

# The Laughing Willow



OLIVER HERFORD

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Laughing willow

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THE LAUGHING WILLOW

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OLIVER HERFORD







*Apropos de Rien*



# THE LAUGHING WILLOW

VERSES AND PICTURES

BY

**OLIVER HERFORD**

Author of "Artful Antics," "The Child's Primer of Natural History," "Overheard in a Garden," "Fairy Godmother-in-Law," "Astonishing Tale of a Pen and Ink Puppet," "The Confessions of a Caricaturist," etc.



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J817-H

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TO PEG

*Oh, should some power the giftie gie her  
To see hersel' as ithers see her,  
I'm thinking Peg would grow sae vain  
He'd take the giftie back again.*



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## THE LAUGHING WILLOW

*To see the Kaiser's epitaph  
Would make a weeping willow laugh.*





## THE LAUGHING WILLOW

### EPI TAPHS

#### Willy Nilly

HERE lies Willy's mortal clay  
In its Mother Earth's caresses.  
Willy's soul has flown away—  
Where it is you have two guesses.

#### Here lies Bill

Here lies Bill, the son of Fred.  
He lied alive; he now lies dead.

#### Tears, Idle Tears

Oh, stranger, dry the starting tear!  
Kaiser Bill is buried here.

#### Pax

'Neath this stone lies Kaiser Bill.  
He sought for peace—he seeks it still.

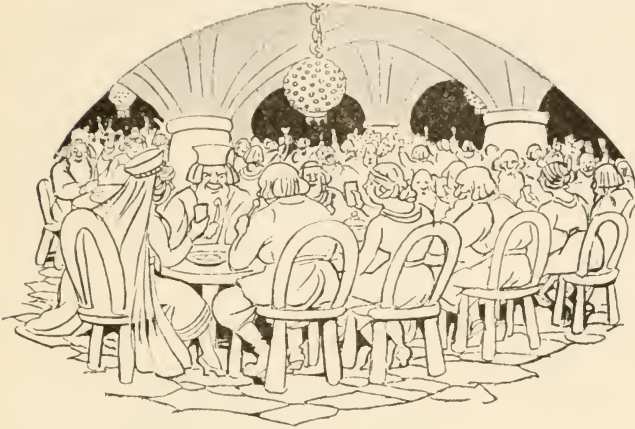
**Requiescat**

Here Wilhelm sleeps. For Mercy's sake,  
Tread softly, friend, lest he should wake!

**Ashes to Ashes**

Swallow him, O Earth, for he,  
Did his best to swallow thee.

THE TRUTH ABOUT RUSSIA



*THE WEDDING FEAST*

THIS is a Russian Wedding Feast ;  
Counting the Groom, there are at least  
A hundred sitting down to dine,  
Or let us call it ninety-nine :  
For more than that there is no room,  
And no one ever counts the Groom !

## *The Laughing Willow*

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THE TRUTH ABOUT RUSSIA—[*Continued*]

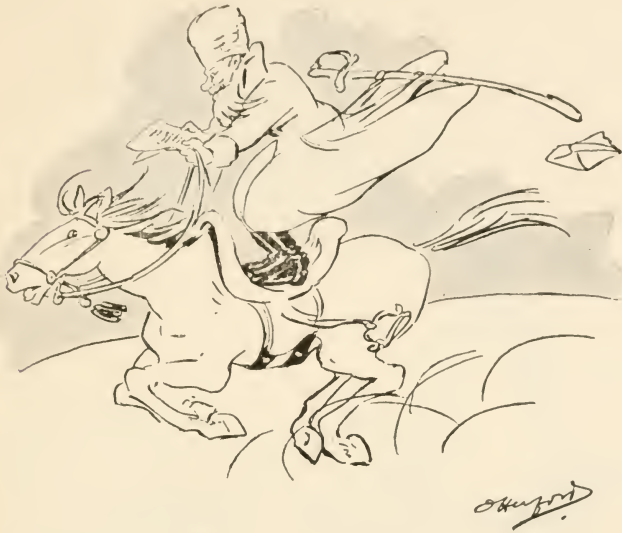
### *A MUJIK*

The Mujik wears a costume weird  
Consisting of a fuzzy beard,  
A sheep-skin blouse (the wool inside)  
And breeks astonishingly wide,  
Made from the fur of North sea Whales,  
And Yak-hide boots with big brass nails.



## *The Laughing Willow*

THE TRUTH ABOUT RUSSIA—[Continued]



### *THE COSSACK*

The Cossack is so much at home  
Upon his horse, that though he roam  
From Vladivostok to Odessa,  
His wife has only to address a  
Letter to Ivan "care his Horse"  
To catch her Spouse, unless of course,  
As sometimes happens, Ivan may  
Have swapped addresses on the way.

[ 13 ]

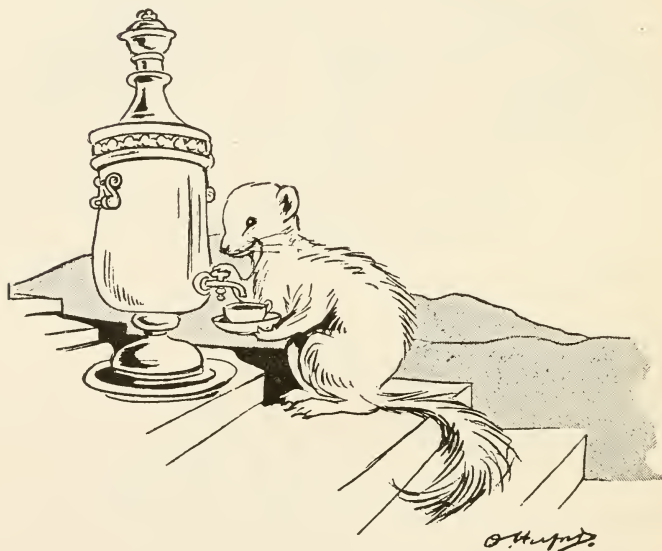
## The Laughing Willow

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THE TRUTH ABOUT RUSSIA—[Continued]

### THE THREE S'S

Without a doubt the *Samovar*  
The *Steppes* and *Russian Sables* are  
Of all things Russian the best known;  
So in this picture I have shown



A Sable sitting on a flight  
Of Russian Steppes, before a bright  
New Samovar, calm as can be,  
Brewing a cup of Russian Tea.



THE AIR RAID

I

COME into the cellar, Maud.  
Get a move on! Goodness gracious,  
There is nothing to applaud  
In bravado ostentatious!  
Still Maud lingered, all unheeding,  
As the Siren sounded twice;  
Above the din her voice came pleading,  
“Are you *sure* there’s no mice?”

II

Above the pandemonium  
Of Siren shrill and warning Drum  
And Aircraft Gun is heard the roar  
Of little Freddy, atat four;

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

### THE AIR RAID—[Continued]

The cellar dark and dank and dim  
No fascination has for him,  
The little darling wants to be  
Upstairs upon the roof and see  
The “fireworks!” “If you ask me—”  
Aunt Kate was overheard to say,  
“I’d let the dear child have his way!”

### III

A hidden Crime, however slight,  
Is sure some day to see the light;  
Oh, why did Auntie come to stay  
With us upon an Air-raid day!  
Why did we never think to tell her  
That there were Lizards in the cellar  
Or Spiders or an Open Drain!  
How shall we ever now explain  
That “Antique Vase” we said was lost,  
That Nile green horror, gold embossed,  
Her Wedding Present—there it lay  
Before her eyes, as plain as day!  
We *almost* wished a bomb would fall  
Upon the house and end it all!

### IV

Who is that cowardly Jack Horner  
Crouching there in the darkest corner,



## *The Laughing Willow*

---

### THE AIR RAID—[*Continued*]

Behind the furnace? Look again,  
That is no cringing coward, when  
Your eyes become accustomed to  
The darkness of the cellar, you  
Will see it is no other than  
Philander Jones and Marian;  
Make no mistake, Philander's dread  
Is not a Zeppelin overhead,  
But that rude moment when he'll hear  
The beastly Siren sound "All's clear!"

v

"Where is Molly?" Like a Shell,  
Short and sharp, the question fell,  
Scattering every one pell mell  
From the cellar's safe retreat  
Through the house on panic feet,  
Basement, Attic—everywhere  
They sought, one hope remained and there  
On the Drying-roof they found her,  
Shrapnel flashing all around her,  
Calm and cool 'mid war's alarms,  
Hugging something in her arms.  
"I's all right—don't cw'y!" said Molly,  
"I tame back to det my dolly!"

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

### VALE DIABOLE

AT a recent church conference it was decided to drop the Devil from the ritual.

WELL! Well! so you've been fired,  
You've lost your job at last.  
It's high time you retired,  
Old Boy, you're failing fast.



*The Laughing Willow*

---

VALE DIABOLE—[Continued]

You're getting old, you know it,  
You are not in the race.  
Admit you cannot go it,  
The killing, modern pace.

Your methods are too dull for  
The modern school of Hate,  
Your lake of burning sulphur  
Is sadly out of date.

The Hohenzollern's Kultur  
Mocks at your fiery pits,  
His double-headed vulture  
Has put yours on the fritz.

Beside the fierce, blaspheming,  
Mail-fisted Kaiser Bill,  
You are a seraph beaming,  
An angel of good-will.

But tho' we can't deny, sir,  
You're hopelessly outclassed,  
You've one thing on the Kaiser,  
Which is, tho' first and last

VALE DIABOLE—[*Continued*]



A failure as a devil,  
Yet boast of this you can:  
You were always on the level—  
And—you are a gentleman!

THE WRONG FLOOR

A CERTAIN Emperor  
(This is a censored tale)  
Once pounded on the door  
Of heaven with fist of mail.



Cried Peter from within,  
Awakened by the row,  
“Stop that infernal din!  
Who are you, anyhow?”

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

THE WRONG FLOOR—[*Continued*]

“Don’t bandy words with me!”

Thundered the visitor.

“All doors to me are free.

I am the Emperor.”

“If you’re an Emperor,”

Said Peter, “then I fear

You’ve come to the wrong floor.

We take no Emperors here.

“Our waiting list is filled

With martyrs brave and true

Whose blood an Emperor spilled.

There is no room for you.”

Cowed by Saint Peter’s look,

The Emperor, with a frown,

Cried, “Well, I’m damned!” and took

The elevator—down.

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

### MARCHING TO BERLIN

WE come from God's own country in the ships of  
Uncle Sam;

We're going to get the william-goat of Kaiser  
Will—i—am;

We know it is *verboten*, but we do not give a  
damn,

As we go marching to Berlin!

(*Drums*) Berlin! Berlin!

Berlin! Berlin! Berlin!

As we go marching to Berlin!

### *Refrain*

Hurray! Hurray! We'll wave the Stripes and  
Stars!

Away, away with Emperors and Czars!

And when we get the Kaiser we'll put him behind  
the bars,

As we go marching to Berlin!

(*Drums*) Berlin! Berlin! etc.

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

MARCHING TO BERLIN—[*Continued*]

We're from the dear old U. S. A., the Land of  
Liberty;

We've crossed a hundred rivers and three thousand  
miles of sea

To teach the Hun<sup>s</sup> a thing or two about Democracy,  
As we go marching to Berlin!

(*Drums*) Berlin! Berlin! etc.

### *Refrain*

Hurray! Hurray! We'll show the Prussian swine  
That Freedom is the only Right Divine,  
And when we catch old Kaiser Bill we'll pitch him  
in the Rhine,

As we go marching to Berlin!

(*Drums*) Berlin! Berlin! etc.

We've left our happy homes that we may help to  
win the war.

We're a million strong already, and there'll soon be  
millions more;

And when the job is done with Kaiser Bill we'll  
mop the floor,

As we go marching to Berlin!

(*Drums*) Berlin! Berlin! etc.



MARCHING TO BERLIN—[*Continued*]

*Refrain*

Hurray! Hurray! We're going to make it hot  
For all the bloody Hohenzollern lot,  
And when we get the Kaiser we'll present him to  
his Gott,

As we go marching to Berlin!

(*Drums*) Berlin! Berlin!

Berlin! Berlin! Berlin!

As we go marching to Berlin!

TARGET PRACTICE

At the Imperial schützenfest  
Fritz Pickelheim led all the rest;



At target practice Pickelheim  
Could hit the Red Cross every time;

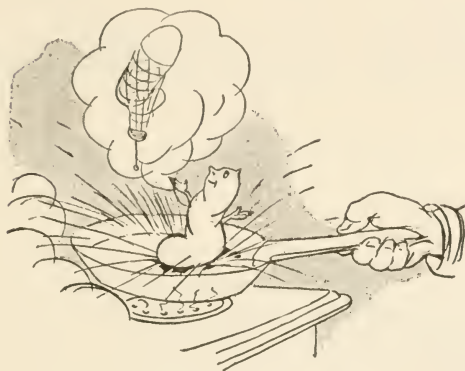
At the clay-baby contest Fritz  
Scored nineteen out of twenty hits;



And once he won the Kaiser's purse  
With nine live babies and a nurse.

THE SAUSAGE BALLOON

I OFTEN wonder, when we fry  
A Sausage, if its thoughts can fly



Across the billowy ocean wave  
To where its namesake stern and brave  
Floats like a Guardian Angel, high  
Above our armies, in the sky,  
Serene and stately as a cloud.  
No wonder Sausages are proud!  
No wonder Sausages when fried  
Oft-times swell up and burst with pride!



CONCERNING THE CROWN PRINCE

I

WHEN Crown Prince Willy goes to bed  
It is his wont to lay his head  
Upon the pillow and extend  
His feet towards the other end.  
“But does he really wear his hat  
In bed?” you ask—well, as to that  
I cannot say, I never saw him,  
But that’s the way *I* always draw him.

II

The thing that Germans most admire  
Is Crownie’s coolness under fire.

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

CONCERNING THE CROWN PRINCE— [Continued]

He loves to watch it gleam and glow  
'Mid fragrant smoke, an inch or so  
Above his nose as he reclines  
In some Château behind the lines;  
If the Crown Prince had his desire  
He would be *always* under fire!

### III

When you or I get up at eight  
We do not have to cogitate  
And rack our brains concerning just  
Which suit to wear, as Princes must;  
The Crown Prince has a hundred suits,  
Including hats and belts and boots,  
Yet such his master-mind, he knows  
Which he must wear and just what goes  
With what, which chevron, sash or sword,  
Each in his Royal Head is stored,  
Down to the detail of a spur,  
All in a Nut-shell, as it were!

### IV

Here is a most uncensored sight!  
The Prince, in garb Pre-Adamite  
Taking (but tell it not in Gath)  
A good old English shower-bath!



v

The Prince's shy and shrinking habit  
Has earned for him the nickname "Rabbit."  
This irritates His Highness more  
Than all his country's grief and gore,  
It hurts his *amour propre*, for it's  
A clear case of the "Cap that fits."  
But don't you think, however funny,  
It's rather rough upon the Bunny?

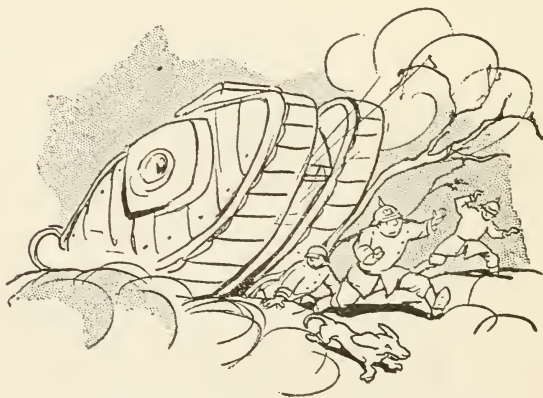


CAMOUFLAGE

IF you can stand upon one spot  
And look like something you are not  
And wouldn't if you could be—say  
A Bean-bag or a Bale of Hay—  
You'll find it quite a useful stunt  
To practise on the Western Front;  
This picture shows how Private Dunne,  
Disguised as snow, deceived the Hun,  
Who could not possibly see through  
The Camouflage: no more can you!

THE TANK

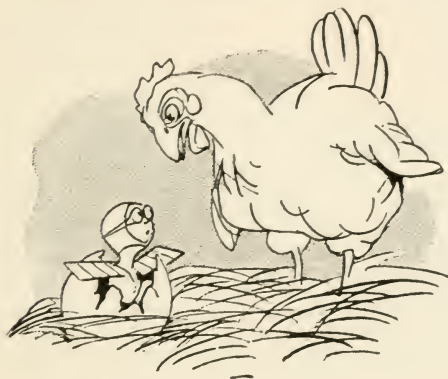
THE Tank's a kind of cross between  
An Agricultural Machine  
And something fierce and Pliocene;  
Over embankments, trees, and walls,  
Trenches, barbed-wire, and forts it crawls;  
Nothing can stay its course—the Tank  
Has not the least respect for Rank  
Or File; with equal joy it squashes  
All things alike, men, beasts, and—Boches.





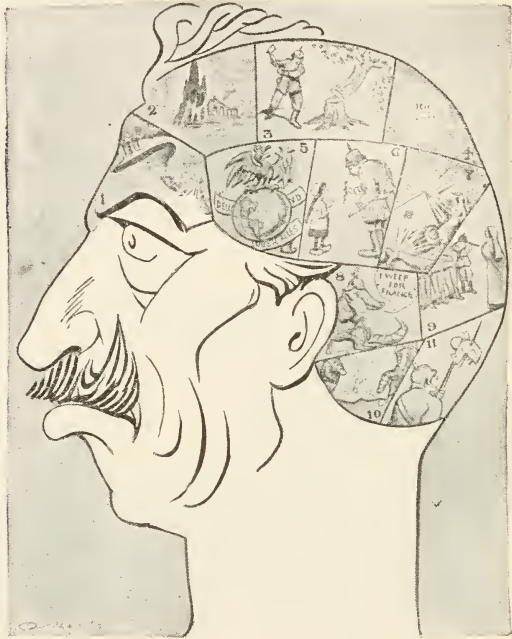
THE BIRD-MAN

THE Bird-man does not chirp and sing  
As Larks and Robins do in Spring,  
He does not moult nor does he feed  
On Earthworms or Canary-seed,



Nor does the Bird-man build a nest  
In which his weary wings to rest;  
At night, instead, when he goes home  
To roost, he seeks an Aërodrome.

FRENZYLOGICAL CHART



- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Humanity.       | 6. Generosity.        |
| 2. Veneration.     | 7. Compassion.        |
| 3. Love of Nature. | 8. Sympathy.          |
| 4. Modesty.        | 9. Chivalry.          |
| 5. Imagination.    | 10. Integrity.        |
|                    | 11. Love of Children. |

BRITANNIA SALVATRIX

MISTRESS of the Trident dread,  
With the brow of Artemis,  
Like Minerva, helmeted,  
Seven Seas her sandals kiss.



## *The Laughing Willow*

---

BRITANNIA SALVATRIX—[*Continued*]

Throbs a mighty heart withal  
Beneath her armour of Disdain.  
Not for naught did Belgium call,  
Servia has not cried in vain.

When the gauge of Hate was hurled,  
Seven seas at her behest,  
From the corners of the world  
Brought the bravest and the best.

From the utmost ends of earth,  
On their tireless waves they bore,  
To the Europe of their birth,  
Legions of the land and air,

Spurning Peace, till Peace has brought  
Hohenzollern to his fall,  
And with the blood of Freemen bought  
A Place in Freedom's Sun for all.

FATHER WILHELM

*To the Tune of Lewis Carroll*



“You are old, Father Wilhelm,” the Crown Prince  
said,

“And the hair’s growing thin on your pate;  
Do you think you are perfectly right in your head—  
The way you’ve been acting of late?”

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

FATHER WILHELM—[*Continued*]

“In my youth,” Father Wilhelm replied to his son,  
“I hated my honour to stain  
But, now that I’m perfectly sure I have none,  
Why, I do it again and again.”

“You are old,” said the Prince, “and you’re getting  
quite bent,  
And rheumatic, yet only just now,  
You turned a back somersault into your tent—  
Pray why did you do it, and how?”

“In my youth,” Kaiser Wilhelm replied to the  
Prince,  
“I kept all my muscles in training;  
And I’ve practised one thing that I learned, ever  
since—  
And that’s to go in when it’s raining.”

“You are old,” said the Prince, “and your head  
is too light  
For anything stronger than water;  
Yet you talk without ceasing from morning till  
night;  
Do you think, at your age, that you oughter?”

“In my youth,” said the Kaiser, “I lived upon raw  
Spanish onions, I ate with my knife;

## The Laughing Willow

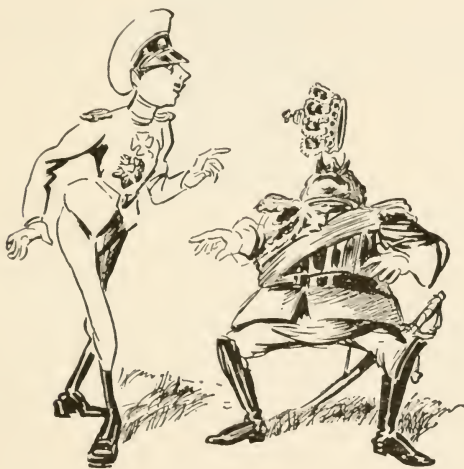
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FATHER WILHELM—[*Continued*]

And the strength that those onions gave to my jaw  
Has lasted the rest of my life.”

“You are old,” said the Kronprins, “and one would  
suppose,

You would be just a little more humble;  
Yet you balance your crown on the end of your nose.  
Aren’t you frightened some day it will tumble?”



“Your questions, my boy, are getting too free,”  
The Kaiser with anger protested—

“Your impudence borders on *Lese Majestee*;  
Be off, or I’ll have you arrested.”

THE TOUCHING BALLAD OF GENERAL VON BEERS

*To the Tune of W. S. Gilbert*



MAJOR FRITZ - SCHINKENWURST HOFBRAU VON  
BEERS

Was the pride and the joy of the Pruss Grenadiers.  
You've guessed him a Prussian, shrewd reader, at  
sight,  
And a glance at his manners will prove you are right.

In his fervour for "Frightfulness" Major Von Beers  
Acknowledged no betters and precious few peers.



*The Laughing Willow*

---

THE TOUCHING BALLAD OF GENERAL VON BEERS—  
[Continued]

And every one envied his well-earned repute  
For arson and pillage and rapine and loot.

No symphony held such delectable tones  
For the ears of Von Beers as the shrieks and the  
groans  
Of women and children bombarded with shell,  
Or the crash of a hospital tumbling pell-mell.

One day from Berlin came the order "Refrain  
For the present from Frightfulness. Start Press  
Campaign.

Von Bernstorff has wired we're getting in wrong  
With the Yankees, so play up HUMANITY strong."

Loud, loud were the wailings of Hofbrau Von Beers.  
But duty is duty, so drying his tears,  
He purchased a volume by Peter F. Dunne  
On "How to be Civilised, though you're a Hun."

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

THE TOUCHING BALLAD OF GENERAL VON BEERS—  
[Continued]

He swatted up Honour, and Peace and Good-will  
For a year seven months and a fortnight until,  
You'll scarcely believe it, that Hun I declare  
Acquired a sort of a civilised air.

It was balky, spasmodic and apt to take flight  
When a press correspondent was nowhere in sight.  
It was clumsy, uncertain and crude, I'm aware,  
Yet distinctly suggested a civilised air.

He started at once a colossal campaign  
And filled correspondents with fibs and champagne,  
And the press correspondents all voted Von Beers  
A prince of good fellows, 'mid deafening cheers.

Thenceforth when a soldier forgot to salute,  
Von Beers would use kindness instead of his boot.  
And he lectured a laggard he'd rather have shot,  
If a newspaper man chanced to be on the spot.

THE TOUCHING BALLAD OF GENERAL VON BEERS—  
[Continued]



If a sentinel, smoking, he happened to catch,  
Instead of a hiding he gave him a match.  
A caress took the place of a clout on the ear,  
That is, when a war correspondent was near.

He distributed photos of Godfearing Huns  
Feeding babies with Beef Broth, Bananas and Buns,  
And snapshots of Willie that caught his gay glance  
And others depicting him weeping for France.

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

THE TOUCHING BALLAD OF GENERAL VON BEERS—  
[Continued]

The fame of Von Hofbrau spread over the land,  
And rich Lady nurses proposed for his hand,



And the Kaiser, All Highest, 'mid deafening tears  
Pinned a cast-iron Halo on Major Von Beers.

# *The Laughing Willow*

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## AN IMPERIAL SNEEZE

*A Sniffle in One Act*

### CHARACTERS

The GERMAN EMPEROR . . .

*Others not to be mentioned in the same cast.*

### SCENE

A luxurious dressing room adjoining the Emperor's Bedroom.

### TIME

*This morning. The Emperor is discovered standing before a Cheval Glass. He is dressed in what is known as "Athletic Underwear," with plain black socks, upheld by Boston Garters.*

EMPEROR: It is not often that one sees

An Emperor in B. V. D.'s.

*A knock is heard on the door.*

EMPEROR: Herein!

*A high officer enters with a telegram.*

A wire?

AN IMPERIAL SNEEZE—[Continued]



OFFICER: Yes, Sire, a wire!

EMPEROR: *Tears open envelope.*

You may retire.

*Reads*

Von Hindenburg has wired to say  
Our noble troops have won the day  
Captured a Russian Samovar  
And several tons of caviar  
Vodka a fabulous amount  
And Droskys more than we can count  
The greatest battle of the war,

[ 46 ]

AN IMPERIAL SNEEZE—[Continued]

Won by the Fourteenth Army Corps  
All honour to the Lord therefore,  
Likewise the Fourteenth Army Corps.

CHORUS OF OFFICERS:

All honour to the Lord therefore,  
Not to speak of the Fourteenth Army Corps.

EMPEROR:

The Lord Be Praised! This cheering news  
Will cure my cold and banish my blues.  
I haven't felt anything like so well  
Since my gallant Navy with shot and shell  
Bombarded the Scarborough Infant School  
And the Orphan Asylum at Hartlepool.

CHORUS OF OFFICERS:

He hasn't felt anything like so well  
Since the Babes were bombarded with shot  
and shell.



## The Laughing Willow

---

AN IMPERIAL SNEEZE—[Continued]

EMPEROR:

Enough! Enough! Less cheering please  
With my nervous system it disagrees.  
Alas! My joy  
Is not without alloy.

*Looks at telegram sadly.*

Oh wretched me! On this glorious day  
When I should have been in the thick of the  
fray  
I lay in bed  
With a cold in my head:  
Hot water bottles, Quinine and Squills  
Mustard Plasters, and Camphor Pills.  
And when they tell of this victory  
They do not so much as mention ME!  
While peans of praise and plaudits pour  
On the Lord—and the Fourteenth Army  
Corps! .

*Weeps.*

*Enter chorus of Highborn Lady Nurses bearing clinical thermometers.*

FIRST NURSE:

Oh Sire we entreat!

SECOND NURSE:

This is most indiscreet!

[ 48 ]



## The Laughing Willow

---

AN IMPERIAL SNEEZE—[Continued]

THIRD NURSE:

A temperature we dread—

FOURTH NURSE:

Oh *please* go back to bed—

FIRST NURSE:

Please do as you are told,

You have an awful cold.

EMPEROR: *Furious.*

A cold!!

NURSE:

I meant to say

Broncho-Pneumonia.

EMPEROR:

Mine was no common plebeian ill,

'Twas a Pneumo-Psycho-Bronchial chill

According to my medical adviser

I caught it when I walked upon the Yser.

NURSE:

You walked!

EMPEROR:

I should have said I tried—

You see it was high tide

And I was much annoyed

To find the bridge destroyed.

But never at a loss

I tried to walk across.

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

AN IMPERIAL SNEEZE—[*Continued*]

*Angrily*

But by the Eternal One

I swear it can't be done

And never was——

*Stops suddenly and makes as if about to sneeze.*

*Nurses regard him apprehensively.*

*Emperor sneezes.*

FIRST NURSE:

Ach! Himmel! what a sneeze!

SECOND NURSE:

Oh Sire! Please!——

THIRD NURSE:

Oh please!

FOURTH NURSE:

Your cold's gone to your head!

ALL TOGETHER:

You MUST go back to bed!

*They seize the Emperor and pull him, struggling,  
through the door leading to the bedroom.*

EMPEROR:

Nein! Nein! Unhand me, wench!

My place is in the trenches.

*Enter High Officer.*

[ 50 ]

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

AN IMPERIAL SNEEZE—[*Continued*]

HIGH OFFICER: *Looks about him cautiously.*

'Tis an ill wind they say  
That profits nobody,  
And this Imperial sneeze  
May bring us victories,  
With Him in bed there'll be  
Some chance for strategy.  
If on the other hand————

EMPEROR: *Heard off stage*

What ho! My horse!

*The Emperor enters*

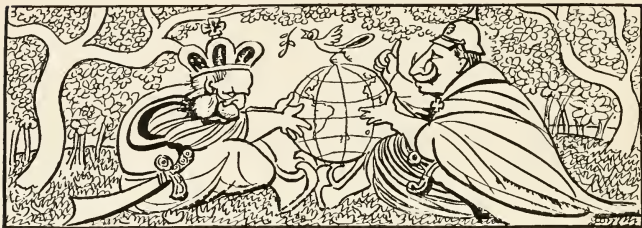
HIGH OFFICER: *Anxiously*

You go?

EMPEROR: *Haughtily*

Of course!

CURTAIN



THE RUBAIYAT OF BILLI KAISAM

Surnamed the Tentbreaker

I

AH, Franz! Could you and I with Gott conspire  
To grab this sorry little globe entire,  
Would we not shatter it to bits, and then  
Remould it nearer to our heart's desire?

II

You all know how, the world to overwhelm  
I made a second Sparta of my realm  
And "dropped the Pilot" from my ship of State  
To lay my own mailed fist upon the helm.

[ 52 ]

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

THE RUBAIYAT OF BILLI KAISAM—[*Continued*]

III

AND how myself did eagerly frequent  
Councils of war and heard great argument  
About it and about, and every year  
Came out with great and greater armament.

IV

For though in ME and MINE I set great store  
And THEE and THINE are terms that I abhor,  
Of all that one should care to fathom, I  
Was never deep in anything but—war.

V

Bernhardi, Nietzsche, Treitschke, who discussed  
Of the "Next War," so wisely, they are thrust  
Like foolish prophets forth, their words to scorn  
Are scattered and their mouths are stopped with  
dust.

VI

With them the seed of warfare did I sow,  
And with mine own hand wrought to make it  
grow.

THE RUBAIYAT OF BILLI KAISAM—[*Continued*]

And this is all the Harvest I have reaped:  
“I came like thunder—and like wind I go!”

VII

And lately from Hell's Cavern Door rose up  
A shape Titanic, ravening to sup  
On Living Human Fodder, and he bade  
Me give him taste of it; and 'twas—The Krupp.

VIII

The Krupp that can with Logic absolute  
The plans of modern Strategists confute  
The steel iconoclast that in a trice  
The strongest Fortress into Dust transmute.

IX

The Krupp no question makes of Aye and No,  
But strikes alike Cathedral or Château  
And I who send it out into the Field—  
I know about it all—I know—I know!

X

And much as War has made an infidel  
Of me, and robbed me of my honour, well

I often wonder what the Devil has  
One half so devilish as I—In Hell!

XI

Ah, but *my* innovations people say  
Placed war upon a sounder basis? Nay,  
’Twas only striking from War’s lexicon  
The terms TRUTH, HONOUR, DECENCY, FAIR PLAY.

XII

The Treaties that I set my seal upon  
Are turned to dust and ashes, which anon  
Like snowflakes falling in a muddy street  
Lighting a little hour or two are gone.

XIII

What if my sword can fling the Sheath aside  
And naked plunge into the crimson tide,  
Were’t not a shame, were’t not a shame for me,  
By a “mere scrap of paper” to abide?

XIV

Indeed, indeed, continually I swore  
For Peace—but was I solemn when I swore?

## *The Laughing Willow*

THE RUBAIYAT OF BILLI KAISAM—[Continued]

And then—then came the Day and sword in  
hand  
My threadbare piety apieces tore.  
\* \* \*

### XV

From Europe's centre, through the Belgian gate  
I rode and at the Door of Paris sate.

And many a city ravished by the road,  
But Paris—she is still immaculate.

### XVI

Here was the Gate to which I found no key;  
Here was the Wall o'er which I might not see.  
Some little talk awhile of strategy  
There was, and then—good afternoon, Paree!





WAR RELIEF



“CAN you spare a Threepenny bit,  
Dear Miss Turkey,” said Sir Mouse,  
“For Job’s Turkey’s benefit?  
I’ve engaged the Opera House!”

“Alas! I’ve naught to spare!”  
Said Miss Turkey, “save advice,  
I am getting up a Fair,  
To relieve the Poor Church Mice.”

SUMMER MASS

IN the cloisters of the grass,  
Lit by buttercups and daisies,  
Celebrants of summer mass,  
Little creatures sing their praises.  
From a myriad throbbing throats  
Rises up their song of Love,  
Like a mist of golden motes,  
To the Golden Throne above.  
And the good Lord, bending nigh,  
Quite forgets his house of stone  
Where the frightened sinners cry,  
And the frowning priests intone,  
And the saints (if saints they be)  
Smile and smile in effigy.

ABOUT PEOPLE I HAVE MET



## ABOUT PEOPLE I HAVE MET

J. M. BARRIE

*A Round Robin from His Humble and Devoted Servants the  
Alphabet*

THE Lord forgive if we transgress  
Thus to familiarly address  
One of our betters.  
But, Jamie, do you no recall  
The slate whereon you learned to scrawl  
Your Humble Letters?

Well we remember how you drew  
Our shapely features all askew,  
Unflattering really.  
You made A lame and B too fat.  
And C too curly—what of that!  
We loved you dearly.

From that first day we owned your spell.  
And just because you used us well  
    We served you blindly.  
Why, even when you put us through  
A fearsome Scottish reel, we knew  
    You meant it kindly.


J. M. BARRIE—[*Continued*]


Jamie, 'tis said Grand Tales there be  
Still biding in the A B C—


    If this be true,  
Quick, Jamie! Cast your golden net.  
Maybe we have the grandest yet  
    In store for you.




THE HORSE

 THE Horse, I don't mind telling you,

Is not an easy thing to do. 

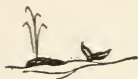
 With Cats and Lions, I confess,

I've had a measure of success; 


 Likewise with Camels, Mice and Snails

And Frogs and Butterflies and Whales. 


THE HORSE—[Continued]





Eels and Rhinoc'ruses and Ants

And Porcupines and Elephants 

 And Bees and Yaks and Owls. But when

I try to draw a Horse, my pen 

 Sputters and scares the high-strung steed,

Who gallops off at such a speed 



You have to take the beast on trust—

You can not see him for the dust.





THE TOWN CAT

THE melancholy days are come,  
The saddest of the year;  
Of houses closed and doorbells dumb  
And windows dark and drear.



Now Dives to his country seat  
Has hied himself away,  
And Tabby turned into the street  
Must shift as best she may.

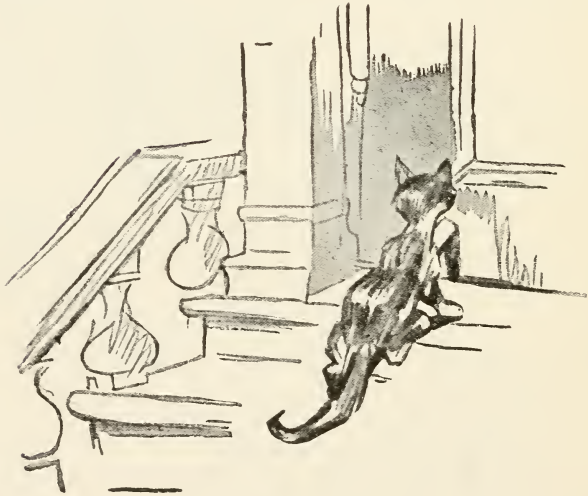
## The Laughing Willow

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THE TOWN CAT—[Continued]

No more the cushion soft as silk,  
The catnip ball no more;  
No more the saucer full of milk  
Behind the pantry door.

Nor shall she in the temple prey  
Upon the lean church mouse;  
The good Lord, too, has gone away  
And closed his city house.



*The Laughing Willow*

---

THE TOWN CAT—[*Continued*]

When Dives hies him back once more  
To his town house, oh, shame!  
Tabby will greet him at the door,  
But not—no, not the same.

TOWSER

My hair hangs down on either side  
Like a Niagara small.

Why is it this, my greatest pride,  
Should bring about my fall?



Why is it that my well brushed hair,  
That now so smoothly lies,  
As soon as I descend the stair  
*Always* gets in my eyes?

## The Laughing Willow

---

TOWSER—[Continued]

No wonder, thus deprived of sight,  
I step on empty air  
And to the bottom of the flight  
Rebound from stair to stair.

I'm not the sort of dog that cares  
To make a fuss when hit;  
But falling down a flight of stairs  
Is not the worst of it.



As there I lie completely out  
Of breath and very flat,  
Why is it *always* some one stout  
That takes me for a mat?

THE OYSTER

IN Autumn, when the leaves are dead,  
They take us from our Oyster-bed,  
And all the winter long they keep  
Us up, without a wink of sleep—



And doesn't it seem hard to you  
When Spring is here, and skies are blue,  
And we should like so much to stay,  
We have to be in bed by MAY?

THE MOUSE

*A Study in Egotisms*

*Scene: A drawing-room.*

*Persons: Clarissa, the Mouse, Purrline.*

CLARISSA: Help! Help! A Mouse!

MOUSE: Don't be alarmed! *I'm* here!  
I hurried when I heard you scream—

CLARISSA: Oh, dear!  
If it jumps up at me I shall expire!

MOUSE: If I may be permitted to enquire,  
Why are you standing there in such a fright,  
Upon a chair, clutching your frock so tight  
About your—

CLARISSA: Help! Oh dear! I wonder what  
That girl's about! Good heavens! I forgot  
It's Jane's day out. There's no one in the house  
But me—

MOUSE: Fair lady! I am but a Mouse,  
A simple Mouse, but underneath this fur  
There beats a heart whose motto is *Sans Purr*.  
To see a lovely female in distress  
Rouses in me the spirit of *Noblesse*.

*The Laughing Willow*

---

THE MOUSE—[*Continued*]

To her protection instantly I fly.  
No common *Mus Domesticus* am I!  
You may have heard—

CLARISSA:                               If only Jane were here!  
What *shall* I do?

MOUSE:                                    Dear lady, have no fear!  
As I was saying, doubtless you've heard tell  
How once a Mountain bore a Mouse-child.  
Well,  
I was that Child! Or rather, to be more  
Strictly veracious, 'twas my Ancestor;  
And sometimes when I dream of deeds Titanic  
I think that Mountain must have been Volcanic!  
So have no fear! If any one should dare  
Molest you, I am here beneath your chair,  
Ready to spring—

CLARISSA:                                Mercy! I wonder why  
It squeaks like that! It's crazy! I shall die  
If it—

MOUSE:                                   Sweet lady! Though I cannot guess  
From your queer speech the cause of your dis-  
tress,  
Your voice, quite meaningless to my Mouse ear,  
Is strangely sweet and musical and clear;  
And, though they violate our beauty-laws,  
I never saw such shapely hinder paws

[ 72 ]



## The Laughing Willow

---

THE MOUSE—[Continued]

As yours, so smooth and beautiful to see,  
So silky white, like sticks of celery.  
Upon each side a tender sprig of gold—  
Gold as pure Cheese, and toothsome to behold—  
Climbs up and up! 'Tis called, so I am told  
By Mice more versed in lady-lore, a Clock.  
Once, it is said, a Mouse named Dickery Dock  
Ran up the—

CLARISSA: Ouch!!!

MOUSE: I wonder if I dare!  
Only the brave deserve—

CLARISSA: O Lord! This chair  
Is giving way! If it should break!—What's  
that?

It's Purrline's mew! Here, Puss! Puss!—

MOUSE: What? The Cat!  
I'd *love* to meet him! But it's getting late.  
My wife's expecting me. I musn't wait!

(Exit)

PURRLINE: Me-ouw!

CLARISSA: And is that *all* you've got to say?  
Did you expect the Mouse to wait all day?  
For all *you* care, I might have died of fright!  
My! But I'm glad it got away all right!

CURTAIN



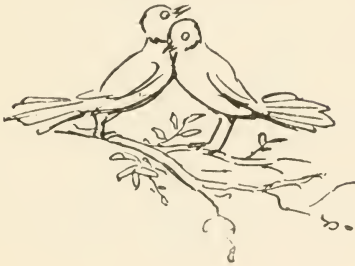
PEOPLE I HAVE NOT MET



PEOPLE I HAVE NOT MET

THE TURTLE

I NEVER wasted any love  
On turtles, but the turtle-dove  
    Is quite another thing;  
When I have nothing else to do,  
I love to hear them bill and coo  
    While mating in the spring.



There's something in their plaintive note  
That brings a lump into my throat  
    And makes my pulses stir;  
Something between a smothered sn  
And the shrill creaking of a door,  
    That soothes me, as it were.

## The Laughing Willow

---

THE TURTLE—[Continued]



How strange is Nature's alchemy,  
To think that living in the sea  
Should change a creature so!  
The turtle of the finny kind  
That swims the sea, is to my mind  
The lowest of the low.



And yet, O inconsistency!  
Although the turtle is to me  
A most obnoxious beast,  
When on a menu card I spy  
"Green Turtle, Soup," though it comes high,  
I take two plates at least!

[ 78 ]

MICHAEL O'LEARY

WHEN forming one of a storming party which advanced against an enemy's barricade, O'Leary rushed to the front and himself killed five Germans who were holding the first barricade, after which he attacked the second barricade, about sixty yards further on, which he captured after killing three of the enemy and making prisoners of two more.

You may talk of the Rebels of Ulster  
And the shindy we had to chuck;  
But we don't give a rap for a family scrap  
Whin the Prooshuns is running amuck.

Did you hear how Lance Corporal O'Leary,  
Mike O'Leary of the Guards,  
Wid his own two mits, tore a forthress to bits  
Like a blisshed conthrapion of cards.

He'd a shmile, had Mike, that 'ud span a dyke,  
And a fist that 'ud fell a horse,  
And he ripped through the mire of blood and  
barbed wire,  
Like a bull through a bunch of gorse.

## The Laughing Willow

---

MICHAEL O'LEARY—[Continued]



Whin he waded in, sure 'twas a sin,  
The way that he bashed and bruk 'em;  
He dropped on thim Huns like forty tons,  
And they niver knew what had struck 'em.

“Poor dears,” says Mike, “I’m thinking belike  
All the news they’ve been told is lies,  
So it’s up to me, ’ere it’s kilt they be,  
To put the poor divils wise.

“Thim Huns, I’m told, while outrageous bold  
Is over a trifle dull.  
Sure, if that’s a fact, ’tis a friendly act  
To hammer it through their skull.

[ 80 ]



## *The Laughing Willow*

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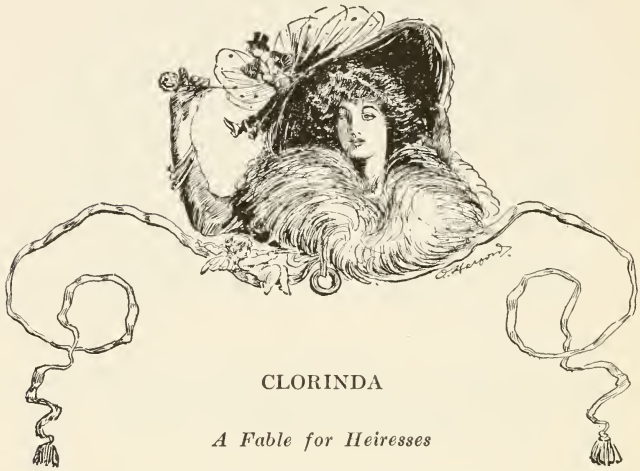
MICHAEL O'LEARY—[*Continued*]

“So here’s for insulting old Erin,  
By thinking a traitor she’d be!  
And here’s for your Imperor sneerin’!  
‘Contemptible army,’ says he.

“Here’s one for the mothers whose pleadin’  
You stopped with a shot and a curse,  
And one for the girls dead and bleedin’  
And the girls that you spared—for worse.

“For the churches you shelled and the priests  
you felled  
Here’s one! And the women, too,  
You held for a shield on the battle field,  
And the innocent babes you slew.”

Whin O’Leary had done, there was divil a one  
Left to tumble to what he said—  
Barrin’ only ten, which I’m wrong again,  
For eight av the ten was dead.



CLORINDA

*A Fable for Heiresses*

ABOVE the plate-glass window-pane,  
Inviting every passing gaze,  
Hung an inscription, large and plain,  
"THE HUSBAND SHOP." This, in amaze,  
Clorinda seeing, stopped wide-eyed,  
And stared, then turned and stepped inside.

A floor-walker whose faultlessness  
And condescending air proclaimed  
One of the *table d'haute noblesse*,

CLORINDA—[*Continued*]

Approached Clorinda and exclaimed,  
With graceful undulating palm:  
“Something in husbands? *Oui, Madame.*”

“We have the latest thing of all  
In husbands; kindly step this way.  
We’re using them on hats this fall,  
In place of plume or floral spray,  
The creature being pinned or tied  
With chiffon bows on either side.”

He leads the way, all wreathed in smiles,  
And wonderful in spotless spats  
That flutter like twin butterflies  
Along an avenue of hats,  
Each one displaying on its brim  
A husband—fashion’s latest whim.

Clorinda tries them each in turn  
Before the glass; some are too small,  
And some too cold, and some too stern,  
And some are slightly soiled, and all,  
When punctured by the hat-pin’s steel,  
Betray by squirms how bored they feel.

*The Laughing Willow*

---

CLORINDA—[*Continued*]

At last Clorinda came to one  
Marked "*Dibbs*," that scarce seemed worth her  
while;

But when she tried it on for fun,  
It met the hat-pin with a smile,  
As if to say, "Oh, beauteous miss,  
Even a stab from you is bliss!"

"The very thing! but thrown away  
Upon a *hat*!" Clorinda cried.  
"'T would make a sweet corsage bouquet."  
The shoppers stared electrified,  
To see Clorinda Dibbs depart  
Wearing a husband next her heart.

ALCIBIADES J. SKINNER

ALCIBIADES J. SKINNER

Was a famous after-dinner  
    Speaker. Great the way  
He secured, just by excelling  
In the art of Story Telling,  
    One good meal a day.

Chestnuts more than often passé  
He exchanged for Marrons Glacés,  
    Canvasback and Quail.  
Flat the feast and dull the dinner  
Lacking that accomplished Spinner  
    Of Postprandial Tale.

Every mail brought invitations:  
Teas and luncheons and collations,  
    Dinners without end.  
No one to a Formal Function  
Such impressiveness, such unction,  
    Such éclat could lend.

## The Laughing Willows

---

ALCIBIADES J. SKINNER—[Continued]

At that gruesomest of gruesome  
Rites, The Banquet tendered to some  
Literary Light,  
None could say with such conviction,  
"We have Snooks of *Snappy Fiction*  
In our midst To-night."

How he said it made no matter;  
Shaft of Wit or Broadway Patter  
Meets with like acclaim.  
Latest Mot or Jest Historic,  
To the dinner guest plethoric  
It is all the same.

When he said, "This moment finds me  
Unprepared," or, "That reminds me,"  
There would be a hum  
Of expectance, or a rippling  
As though Daniel (or Kipling)  
Had to Judgment come.

Alas for Fame! As A. J. Skinner  
Put it at the Author's Dinner,  
"Fame's a fickle Jade!"  
Had he then an intimation  
That his own wide reputation  
Was ere long to fade?

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

ALCIBIADES J. SKINNER—[*Continued*]

From that day his after-dinner  
Stories thinner grew and thinner.

Sorry was his case.

Rare the dinner invitation,  
Rarer still the lunch—Starvation  
Stared him in the face.

One day as his eye was wandering  
O'er a map, he fell to pondering:  
"If I cross the Main,  
Somewhere 'twixt the Poles and Tropics  
I may find some brand new Topics  
For my food campaign!"

So one Friday A. J. Skinner  
Bought a passage and an "Inner"  
On a sailing ship;  
Not for sport or relaxation,  
Not for rest or recreation—  
'Twas a business trip.

Fatal trip, had he but known it!  
Or a Fortune Teller shown it  
Written on his palm!—  
How one morning bright and sunny,  
With a breeze as soft as honey,  
And a sea as calm—

*The Laughing Willow*

---

ALCIBIADES J. SKINNER—[*Continued*]

Somewhere in the South Pacific  
There would spring up a terrific  
Tropical typhoon—  
Smite their helpless ship and bear it  
On a mountain wave and tear it  
Like a Toy Balloon.

Luckily for Mr. Skinner,  
When she sank he was not in her.  
Clinging to a Spar,  
Being, too, an expert swimmer,  
Soon he saw the breakers' glimmer  
On a sandy bar.

Lucky, did I say? Appalling  
Choice of words! Would you when crawling  
Up a Sandbank gritty,  
On firm land a foothold winning,  
Call it luck to meet a grinning  
Cannibal Committee?

Well, to make a long narration  
Shorter (by abbreviation),  
Soon as he was sighted  
Alcibiades J. Skinner  
To a most select Shore Dinner  
Was at once invited.



*The Laughing Willow*

---

ALCIBIADES J. SKINNER—[*Continued*]

Never had the South Pacific  
Witnessed such a beatific  
    Banquet as was here.  
Never was such mirth unbounded  
As when that far beach resounded  
    With unwonted cheer.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

Epicures on South Sea beaches  
Waste no time on Toasts and Speeches;  
    Happy dreams had they.  
In their midst was A. J. Skinner,  
Most nutritious After-Dinner  
    Speaker of his day.

EVE

*Apropos de Rien*

It is not fair to visit all  
The blame on Eve, for Adam's fall;  
The most Eve did was to display  
Contributory negligé.



THE Highbrow Hen

Said Farmer Dole to his speckled hen,  
"Why don't you lay for me now and then?"  
Said the speckled hen to Farmer Dole,  
"Because I've taken up birth control."

SIR IPPYKIN

GRIM Giant Graft sate in his cavern dim;  
A king's reward was offered for him dead.  
He scowled to think it could not come to him,  
That price upon his head.

Of all his foes he dreaded only one,  
A knight of stalwart heart and spotless fame,  
Who feared no creature underneath the sun—  
Sir Ippykin his name.

One night to Ippykin there came a thought—  
A mocking thought, that whispered in his ear:  
“Ah, ha, Sir Knight! men say thou fearest naught;  
They lie—thou fearest Fear!

Fear smites you when you read the king's decree  
That whatsoever knight shall rid the land  
Of Giant Graft will gain a golden fee,  
Likewise his daughter's hand,

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

SIR IPPYKIN—[*Continued*]

You fear to win, for fear that you must wed  
The princess—for you love another maid;  
You dare not lose the fight because you dread  
Lest men call you afraid.”

Cried Ippykin, “Lord, how shall I cut through  
This tangled coil?” Then of a sudden laughed  
A gleeful laugh, and rose and hied him to  
The cave of Giant Graft.

No chronicler was present to reveal  
What passed between the knight and Giant  
Graft;  
Or what the bargain was the which to seal  
So many horns they quaffed.

But this is sure—thereafter from the lands  
Of Ippykin once every week would stray  
Certain fat sheep into the Giant’s hands  
In some mysterious way;

And once a week the giant and the knight  
Would chase each other round in seeming strife,  
Until the king grew weary of the sight,  
And pensioned both for life.

*The Laughing Willow*

---

SIR IPPYKIN—[*Continued*]

Then Ippykin and his true love were wed  
And both lived happy till they passed away;  
But Giant Graft, fat, flagrant, and well fed,  
Is living to this day.

THE PSYCHOLOGY COP

THE New York Police Force is to be instructed in psychology.—*News Item.*

ONE morn, as Robert Ristwatch Rice  
Sped *Childsward* for his midday meal,  
Upon his shoulder, like a vise,  
He felt a grip of steel.

And in his ear a voice there hissed  
(With spirits fraught, and crime),  
And something snapped around his wrist  
That did not tell the time.

“I’ve pinched yer now!” (devoid of tact  
Was Sergeant Fay). “For shame!  
Yer Hun! I caught yer in the act  
Insultin’ that there dame!”

“That skirt there in the showy lid,  
And muff of classy fur.”  
“My word!” cried Robert Rice, “I did  
Not even speak to her.”

*The Laughing Willow*

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THE PSYCHOLOGY COP—[*Continued*]

“What’s words to me, just froth and foam!

I’m a psycholic guy—

I lamp yer thoughts inside yer dome

With my subconscious eye!”

“Then you should know,” said Rice, “I’m a

MISOGYNIST!”—“By Gee!

That settles you!” cried Sergeant Fay;

“You come along with me.”





PHYLLIS LEE

BESIDE a Primrose 'broider'd Rill  
Sat Phyllis Lee in Silken Dress  
Whilst Lucius limn'd with loving skill  
Her likeness, as a Shepherdess.  
Yet tho' he strove with loving skill  
His Brush refused to work his Will.

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

PHYLLIS LEE—[*Continued*]

“Dear Maid, unless you close your Eyes  
I can not paint to-day,” he said;  
“Their Brightness shames the very Skies  
And turns their Turquoise into Lead.”  
Quoth Phyllis, then, “To save the Skies  
And speed your Brush, I’ll shut my Eyes.”

Now when her Eyes were closed, the Dear,  
Not dreaming of such Treachery,  
Felt a Soft Whisper in her Ear,  
“Without the Light, how can one See?”  
“If you are *sure* that none can see  
I’ll keep them shut,” said Phyllis Lee.

MRS. SEYMOUR FENTOLIN

IT was Mrs. Seymour Fentolin who stood there, a little dog under each arm; a large hat, gay with flowers, upon her head. She wore patent shoes with high heels, and white silk stockings. She had, indeed, the air of being dressed for luncheon at a fashionable restaurant.

From a story in *The Popular Magazine*.

THE lauded lilies of the field  
Who toil not—neither do they spin,  
The palm sartorial must yield  
To Mrs. Seymour Fentolin.



A hat, French heels, white stockings,  
dogs!  
Not even Solomon could win  
The championship for showy togs  
From Mrs. Seymour Fentolin.

The two extremes in décolleté,  
Of ballroom and of bathing beach,  
Here meet in a bewildering way  
And mingle all the charms of each.

*The Laughing Willow*

---

MRS. SEYMOUR FENTOLIN—[*Continued*]

I am no social butter-in,  
I do not crave to meet her bunch,  
But where does Mrs. Fentolin,  
If one might venture—take her lunch?

And might one ask that peerless dame,  
Without appearing impolite,  
Is *Seymour* really her first name,  
And has the printer spelt it right?

THE DEVIL AMONG THE LADIES

I

THE Devil seeking some new way  
To kill eternity, one day  
    (So bored he was, in Hades)  
Flew to Manhattan Isle to start  
A Summer School to teach the art  
    Of Smuggling to Ladies.

II

He opened in an uptown street  
A Modiste's shop refined and neat  
    (The number doesn't matter),  
Displaying in his window all  
The Modes—Spring, Summer, Winter,  
    Fall  
    (Especially the latter).

III

The Ladies came in eager flocks,  
And as he showed his Paris frocks,  
    With dext'rous verbal juggling,  
He lightly led the talk from Modes  
To Customs—and the law that goads  
    An honest girl to smuggling.



## *The Laughing Willow*

---

THE DEVIL AMONG THE LADIES—[Continued]

### IV

“If Uncle Sam for Revenue,  
Dear Ladies, picks your pockets, you  
The compliment should bandy.  
Pray let me teach you how to pick  
The spangled pockets of that slick  
Avuncular old Dandy.



### V

“We can begin at once, if you  
Will step this way.” The giddy crew  
Flocked after him like chickens

[ 102 ]

## The Laughing Willows

THE DEVIL AMONG THE LADIES—[Continued]

To where an effigy there hung  
Of Uncle Sam with bells be-strung  
Like Fagin's doll in Dickens.

VI

The Devil then with money fills  
The dummy's pockets—gold and bills  
And silver pieces mingling.  
“Now try your skill! all you can take  
Is yours, my dears, if you don't shake  
The bells and set them jingling.”



VII

The news flew round, and soon the crush  
Was like a bargain-counter rush  
Of Frantic Ladies struggling;

[ 103 ]

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

THE DEVIL AMONG THE LADIES—[*Continued*]

And soon the Devil was about  
A hundred thousand dollars out  
And closed his School of Smuggling.

### VIII

Exclaiming, "I'm behind the age!"  
He kicked the dummy in his rage.  
"What's this—the bells don't jingle!"  
And sure enough the bells were dumb.  
Deftly inserted chewing gum  
Had stopped their tingle-tingle.

### IX

"Ho! ho!" he laughed, "'tis plain to see  
New York is too advanced for me.  
I should have stayed in Hades;  
For who the devil, pray, am I  
In this enlightened age to try  
My wit against the Ladies!"



## *The Laughing Willow*

---

### SPRING

By his cold hearth, sans Youth, sans Mirth,  
Sits poor old shivering Daddy Earth.



A knock, a footstep on the floor.  
“Come in!” he growls—“and *shut that door!*”

## The Laughing Willow

---

SPRING—[Continued]

Two soft hands on his eyelids press;  
A laughing voice: "Who am I?—guess!"  
" 'Tis Mistress Spring! Alas, my dear,  
You find me sadly changed, I fear."



Ellerford

"Cheer up!" cried Spring, "I bring for you  
The Spell of Youth: Gold—Silver—Blue."

[ 106 ]

*The Laughing Willow*

---

SPRING—[*Continued*]

Sun gold, sky turquoise, silver rain,  
And Daddy Earth was young again!

He danced, he sang: "Hail Spring divine!  
Ethereal Spring—h'm—*wine?*—*pinc*—*shine?*"

Too late the rhyme popped in his head;  
"Be *mine!*" he sang—but Spring had fled.

THE CATFISH

THE saddest fish that swims the briny ocean,  
The Catfish I bewail.  
I can not even think without emotion  
Of his distressful tail.  
When with my pencil once I tried to draw one,  
(I dare not show it here)  
Mayhap it is because I never saw one,  
The picture looked so queer.  
I vision him half feline and half fisny,  
A paradox in twins,  
Unmixable as vitriol and vichy—  
A thing of fur and fins.  
A feline Tantalus, forever chasing  
His fishy self to rend;  
His finny self forever self-effacing  
In circles without end.  
This tale may have a Moral running through it  
As Æsop had in his;  
If so, dear reader, you are welcome to it,  
If you know what it is!

THE PRODIGAL CENTIPEDE

ONCE to a Centipede a Snail  
Remarked, "I wonder why you trail  
Along the ground with such a lot  
of feet—a hundred, is it not?  
A hundred feet! when two or three  
Are all you need. Just look at me!



The speed and ease with which I crawl,  
And yet I have no feet at all!  
In these days would it not be wise  
For you to—well, to *Hooperize*?  
You surely don't need more than two  
To get along! If I were you,  
I'd use one pair and stand up straight,  
And save the other ninety-eight  
Against a rainy day."

## The Laughing Willow

THE PRODIGAL CENTIPEDE—[Continued]

“Indeed  
You’re right!” replied the Centipede.  
“I’ve often thought, to do my part,  
’Twould be advisable to start  
A Feetless Day—but then, you see,  
If I stood upright I should be  
A hundred feet in height, and I  
Might bump my head against the sky!”  
“Well,” said the Snail, “I must admit  
That puts a different face on it!  
Your life depends on lying flat!  
Dear! Dear! I hadn’t thought of that!”



## *The Laughing Willow*

---

### A BALLADE OF BLACK SOCKS

PLAIN Black socks can never be wrong.

—*The Gentleman of Letters*  
in "*Vanity Fair*."

LORDS of Fashion may disagree

On the question of questions, what to wear

At *déjeuner*, dinner, dance or tea,

"Feed informal" or "Smart affair."

Let not the neophyte despair

Dreading disdain of the gilded throng

Hark to the dictum of Vanity Fair

"Plain Black Socks can never be wrong."

Let scribes sartorial decree

Whether the "skirt" shall be full or spare,

Whether the crease be above the knee,

Whether the seam shall be here or there.

Of the openwork sock with the clock beware!

On Fancy's rein let your curb be strong!

Hark to the dictum of Vanity Fair,

"Plain Black Socks can never be wrong."

*The Laughing Willow*

---

A BALLADE OF BLACK SOCKS—[Continued]

Doubting dolts may be all at sea

Tossed on tempestuous waves of care.

Are they wearing two studs?—or one?—or three?

Will a satin tie cause a well bred stare?

Leave dressy deeds to dudes that dare!

Heed not the scented siren's song

Hark to the dictum of Vanity Fair,

“Plain Black Socks can never be wrong.”

L'envoi

Princes of Fashion, wherever ye fare—

London, Paris, New York, Hong Kong,

Hark to the dictum of Vanity Fair:

“Plain Black Socks can never be wrong.”



OTHER PEOPLE INCLUDING  
MARK TWAIN



OTHER PEOPLE INCLUDING MARK TWAIN



*Horace*

THE GENTLEMAN OF LETTERS

“How splendid to have men’s attire treated by a gentleman and litterateur.—*John Armstrong Chaloner.*”

AH me! Had Horace when his muse was flagging,  
But given laughing Lalage a rest,  
And kept Mæcenas’ pantaloons from bagging,  
(Whatever ’twas he wore below his vest.)

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

THE GENTLEMAN OF LETTERS—[*Continued*]



If when his frisky Pegasus he mounted,  
He'd sung, instead of the eternal HER  
The stylish HIM, he might have been accounted  
A gentleman as well as litterateur.

If Shakespeare had abstained from malty liquors,  
And spent the time (when not purloining plays)  
In pressing Francis Bacon's velvet knickers  
He might thereby have gained a social raise.

If Tommy Moore when not devoutly pressing  
His suit in amorous rhyme, had pressed instead  
His patrons lordly "pants," it is past guessing  
What titles had been showered on his head.

*The Laughing Willow*

---

THE GENTLEMAN OF LETTERS—[*Continued*]

Had Bobby Burns renounced his Highland lassies,  
And tuned his pipes to "Gentlemen's attire,"  
He might in time have risen from the masses  
And been addressed as Robert Burns, Esquire.

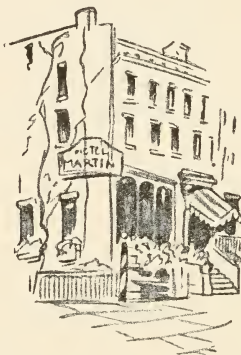
If Hall Caine—.....  
.....  
.....  
.....but why drag in Hall Caine?

Come, Chaloner, confess like a good feller  
By "Gentleman and litterateur" you meant  
The literary style of the Best Seller  
And the strictly pure refinement of the Gent.

THE WOMEN OF THE BETTER CLASS

“THE artists and writers were the first Americans to make themselves at home in this amusing Parisian resort. (*The Old Café Martin.*) And it was here, too, that women of the better class first tasted the delights of café life. It was considered quite a daring thing in the late eighties for be-cloaked and be-diamonded women of Fifth Avenue to sit here and sip their after-dinner coffee.”

*Vanity Fair.*



ONE of those queer, artistic dives,  
Where funny people had their fling.  
Artists, and writers, and their wives—  
Poets, and all that sort of thing.

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

### THE WOMEN OF THE BETTER CLASS—[*Continued*]

Here, too, to view the vulgar herd  
And sip the daring demi-tasse—  
Be-cloaked, be-diamonded, be-furred—  
Came women of the better class.

With its Parisian atmosphere,  
It had a Latin Quarter ring.  
Painters and journalists came here—  
Actors, and all that sort of thing.  
Here, too, to watch the Great Ungroomed  
And sip the dangerous demi-tasse,  
Be-furred, be-feathered and be-plumed,  
Came women of the better class.

Here Howells dined—Saint Gaudens, Nast,  
Kipling, Mark Twain and Peter Dunne,  
Nell Terry, and not least though last  
One Robert Louis Stevenson.  
And mingling with that underworld,  
To sip the devilish demi-tasse,  
Be-cloaked, be-diamonded, be-pearled,  
Came women of the better class.

Like geese to see the lions fed,  
They came—be-jewelled and be-laced,  
Only to find the lions fled.  
“My Word!” cried they, “What wretched taste!”

## The Laughing Willow

---

THE WOMEN OF THE BETTER CLASS—[Continued]

Ermined and minked and Persian-lambed,  
Be-puffed (be-painted, too, alas!)

Be-decked, be-diamonded—be-damned!

The women of the better class.





MARK TWAIN

*A Pipe Dream*

WELL I recall how first I met  
Mark Twain—an infant barely three  
Rolling a tiny cigarette  
While cooing on his nurse's knee.



## The Laughing Willow

---

MARK TWAIN—[Continued]

Since then in every sort of place  
I've met with Mark and heard him joke,  
Yet how can I describe his face?  
I never saw it for the smoke.



At school he won a *smokership*,  
At Harvard College (Cambridge, Mass.)  
His name was soon on every lip,  
They made him "smoker" of his class.

Who will forget his smoking bout  
With Mount Vesuvius—our cheers—  
When Mount Vesuvius went out  
And didn't smoke again for years?

[ 122 ]

## The Laughing Willow

---

MARK TWAIN—[Continued]

The news was flashed to England's King,  
Who begged Mark Twain to come and stay,  
Offered him dukedoms—anything  
To smoke the London fog away.

But Mark was firm. "I bow," said he,  
"To no imperial command,  
No ducal coronet for me,  
My smoke is for my native land!"



For Mark there waits a brighter crown!  
When Peter comes his card to read—  
He'll take the sign "No Smoking" down,  
Then Heaven will be Heaven indeed.

PRINCE POMPOM

BENEATH a Fruitful Apple Tree  
Sate Pompom, youth of high degree,  
And Prince of Apple-Tartary;  
While in the branches overhead  
The apples blushed with rapture red,  
As from a great book on his knees  
He read of the Hesperides,  
And how, to win the apples gold,  
One Hercules, a Hero bold,  
A hundred-headed Dragon slew.  
“How brave! How wonderful! How true!”  
Exclaimed the apples, flushed and red.  
“That proves what we have always said:  
We come of Ancient Pedigree!  
We’re of the Applestocracy!  
Our title cannot be denied.”  
Whereat they swelled and swelled with Pride  
Until their High and Mighty Air  
Was more than Apple Tree could bear.  
“Come!” cried the Tree, “you must vacate  
My boughs—they will not bear your weight!”

*The Laughing Willow*

---

PRINCE POMPOM—[*Continued*]

Pride goes before a fall.

Alas!

Next morning, prone upon the grass,  
Blushing for shame, the Apples lay,  
And when Queen Pompom passed that way  
She picked them up, and by and by  
She made them into Apple Pie.

THE SERIAL

*To the Tune of Tennyson*

*I burst upon the reader's eye  
With verbal trumpet blaring,  
Proclaiming me the latest cry  
In fictionary daring—  
Vital, compelling, hectic, rare,  
Heart-gripping, epoch-making!  
A woman's naked soul laid bare,  
A climax record-breaking!  
A quivering, pulsating plot,  
The mystery of a red room,  
A story to be read red hot  
In boudoir, bath or bedroom,  
An Eve, repentant, up to date,  
Confesses what her fall meant;  
You simply won't know how to wait  
Until the next installment.*

I come from heaven knows where—or when.  
My pedigree is shady.

My father was a Fountain Pen;

My mother, a Typelady,

[ 126 ]

## *The Laughing Willow*

---

THE SERIAL—[*Continued*]

Who smote the keys from morn till night  
With fingers swift and taper,  
Till I appeared, all clean and bright,  
On reams of foolscap paper.

And now in serial form I flow,  
And flout at style and diction,  
As like a babbling brook I go  
To join the Sea of Fiction.

Some streams, I know, more deeply flow,  
And some for speed endeavor.  
Short stories come, short stories go,  
But I'll go on forever.

I glitter like a foolish string  
Of pearls, with polish painful,  
With epigrams of doubtful ring  
And platitudes Hall-Caineful.

And many a mood and tense amiss,  
And metaphor amuddle,  
And here and there a clinging kiss,  
And here and there a cuddle—

## The Laughing Willow

---

THE SERIAL—[Continued]

And here and there a phrase in French,  
To give a touch linguisty;  
And here and there a Fisher wench,  
And here and there a Christy.

And here and there and everywhere  
My thin stream slowly trickles  
'Twixt *Bunk's Elixir for the Hair*  
And *Black and Crosswell's Pickles*.

And here a temperamental scene,  
Fervid, intense, Byronic—  
Tosses tempestuous between  
*Ayre's Soap* and *Tinkham's Tonic*.

A sprightly conversation's flow  
Is checked by *Soak and Stingham's*  
*Pink Pills*, to reappear below  
An ad for ladies' thingums.

The well-known slip 'twixt cup and lip  
Here, too, finds confirmation—  
"He raised his glass"—*Thy Anti-Grip!*  
*Beware of Imitations!*



## *The Laughing Willow*

---

THE SERIAL—[*Continued*]

—“Up to his lips; when on his wrist  
He felt a grip, steel-sinewed;  
The glass fell, and a hoarse voice nissed  
The words”—*To be Continued.*

### Editorial Note

*Some streams, we know, more deeply flow,  
And some for speed endeavor.  
Short stories come, short stories go,  
But this goes on forever.*

THE CLOUD

*An Idyll of the Western Front*

SCENE: *A wayside shrine in France.*

PERSONS: Celeste, Pierre, a Cloud.

CELESTE (*gazing at the solitary white Cloud*):

I wonder what your thoughts are, little Cloud,  
Up in the sky, so lonely and so proud!

CLOUD: Not proud, dear maiden; lonely, if you  
will.

Long have I watched you, sitting there so still  
Before that little shrine beside the way,  
And wondered where your thoughts might be  
astray;

Your knitting lying idle on your knees,  
And worse than idle—like Penelope's,  
Working its own undoing!

CELESTE (*picks up her knitting*): Who was she?

Saints! What a knot!—Who was Penelope?

What happened to *her* knitting? Tell me, Cloud!

CLOUD: She was a Queen; she wove her husband's  
shroud.

CELESTE (*drops the knitting*),

[ 130 ]

*The Laughing Willow*

---

THE CLOUD—[*Continued*]

His shroud!

CLOUD:               There, there! 'Twas only an excuse  
To put her lovers off, a wifely ruse,  
Bidding them bide till it was finished, she  
Each night the web unravelled secretly.

CELESTE: He came home safe?

CLOUD:                               If I remember right,  
It was the lovers needed shrouds that night!  
It is an old, old tale. I heard it through  
A Wind whose ancestor it was that blew  
Ulysses' ship across the purple sea  
Back to his people and Penelope.  
We Clouds pick up strange tales, as far and wide  
And to and fro above the world we ride,  
Across uncharted seas, upon the swell  
Of viewless waves and tides invisible,  
Freighted with friendly flood or forkèd flame,  
Knowing not whither bound nor whence we came;  
Now drifting lonely, now a company  
Of pond'rous galleons—

CELESTE:                               Oft-times I see  
A Cloud, as by some playful fancy stirred,  
Take likeness of a monstrous beast or bird  
Or some fantastic fish, as though 'twere clay  
Moulded by unseen hands.

CLOUD:                               Then tell me, pray,

*The Laughing Willow*

---

THE CLOUD—[*Continued*]

What I resemble now!

CELESTE: I scarcely know.

But had you asked a little while ago,  
I should have said a camel; then your hump  
Dissolved, and you became a gosling plump,  
Downy and white and warm—

CLOUD: What! *Warm*, up here?  
Ten thousand feet above the earth!

CELESTE: Oh dear!

What am I thinking of! Of course I know  
How cold it is. Pierre has told me so  
A thousand times.

CLOUD: And who is this Pierre  
That tells you all the secrets of the air?  
How came he to such frigid heights to soar?

CELESTE: Pierre's my—He is in the Flying Corps.

CLOUD: Ah, now I understand! And he's away?

CELESTE: He left at dawn, where for he would  
not say,

Telling me only 'twas a bombing raid  
Somewhere—My God! What's that?

CLOUD: What, little maid?

CELESTE (*pointing*): That—over there—beyond  
the wooded crest!

CLOUD: Only a skylark dropping to her nest;  
Her mate is hov'ring somewhere near. I heard



*The Laughing Willow*

---

THE CLOUD—[*Continued*]

A moment past the sky was everywhere  
As clear as clear; there was no Cloud in sight.  
It looked to me, floating there calm and white,  
Like a great mother hen, and I a chick.  
She seemed to call me, and I scurried quick  
Behind her wing. That spoiled the Boche's game,  
And gave me time to turn and take good aim.  
I emptied my last drum, and saw him drop  
Ten thousand feet in flames—

CELESTE (*shuddering*): Stop! Pierre, stop!  
Maybe a girl is waiting for him too—

PIERRE: 'Twas either him or me—

CELESTE: Thank God, not you!

PIERRE (*pointing to the church*): Come, let us burn  
the candle that you vowed.

CELESTE: Two candles!

PIERRE: Who's the other for?

CELESTE: The Cloud!

FINIS









