

**FARROW
GEORGE
EDWARD**

ABSURD DITTIES

George Farrow
Absurd Ditties

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Absurd Ditties:

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G. E. Farrow

Absurd Ditties

I

THAT OF MR. JUSTICE DEAR

"'Tis really very, *very* queer!"

Ejaculated Justice Dear,

"That, day by day, I'm sitting here

Without a single 'case.'

This is the twenty-second pair

Of white kid gloves, I do declare,

I've had this month. I can *not* wear

White kids at such a pace."

His Lordship thought the matter o'er.

"Crimes ne'er have been so few before;

Not long ago, I heard a score

Of charges every day;

And now – dear me! how *can* it be? —

And, pondering thus, went home to tea.

(He lives Bayswater way.)

A frugal mind has Justice Dear

(Indeed, I've heard folks call him "near"),
And, caring naught for jibe or jeer,
He rides home on a bus.
It singularly came to pass,
This day, he chanced to ride, alas!
Beside two of the burglar class;
And one addressed him thus:

"We knows yer, Mr. Justice Dear,
You've often giv' us 'time' – d'ye hear? —
And now your pitch we're going to queer,
We criminals has *struck*!
We're on the 'honest livin' tack,
An' not another crib we'll crack,
So Justices will get the sack!
How's *that*, my legal buck?"

This gave his Lordship quite a fright,
He had not viewed it in that light.
"Dear me!" he thought, "these men are right,
I'd better smooth them down.
"Let's not fall out, my friends," said he,
"Continue with your burglarie;
Your point of view I clearly see.
Ahem! Here's half-a-crown."

The morning sun shone bright and clear
On angry Mr. Justice Dear;
His language was not good to hear;

With rage he'd like to burst.
His watch and chain, and several rings,
His silver-plate, and other things,
Had disappeared on magic wings —
They'd burgled his house first!

II

THAT OF THE LATE MR. BROWN

Life has its little ups, and downs,
As has been very truly said,
And Mr. Brown,
Of Camden Town
(Alas! the gentleman is dead),
Found out how quickly Fortune's smile
May turn to Fortune's frown;
And how a sudden rise in life
May bring a person down.

He lived – as I remarked before —
Within a highly genteel square
At Camden Town,
Did Mr. Brown
(He had been born and brought up there);
But – waxing richer year by year —
Grew prosperous and fat,
And left the square at Camden Town
To take a West End flat.

It was a very stylish flat,
With such appointments on each floor
As Mr. Brown

At Camden Town
Had never, never seen before:
Electric lights; hydraulic lifts,
To take one up and down;
And telephones *to everywhere*.
(These quite bewildered Brown.)

The elevator pleased him most;
To ride in it was perfect bliss.
"I say!" cried Brown,
"At Camden Town
We'd nothing half as good as this."
From early morn till dewy eve
He spent his time – did Brown —
In being elevated up,
And elevated down.

One night – I cannot tell you why —
When all the household soundly slept,
Poor Mr. Brown
(Late Camden Town)
Into the elevator step;
It stuck midway 'twixt floor and floor,
And when they got it down,
They found that it was all U. – P.
With suffocated Brown.

Yes, life *is* full of ups and downs,
As someone said in days of yore.

They buried Brown
At Camden Town
(The place where he had lived before);
And now, alas! a-lack-a-day!
In black and solemn gowns,
Disconsolate walk Mrs. Brown
And all the little Browns.

III

THAT OF OUR OLD FRIEND BISHOP P

**(With many thanks to Mr. W. S. Gilbert
for his kind assurances that the inclusion
of these verses causes him no offence.)**

Twice Mr. Gilbert sang to you
Of Bishop P., of Rum-ti-foo;
Now, by your leave, I'll do that too,
Altho' I'm bound to fail
(So you will tell me to my face)
In catching e'en the slightest trace
Of true Gilbertian charm, or grace,
To decorate my tale.

Still, I will tell, as best I can,
How Bishop Peter – worthy man —
Is getting on by now.
Now where shall I begin? Let's see?
You know, I think, that Bishop P.
(Wishful to please his flock was he)

Once took the bridegroom's vow.

You doubtless recollect, His Grace
Wed Piccadil'lee of that place,
And Peterkins were born apace,
When she became his bride.
In fact I'm told that there were three,
When dusky Piccadillillee,
In odour of sanctittittee,
Incontinently died.

Some years have passed since her demise
But Bishop Peter – bless his eyes —
That saintly prelate, kind, and wise,
Is excellently well.
And, not so very long ago,
He sought to wed – this gallant beau
(His faithful flock desired it so) —
Another Island belle.

There was one difficulty, this:
Our Peter wooed a dusky Miss
Who (tho' inclined to married bliss)
Declared him rather old;
Who giggled at his bald, bald head,
And even went so far, 'tis said,
As to decline His Grace to wed,
Did Lollipoppee bold.

But, one day, on that far-off reef,
A merchant vessel came to grief,
And all the cargo – to be brief —
Was washed upon the shore.
Most of the crew, I grieve to state,
Except the Bos'un and the Mate,
Were lost. Theirs was a woesome fate,
And one we all deplore.

Amongst the wreckage on the strand,
A box of "Tatcho" came to land,
Which, there half buried in the sand,
The Bishop – singing hymns
Amongst his flock down by the shore —
Discovered, and they open tore
The case. Behold! The contents bore
The magic name of Sims.

"What! G. R. Sims?" quoth Bishop P.
(Visions of "Billy's Rose" had he),
"Good gracious now! It Sims to me
I've heard that name before."
(Oh, well bred flock! there was not one
Who did not laugh at this poor pun;
They revelled in their Bishop's fun.
They even cried "Encore!")

Then spake the Mate (whose name was Ted):
"Now this 'ere stuff, so I've 'eard said,

Will make the 'air grow on yer 'ead
As thick as any mat."

"Indeed?" quoth worthy Bishop P.;

"Then 'tis the very thing for me,

For I am bald, as you may see."

His Grace removed his hat.

The Bo'sun quickly broke the neck
Of one large bottle from the wreck,
Proceeding then His Grace to deck
With towels (careful man,
This was to save his coat of black,
For "Tatcho" running down one's back
Is clearly off its proper tack).
And then the fun began.

For Ted he rubbed the liquid through,
As hard as ever he could do.
And worthy Jack rubbed some in too
(The Bo'sun's name was Jack).
And day by day they did the same.
Now "Tatcho" ne'er belies its fame,
And soon a little hair there came
(His Lordship's hair is black).

Miss Lollipoppee views with glee
The change in worthy Bishop P.
Now quite agreed to wed is she
(The banns were called to-day).

No "just cause or impediment"
Can interfere with their content;
The natives' loyal sentiment
Is summed up in "Hooray!"

IV

THAT OF CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD McKAN

There never lived a worthier man
Than Captain Archibald McKan.
I knew him well some time ago
(I speak of twenty years or so);
Sans peur et sans reproche was he;
He was the soul of chivalry,
Was Captain Archibald McKan.

True greatness showed in all his mien,
No haughty pride in him was seen,
Though, captain of a steamer, he,
From Greenwich unto far Chelsea,
That, spite of weather, wind, and tide,
From early Spring to Autumn plied,
Brave, modest Captain A. McKan.

However sternly might his roar
Reverberate from shore to shore
Of "Ease her! Back her! Hard astern!"
His duty done, with smile he'd turn
And be most affable and mild

To every woman, man, or child
Aboard, would Captain A. McKan.

He reassured the anxious fears
Of nervous ladies – pretty dears! —
He in his pocket carried toys
And sweets for little girls and boys;
He talked in quite familiar way
With men who voyaged day by day,
Did Captain Archibald McKan.

In fact, as I've already said,
No man alive – or even dead —
Was freer from reproach than he;
And yet of Fortune's irony
(Though such a very decent sort)
This worthy man was e'en the sport.
Alas! was Captain A. McKan!

"*Cherchez la femme.*" The phrase is trite,
Yet here, as usual, 'twas right.
Our Captain noted every day
A certain girl rode all the way
From Greenwich Pier to Wapping Stair.
"It *cannot* be to take the air,"
Thought Captain Archibald McKan.

She calmly sat, with downcast eye;
And looking both demure and shy;

Yet, once, he caught a roving glance,
Which made his pulses wildly dance;
And, – though as modest as could be —
"I do believe she's gone on me,"
Considered Captain A. McKan.

"Why else should she persistently
Select *my* boat alone?" thought he;
"I *wonder* why she comes? I'll ask,
Though 'tis a very ticklish task."
So, walking forward with a smile,
Beside the lass he stood awhile,
Then coughed, did Captain A. McKan.

"You're frequently aboard my boat,"
Began he; "she's the best afloat;
But, pray, may I enquire, *do* you
So *very* much admire the view?"
"Er – moderately, sir," said she.
"Exactly so! It *must* be *me*!"
Decided Captain A. McKan.

"Come, tell me, Miss, now no one's by,"
He whispered; "Won't you tell me why
You come so oft? There's naught to dread."
The lady looked surprised, and said:
"My husband works at Wapping Stair,
I daily take his dinner there."
Poor Captain Archibald McKan!

V

THAT OF MATILDA

Yes, I love you, dear Matilda,
But you may not be my bride,
And the obstacles are many
Which have caused me to decide.
Firstly, what is *most* annoying,
And I'm not above confessing,
Is, that I think you indolent,
And over-fond of dressing.
I've known you spend an hour or two
In a-sitting on a chair,
And a-fussing and attending
To your toilet or your hair.

There's another little matter —
You may say a simple thing —
Yet, Matilda, I must own it,
I object to hear you sing.
For the sounds you make in singing
Are so *very* much like squalling,
That the only term appropriate
To them is caterwauling.
Indeed, I've never *heard* such horrid
Noises in my life,

And I'd *certainly* not tolerate
Such singing in a wife.

And, Matilda dear, your language!
It is really *very* bad;
The expressions which you use at times,
They make me feel quite sad.
It is very, very shocking,
But I do not mind declaring
That I've heard some sounds proceeding
From your lips so much like swearing,
That I've had to raise a finger,
And to close at least *one* ear,
For I couldn't feel quite certain
What bad words I mightn't hear.

But worse than this, Matilda:
I hear, with pious grief,
Many rumours that Matilda
Is no better than a thief
And I'm shocked to find my darling
So entirely lost to feeling,
As to go and give her mind up
Unto picking and a-stealing.
Oh, Matilda! pray take warning,
For a prison cell doth yearn
For a person that appropriates
And takes what isn't her'n.

And the culminating blow is this:

You stay out late at night.

Now, Matilda dear, you must confess

To do this is *not* right.

Where you go to, dear, or what you do,

There really is *no* telling,

And with rage and indignation

My fond foolish heart is swelling.

Yet the faults which I've enumera-

Ted can't be wondered at,

When one realises clearly

That "Matilda" – is a *cat*.

VI

THAT OF "DOCTOR" PATRICK O'DOOLEY

In the South Pacific Ocean
In an oiland called Koodoo,
An' the monarch ov that oiland
Iz King Hulla-bulla-loo.
Oi wuz docthor to that monarch
Wonct. Me name iz Pat O'Dooley.
Yis, you're roight. Oi come from Oirland,
From the County Ballyhooly.

An' Oi'll tell yez how Oi came to be
A docthor in Koodoo;
May the Divil burn the ind ov me,
If ivery word's not thru.
Oi wuz sailin' to Ameriky,
Aboard the "Hilly Haully,"
Which wuz drouned in the ocean,
For the toime ov year wuz squally.

An' Oi floated on a raft, sor,
For some twinty days or more,
Till Oi cum to Koodoo Island,

Phwich Oi'd niver seen before.
But the natives ov thot counthry,
Sure, would take a lot ov batin',
For a foine young sthrappin' feller
They think moighty pleasint atin'.

An' they wint an' told the King, sor,
Him called Hulla-bulla-loo.
"Ye come from Oirland, sor?" sez he.
"Bedad!" sez Oi, "thot's true."
Thin he whispered to the cook, sor;
An' the cook he giv me warnin':
"It's Oirish *stew* you'll be," sez he,
"To-morrow, come the marnin'."

But to-morrow, be the Powers, sor,
The King wuz moighty bad,
Wid most odjus pains insoide him,
An' they nearly drove him mad;
So he sint a little note, sor,
By the cook, apologoizin'
For not cooking me that day, sor,
Wid politeness most surprisin'!

An' Oi wrote him back a letther,
Jist expressin' my regret,
Thot Oi shouldn't hiv the honor,
Sor, ov bein' cooked an' et;
An' Oi indid up the letther

Wid a midical expressshin,
As would lead him to imagine
Oi belonged to the professhin.

Och! he sint for me *at wonct*, sor.
"If ye'll *only* save me loife,"
Sez he, "Oi'll give yez money,
An' a most attractive woife,
An' ye won't be in the *menu*
Ov me little dinner party
If ye'll only pull me round," sez he,
"An' make me sthrong an' hearty."

So Oi made a diagnosis
Wid my penknife an' some sthring
(Though Oi hadn't got a notion
How they made the blessid thing;
But Oi knew thot docthors did it
Phwen they undertook a case, sor),
An' Oi saw his pulse, an' fild his tongue,
An' pulled a sarious face, sor.

Thin Oi troied a bit ov blarney.
"Plaze, yer gracious Madjisty,
It's yer brains iz much too big, sor,
For yer cranium, ye see."
But the King he looked suspicious,
An' he giv a moighty frown, sor.
"The pain's not there at all," sez he,

"*The pain is further down, sor.*"

"Oi'm commin', sor, to thot," sez Oi.

"Lie quiet, sor, an' still,

While Oi go an' make yer Madjisty

Me cilebratid pill."

In the pocket ov me jacket

Oi had found an old ship's biscuit

("An' Oi think," sez Oi, "'twill do," sez Oi,

"At any rate Oi'll risk it").

The biscuit it wuz soft an' black

By raisin ov the wet,

An' it made the foinist pill, sor,

Thot Oi've iver seen as yet;

It wuz flavoured rayther sthrongly

Wid salt wather an' tobaccy,

But, be jabers, sor, it did the thrick,

An' *cured* the blissid blackie!

The King wuz as deloighted,

An' as grateful as could be,

An' he got devorced from all his woives,

An' giv *the lot* to me;

But a steamer, passin' handy,

Wuz more plazin' to "yours trooly,"

An' among the passingers aboard

Wuz the "Docthor", – Pat O'Dooley.

VII

THAT OF MY AUNT BETSY

You may have met, when walking out
or thereabout,

A lady (angular and plain)
Escorted by an ancient swain,
Or, possibly, by two,
Each leading by a piece of string
A lazy, fat, and pampered thing
Supposed to be a dog. You may,
Perhaps, have noticed them, I say,
And, if so, thought, "They do
Present unto the public gaze
A singular appearance – very."
That lady, doubtless, was my aunt,
Miss Betsy Jane Priscilla Perry.

The gentleman – or *gentlemen*—
Attending her were Captain Venne
And Major Alec Stubbs. These two
For many years had sought to woo
My maiden aunt, Miss P.,
Who never *could* make up her mind
Which one to marry, so was kind
To one or other – each in turn —

Thus causing jealous pangs to burn.
I incidentally
Should mention here the quadrupeds —
Respectively called "Popsey Petsey," —
A mongrel pug; – and "Baby Heart," —
A poodle – both belonged to Betsy.

You'd notice Captain Venne was tall,
And Major Stubbs compact and small;
These two on nought could e'er agree,
Except in this – they hated me,
Sole nephew to Aunt Bess.
My aunt was very wealthy, and
I think you'll quickly understand
The situation, when I say
That Captain Venne was on half-pay,
And Major Stubbs on *less*.
To me it was so very plain
And evident, I thought it funny
My aunt should never, never see
They wanted, not her, but her money.

And Stubbs and Venne they did arrange
A plan, intended to estrange
My aunt and me. They told her lies;
And one day, to my great surprise,
A letter came for me.
Requesting me to "call at six,"
For aunt had "heard of all the tricks

I had been up to," and "was sad
At hearing an account so bad."
I went – in time for tea.
My aunt was looking so severe
I felt confused, a perfect noodle
While Major Stubbs caressed the pug,
And Captain Venne he nursed the poodle.

"Dear Major Stubbs," my aunt began,
"Has told me all – quite all he *can*—
Of your sad goings on. Oh, fie!
Where will you go to when you die,
You naughty wicked boy?"
And Captain Venne has told me too
What *very* dreadful things you do.
Of course I cannot but believe
My two dear friends. *They'd* not deceive,
Nor characters destroy,
Without a cause. Go, leave me now,
You'll see my purpose shall not falter
I'll send at once for Lawyer Slymm,
My latest will to bring and alter."

I fear I lost my temper – quite;
I know I said what wasn't right;
You see, I felt it hard to bear
(And really, I contend, unfair),
To be misjudged like this.
I tried to argue, but 'twas vain,

"My mind is fixed – my way is plain,"
My aunt declared. "Then hear me now!"
I hotly cried, "There's naught, I vow,
To cause you to dismiss
Your nephew thus, but, as you please.
And if, perchance, you wish to do it,
Your money leave to your two friends;
They want it, and – they're welcome to it."

I hurried out. I slammed the door.
I vowed I'd never call there more.
And neither did I, in my pride,
Till six weeks since, when poor aunt died,
And then, from Lawyer Slymm
I got a little note, which said:
"The will on Tuesday will be read."
I went, and found that "Baby Heart"
From Captain Venne must ne'er depart —
She had been left to him;
While "Popsey Petsey" Major Stubbs
Received as his sole legacy
And that was all. The money – oh!
The money – that was left to *me*.

VIII

THAT OF THE TUCK- SHOP WOMAN

Of all the schools throughout the land
St. Vedast's is the oldest, and
All men are proud
(And justly proud)
Who claim St. Vedast's as their *Al-*
Ma mater. There I went a cal-
Low youth. Don't think I'm going to paint
The glories of this school – I ain't.

The Rev. Cecil Rowe, M.A.,
Was classics Master in my day,
A learned man
(A worthy man)
In fact you'd very rarely see
A much more clever man than he.
But if you think you'll hear a lot
About this person, – you will not.

The porter was a man named Clarke;
We boys considered it a lark
To play him tricks

(The usual tricks
Boys play at public schools like this),
And Clarke would sometimes take amiss
These tricks. But don't think I would go
And only sing of him. Oh, no!

This ditty, I would beg to state,
Professes likewise to relate
The latter words
(The solemn words)
Of her who kept the tuck-shop at
St. Vedast's. I'd inform you that
The porter was her only son
(The reason was – she had but one).

For many years the worthy soul
Had kept the shop – the well-loved goal
Of little boys
(And larger boys)
Who bought the tarts, and ginger pop
And other things sold at her shop —
But, feebler growing year by year,
She felt her end was drawing near.

She therefore bade her son attend,
That she might whisper, ere her end,
A startling tale
(A secret tale)
That on her happiness had preyed,

And heavy on her conscience weighed
For many a year. "Alas! my son,"
She sighed, "injustice has been done.

"Let not your bitter anger rise,
Nor gaze with sad reproachful eyes
On one who's been
(You *know* I've been)
For many years your mother, dear;
And though you think my story queer,
Believe – or I shall feel distressed —
I *thought* I acted for the best.

"When you were but a tiny boy
(Your mother's and your father's joy),
Good Mr. Rowe
(The Revd. Rowe)
Was but a little baby too,
Who very much resembled you,
And, being poorly off in purse,
I took this baby out to nurse.

"Alike in features and in size —
So like, indeed, the keenest eyes
Would find it hard
(Extremely hard)
To tell the t'other from the one — "
"Hold! though your tale is but begun,"
The porter cried, "a man may guess

The secret of your keen distress.

"You changed the babes at nurse, and I
(No wonder that you weep and sigh),
Tho' callèd Clarke
(School Porter Clarke),
Am *really* Mr. Rowe. I see.
And he, of course, poor man, is *me*,
While all the fortune he has known
Through these long years should be my own.

"Oh falsely, falsely, have you done
To call me all this time your son;
I've always felt
(Distinctly felt)
That I was born to better things
Than portering, and such-like, brings,
I'll hurry now, and tell poor Rowe
What, doubtless, he will feel a blow."

"Stay! stay!" the woman cried, "'tis true,
My poor ill-treated boy, that you
Have every right
(Undoubted right)
To feel aggrieved. I *had* the chance
Your future welfare to advance
By changing babes. I knew I'd rue it,
My poor boy – but —*I didn't do it.*"

IX

THAT OF S. P. IDERS WEBBE, SOLICITOR

Young Mr. S. P. Iders Webbe,
Solicitor, of Clifford's Inn,
Sat working in his chambers, which
Were far removed from traffic's din.
To those in legal trouble he
Lent ready ear of sympathy —
And six-and-eightpence was his fee.

To widows and to orphans, too,
Young Mr. Webbe was very nice,
And turned none from his door away
Who came to seek for his advice:
To these, I humbly beg to state —
The sad and the disconsolate —
His fee was merely six-and-eight.

He'd heave a sympathetic sigh,
And squeeze each bankrupt client's hand
While listening to a tale of woe
Salt tears within his eyes would stand.
Naught, naught his sympathies could stem,

And he would only charge – ahem! —
A paltry six-and-eight to *them*.

This gentleman, as I observed,
Was calmly seated at his work,
When, from the waiting-room, a card
Was brought in by the junior clerk.
"Nathaniel Blobbs? Pray ask him to
Step in," said Webbe. "How do you do?
A very pleasant day to you."

"A pleasant day be hanged!" said Blobbs,
A wealthy man and very stout
(That he was boiling o'er with rage
There could not be the slightest doubt).
"I'm given, sir, to understand
You're suitor for my daughter's hand.
An explanation I demand!"

"I *know* your lawyer's tricks, my man;
In courting of my daughter Jane —
Who's rather plain and not too young —
My money's what *you* seek to gain.
Confound you, sir!" the man did roar.
"My daughter Jane is no match for
A beggarly solicitor!"

At words like these *most* gentlemen
Would really have been somewhat riled;

But do not think that Mr. Webbe
Was angry. No; he merely *smiled*.
But, oh! my friends, the legal smile
Is not to trust. 'Tis full of guile.
(*So smiles the hungry crocodile.*)

"I see," Webbe most politely said,
"My worthy sir, *your* point of view.
You're wealthy; I am poor. Of course,
What I proposed would never do.
If only, now, I'd property,
And *you* were – well, as poor as *me* – "
"Pooh! that," cried Blobbs, "can *never* be."

"Think not?" said Webbe. "Well, p'r'aps you're right.
And so – there's nothing more to say.
You *must* be going? What! so soon?
I'm *sorry*, sir, you cannot stay!"
Blobbs went – and slammed the outer door.
Webbe calmly made the bill out for
The interview – a lengthy score.

He charged – at highest legal rate —
For every word he'd uttered; and
He even put down six-and-eight
"To asking for Miss Blobbs's hand";
Next, in the Court of Common Pleas
A "Breach of Promise" case, with ease,
He instituted – if you please.

He gained the day, because the maid
Was over age, the Judge averred,
And Blobbs was forced to "grin and pay,"
Although he vowed 'twas *most* absurd.
The "damages," of course, were slight;
But "legal costs" by no means light.
(Webbe shared in these as was his right.)

Outside the Court indignant Blobbs
Gave vent to some expressions which
Were libellous, and quickly Webbe
Was "down on him" for "using sich."
Once more the day was Webbe's, and he,
By posing as a damagee,
Obtained a thousand pounds, you see.

With this round sum he then contrived
To buy a vacant small estate
Adjoining Blobbs, who went and did
Something illegal with a gate.
Webbe "had him up" for *that*, of course;
Then something else (about a horse),
And later on a water-course.

He sued for this, he sued for that,
Till action upon action lay,
And in the Royal Courts of Law
"Webbe *versus* Blobbs" came on each day.

"Law costs" and big "retaining fees,"
"Mulcted in fines" – such things as these
Made Blobbs feel very ill at ease.

As Webbe grew rich, so he grew poor,
Till finally he said: "Hang pride!
I'll let this fellow, if he must,
Have Jane, my daughter, for his bride."
He went once more to Clifford's Inn.
Webbe welcomed him with genial grin:
"My *very* dear sir, pray step in."

"Look here!" cried Blobbs. "I'll fight no more!
You lawyer fellows, on my life,
Will have your way. I must give in.
My daughter Jane *shall* be your wife!"
"Dear me! this *is* unfortunate,"
Said Webbe. "I much regret to state
Your condescension comes too late.

"For, sir, I marry this day week
(Being a man of property)
The young and lovely daughter of
Sir Simon Upperten, M.P."
Then, in a light and airy way:
"I think there's nothing more to say.
Pray, mind the bottom step. *Good* day!"

X

THAT OF MONSIEUR ALPHONSE VERT

Your Mistair Rudyar' Kipling say
Ze cricquette man is "flannel fool."
Ah! oui! Très bon! I say so too,
Since Mastair Jack, *enfant* at school,
He show me how to play ze same.
I like it not – ze cricquette game.

My name is Monsieur Alphonse Vert
(You call him in ze English "Green");
I go to learn ze English tongue,
And lodge myself at Ealing Dean
In family of Mistair Brown,
Who has *affaire* each day "in town."

Miss Angelina Brown she is
Très charmante– what you call "so pretty";
I walk and talk wiz her sometimes
When Mr. Brown go to ze City;
I fall in love (pardon zese tears)
All over head, all over ears.

I buy her books, and flowers (*bouquet*),
And tickets for *la matinée*,
And to ze cricquette match we go,
Hélas! upon one Saturday.
To me she speak zere not at all.
But watch ze men, and watch ze ball.

Ze cricquette men zey run, zey bat,
Zey throw ze ball, zey catch, zey shout;
And Angelina clap her hands.
Vot for, I know not, all about,
And in myself I say "*Ah! oui!*"
I *too* a cricquette man shall be."

To Angelina's brother Jack
(His name is also Mastair Brown)
I say, "Come, teach me cricquette match,
And I will give you half-a-crown."
Jack say, "My eye!" (in French *mes yeux*)¹
"Oh! what a treat!" (in French *c'est beau*).

After, to Ealing Common we
Go out, with "wicquette" and with "ball,"
And what Jack calls a "cricquette-bat."
(Zese tings I do not know at all;
But Angelina I would catch,
So "*Allons! Vive la cricquette match!*")

¹ Frenchmen could never make these two words rhyme – but Englishmen can. I've heard 'em. G. E. F.

I hold ze "bat," Jack hold ze "ball."
"Now zen! Look out!" I hear him cry.
I drop ze "bat," I look about;
Ze ball – he hit me in ze eye."
I cry, "*Parbleu!*" Ze stars I see.
I think it is "all up" wiz me.

I try again. Ze "ball" is hard.
I catch him two times – on ze nose.
I run, I fall, I hurt my arm,
I spoil my new white flannel clothes,
In every part I'm bruised and sore,
So cricquette match I play no more.

I change my clothes, I patch my eye,
I tie my nose up in a sling,
And to Miss Angelina Brown
Myself and all my woes I bring.
"Ah, see," I cry, "how love can make
Alphonse a hero for thy sake."

But Angelina laugh and laugh,
And say, "I know it isn't right
To laugh; but you must please forgive
Me. You look *such* a fright!"
And next day Jack say, "I say, Bones,
My sister's going to marry Jones."

XI

THAT OF LORD WILLIAM OF PURLEIGH

Lord William of Purleigh retired for the night
With a mind full of worry and trouble,
Which was caused by an income uncommonly slight,
And expenses uncommonly double.
Now the same sort of thing often happens, to me —
And perhaps to yourself – for most singularlee
One's accounts – if one keeps 'em – will never come right,
If, of "moneys received," one spends double.

His lordship had gone rather early to bed,
And for several hours had been sleeping,
When he suddenly woke – and the hair on his head
Slowly rose – he could hear someone creeping
About in his room, in the dead of the night,
With a lantern, which showed but a glimmer of light,
And his impulse, at first, was to cover his head
When he heard that there burglar a-creeping.

But presently thinking "Poor fellow, there's naught
In the house worth a burglar a-taking,
And, being a kind-hearted lord, p'r'aps I ought,

To explain the mistake he's a-making."
Lord William, then still in his woolly night-cap
(For appearances noblemen don't care a rap),
His second-best dressing-gown hastily sought,
And got up without any noise making.

"I'm exceedingly sorry," his lordship began,
"But your visit, I fear, will be fruitless.
I possess neither money, nor jewels, my man,
So your burgling here will be bootless.
The burglar was startled, but kept a cool head,
And bowed, as his lordship, continuing, said:
"Excuse me a moment. I'll find if I can
My warm slippers, for I *too* am bootless."

This pleasantry put them both quite at their ease;
They discoursed of De Wet, and of Tupper.
Then the household his lordship aroused, if you please,
And invited the burglar to supper.
The burglar told tales of his hardly-won wealth,
And each drank to the other one's jolly good health.
There's a charm about informal parties like these,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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