

Light Verse

THE SKIPPER FROM SKIBBEREEN

FROM Skibbereen to Trebizond,
From County Cork to Lazistan!
What of the cargo? The winds were fair;
Kindly as Heaven, they took me where
I met her in a Turkish khan.

Love o' the sea, but she was rare!
Eyes to melt a houri's veil!
Fingers sweet with henna stain
Bound me with a jasmine chain,
Bent and held me like a gale.

From Lazistan to Port of Spain!
No will of mine cast off the thrall
Of paradise in Trebizond.
It's ever and ever a port beyond,
Ever away, the wild winds call!

Richard Butler Glaenzer

OH, GOLDEN HOURS!

OH, golden hours, fly swift along,
And bring more hours of gold.
With golden grapes our cup is filled,
With lavish hand its nectar spilled;
Oh, reckless youth, and bold!

Oh, silver hours, creep slowly by,
For all our grapes are culled;
Now by the fire content we sit,
With hoary head and sharpened wit,
And drink our vintage—mulled!

Anne Merwin

THE MAIN THING

If I could paint,
I'd limn thee with a halo, like a saint—
A wondrous, mystic damsel without taint—
If I could paint.

If I could write,
I'd make thee heroine, and me a knight,
And laud thy raven hair and glances bright,
If I could write.

If I could mold,
I'd shape thy form in ivory and gold
As did the Grecian artisans of old—
If I could mold.

If I could sing,
I'd catch the soaring muse upon the wing
And make the welkin to thy praises ring,
If I could sing!

But I can work—
Can find elusive dollars where they lurk.
If thou wert mine, nor heart nor brain should
shirk—

For I can work!

L. W. Ingalls

A MODERN GRIEVANCE

A THOUSAND men loafed on the deck,
Above the lapping tide,
When death, like a rat, stole underneath,
And they knew not how they died.

A hundred men lay on the hill,
All in the idle sun;
Death clove the air ten miles away,
And shattered every one.

No foeman's face the sailor saw,
Nor sword the soldier lifted;
There was only the trail of a periscope,
And a little smoke that drifted.

Oh, give me the pike and the saber-slash,
And the pant of the foeman's breath,
When eye to eye and foot to foot
Men fought with visible death.

Give me the shock of Waterloo,
And the shriek of Trafalgar,
The rush and riot of sweating troops,
And the pounding men-of-war.

But not a rat with death in his nose,
And a giant that croucheth low!
Oh, curse the clever collegers
Who trick a soldier so!

Ralph Mortimer Jones

ALAS!

"A LAS!" he sighed. "We mortals know
But griefs and sorrows here below;
And from the cradle to the tomb
The very flowers are false that bloom
Beside the path where we must go.

"Unlucky beings we, on whom
No winds but ill are wont to blow,
For whom no scented blossoms grow—
Alas!" he sighed.

Amazed at such abysmal wo,
I said: "Deep grief you seem to show.
What filled you with this awful gloom?
What caused this aspect you assume,
And turned things topsyturvy so?"
"A lass!" he sighed.

Louis B. Capron

THE GLOBE-TROTTER'S PLAINT

I'VE been out West and seen the mountains;
I've seen the cowboys, too;
I've sailed out through the Golden Gate
Into the ocean blue.

I've been in many famous cities,
I've looked into Indian huts;
I've seen them growing pineapples,
And loading coconuts.

I've seen the Sphinx and Pyramids,
I've seen the desert sands;
I've watched the natives come and go
In many different lands.

But when I try to describe them
With words that ring and glow,
A bored reply comes back: "I know—
I've seen that at the picture show!"

David Baxter

CONSOLATION

LAST night a strange and wondrous dream came
visiting my bed;
I saw a bunch of famous men, and this is what
they said:

John D., says he:
"Tis plain to see
You're well and strong, all right!
Of all I've made
The half I'll trade
For your good appetite!"

Cried Edison:
"My life has run
Toward its declining stage.
My graphophone
I'd make your own
If I were just your age!"

Next Wilson spoke:
"It's not a joke—
Indeed, I'm in a hurry;
My White House fine
I wish were thine,
If with it went my worry!"

Came Roosevelt's smile,
And for a while
He gazed with envious glance:
"I'd give, you bet,
My fame to get
Your insignificance!"

The moral to this little tale I'm sure you'll find
is true—
You have what others want, although it mayn't
seem much to you.

G. Morrow

HIS TITLE TO GLORY

A SOUL from this planet toiled up toward the
gate;
At a distance he looked sadly spotted and
stained.

"What use in his coming?" a seraph sedate
Of St. Peter inquired, as the summit he gained.
"I can see at a glance he's bespattered with sin;
He surely should know that you can't let him in!"

Of the question St. Peter was fully aware,
But he made no reply. He had seen folks before
Who didn't look well as they mounted the stair,
But stacked pretty fair when one saw them
some more.

He never went off at half-cock, as we say
In this terribly flippant and garrulous day.

The figure came nearer—he didn't improve
On closer observing, I'm pained to relate.
St. Peter poured oil on the long, sloping groove
That leads to—below—from the heavenly gate.
Just then there arrived the new pilgrim from earth;
His countenance showed not a vestige of mirth.

"What claim to admission?" said Peter the
Prompt,

In tones that full many a sinner have scared.
Inquisitive cherubs in phalanxes romped
To the portal, to see how the newcomer fared.
The candidate stood with humility bent,
And out through the silence this statement he sent:

"I have been but a fizzle at goodness, I fear;
Some precepts I've broken, and others I've
bent;
But down in the neighborhood where 'twould
appear

I ought to be known, for my life there I spent—
Where they knew all my good points as well as
my ill,
They said I was good about paying a bill."

St. Peter swung wide the huge, jewel-set portal,
And said: "My regret is it cannot swing wider.
No welcomer soul than this new-fledged immortal
Ever stood at this gate or stepped proudly
inside 'er.

'Twould cover up sins that were high as the hills—
His singular habit of paying his bills!"

Strickland Gillilan