

Light Verse

A TRAGEDY OF WAR

NOT all is told by the penny press, though its columns reek with gore, and its head-lines rave for the fallen brave with an internecine roar; for there's the tale of the local swell—'tis a tale of hope destroyed—for he used to deck his elastic neck with a collar of celluloid. Ah me, ah me! The powder-mill has hit this fellow sore, for it buys in the rough the very stuff that made the collar he wore. The sheen and gleam and the matchless white, undimmed by sweat or dust, and the camphor smell that he loved so well, are claimed by this ruthless trust! The rainbow tie that he used to wear, and the ring that he tied it through, and the cut-glass pin with the edge of tin have nothing now to do.

The laundryman has a glowing face, and he beams on the bust of Mars; as he waddles about he suppresses a shout for the DuPonts, Krupps, and Czars! But the local swell—ah, there's the rub!—his fate is sad to-day; he must open his tills for laundry bills, or sink to negligee!

J. Edward Tuft

LOVE AT MARKET

"WHO'LL buy?"

This was the mother's cry.
"My daughter's eyes are jewels rare,
And golden is her gleaming hair.
Who'll buy?"

The girl looked on with languid eyes
At empty hearts in gold's disguise,
Until a beggar with a soul
Looked in her face and bade her live.

Then rang her cry
Above "Who'll buy?"—
"I'll give!"

Marion Lyon Fairbanks

DANGER-SIGNALS

WHEN I call upon Hélène—
Which is nearly every night,
Since I'm head and heels in love
With the dainty little sprite—
Sitting at her side, and full
Of a lover's hopes and fears,
Oft I find my eyes are fixed
On the jewels in her ears.

Flashing from each rosy lobe
Diamonds big as filberts speak
Mockingly, alas, to me
Of my scanty wage per week;
And the reason why I don't
Pop the question thus appears—
I am warned away by those
Danger-signals in her ears!

Grant Paulding

SELF-CONTRADICTORY

WHAT can her letter mean? I cannot tell
If I have cause for joy or for distress!
I wrote and asked her: "Bess, will you be
mine?"

Her answer was: "No, George—yours truly,
Bess."

E. R. Cheyney

THE NEW POETRY

TOO much liberty indeed
Makes Pegasus a puzzled steed.

Though the new poets set him free
From rime and lyric ecstasy,

He thinks that once when he was young,
And all the stars of morning sung,

He was happier far, because
Wisely restrained by metric laws;

While now he trots, yet never knows
If he's a horse of verse or prose!

William H. Hayne

COWBOY SONG

COME on, you old pony, and pick up your
feet!

There's miles we must cover before we can eat;
And eatin's where both of us fellers is strong,
So let's be a lopin', a lopin' along.

The cook, he ain't handsome, but supper-time
he

Looks better than George B. Adonis to me;
So watch out for dog-holes, don't tumble in
wrong,

And let's be a lopin', a lopin' along.

Come on, you old pony, and make yer legs
shake!
I'm thinkin' of coffee, potatoes, and steak;
The fryin'-pan's sizzle's a beautiful song,
So let's be a lopin', a lopin' along.

Come on, you old pony, we're hungry, we two,
And—there's the old ranch-house just heavin' in
view;
There's smoke from the kitchen, you bet I ain't
wrong!
Whoopee! Let's be tearin', a tearin' along!

Berton Braley

WHAT DAISIES TELL

IN some fair region far away
A daisy blooms for lovers;
And o'er its petals all the day
A fairy fantom hovers.

It tears a petal from the stem
And wreaks—the canny fairy—
Upon my lass some stratagem.
"She loves me" then, my Mary!

Then quick it tears another out,
And maiden fancies vary;
The dear one fills my soul with doubt;
"She loves me not"—my Mary!

Thus all the world shall see me gay
Or sad, or loved or lonely,
Until the petals cease some day
And leave "She loves me"—only!

A. Burstein

THE MAN WITHOUT A HOOK

I SING of a wight without hope or right,
Without hook to call his own,
Whose song unsung my heart has wrung;
Of his woes I make sad moan!

Of the married man, and the cruel plan
That gives him no single spot
To hang his clothes; for, say who can
'Tis fair, I say 'tis *not*.

His coat all limp with an awful crimp
In the collar is stifled under
A voluminous gown that keeps it down,
Hidden forever—no wonder!

His opera-hat is crushed and flat
'Neath his wife's new summer sweaters;
His boots and cane, they try in vain
To escape the entangling fetters

Of skirts. It hurts, for he thought 'twas his,
This closet. Oh, how mistaken
A man can be! When he's married, he
Has his notions rudely shaken!

And so to the end the invaders descend
In swirls of chiffon and fur,
Till the clothes of him fade in recess dim
O'erwhelmed by the clothes of her!

Ruth P. Thompson

SONNY

MY mother said: "Oh, sonny, ye'll hate it!"
But I knew more than my mother knew.
"The city's the place for a man," said I;
"Here there is nothing but fields and sky."
The city's the place. Oh, just you wait—it
Will send me back rich with gold for you!"

Oh, I was strong and I fought the city;
For I knew more than my mother knew.
"The country's the place for a fool," said I;
"The place for a fool to stay and die."
I won the fight, losing patience and pity
For all who could not win it, too.

Back to the country I went with money;
Oh, I knew more than my mother knew.
"Now you shall live like a queen," said I;
"I'll give you all that a king could buy!"
But her eyes grew dark, and she whispered:
"Sonny,

Have ye enough for to buy back *you*?"

Richard Butler Glaenzer

KEEPING EVERYBODY BUSY

THEY strip the world of barytones
To please my Josephine;
What matter if Italia groans
At losing singers, bag and bones?
"Tis opera night!" she telephones;
Artistic little queen!

They strip the silver sable fox
To warm my Josephine;
When Æolus opes his tempest-box
Till every ship careens and rocks,
Soft bits of fur adorn the frocks
Of my entrancing queen.

They strip the silk cocoon to make
The gowns of Josephine—
One shimmering like a mountain lake;
One silvery, like a willow brake;
Another, pale as angel-cake,
In timid *crêpe de Chine*.

It seems that all the textile mills
Must hum for Josephine;
They strip the goat upon the hills—
Her glove my very being thrills!—
And oh, she strips my roll of bills,
Brave in its yellow sheen!

J. E. Middleton