
 I live in the spotlight, and find it is not right
 To heed commentations* or strictures.
 I have founded a town a long, long way down,
 In fact, to the South Pole adjacent;
 But the awful sea fogs, and the clamour-of dogs
 Rendered life very far from complacent;

So I moved to a suburb where I could that rub curb,
 And order my life as I pleased,
 It is cold, you must know, sometimes sixty below,
 But I'm not now distracted and teased.
 Down here I'm alone and far from the 'phone,
 And the multiform claims of society;
 The outfit I wear, Oh! 'twould frighten a scarecrow,
 But I care not a rap for propriety.

In my sub-polar State one can never be late,
 For there's nothing down here to be late for;
 No churches or trains, no meetings in lanes,
 No appointment that one has a date for;
 When I say I'm *alone*, I mean I'm alone,
 More alone than was Robinson Crusoe;
 No creature lives here at this time of year—
 They all have more *nous* than to do so.

Not a cat or a rat, a mouse or a bat,
 A wolf or a bear, a rabbit or hare,
 A horse or a donkey, an ape or a monkey,
 A cricket or worm, a maggot or germ,
 Not a leaf or a tree, not a moth or a bee,
 Where the mercury's miles below zero,
 Not a fly or a flea, no creature but me:
 I'm a soloist rivalling Nero.

* The word *commentations* is copyright, and must not be used without authority.

MAORILAND

(N.Z. *Free Lance*, Feb. 23, 1944)

This is how the verse entitled *Maoriland* came to be written. A former Wellingtonian now in Sydney, Mrs. J. Carrington Pope, who is artistically inclined, asked her husband to communicate with Mr. R. J. Pope and see if he would write her an eight-lined stanza to meet a certain situation that had arisen. To quote from the letter:

"My wife is becoming quite noted here for her samplers, sewn, in proper wartime fashion, on sugar-bags. She almost always selects a verse of poetry, and illustrates it by needle-work pictures; and these samplers are in great demand for raising patriotic funds. Would you, she wishes me to ask, make her a verse about New Zealand, with these specifications? The country to be called 'Maoriland,' if mentioned by name, some reference being made, if possible, to its brown-skinned people."

AUSTRALIA

(Pattern verse)

I love a sunburnt country,
 A land of sweeping plains,
 Of ragged mountain ranges,
 Of droughts and flooding rains;
 I love her far horizons,
 I love her jewel sea,
 Her beauty and her terror,—
 The wide, brown-land for me.

Anon

Along with the request, this pattern verse, entitled, *Australia*, was enclosed. In reply to the lady's request, Mr. Pope sent her the following verse from Wellington.

MAORILAND

"Beloved Maoriland, your charms
 I've voiced in many a line and strain;
 But never have I reached the heights
 Your matchless beauty tempts in vain.
 A brown-skinned, genial, noble race,
 A wealth of fiord, forest, lake:
 Of such endearments love was born,
 A hold no rival land can break."

THE PLEASING POLITICIAN

The politician pleases me,
 His ways are wondrous kind;
 Than he, who is more ready
 To bear your case in mind?
 If he cannot at the moment
 For your grievance find a cure,
 Well, he'll promise you can count upon
 His interest for sure.

And it's more than likely that he'll add,
 "If the matter lay with me,
 I need hardly tell you, my dear sir,
 'Twould be a certainty;
 Your claim must be adjusted
 With no undue delay;
 But I'll see the departmental head,
 And get things under way."

Just then he sees Jones bearing down—
 Constituent and bore—
 And Jones is just the kind of man
 One cannot well ignore.
 "Ah! Jones, I'm glad to meet you;
 But you've caught me on the hop.
 I'm just off to a meeting—
 So sorry I can't stop."

But stop he does—and more than once—
 Ere the meeting he attends;
 For he really *must* see Pompous
 And make him some amends;
 He had promised to be present at
 The Stonybroke bazaar,
 But had confused the date, and now—
 "He don't know where he are."

"It isn't always easy
 To decide the course to choose;
 For you must ever bear in mind
 The votes you stand to lose;—
 'Address the Ice-cream Conference?
 Or help to plant a tree?—
 Well, there you have the problem
 That perplexes the M.P."

Yes, the politician charms me,
He is always on thin ice,
And must act with nice discretion
Or meet trouble in a trice;
And not seldom at a crisis
He's beset with deadly fear,
Lest an ill-timed or incautious word
Should ruin his career.

20

FIGHT ON !

"Are we downhearted?" "No!" I hear
The Empire's answering shout.
Though we are set a giant task
We'll brave the issue out;*
The foes of Freedom are conjoined
To crush Her by their might;
Have we no kinsmen bold enough
To join us in this fight?†

Pale Liberty stands trembling by
While foemen crowd around.
Must we who love her, bow in shame
And hear her death-knell sound?
It cannot be—it must not be—
That we consent, dismayed,
To see our heritage destroyed,
And Liberty betrayed.

Fight on we will, with purpose stern,
Nor pause to count the cost;
When Liberty to Force bows down
Then truly all is lost.
Fight on! Fight on! Right must prevail!
Our duty shines ahead!
The tyrants shall not reach their goal,
Nor Liberty lie dead.

* When France capitulated.

† The allusion is to the U.S.A. whose decision
had not then been made.

A MODERN "LITTLE LIST."

- Parody No. 4 *

I think the time is opportune
 To amplify the list
 Made by Koko in the "Eighties"
 Of the folk who'd not be missed.
 Society offenders now
 On all sides so abound,
 'Twould be puzzling to determine
 Who should NOT be underground.

The man who buys a wireless set
 And thinks he'll give a treat
 To all and sundry persons
 Residing in his street,
 Whose loud-speaker from the window
 Sunday nappers puts to rout,
 Could surely be dispensed with—
 I, for one, would "count him out."

The lady whose late "perm wave"
 Makes her conversation flow
 In an overwhelming torrent
 Such as suffering husbands know;
 And the golfer who is lurking
 To inflict his latest round,
 Would undoubtedly be valued more
 Were he bunkered underground.

And the egoistic mother
 Who with irritating tone
 Ignores your offsprings' triumphs,
 But magnifies her own;
 And the ladies who play bridge all day
 And fain would play all night—
 To put these on the list, I think,
 Is nothing more than right.

There may possibly be bowlers—
 Though in this I may be wrong—
 Still, I think a few exist, who to
 The genus "bore" belong;
 I've overheard some tedious tales
 Concerning Jack and Kitty;
 And if bowlers were their authors,
 Well, I'd list them without pity.

* See note preceding Poem No. 10.

The would-be witty raconteur,
 Who thinks he shines at dinners,
 The ultra-knowing sporting "fan"
 For ever picking winners,
 An offer to these two I make—
 I know one can't resist—
 I'll bet them fifteen pounds to one
 They never would be missed.

It really is embarrassing,
 With such a boundless choice,
 'Mong those who've earned interment
 One's preference to voice;
 But if with my collection
 You should find you can't agree,
 Make a personal selection,
 And, pray, head your list with me.

THE TUI

Hark! from the rata's' crimsoned crown
 The tui's song!—each note a gem
 More exquisite than jewel set
 In royal diadem.

Sweet songster banished to the wilds,
 How rarely now thy note is heard!
 Nor thrush nor blackbird fills thy place
 In song, melodious bird.

The nightingale in northern climes,
 Reigns queen-like o'er the feather'd throng,
 And poets rapturous acclaim
 Her peerless, haunting song.

To them the tui's fluty notes,
 Which lead our forest choir at morn,
 Are but a mystic, unknown tale,
 A symphony unborn.

I have not heard the nightingale
 Sing 'neath the moon her joy and pain,
 But I have heard the tui charm
 Our forest after rain;

And if, sweet singer, there should be
 A strain more pure, more rich than thine,
 Methinks 'twere some supernal song,
 Not earth-born, but divine.

TIME

O, Time you despoiler!
 Time you old thief!
 You have stolen my youth,
 And life is so brief!
 You have filched from me joys,
 And left me with cares,
 Unsteadied my footsteps,
 And brought me grey hairs.

Dear friends you have taken,
 And some you've estranged;
 The future I'd planned
 You've sadly deranged;
 Hopes that were brightest
 You've harshly deferred,
 And youth's golden visions
 Are faded and blurred.

Ah! life is a myst'ry
 That man may not solve;
 Its why and its wherefore
 He cannot evolve.
 Like sere leaves in Autumn
 We drift to and fro,
 Till we blend with the earth—
 No further we know.

Some purpose there must be,
 Some Infinite Plan,
 Transcending the mind
 And the measure of man.
 Which we, purblind mortals,
 Discern, if at all,
 In meteor glimpses
 That baffle recall.

It may be then, Time,
 Though I hold you no friend,
 You are guiding my steps
 To some destined end;
 Though the pathway is steep,
 And misfortunes abound,
 Though you're leading me on
 Through darkness profound,
 When over the mountain,
 And night and day blend,
 Shall I then know Life's Purpose
 And own you my friend?

A HUN'S A HUN FOR A'THAT

Parody No. 5 *

Is it as honoured guest he comes
 To share your board and a'that?
 His hearty grup yer haun fair numbs,
 He's wylin' ye for a'that.
 For a'that and a'that
 He'll speak ye fair and a'that,
 And lo'e ye like a brither Hun,
 Yet pick your pooch for a'that.

What tho' he apes the cultured man,
 Wears gloves, frock-coat, and a'that,
 The club is keekin' out the tails,
 The man's a Hun for a'that.
 For a'that, and a'that,
 The silken hat and a'that,
 He's bidin' till ye look awa',
 To crack yer heid and a'that.

Ye ken thon bluntie wha's their laird,
 That struts and blaws and a'that,
 And ses he's weel acquent wi' God,
 Kens fine his plans, and a'that;
 For a'that, and a'that,
 His bleezin' speech, and a'that,
 He's but a mannie wi' a sword,
 He disna' fecht, for a'that.

His crooked ways, and lyin' tongue,
 For brutal deeds, and a'that,
 There's nae a knave that ever swung
 Could match the Hun in a'that.
 For a'that, and a'that,
 His paukie† ways and a'that,
 He hasna' wut to hide his guile,
 Tho' superman and a'that.

And let me say, when comes the day
 That men shall pay for a'that,
 Auld Nick he'll ca': "A' Huns this way,
 The fire's new-trummed and a'that;
 For a'that, and a'that,
 We'll mak' ye snug and a'that;
 Yer Kaiser's lang bin toastin' here,
 He's daen' fine, and a'that."

* See Note preceding poem No. 9.

† Paukie=Cunning, sly.

LITTLE BLUE EYES

To my Grandchild, June

What are you gazing at, Little Blue Eyes?
 Lost in a reverie deep as the skies?
 Far away on the pinions of fancy you've flown,
 Forgetful of Grandfather sitting alone.

What are the visions your day-dreams have bred?
 What truant thoughts fill that fair little head?
 Do you see once again the realm whence you came,
 Ere mortals had claimed you—that land without name?

Or to Alice in Wonderland is it you've sped,
 And are awed by the Queen screaming: "Off with her head!"?
 Or have you like Goldilocks, braved the Three Bears,
 And are sitting, as she did, in each of their chairs?

To Fairyland have you discovered the way,
 And learnt mystic secrets from some clever fay?
 For though you are here, yet you're far, far away:
 A queer kind of prank on your Grandpa to play!

Too old to go with you, he here must abide,
 Awaiting with patience whate'er may betide;
 But soon back to poor, lonely Grandpa you'll fly,
 As the song-wearied lark drops to earth from the sky.

Notes—Stanza 4 "fay=fairy.

„ 5 "drops to earth."

Nearly every country-bred child has noted the skylark
 end its song abruptly, fold its wings, and drop to earth
 like a stone.

(Suggested by the morbid curiosity displayed by so many persons when a street accident occurs.)

MOTOR KILLS

Parody *

I heard the motors tooting loud,
 That go pell-mell o'er vale and hill,
 When all at once I saw a crowd,
 A host—and knew there'd been a "kill."
 Beside the corpse, some on their knees,
 Pushing and struggling,—in they squeeze.

Conspicuous as the bars that line
 The precincts of the King's highway,
 I marked the female form divine
 Amid a mass of coarser clay.
 Some dozens saw I at a glance,
 Crossing the road to gain a stance.

The cars beside them raced, but they
 Ignored the cars—they meant to see;
 A poet could not choose his way
 In such a jostling company.
 They gazed—and gazed—but never thought
 What grief the show to some had brought.

And oft when on my couch I lie
 In vacant or in pensive mood,
 It flushes me with shame that I
 Was one of a misguided brood,
 Which curiosity so fills,
 It needs must gloat on others' ills.*

* See note preceding poem No. 9.

A WELLINGTON COLLEGE SONG

"Wellington College has long lacked a school song. There have been school songs written before, but none has possessed that particular quality that makes for permanent recognition as *the* School song. The latest one is from the hand of Mr. Robert J. Pope, who composed both words and music. The song was first sung at the Breaking Up ceremony in December, 1930. The words are as follows:—"

"WELLINGTON!"

1. There will come in the future when youth lies behind us,
And mem'ries of schooldays crowd back from the past,
The echoes of chorus or cheers to remind us
Of days when the old School was victor at last.

CHORUS (after each verse)

"Wellington! Wellington!" Hear the shouts ringing!
"Wellington! Wellington!" Hark to the call!
"Wellington! Wellington!" Proudly they're flinging,
"Wellington! Wellington!" Best of them all!

2. Once again we'll be back in the days of our boyhood,
Again stoutly facing our rivals in play,
With delight we'll remember that pass from the scrummage,
And the glorious field-goal that gained us the day.

(CHORUS)

3. And that great game of cricket! Who does not remember?
The foe wanted four, and the last man was nine;
A lofty drive ended our hopes till the long-field
Enraptured the School with a catch on the line!

(CHORUS)

4. Then we'll think of the days when the Empire was calling
Her sons to defend her at duty's behest;
With pride we'll recall how the old School responded
And gave to our country her bravest and best.

(CHORUS)

5. For the light that she's brought us, the wisdom she's taught us,
Let each son be zealous her worth to extol;
And follow the pathway of earnest endeavour,
With Duty his watchword and Honour his goal.

(CHORUS)

ANOTHER "LITTLE LIST"

Parody No. 7 *

Since Ko-Ko made his "little list,"
 Now many years ago,
 Of persons non-essential,
 Or flagrantly de trop,
 The times have changed, and other bores,
 Unknown to Ko-Ko's list,
 Have permeated social life—
 They, too, would not be missed.

There's the golf enthusiast obsessed
 With bunkers, clubs, and "lies";
 Likewise the motor maniac
 Whose speed all rules defies;
 And grandmamas of seventy
 Who ape "sweet seventeen";
 All talkers who reiterate,
 "Well, you know what I mean."

The idiot who calls you Smith
 When your cognomen's Smythe,
 An irritating nincompoop
 Who makes you fairly writhe;
 And the feminine wrong-number fiend,
 She's high up on the list
 And the odds are overwhelmingly
 Against her being missed.

After long consideration
 I have added to the list
 The pedagogues alleged to give
 Their pabulum "a twist";†
 And the canny politician, too,
 Who's everybody's friend,
 And whose principles, though firmly fixed,
 Will 'neath pressure gently bend.

And those quasi-human ruminants
 For ever chewing gum;
 All modern Jeremiahs
 With prognostications glum;
 All these form only one per cent—
 But I must now desist,
 And leave to shrewder brains the task
 Of filling up the list.

* See note preceding poem No. 9.

† A thrust at teachers who covertly advocated communism.

ADAM AND EVE

Fashion comes and fashion goes,
 At whose bidding no one knows.
 Man, with ~~his pedestrian~~ mind, *unadventurous*
 Lags complacently behind;
 He long since resigned all hope
 With *its* vagaries e'er to cope.
 Only woman's intuition
 Keeps abreast of the position.
 Woman (though inclined to chatter)
 Knows the things that truly matter;
 Knows that now her present hat
 Is a sight to shudder at;
 Though she thought, when first she wore it,
 None could view and not adore it.
 Well, 'tis past—and without sorrow;
 For the sales begin tomorrow.

Not so man. A well-worn "tile"
 Destitute of form or style
 Is for him a prized possession
 Valued far beyond expression.
 Not for rubies or fine gold
 Would that cherished hat be sold.
 And were it not for woman's guile
 He still would own that much-loved "tile";
 But on a day—with grief 'tis stated—
 Beneath the "copper" 'twas cremated;
 And his eye instinctive turning,
 Spied its latest fragment burning.
 Man e'er is man, and woman woman,
 Each a phase of what is human;
 Wedlock fain would make them one,
 Fiddlesticks! It can't be done.

KING WILLOW

King Willow comes out from his mystic retreat,
 And a right merry monarch is he;
 He spends all the winter in slumber profound,
 But the sun brings him out with the bee.

His liegemen are waiting their captain to hail,
 And to join in the joyous campaign;
 It needs no conscription his armies to raise,
 No ribbons their zeal to maintain.

"Now bring out the bat and the ball," says he,
 "Not stand here in idle array,
 "Blue sky is above us, green turf 'neath our feet,
 "Then why should we longer delay?"

Be the contest at Lord's, among players of fame,
 Or a bout on some small village green,
 King Willow is happy; he marks not their skill,
 As long as his subjects are keen.

He loves a bold batsman who piles up the runs,
 A bowler who skittles the wickets,
 And a fieldsman who never abandons the race,
 Till the ball rattles hard 'gainst the pickets.

He oft may be seen in some cunning disguise,
 Say, an old man decrepit or lame,
 Who watches, discerning with gannet-like glance,
 Every action and stroke in the game.

Then here's to King Willow and all his long train,
 From Bradman to ten-year Jim Small,
 Who love the old game, and play it with zest,
 Loyal knights of the bat and the ball.

THE DOORKEEPER'S RETORT TO HITLER

Heil, Hitler ! Heil ! I lately read
 Your swaggering address,
 Its dictatorial manner rather
 Jarred me, I confess.
 Even if you are the great Sheebang,
 The loud and awful noise,
 I think 'twere wiser to adopt
 A less flamboyant poise.

When being Heiled ! and Heiled ! and Heiled !
 By many a shouting mob,
 Your head is apt to swell, and make
 You magnify your job,
 And pose as if a superman
 Or else a minor god ;
 But bear in mind, quite soon you'll be
 Stretched out beneath the sod.

Or, even if the heights you climb
 Ensure a costly tomb,
 It will not mend your case at all,
 Or mitigate your doom ;
 When Peter at the gate you meet,
 And tender your credentials,
 He'll say, " This is the Realm of PEACE ;
 You lack all the essentials."

" And while I'm guardian of this gate,
 No Nazi shall pass through ;
 The boot's now on the other foot :
 Remember, I'm a Jew ! "

THE CHOICE

I somehow don't quite see the way
 To vote in this election;
 For both sides have a stranglehold
 It seems, upon perfection.
 If either side had had defects,
 How simple choice would be!
 But since both are immaculate,
 'Tis tough to a degree.

I am assuming you would make
 A wise choice if you could,
 And are prepared to separate
 What's so-so from what's good;
 But that is not the simple task
 We're now asked to perform;
 For both sides are so faultless that
 There's no scope for reform.

For proof of this no need exists:
 Both openly admit it;
 Ultima Thule's now attained,
 And their's the side that hit it.
 Of course, I do not mean to say
 Each side commends the other,
 I merely mean each 'boosts' his own,
 And damns that of his brother.

What chance have we benighted souls,
 To choose twixt two perfections?
 To compass this we need a vote
 That counts in both directions.
 Your pauper, having naught to lose,
 May possibly condemn a
 Voter with a stake, who's mazed,
 In this unique dilemma.

" THE BOSS "

(An affectionate tribute to Mr. J. P. Firth on his retirement,
after nearly 30 years as Headmaster of Wellington College.)

Who taught us how to play the game,
How might and right are not the same,
That honest work is more than fame ?
" The Boss."

Who led us all to strive with vim,
To scorn all methods that were " slim,"
To prize a word of praise from him ?
" The Boss."

Who, happ'ning on us unaware,
When mischief dire was in the air,
Politely asked, " How will you square ? "
" The Boss."

Who from his modest six-feet-five,
Would hope in four-feet-two revive,
Thenceforth the proudest boy alive ?
" The Boss."

Who in our school-days sowed the seed
That blossomed in the Empire's need,
And gave us Honour for our creed ?
" The Boss."

Who shared our joys of bat and ball,
Who roused us at our country's call,
And won the hearts of one and all ?
" The Boss."

FLY-TIME

'Tis fly-time and the busy fly
 Is out to do his best;
 He is up and at me early,
 And he sees me off to rest;
 Most meddlesome of creatures,
 As good old Chaucer said;
 I love him well at all times,
 But I love him best when dead.

He is present at my breakfast,
 And samples all my kai;*
 He lands upon my scanty locks,
 Or investigates my eye;
 Of my ear he makes a haven
 Where he steals a moment's rest,
 For thinking out some fiendish plan
 To improve him as a pest.

Yes, I love the gentle house-fly,
 So faithful and so true;
 Your human friends may leave you,
 This the fly will never do;
 He will visit you in sickness,
 And dine with you in health,
 And prove equally assiduous,
 Amid poverty or wealth.

* Kai=Maori for food.

NURSERY RHYMES UP-TO-DATE

Little Miss Buffitt
 Decided to rough it,
 So dined at a common cafe;
 A big watersider
 Persistently eyed her,
 And frightened Miss Buffitt away.

Clever Jack Horner
 Created a "corner"
 In fruit for the Christmas pie;
 He put in a sum
 And pulled off a "plum"
 And said, "What a smart man am I!"

Jack and Lill
 Ran up a bill
 In ev'ry trusting quarter;
 Jack "came down"
 And "did" the town,
 And Lill came tumbling after.

Gay Mrs. Spanker
 Went to the banker
 To get her poor husband a loan;
 But when she got there
 She was met with a stare
 And so the poor husband got none.

I had a little motor
 Enamelled in pale grey;
 I lent it to a lady
 To drive a little way;
 But she crashed it, and smashed it
 And now I've got to pay;
 So I shan't lend my motor more
 To any lady gay.

There was an old woman
 Who stood in a queue;*
 They had so many orders
 They didn't know what to do;
 She paid for her coal,
 Then went home to bed;
 The coal hasn't come,
 And the old woman's dead.

* Refers to a time of "a coal famine."

THE STRICKEN ADVERTISER

No matter what his aims may be,
 No matter if he lies
 To benefit his fellow men,
 A man must advertise.
 His product, be it what it may,
 The work of hand or brain,
 If he neglects to shout its praise,
 He courts success in vain.

Though a trifling lack of candour
 In his mode, one may perceive,
 "Humanum est errare" 'd be
 His plea, I do believe;
 When issuing a prospectus
 How jejune would be bare truth :
 It might deceive sheer ignorance
 Or unsuspicious youth.

No, in the storm and stress of life,
 Man dare hardly pause to choose;
 He must banish candour, and employ
 Such means as pedlars use.
 Why wonder then, when we are told
 Some "used-car's" slaughtered price?
 The vendor scorns the loss he's made;
 And "booms" the sacrifice.

The loss that linen drapers court
 At "sales", nigh breaks one's heart;
 And traffickers in real estate,
 From self-robbery must smart;
 Nor are such rumours idly based
 On fairy-tale or guess,
 They're real authentic losses made—
 Vide the public press.

In your perusal of the "ads,"
 Impressed you're bound to be
 With devastating losses borne
 By firms habitually;
 For losses so stupendous—
 And they frequently befall—
 Leave you hopelessly bamboozled
 How the firms survive at all.

SONG

THE BRITISH NAVY

Dare foes presume to curb the right
 That Britons proudly claim,
 The inborn right of Liberty
 For all who bear that name ?
 Yes, foemen flushed with arrogance,
 Now challenge Britain's right,
 All envious of the place she's won
 By many a hard sea-fight.

CHORUS : .

But the Navy, the British Navy
 Has known such threats before ;
 Did Spain's Amarda win renown
 'Gainst Drake's ships off the Nore ?
 From Jutland, too, the Germans fled
 Before Britannia's might,
 When Jellicoe and Beatty drove
 Their ships in headlong flight.

The Nazis sent the Bismark forth
 The Northern Seas to raid,
 Convinced their swiftest battleship
 Would break the close blockade.
 At twelve miles range she spied the Hood,
 And with a lucky shot
 She struck that great ship's magazines,
 And sank her on the spot.

CHORUS :

But the Navy, the British Navy
 Felt anger, not dismay ;
 From ev'ry side the warships raced,
 Nor rested night or day ;
 The Air-arm, too, played well its part,
 And ev'ry rating stood
 Firm bound by oath, soon clinched by deed,
 To straight avenge the Hood.

All tyrannies Britannia holds
 As her persistent foes,
 And never while they live will cease
 To strike them crushing blows.
 Despite all Mussolini's boasts,
 Italian seamen failed ;
 For in the fight off Matapan,
 Our British ships prevailed.

CHORUS :

And the Navy, the British Navy
Will not relax its hold,
Retaining still the bulldog grip
Far famed in fights of old.
'Gainst tyrants of the Nazi breed,
Who would enslave the world,
Defiance by our British fleet,
Must endlessly be hurled.

Written at the request of the Musical Director in Wellington, of the National Broadcasting Service of New Zealand. It was set to music by the writer of the words.

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SONG
OUR UNION JACK

In other lands beloved flags
Have noble deeds inspired;
Have stirred great souls to deathless deeds
That ages have admired;
And some flags wave o'er ruthless hordes
Who struck at Freedom's life,
Against such foes our Union Jack
Must wage relentless strife.

REFRAIN :

Then rally round the brave old flag
The flag that must fly free,
That ne'er has brooked a tyrant's power
Be it on land or sea.
Can we our birthright e'er resign,
And bear a conqueror's yoke?
Not while the Old Flag wields its power
True freemen to invoke.

We're not the breed that tyrants love,
A dumb, submissive crowd,
Who cringe before their Master's scowl.
Nor scarce dare groan aloud;
We were born and bred where Freedom reigns,
No foe shall find us lack
The courage high, the dauntless will,
To guard our Union Jack.

Repeat REFRAIN.

These words were set to music by the author.

NEW ZEALAND

(Revised Version)

There's a land that lies in the Southern Seas,
 Remote from the Old World's bounds,
 On whose rugged shores the mighty beat
 Of the ocean's heart resounds.
 It lies in the path of the restless winds
 That blow from out the west,
 And shroud with everlasting snows
 The towering mountain crest.

There rata and beech and pine are born
 Of these winds—a mantle green,
 Clothing the hills and the stony steeps
 And the valleys that lie between.
 In the sheltered vales the tree-fern spreads
 Its fronds o'er the hurrying stream,
 That rushes and ramps, then, weary, rests
 Where shimmering sunbeams gleam.

'Tis a land where Nature's ways are kind;
 Its beauties far renowned;
 Where mānuka* its fragrance lends,
 And waterfalls resound.
 Where daisied downs look up and smile
 At skies of turquoise blue;
 Where mountains stand marshalled, range on range,
 And flocks enhance the view.

Here Vulcan still conserves his fires
 'Neath Ngauruhoe† grand,
 And lonely Egmont vigil keeps
 On Taranaki's strand.
 From some Lethēan cave roars forth
 Pent steam with thund'rous sound,
 Or fretful geyser, chafing long,
 Flings skyward with a bound.

'Tis a land of promise, a land of youth
 (Time long had passed it by);
 No crumbling castles crown its crags,
 No minsters years defy.

* Pron. mā-nu-ka, a like ah (in both cases), u like oo. Accent on ma.

† Nga-u-ru-ho-e, five syllables; the o and the e both cut short, the e as in egg.

Its monuments and stately piles
Time's slow, refining hand
Not yet has touched with the soft'ning line
That art can ne'er command.

Here may the old-world traveller gauge
The power of Britain's hand,
Who sent her children forth to tame
A wild, but lovely land;
With faith unfaltering they faced
The hardships and the toil,
And won with brain and sinewy arm
Subsistence from the soil.

And onward, upward, still they strove,
To make an equal land,
Where by his worth and not his birth,
A man should win command.
We children of those pioneers,
(Unurged by stress to roam)
Cling proudly to *their* Mother-land,
And still *we* call it "*Home*."

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SUNSHINE AND SHADOW

They say the grass is springing,
And the birds are gaily singing,
And the land is filled with gladness for the coming of the Spring;
But for me 'tis rue that's springing,
And the songs the birds are singing
Awaken but sad memories, and idle longings bring.

'Twas when the flowers were springing,
And the birds their carols singing,
A love new-waken'd taught me all the rapture of the Spring;
But now, though birds be singing,
On a grave the grass is springing,
And their happiness adds sorrow to my sorrow, as they sing.

OUR ANCESTORS' CAREER

Our ancestors' career was hard,
 So circumscribed their joys;
 Unknown to them that sheer delight,
 A modern city's noise.
 They did their best to raise a din,
 With carts on cobble stones,
 And an army of street venders,
 Who bawled in strident tones.

But these were just the toddling steps
 Of tyros at the game,
 Which from our lofty altitude
 Look ludicrously lame.
 Those instruments—the best they had—
 To make a worth-while row,
 Were puerile; they, in fact, would be
 Despised by children now.

The famed pneumatic rivetter
 That soothes the modern ear,
 The equally pneumatic pick
 That helps our path to cheer,
 Were silent to our forebears (Scot.)—
 The "pipes" were all they had.
 Nay! brother Jock, there's no affront:
 I have not finished, lad.

The pipes, I grant, sound full as sweet
 As the pneumatic picks,
 Yet lack the pick's dynamic note
 Disintegrating bricks;
 But when it's an endurance test
 On which all thoughts are pinned,
 I'll back the pipes against the field—
 They're longer in the wind.

Our late forefathers did not share
 With us that pure delight,
 The booming of "loud-speakers"
 In the dead vast of the night.
 Nor did their citizens foresee
 The modern use of dogs;
 That is, to rasp the nerves of those
 Who do not sleep like logs.

Deprived of all such benefits—
 More widely than we know—
 How hard to be an ancestor,
 And life's best joys forgo!

No self-respecting poet (no matter how poor), will let Spring go by unsung. The spring-poet, however, has become conservative and too idealistic. The following is an attempt to treat the subject in a common-sense, practical manner that should appeal to business men and give a lead to our rising poets.

When the hefty football player takes his ease,
And the young suburban husband plants his peas,
When you see the housewife rubbing
Eternally and scrubbing,
You may take it, gentle maiden,
It is Spring.

When the tramper dons his rucksack and his shorts,
And the cricketer upon the turf disports
Himself in flannels white,
With a blazer overbright—
Shed your winter hat, dear maiden,
It is Spring.

When you hear the pullets cackling loud at morn,
In their cooped-up city quarters so forlorn,
If in lodgings you should be,
You may take this tip from me :
Eggs for breakfast now, sweet maiden,
It is Spring.

Should you see the lambs disporting round their mums
(That is before their time for freezing comes),
And the butcher brings you ram
(Euphemistically "lamb"),
Believe him, artless maiden,
It is Spring.

The "Celestial" purveyor now displays
New potatoes, peas, and lettuce on his trays,
And the whitebait vender's cries
In suburban streets arise—
These are portents, happy maiden,
Of the Spring.

When round the drapers' windows full of hats,
You see women buzzing, thick as summer gnats,
It is proof beyond all doubt
That "winter things" are "out";
So rejoice, I say, fair maiden,
It is Spring.

THE DRILLING DOMINIE

Parody No. 8 *

This piece was written on the occasion of the Garlick Camp of Physical Instruction. The Government Schools were closed for a week to provide an opportunity of giving Physical Instruction to all teachers in the Public Schools of the Dominion.

In the Wellington District the male teachers went into camp on the Hutt Racecourse, with the exception of the elderly men. These were conveyed to and from the camp daily, by train to Lower Hutt; and between the railway station there and the camp, they went by bus, morning and evening, across the Hutt river.

At the request of the *Journal of Education*, these verses were published in that journal at the time.

Apologies to Henry Newbolt, author of the lines parodied, *The Fighting Temeraire*, are here made.

(Various incidents in the Garlick Camp, see note above.)

It was eight bells ringing,
 And the sausages were done,
 And the orderlies were bringing
 In the dishes one by one.
 It was eight bells ringing,
 And the orderlies were bringing
 Chops and sausages, and flinging
 Down the dishes one by one.

Oh ! to get some porridge steaming,
 It is rare ! It is rare !
 Oh ! to see enough spoons gleaming
 Still more rare ! Still more rare !
 How to get some porridge steaming,
 And to see enough spoons gleaming,
 Is the thing that we are scheming
 As we sit and ponder there.

It was noontide ringing,
 And the morning drill was done,
 To his pipe each man was clinging,
 It enhanced the rest he'd won ;
 It was noontide ringing,
 To his pipe each man was clinging,
 But with form alert for springing
 For the mess-tent, on the run.

* See note preceding poem No. 9. *This* apology was made in error.

There'll be some without a plate boys,
Plates are rare ! Plates are rare !
There'll be none if you are late boys,
So be there ! So be there !
There'll be some without a plate boys,
You'll be one if you are late boys,
But we'll all share in the wait boys,
And inhale the fine fresh air.

There's a square meal looming
At the setting of the sun,
How its phantom odours fuming
Make us eager to be done !
There's a square meal looming,
How its phantom odours fuming
Make us yearn for home and grooming,
When the long day's drill is done.

When the sunset breezes shiver,
We'll be there ! We'll be there !
Though we get a touch of liver,
We don't care ! We don't care !
When the sunset breezes shiver,
And the 'bus comes o'er the river,
Though we overload our liver,
We'll be there ! We'll be there !

EDUCATIONAL REFORM

For years, aye many years, its been
 My crystalised opinion
 That education practice is
 Awry in this Dominion;
 And that I'm right beyond a doubt
 In this my firm contention,
 Is proved by great authorities
 Quite needless here to mention.

To prattle in their mother tongue
 Mere children are permitted;
 While subjects of transcendent worth
 Are studiously omitted.
 Our little tots are given flowers
 And pets that they may rear 'em
 Neglecting for such futile things
 The great binomial theorem.

Young budding minds are fretted with
 Much adding and subtracting,
 Regardless of the part in life
 They'll one day be enacting;
 They're doomed to tread the mazy path
 Of racecourse speculations,
 Ungrounded in the principles
 That govern permutations.

Vocational in character
 Should be their early training,
 To know when cost of living's up
 And when, if e're, its waning.
 A course in modern bankruptcy
 Has much to recommend it:
 'Tis not enough to garner wealth,
 One must know how to fend it.

If mine had been the mind to frame
 The social science course,
 Each child should now be learning el-
 Ementary divorce;
 This boon, like aviation, has
 Quite lately been perfected
 Its latent possibilities
 Too long were unsuspected.

I mention just a few defects
In pedagogic practice;
An art as difficult, I'm told,
As skating is on cracked ice.
But obstacles must be o'ercome,
And education righted,
No longer should we grope our way
Like travellers benighted.

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JOYS OF THE CAR OWNER

I'd like to own a motor-car,
Though not to go joy-riding;
I'd keep it for a nobler use,
I don't mind here confiding.
Like other men I long to lie
Beneath a car extended,
And prove, 'mid oil and grime, the joy
Of leisure thus expended.

While neighbours all around I see
Engaged in this pursuit,
I often feel that I should make
A capable recruit;
For I am fond of mess and dirt,
And dote on oily waste,
While nuts and greasy springs and screws
Exactly suit my taste.

My Sunday mornings are, alas!
Now shockingly misspent,
In prowling round my garden,
Or on hiking pleasures bent;
Whereas, had I a motor-car,
I should clean it all day long,
And make an inharmonious life,
One grand—sweet—song.

A PROTEST

A section of the community at the time, protested against Wellington's *then* recently-established municipal milk supply. The meeting took place in 1922.

"This meeting is called," said the chief germ, Typhoidus,
 "To tender our thanks to all those who've employed us;
 And to enter our protest—it can't be too firm—
 'Gainst the wrong that's been done to the poor working germ.

There's that man they call Gnaw-wood*—I think that's the name—
 Who for all of our troubles is mostly to blame;
 When the milk trade was winning us tricks by the score,
 He became most officious, and shoved in his oar.

This pasteurised milk is so grossly unfair
 That a strong deputation must wait on the Mayor;
 And, in English as plain as our tongues can command,
 Say this milk distribution's a thing we won't stand."

Then Patrick Diphtheria sprang to his feet,
 And, putting it mildly, he "went off a treat"—
 "Thim cursed clane battles, I'll break ivry won,
 And give *ivry* councillor hell, barrin' none!"

But the chairman called Patrick to order, and said:
 "Though your anger is righteous, Pat, easy ahead;
 We'll wait on the Council, without more delay,
 And lodge our complaints in a dignified way."

And there, sure enough, when the Council next meets
 Are three truculent germs in the Councillors' seats.
 Says the Mayor: "If you're catching, you'd better get out;
 If you're not, let us hear what the trouble's about."

Then chief germ, Typhoidus, arose, and said he,
 "With this new-fangled milk scheme we cannot agree;
 The citizens *may* get their milk on good terms,
 But it's over the odds for us hard-working germs.

"And whatever advantage to others its giving,
 For us it makes harder the problem of living;
 The doctor and nurse, too, it's robbing, I say,
 Of a very large part of their regular pay.

"Now the Stonemason's Union's begun to complain;
 Though protest is useless, they firmly maintain;
 Dire poverty threatens the troubled wreath-maker,
 And you're breaking the heart of the poor undertaker."

* The reference is to Sir Charles Norwood, then chairman of the Wellington City Council's Milk Committee.

OUR BEER

(Written during First World-war)

We have sent our lads in thousands,
Aye, in scores of thousands now,
To bleed, and die, it may be,

For the cause we all hold dear;
We have given of our treasure,
Freely, gladly, without measure,
But we make one reservation :

We will not give up our Beer.

'Tis the bulwark of our nation,
It has made us what we are ;

'Tis the star that gleams before us
When the world is dark and drear ;
Take our Lares and Penates,
Take our bread and meat and "taties,"
All these are superfluities

When measured by our Beer.

'Tis on this our constitution
Is founded firm and strong ;
And the rights our fathers bled for

To our hearts are very near ;
We are ready to surrender
Home and hearth, and likewise fender,
Making one distinct exception ;

To wit, "the Fam'ly Beer."

Could we see the pallid brewer
Brooding o'er the "might have been,"
Would our hearts be void of pity,

And our eyes refuse a tear ?
Could we bear to see him languish
'Neath the load of loss and anguish,
That would crush his gentle spirit

If we abrogated Beer ?

No ; in courage and devotion
To our country and our King,
We yield to no man living,

Be he peasant, knight, or peer ;
Take, if need, our sons and daughters ;
Take our lands, and min'ral waters ;
But we can't resign our birthright,

Life's sheet-anchor, glorious Beer.

NOT ON SIDE

That woman is man's equal needs
 No demonstration here ;
 This, Nature sometimes disregards,
 With consequences queer.
 For Nature is a humourist,
 Who oft times plays the joke
 Of harnessing an ox and ass
 In matrimonial yoke.

There's Major Long, some six feet five ;
 His wife is four feet three ;
 "What chance have these," I ask, "to stand
 On an equality ?"
 And Mrs. Broad—she's fourteen stone ;
 Her husband nine stone eight ;
 The cards have not been fairly dealt
 To "hubby" and his mate.

There's Mrs. C., who's fond of "life,"
 While C. it bores to tears ;
 They've long survived the tender terms
 That graced their halcyon years ;
 So Mrs. C., when kept at home,
 Sharp comment does not spare ;
 While Mr. C., if taken out,
 Is genial as a bear.

'Tis irony on Nature's part
 To link such souls as these,
 Who have as much affinity
 As chocolate and cheese ;
 What wonder then, if married life
 Revolves around the Poker,
 When on the King and Queen of Hearts
 Dame Nature plays the Joker.

MAKIN' A RAYPUBLIC

(This tells of the Irish Republic when in process of formation)

If it's paace ye would be sakin'
 Thin in Bilfast ye sh'ud dwell;
 It is the paaceful city,
 And it's Oi that know it will;
 At iv'ry busy corner
 There's a handy little gun
 To kape the bhoys in orrder
 Whin they're boi-strous in their fun.

And 'dade now tho' its paaceful,
 Faith it's far from bein' dhull;
 For there's plisant little strate-foights
 Goin' on widout a lull;
 And there's bhoys loike Tirence Murphy
 Shootin' pol-is-men all day,
 Not to mintion bombs they's throwin'
 Froom the roof acrost the way.

Now, is there e'er a city
 That the sun shines on to-day,
 Where the citizens thry harder
 Irritation to allay?
 Gad! there's min paradin' always
 Wid a gun or hand grenade,
 Settlin' quarrels that moight happen,
 And that sometoimes do, indade.

There's a pathri-ot-ic body
 In Ould Ireland called Sinn Fein,
 Ye'll have heard thim towld of maybe,
 And ye'll know the bhoys Oi mane;
 They've a moighty thirst for fraydom,
 And their hearts for Erin yearn;
 They kape the home fires burnin'
 While there's e'er a home to burn.

Now in Bilfast they're in plinty,
 All workin' hard, of course,
 Breakin' jails and wreckin' thramcars,
 Yet they moight be doin' worse;
 For they're buildin' a raypublic
 Of Orange min and Grane,
 And thase take a dale of mixin'
 As is aisy to be sane.

IN MEMORIAM

One of these days you may come across some lines in one of the New Zealand papers somewhat after this fashion :—

OBITUARY

ROBERT JAMES POPE

Old-lengthy Robert's passed away,
His destination unrevealed;
Perhaps 'twere kinder not to seek
What charity judged best concealed.

He tried his duty to perform;
Had done good, too, by fits and starts;
His life recalls the curate's egg;
'Twas really excellent—in parts.

And oft when I recall him now,
I firmly think he wronged himself;
He might have left a treasured fame,
Had he the soul that covets pelf.

We scarce can feel that merit pure
Has gained for him supernal joy;
A lenient judge is our best hope,
The last resource in Love's employ.

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