

# Light Verse

## SHAKESPEARE'S RIVAL

ANNE HATHAWAY I did adore;  
I never loved a maiden more,  
For she was tender, she was sweet,  
What time she tripped through Shot-  
tery's street  
Like—well, there is no metaphor!  
  
I was a wandering troubadour;  
My songs, my love—how they would soar,  
When I, grown brave, dared to entreat  
Anne Hathaway!

All my poor passion I did pour  
In reckless wooing; yea, I bore  
Love's sorrow till I knew defeat.  
Another's triumph was complete—  
Yes, Will of Avon won her; for  
Anne hath a way!

*Charles Hanson Towne*

## AUTHENTIC NEWS FROM THE FRONT

"I'm glad that Red Cross ship could  
sail,"  
Said Jack in tones of glee.  
"Hurrah for Red Cross nurses that  
It took across the sea!"

"They should have stopped the ship,"  
said Tom,  
"Because I'm sure they'll find  
The reddest, crossdest nurse of all  
Is ours they've left behind!"

*Blanche Elizabeth Wade*

## HE KNEW MY FATHER

THE look of him was wholly commonplace—  
His grizzled beard, worn garments, fur-  
rowed face.  
It wanted all my life-learned poise to keep  
Suppressed an adverse note that strove to creep  
Into my judgment as I viewed the man,  
So shaped he seemed on utter failure's plan.  
His was the seldom-traveler's furtive look,  
Cowering uneasy in his red-plush nook.

To me at length for friendliness he turned;  
For human fellowship this lone man yearned.  
I humored his pathetic eagerness  
To know my name, my calling, my address.

"Your father's name?" He trembled as he spoke;  
And when I told him, o'er his features broke  
A look of satisfaction deep and sweet  
As if I'd made his cup of joy replete.

"I knowed your dad—why, him an' me was  
chums!"  
And then I knew the happiness that comes  
To every father-hungry grown-up lad  
Who never ceases longing for the dad  
So little understood in callow days—  
So quick to blame he seemed, so slow to praise;  
So wished-for now, when wisdom holds her  
throne,  
That for our disrespect we might atone!

About that head, erstwhile so commonplace,  
A halo formed, of glory and of grace.  
He'd known and loved the father I had known;  
As boy friends intimate the two had grown;  
I clung to him—I all but held his hand,  
This magic guest from an enchanted land.  
Now with a thrill his voice in memory comes:  
"I knowed your dad—why, him an' me was  
chums!"

*Strickland Gillilan*

## THE OLD BELLE'S DRINKING SONG

TO what shall I drink with this mild cup of  
tea?  
To the nights and the days that were jolly?  
To the men that have broken their hearts over  
me?  
To the mistletoe sprays and the holly?  
To the mild summer nights that were moonlit  
and breezy?  
Ah, no—for who values the things that come  
easy?

I'll drink to the dresses I couldn't afford,  
To the women I've envied and hated;  
I'll drink to the times when my brain-cells were  
bored,  
To the loves that were sweet and ill-fated;  
To the snubs and the flicks and the fears and the  
aching;  
To the times when my iron-clad heart was near  
breaking!

I'll drink to the bitter campaign for a man—  
For any old man that had money;  
To the shrewd reconnoiter, the miscarried plan;  
To the years with no milk and no honey;

A toast to the married life I might have led!  
Just another weak cup, then away to my bed,  
Where my very last chance lies so comfortably  
    curled—

The soothingest husband in all this nice world!

*Jane Burr*

THE LADY LISTENS

THE other night, while dining out, a maiden  
    most inviting  
Said: "Mr. Smith, please do explain just why  
they are all fighting!"

"The Germans—" I began—  
    You can see it was my plan  
To get off some striking thoughts about the war.  
    "Oh, the germans!" murmured she;  
    "Let me fox-trot with my tea!  
No one *ever* gives a german any more!"

"Turkey seems to—" once again  
    I began, but all in vain.  
"Oh, you men! You love your turkey and your  
    roast!

    But give *me* a nut *glacé*,  
    Or a cherry-crowned *parfait*,  
Or a chicken-salad sandwich, at the most!"

"Now the Russians and the Eng—"   
    But I didn't get my fling.  
"Oh, don't you think Pavlowa is a cutie?  
    And the Russian blouse! Divine!  
    Come to tea, I'll show you mine,  
Black and green, with monkey fur—a perfect  
    beauty!"

Said I with quiet, stern despair: "I cannot tell  
    you more."

"Oh, thank you! Now I understand," cried she,  
    "about the war!"

*Anne Parrish*

THE KISS

A KISS is not like the poems at all  
    Which I drop through the editor's office  
    door;

For I like it as well "returned with thanks,"  
    As "accepted, with a request for more."

*Clinton Harcourt*

THE LOOSING

"WHERE'S my old dog?" I cry in jest,  
    As the child from the house above  
Sinks her hands in his broad, white chest  
    And strains him back from his love.

Well she knows, as she holds him fast,  
    That his heart is elsewhere—  
That I wait for his frantic leaps at last,  
    And his roguish, dear despair.

"Where's my old dog?" I cry again,  
    As the pines shut close on the trail;  
There comes a sound from that throat so fain  
    As my feet go swift in the dale.

His bark rings far through the darkling wood,  
    Mutinous, eager, strong;  
And I smile as I think that, though she would,  
    She cannot hold him for long.

"Where's my old dog?" I cry once more.  
    Ah, foolish clamor and quest!  
For though he tugs on a neighbor's floor  
    His kennel waits in my breast.

The wood is still as the twilight hush  
    Renders its world-caress;  
Who so fleet in the crackling brush—  
    Blind in his eagerness?

Love-hot yelps of a heart set free!  
    Gladly I welcome the shock,  
As my dog flows upward in joy on me,  
    Like the foam on a weed-brown rock!

*George Sterling*

THE PARTS OF SPEECH

THE pronoun said:  
    "You'll find it true  
The world is made  
    Of me and you."

The noun proclaimed:  
    "From me all springs;  
The world in truth  
    Consists of things."

The verb announced:  
    "'Tis plain to see  
What makes the world  
    Is just to be."

Conjunction cried,  
    To end the tiff:  
"You'll find the world  
    All hangs on if!"

*McLandburgh Wilson*

PRONUNCIAMENTO

MY mother learned in Boston town  
    From culture's rivulets to quaff;  
And so, on vulgar speech to frown,  
    She says emphatically: "Hahf!"

At this my dad, Chicago-born,  
    Has made it e'er his point to chaff;  
And often, just to show his scorn,  
    He tells me, quite distinctly: "Haff!"

And so I stand between two fires;  
    You wonder how I stand the gaff?  
My way's my mother's and my sire's—  
    For I pronounce it hahf and haff!

*A. Burstein*