

Classic Poetry Series

**Clarence Michael James
Stanislaus Dennis
- poems -**

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Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis(7 September 1876 - 22 June 1938)

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis, better known as C. J. Dennis, was an Australian poet known for his humorous poems, especially "The Songs of a Sentimental Bloke", published in the early 20th century. Though Dennis's work is less well known today, his 1916 publication of *The Sentimental Bloke* sold 65,000 copies in its first year, and by 1917 he was the most prosperous poet in Australian history.

Together with Banjo Paterson and Henry Lawson, both of whom he collaborated with, he is often considered among Australia's three most famous poets.

When he died at the age of 61, the Prime Minister of Australia Joseph Lyons suggested he was destined to be remembered as the "Australian Robert Burns".

Biography

C. J. Dennis was born in Auburn, South Australia. His father owned hotels in Auburn, and then later in Gladstone and Laura. His mother suffered ill health, so Clarrie (as he was known) was raised initially by his great-aunts, then went away to school, Christian Brothers College, Adelaide as a teenager.

At the age of 19 he was employed as a solicitor's clerk. It was while he was working in this job that, like banker's clerk [Banjo Paterson](http://www.poemhunter.com/andrew-barton-paterson-2/) before him, his first poem was published. He later went on to publish in *The Bulletin*.

C. J. Dennis is buried in Box Hill Cemetery, Melbourne. The Box Hill Historical Society have attached a commemorative plaque to the gravestone. Dennis is also commemorated with a plaque on Circular Quay in Sydney which forms part of the NSW Ministry for the Arts - Writers Walk series, and by a bust outside the town hall of the town of Laura.

A Ballad For Elderly Kids

Now this is the ballad of Jeremy Jones,
And likewise of Bobadil Brown,
Of the Snooks and the Snaggers and Macs and Malones,
And Diggle and Daggles and Down.
In fact, 'tis a song of a fatuous throng.
Which embraces 'the man in the street,'
And the bloke on the 'bus, and a crowd more of us.
And a lot of the people we meet.

Yes, this is the story of Jack and of Jill,
Whose surnames are Snawley or Smith,
And of Public Opinion and National Will,
And samples of Popular Myth.
For Jeremy Jones, as a very small boy,
Was encouraged to struggle for pelf,
And to strive very hard in his own little yard,
But never to think for himself.

Then, Hi-diddle-diddle, the cat and the fiddle,
Come, sing us a nursery rhyme.
For, in spite of our whiskers, we elderly friskers
Are kiddes the most of our time.
So this is the song of the juvenile throng,
And its aunts and its big brother Bill,
Its uncles and cousins, and sisters in dozens,
Louisa and 'Liza and Lill.

Now, Jeremy Jones was exceedingly 'loyal,'
And when any procession went by,
He'd cheer very loud with the rest of the crowd,
Though he honestly couldn't tell why.
He was taught that his 'rulers' toiled hard for his sake,
And promoted the 'general good';
That to meddle with 'customs' was quite a mistake.
And Jones didn't see why he should.

To gird at the 'Order of Things as they Are,'
He was told, was the act of a fool.
He was taught, in effect, to regard with respect

Ev'ry' 'Precedent,' 'Practice' and 'Rule.'
And if we deserted the 'Usual Plan'
He believed that the nation would fall.
So Jones became known as a 'right-thinking man,'
Which meant that he didn't at all.

Oh, Little Miss Muffett, she sat on a tuffet,
But fled from a spider in fright;
For no one haa told her that if she was bolder,
She might have asserted her right.
Ho, rub-a-dub-dub, three men in a tub,
On a sea of political doubt;
And they argue together concerning the weather,
But never attempt to get out.

They made him a grocer when Jerry left school,
And a very good grocer was he;
And a dunce he was not, for he knew quite a lot
Of such matters as treacle and tea.
But the making of nations, and things so immense,
He considered beyond his control.
He was busy on week-days at saving his pence,
And on Sundays at saving his soul.

But politics Jones did not wholly neglect!
He subscribed to a paper, THE SAGE;
And every morn, with becoming respect,
He scanned its political page.
He believed what was said in each leader he read,
For a 'right-thinking person' was he.
Who was shocked at their vices, who growled of the prices
Of Sugar or treacle or tea.

Oh, Little Jack Horner sits in a corner,
A look of delight in his eye,
At the sight of a plum on the end of his thumb,
While there's somebody sneaking his pie.
Then, ride a cook hoss to Banbury Cross
Though the Lord only knows why we do.
But there's precedent for it, and those who ignore it
We class as an ignorant crew,

So Jeremy Jones he meanders through life,
Behaving as Grandmother bids;
And so do his very respectable wife
And extremely conventional kids.
Their bosses can trust 'em, for habit and custom
They've learnt in the regular school;
And they call him 'right-thinking,' while privately winking
And setting him down as a fool.

Convention's his master; he vows that disaster
Will swiftly encompass its foes.
He thinks Evolution a Labor delusion,
And 'Progress' a 'something' that grows.
He's one of the many - a credulous zany
The leadable, bleedable type
Who looks upon 'Time' - instructed by Granny
As something that rarely is ripe.

Oh, Goosey, goose gander, where do you wander?
Only, kind sir, where I'm told;
For my master has said I must go where I'm led,
And to contradict him would be bold.
And Little Bo-peep she lost her sheep.
It's the Socialist's fault, she'll insist.
But leave her to grieve, for she'll never believe
That a Meat Trust could ever exist.

Then this is the ballad of elderly kids,
Of Jeremy Jones and his kind,
Of Bobadil Brown, and Daggles and Down,
And the crowd with the juvenile mind.
Oh, this is a song of the National Will,
Of the Snooks, and the Snaggers, and Smiths,
Their aunts and their cousins, and big brother Bill,
Convention and Popular Myths.

A sad little song of the fatuous throng,
A string of sedate little rhymes,
Concerning the crowd who consider it wrong
To collide with the 'trend of the times.'
A song about Us, who are missing the 'bus,
While we trifle and toy with pretence.

For we play very hard in our own little yard,
But we seldom look over the fence.

Then Hi-diddle-diddle, the cat and the fiddle
We're never concerned with the cause.
Let's giggle and sinf for the Trust and the Ring
Are really our old Santa Claus.
Effects may surprise us, but Granny'll advise us;
We'll never behave as she bids.
Ho, grocers and drapres, let's stick to the papers;
We're all of us elderly kids.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Ballad Of Freedom

Now Mr. Jeremiah Bane
He owned a warehouse in The Lane,
An edifice of goodly size,
Where, with keen private enterprise,
He sold imported napery
And drapery - and drapery.
His singlets and his socks were sent
Out over half the continent;
In clothing for the nursery
And mercery - and mercery
He plied a most extensive trade,
And quite enormous profits made,
And barracked, with much fervency,
For foreign-trade - described as 'Free.'
He said,
Indeed,
It was
His creed.
The trade described as Free.

And this good man was known to fame
For charity; indeed, his name
Shone often in the daily press.
When needy folk were in distress
He aided - (with publicity)
Mendicity - mendicity.
And though much cash he thuswise spared
There still were people who declared
His act of private charity
A rarity - a rarity.
Donations, duly advertised,
From business point of view, he prized;
But 'good by stealth' he ne'er could see
Was any use to such as he.
But still,
The press,
With much
Success,
Declared his hand was free.

Now Mr. Bane's employees were
Wont to address the boss as 'Sir,'
To show him most intense respect;
And there were few who would neglect
To couple with civility
Humility - humility.
They dressed in cheap but pretty clothes,
And ev'ry man turned up his nose
And scorned familiarity
Or parity - or parity
With ill-dressed toilers who 'combined.'
They thought proceedings of that kind
Were of a very 'low' degree,
For they were 'cultured,' don't you see.
'Tis true
Their pay
Was mean,
 But they
Felt proud to be so free.

Though they were vilely underpaid
They were too proud - or else afraid
To advertise the fact abroad
Or see to get a Wages Board.
Besides their meek servility,
Gentility - gentility
Forbade so rash an act; but still
One man there was - (his name was Bill)
Who vowed their fool propensity
Was density - was density
An unenlightened state of mind,
A lack of wit that made them blind.
'You're but a lot of worms,' said he.
'If you were men you'd clearly see
Until
You band
And make
A stand
You never can be free.'

And ev'ry day this person, Bill,

Conversed with them of unions till
They owned his arguments were true,
And one by one waxed eager to
Embrace an opportunity
For unity - for unity.
They talked about a Wages Board
Which, formerly, they had abhorred,
And girded at their slavery
With bravery - with bravery.
Each man began to feel 'The Firm'
No longer owned it for its worm;
Their independence they could see
Achieved by simple unity;
Forgot
Their clothes
And mixed
With those
Who battle to be free.

When Mr. Bane one morning heard
About his thing he cried, 'Absurd!
They'll never get my clerks to horde
With those who seek the Wages Board,
And lose respectability!
Futility! - Futility!
My clerks are gentlemen who'd scorn
To mingle with the lowly born.
Such bosh I've never heard!' said he.
'Absurd!' said he - 'Absurd!' said he.
'As for their pay, they're quite content
They've never asked an extra cent!
And in
The morn
They'll mark
Their scorn,
And show you they are free.'

And on the morrow Mr. Bane
Called them together to 'explain':
'I have a small petition here
But first, I wish to make it clear,'
Said he, with simple gravity

And suavity - and suavity,
'That no man here is asked to sign.'
(His voice was gentle and benign)
'I trust to your humanity
And sanity - and sanity
To guide you; but I feel quite sure
That Wages Boards you can't endure.
I leave it all to you,' said he.
'It makes no difference to me.
My views
Are known,
But still,
I've shown
Your choice in this is free.'

The staff it looked at Mr. Bane,
And in his eye it read, quite plain,
'Neath that expression so benign,
The fate of him who did not sign
A vision of futurity
Obscurity - obscurity
A dearth of work - in short, the sack.
They knew that he who answered back
Would earn, by his temerity,
Severity - severity.
So one and all, with shaky pen,
Signed this refusal to be men....
But surely, as you must agree,
Their choice was free as it could be,
They said
The Board
They all
Abhorred,
Preferring to be free.

Still Mr. Bane grows fat and sleek,
And still, at thirty bob a week,
His clerks slave on from morn till night,
No hope of better things in sight.
But Bane, with much benignity
And dignity - and dignity,

When talk of Wages Board is heard,
Declares the notion is absurd:
'My clerks with prompt celerity
And verity - and verity
Refused the thing with one accord.
The clerks themselves don't want the Board!
It is preposterous,' says he,
'To force it on who don't agree
And still
His men
With brain
And pen
To fatten him are free.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Beauty Hint

Sweet, think how much the better it would be
If you thro' life should thus preserve your beauty.
It really doesn't matter much to me;
But don't you think you owe the world a duty,
And don't you think that thro' some kindly thought -
Of me, for instance - beauty were well bought?

Those wrinkles on your face, dear,
Those bags beneath your eyes
Are but the evil trace, dear,
Of temper, spite and lies.
Why can't you be a saint, dear,
Like dear old Joan of Arc;
Be pleasant - which you ain't, dear,
And do not be a nark.

Consider, sweetheart, if you smiled always
How much, thro' weeks, your face might be improving;
In place of which, in these unhappy days,
You go to beauty shops for the removing
Of wrinkles, blemishes and ugly warts.
Why, when a smile will serve, seek these resorts?

Why can't you raise a grin, sweet,
And be a little beauty?
For ugliness is sin, sweet,
And loveliness a duty.
So, for my sake, why can't you make
An effort to be glad.
Just think of me and joyful be;
For I am not too bad.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Blind Man In The Street

'He's blind,' we say. Then turn aside
Upon our way, again to view
Familiar things - some prospect wide,
Some olden scene for ever new.
Heedless we pass along, and soon
The groping figure's out of mind,
Lost in the sunlit afternoon.
'Poor chap, he's blind.'

Slowly he taps along the street,
Pitch black beneath our smiling skies:
While ours the boon again to greet
New scenes with ever thoughtless eyes.
Thoughtless indeed if, passing, we
Grudge thanks for this most precious sense.
He asks of us - not sympathy
But recompence.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Bouquet

Yes!!! So we will
Throw care away,
If for no other reason than that 'twill
Delight our brother.
We'll gaily 'mooch' along in tram and train,
And ever one of us will look in vain
For weary laborers of brawn or brain.
There will not be
Papers to go around. Oh yes, you'll see!...
Husbands will hurry home as if for life
Gladly to read to each delighted wife
The little things
That C.J.D. so humorously sings
All discord and all gloom we'll strive to smother,
Rejoicing that we have so bright a brother.

- Bung

To which we reply:-

Spurred by such praise we shall endeavour
To some day write a thing that's really clever
But, at the same time, don't forget my brother,
Even a scribe grows dull some time or other
And if, at times, this column waxes dreary
Please realise that we, sometimes, grow weary.
Even old Homer nods, they say
We're in a rather nodding mood today.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Bush Christmas

The sun burns hotly thro' the gums
As down the road old Rogan comes
The hatter from the lonely hut
Beside the track to Woollybutt.
He likes to spend his Christmas with us here.
He says a man gets sort of strange
Living alone without a change,
Gets sort of settled in his way;
And so he comes each Christmas day
To share a bite of tucker and a beer.

Dad and the boys have nought to do,
Except a stray odd job or two.
Along the fence or in the yard,
'It ain't a day for workin' hard.'
Says Dad. 'One day a year don't matter much.'
And then dishevelled, hot and red,
Mum, thro' the doorway puts her head
And says, 'This Christmas cooking, My!
The sun's near fit for cooking by.'
Upon her word she never did see such.

Your fault,' says Dad, 'you know it is.
Plum puddin'! on a day like this,
And roasted turkeys! Spare me days,
I can't get over women's ways.
In climates such as this the thing's all wrong.
A bit of cold corned beef an' bread
Would do us very well instead.'
Then Rogan said, 'You're right; it's hot.
It makes a feller drink a lot.'
And Dad gets up and says, 'Well, come along.'

The dinner's served - full bite and sup.
'Come on,' says Mum, 'Now all sit up.'
The meal takes on a festive air;
And even father eats his share
And passes up his plate to have some more.
He laughs and says it's Christmas time,

'That's cookin', Mum. The stuffin's prime.'
But Rogan pauses once to praise,
Then eats as tho' he'd starved for days.
And pitches turkey bones outside the door.

The sun burns hotly thro' the gums,
The chirping of the locusts comes
Across the paddocks, parched and grey.
'Whew!' wheezes Father. 'What a day!'
And sheds his vest. For coats no man had need.
Then Rogan shoves his plate aside
And sighs, as sated men have sighed,
At many boards in many climes
On many other Christmas times.
'By gum!' he says, 'That was a slap-up feed!'

Then, with his black pipe well alight,
Old Rogan brings the kids delight
By telling o'er again his yarns
Of Christmas tide 'mid English barns
When he was, long ago, a farmer's boy.
His old eyes glisten as he sees
Half glimpses of old memories,
Of whitened fields and winter snows,
And yuletide logs and mistletoes,
And all that half-forgotten, hallowed joy.

The children listen, mouths agape,
And see a land with no escape
Fro biting cold and snow and frost
A land to all earth's brightness lost,
A strange and freakish Christmas land to them.
But Rogan, with his dim old eyes
Grown far away and strangely wise
Talks on; and pauses but to ask
'Ain't there a dropp more in that cask?'
And father nods; but Mother says 'Ahem!'

The sun slants redly thro' the gums
As quietly the evening comes,
And Rogan gets his old grey mare,
That matches well his own grey hair,

And rides away into the setting sun.
'Ah, well,' says Dad. 'I got to say
I never spent a lazier day.
We ought to get that top fence wired.'
'My!' sighs poor Mum. 'But I am tired!
An' all that washing up still to be done.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Case For Kings

I've never had much truck with kings
(Said old George Jones). For all my days
My lot's been cast 'mid common thngs,
My path has run by humble ways.
Tho' I have live my life in what
Men call 'The shadow of the throne,'
No king disturbed my peace one jot,
And I have left them well alone.

But I have heard men rave and rant
Of great injustice, wrongs and rights
And all that maudlin, modern cant
Of liberty and freedom's fights.
But peacefully I've gone my way
And sought content on this bright earth.
I've harked to all they've had to say,
And summed it up for all it's worth.

But foreign lands have crushed their kings,
And raised new flags of strange design;
Yet all the liberty it brings
Seems, somehow, not one half of mine
In all those lands in this dread hour
Warring ambitions rise supreme;
And, in his crazy lust for pow'r,
Brother slays brother - for a dream.

Some wise man, in some book I read
(Said old George Jones) the seer explains
All human plans must have a head;
And, if it falls, black chaos reigns.
And can one doubt? When, far and wide,
Not freedom's gain, but freedom's loss
Follows the fall, with fratricide
'Mid those who would supplant the Boss.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Change Of Air

Now, a man in Oodnadatta
He grew fat, and he grew fatter,
Though he hardly had a thing to eat for dinner;
While a man in Booboorowie
Often sat and wondered how he
Could prevent himself from growing any thinner.

So the man from Oodnadatta
He came down to Booboorowie,
Where he rapidly grew fatter;
And the folk will tell you how he
Urged the man from Booboorowie
To go up to Oodnadatta -
Where he lived awhile, and now he
Is considerably fatter.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Chantey Of Labor's Lost

There on the quay sobbed Bones, A.B.,
And he took me by the hand.
Says he to me, 'I've quit the sea
An' I'm huntin' a berth on land.
'Er doom 'as come; an' the days o' rum,
Salt-'orse an' tar is over;
For these is the days of the popinjays
An' the end of the deep-sea rover
Oh,
Them tough ole, rough ole, rollicking lads
The shell-back, deep-sea rover.

'They've finished with me,' says Bones, A.B.,
'For they've finished with seamanship.
What they're shippin' of late is a milliner's mate
With a housemaid's mop on the 'ip.
But ask 'im the rig of a barque or a brig,
Or the toons of the chanteys sung
By a buck he-male in the days of sail
When me an' me mates was young
Oh,
Them mad ole, bad ole, rollicking days
When mates an' the world was young.

'Before 'e was born I'd rounded the Horn
Ten times in ships o' sail,
Close-reefed an' fast in the bellerin' blast
Of the mother-in-law of a gale.
Bare-decked I been, an' wrecked I been,
Mate-hazed, marooned, shanghai-ed.
But shiver me gob, I knoo me job
In the days when the seas was wide
Oh,
Them reckless, feckless, rollicking days
When faith and the seas was wide.

'So I'm leavin' the sea,' says Bones, A.B.,
'For the sea don't need me now.
An' I'm shapin' a course to valet a 'orse

Or coddle a milkin' cow.
All that they asks of shipboard tasks
Is a dood of a doll's-eye weaver;
An' I'm missin' `em bad; them mates I `ad
So lovin' the sea they leave `er
Oh,
Them tearin', swearin', devil-may-carin',
Lovable lads wot leave `er.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Cricket Casualty

My dear, I'm awful shorry
'Bout gettin' home sho late.
I orra been in hoursh ago;
But you know how I hate
To biss a crit of micket
(Shuse me) I mean to say,
To criss a mit of bicket
Cricket! Ash right. Hooray!

In-toshicated? Nonshense!
Just need a lirrle rest.
I shush been round to Johnson's place
Lish'nin' to the Test.
Great game! It's nervish teshion
Has made me feel like thish.
You know how I like cricket
I wouldn't bit a mish.

Hooray for Misher Bra'man!
Anurraa fourer hit!
Hoo - what? Don't be inshultin'!
I'm norra leash bit lit!
Not even s'ightly shrozzled.
Jush had a lirrle spot
Each time they hirra fourer
Mean to call tharra - lot?

My dear, don't get - hic - cited,
I wouldn't hissa mit.
Three sheers for good old Washaname!
Anurra boun'ry hit! ...
Hic! Struse me, love. Per-haps you're right,
I berra gessum rest.
Jush beein - Hum! You know, Jolson's place
Lish'nin' to - the Test.

A Deep Sea Chantey

We didn't like the bo'sun's mate

(Yo, 'eave ho! an' a bottle o' lemonade or somethin' soft, Miss).

Becos 'is dile filled us wiv 'ate

(Yo, 'eave ho! An' a bottle o' near-beer, or somethin' that's real easy scoffed, Miss).

We ain't the crowd for gettin' shick

Becos we've joined the Bolshevik.

An' we reckon Jack's as good as - Hic!

(Schuse me! 'Tain't the likker. I'ah the sense of injush-tish an' wash the right thing to be dealt out ter seamen's sorter sent me aloft, Miss).

We didn't like 'is kind o' face

(Yo, 'eave ho! An' a bot'l Soviet Sarsparliler - or anythin' the comrades drink, Miss).

Ses 'e, 'Yeh lubbers! Splice mai brace!

(Yo, 'eave, Hic! . . . Sheems ter me these Bolsh'vik make yeh skicker'n yeh think, Miss).

'E wash a reel two-fisted bloke.

One o' them coves 'oo made a joke

O' swillin' rum - like the ole sea folk.

(You know shailors? - Ole shilly shellbacks - - dis'plin - all that short 'er ole fash'n talk? Makes the service stink, Miss).

Eh? Wash at, Miss? It's af'er six?

An' yeh won't sherve drinksh?

We've done our tricks?

A'right! (Yo, 'eave ho, for a bot'ler) . . . Blast!

Bill, cut that song! It 'urts! Avast!

She's goin' out?? Hey, jump abroad!

Struth! Nearly missed! 'Eave up! Oh, Lord! . . .

(Later)

Ah! Gimme a ship as a ship should be,

An' a sailor man as loves the sea!

Gimme a sight o' the sheelin' gull,

An' the wash a widenin' aft 'er hull.

An' - 'ere's a sign I'm findin' grace

I LIKES the look o' that bos'un's face!

Ah! Smell them breezes! Come on, Bill!

'Twas longshore dope. We're sailors still!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Different Meaning

It is truly as lucid as lucid can be;
It is plain as the nose on your face
Though the tactics may be a disgrace, don't you see,
The tactician is not a disgrace.
He may wobble and swerve and crayfish and curve
It is all of it part of the game
But you mustn't say 'Wobbler,' for, prithee, observe
That the meaning is not quite the same.

One might carry this argument ever so far
There is not the least good in denying
That though a man's talk may be lies you must balk
At describing the talker as 'lying.'
His work may be slow, but it's nonsense, you know.
To declare that the man's a 'slow worker.'
And if he should shirk in the House all his work
'Twould be foolish to call him a 'shirker.'

In quoting such things one could fill up a ream;
It is so to the end of the chatter.
A man who adapts his adversary's scheme,
He need never be called an 'adapter.'
And if he should fuse, it is not the least use
To describe him as being a 'Fuser.'
Such a use of the word is distinctly absurd,
And would earn but contempt for the user.

For a statesman's a statesman right on to the end,
Never mind what his actions resemble;
He may bargain and palter and stumble and falter
And wheedle and scheme and dissemble.
But, observe, these are acts, and though probably facts
That would earn for the mere politician
A horrible name, it is not quite the same
When applied to a master tactician.

And so, you electors, when chewing the ended
Of reflection, attend to this study.
And observe, though a member may meddle with mud
He in not, of necessity, muddy.
Though he turns like a weathercock ten ways at once,
Till you never know which way he's leaning,
To call him a weathercock proves you a dunce,
For it has quite a different meaning.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Different Route

Say you have some great objective.
Very well. Be calm, reflective;
Make no vulgar show of vigor; 't isn't good.
Do not rush the thing directly;
But approach it circumspectly,
As a gentlemanly politician should.
Though certain consequences hinge upon the laws you make,
Your prestige in high politics rests with the road you take.

For the common sort of fellows,
With enthusiastic bellows,
Rush about and shout their schemes in ev'ry ear;
In their shirt-sleeves, toiling, fretting,
And most vulgarly a-sweating,
Quite without a thought or care how they appear.
And if they do arrive at things a trifle in advance
Their strenuous endeavors go to prove their ignorance.

Have a care for your appearance
If you claim the least adherence
To the genteel game of politics as played
By right-thinking politicians,
Who 'consider their positions'
Once a week, while common business is delayed.
And shun, O, shun that fearsome fellow eager for a spurt,
And the man who, metaphorically, labors in his shirt.

What though others rush before you?
What though busy folk ignore you?
Draw your gloves on carefully and take your stick.
Having chosen your direction,
Then proceed, with circumspection,
Stepping out with dignity - but not too quick.
If mere workers are before you, that is what you must expect;
But reflect, with satisfaction, that your route is more select.

Then, pray, have no hesitation
Should you find your destination
Is the same as that of him that humps the load
In declaring that your action
Gives you perfect satisfaction,
As you reached the place by quite another road.
Ignore his paltry claim to being first - such was his whim;
But emphasise the fact that you disdained to follow him.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Digger's Tale

'My oath!' the Duchess sez. 'You'd not ixpect
Sich things as that. Yeh don't mean kangaroos?
Go hon!' she sez, or words to that effect --
(It's 'ard to imitate the speech they use)
I tells 'er, 'Straight; I drives 'em four-in-'and
Ome in my land.'

'You 'ear a lot,' sez little Digger Smith,
'About 'ow English swells is so stand-off.
Don't yeh believe it; it's a silly myth.
I've been reel cobbers with the British toff
While I'm on leaf; for Blighty likes our crowd,
Ah' done us proud.

'Us Aussies was the goods in London town
When I was there. If they jist twigged your 'at
The Dooks would ask yeh could yeh keep one down,
An' Earls would 'ang out 'Welcome' on the mat,
An' sling yeh invites to their stately 'alls
Eor fancy balls.

'This Duchess -- I ain't quite sure uv 'er rank;
She might 'ave been a Peeress. I dunno.
I meets 'er 'usband first. 'E owns a bank,
I 'eard, an' 'arf a dozen mints or so.
A dinkum toff. 'E sez, 'Come 'ome with me
Ah' 'ave some tea.'

'That's 'ow I met this Duchess Wot's-'er-name --
Or Countess -- never mind 'er moniker;
I ain't no 'and at this 'ere title game --
An' right away, I was reel pals with 'er.
'Now, tell me all about yer 'ome,' sez she,
Ah' smiles at me.

'That knocks me out. I know it ain't no good
Paintin' word-picters uv the things I done
Out 'ome 'ere, barrackin' for Collin'wood,
Or puntin' on the flat at Flemin'ton.

I know this Baroness uv Wot-yeh-call
Wants somethin' tall.

'I thinks reel 'ard; an' then I lets it go.
I tell 'er, out at Richmond, on me Run --
A little place uv ten square mile or so --
I'm breedin' boomerangs; which is reel fun,
When I ain't troubled by the wild Jonops
That eats me crops.

'I talks about the wondrous Boshter Bird
That builds 'er nest up in the Cobber Tree,
An' 'atches out 'er young on May the third,
Stric' to the minute, jist at 'arf past three.
'Er eyes get big. She sez, 'Can it be true?'
Her eyes was blue.

'An' then I speaks uv sport, an' tells 'er 'ow
In 'untin' our wild Wowsers we imploy
Large packs uv Barrackers, an' 'ow their row
Wakes echoes in the forests uv Fitzroy,
Where lurks the deadly Shicker Snake 'oo's breath
Is certain death.

'I'm goin' on to talk of kangaroos,
An' 'ow I used to drive 'em four-in-'and.
'Wot?' sez the Marchioness. 'Them things in zoos
That 'ops about? I've seen then in the Strand
In double 'arness; but I ain't seen four.
Tell me some more.'

I baulks a bit at that; an' she sez, "Well,
There ain't no cause at all for you to feel
Modest about the things you 'ave to tell;
An' wot you says wonderfully reel.
Your talk' - an' 'ere I seen 'er eyelids flick --
Makes me 'omesick'.

'I reckerlect,' she sez -- 'Now let me see --
In Gippsland, long ago, when I was young,
I 'ad a little pet Corroboree,'
(I sits up in me chair like I was stung.)

'On it's 'ind legs,' she sez, 'it used to stand.
Eed from me 'and.'

'Uv cours, I threw me alley in right there.
This Princess was a dinkum Aussie girl.
I can't do nothin' else but sit an' stare,
Thinkin' so rapid that me 'air roots curl.
But 'er? She sez, 'I ain't 'eard talk so good
SInce my childhood.

"I wish,' sez she, 'I could be back again
Beneath the wattle an' that great blue sky.
It's like a breath uv 'ome to meet you men.
You've done reel well,' she sez. 'Don't you be shy.
When yer in Blighty once again,' sez she,
Come an' see me.'

'I don't see 'er no more; 'cos I stopped one.
But, 'fore I sails, I gits a billy doo
Which sez, 'Give my love to the dear ole Sun,
An' take an exile's blessin' 'ome with you.
An' if you 'ave some boomerangs to spare,
Save me a pair.

"I'd like to see 'em play about,' she wrote,
'Out on me lawn, an' stroke their pretty fur.
God bless yeh, boy.' An' then she ends 'er note,
'Yer dinkum cobber,' an' 'er moniker.
A sport? You bet! She's marri'd to an Earl --
Ah Aussie girl.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Dirge Of The Morning After

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE (wailing dismally):

'Who can deliver us, Lord of our destiny!
Out of the depths comes our passionate cry,
Wrung from the soul of us. Aid for the whole of us!
Tell us, we pray, that our succor is nigh.

'Where is the super-man? Where the deliverer?
Where is the Captain to win us relief
Surcease from sorrowing, respite from borrowing?
Oh, for a philtre to deaden our grief!'

ANXIOUS VOICE FROM RIGHT WING:

'Patience, O populace! Wait for a little while!
Labor shall succor you - cleave to your Jim!
James and the rest of them, sure, are the best of them
Jimmy, the agable, trust ye to him!

'Lo, from the Chosen lures he the capital.
Bright golden, capital! Glorious loans!
Millions and mill-i-ons! Soon 'twill be bill-i-ons!
Patience awhile till he floats 'em.' (Loud groans.)

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE (irritably):

'Jim? Oh, be d-d to him. Doors are all slammed to him
Cohen's and Isaac's and old Ikey Mo's.
We would live decently! Up the spout recently
He has shoved everything barring our clothes.

(Again dolefully)

'Who can deliver us? Is there no saviour?
Is there no Chief with a Will and a Plan?
Not in a city-full? Oh, it is pitiful!
The hour it is striking - but where is the man?'

VOICE FROM LEFT WING (eagerly)

'Cheer up, my countrymen! Here is your Gregory!
Long he!s been shut from the councils of State.
He'll banish care for you; he'll do and dare for you.
Wade is the captain to fashion your fate.

'Long was he languishing, sunk in obscurity;
Now his wise counsel the populace seeks.
He is the man for you; he'll plot and plan for you.
Rest on his Liberal bosom.' (Wild shrieks.)

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE (petulantly)

'Out on your Gregory! Visions of beggary
Haunt us whenever we bear of his name.
Labor or Liberal, Jimmy or Gregory.
Wade or McGowen, they're both much the same.

(With increasing anguish):

'Who can deliver us? Who is to win for us
Money at four per cent., five per cent., ten?
In what futurity, out of obscurity,
Shall there arise this great leader of men?'

GREASY VOICE FROM THE FLIES:

'Sufferin' Solomon! Vot is dis howl about?
Hary to yer Uncle, he'll tole yer vot's right;
Not more at four per shent. - no, nor at more per shent
Can you get capital! Monish is tight.

'Listen, goot beobles, your beano is finished mit;
Und obligations you neffer can shirk.
Monish vos tight, my tears; dot vos all right, my tears.
Loans vas maturin'. You'll haf to get vork.'

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE (howling):

'Work? O preposterous! What are we coming to?
Is there no super-man armed with a scheme
Scheme to win capital? Is there no chap at all
Willing to plan for us? Work! Do we dream?

(Desperately):

'Who can deliver us? Who can win ease for us?
Rescue us out of this ocean of debt?
We've come to wreck in it; up to the neck in it
Won't someone help us get out of the wet?'

(With gloomy reiteration):

'Who can deliver us? Who can deliver us?
Are none to pit such desperate elves?
Here or in other State? Oh, the poor Mother State!....
CHORUS FROM THE GALLERY (in disgust):
'Aw, turn it up, an' deliver yerselves.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Dogs' View

I'm only just a common racing dog,
Simple in habit, and my diet's plain.
I have never had a longing for the grog
That some men seem to need, more vim to gain.
And I have heard it said of such a one,
Who in his swilling emulates the hogs:
'He's boozing day and night: he's getting done.
Poor man,' they say: 'he's going to the dogs.'

But now 'tis threatened that a dog should win
A newer culture and a swifter pace
By taking to the whisky and the gin,
That he may wax more reckless in the race.
And we, who hitherto have been content
With just a lap of water and a rub,
Will soon enough contract that human bent
Of knocking off and going to the pub.

And then, who knows? Some badly balanced pup,
Weak-willed, and too intent on hectic joys,
Will learn too soon the way to liquor up
And have a jolly evening with the boys.
And we shall say of such a one, in blame:
'It's quite all right to have one new and then;
But he has overdone this drinkning game.
Poor dog,' we'll say: 'He's going to the men.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Duty Done - 1933

A duty done ... What else was there to do?
A simple matter; and as simply solved.
His straight young mind worked straightly - worked as true
As ever youth's clean mind. Here no involved
And weighty pondering of faith or fact.
Duty demanded; and he leapt to act.

He leapt and died . . . Could he but tell it now,
There would, be sure, come no heroic tale.
'What else would any man do, any how?'
This thing cried to be done. How could he fail?
The cry; the danger; Duty's sudden call;
Then - well, a bit of bad luck. That was all.

They say that youth grows cynical: too prone
To weigh advantage; thro' some modern plan
Changed from the clear-eyed youth old days had known:
More of a crafty huckster, less a man.
They say - and they are answered by one youth,
Proving again one wholesome human truth.

A duty done; and valiantly done.
Tho' death came in the doing, yet, who knows
At what wise ordering? No living one
May say how kind death be to such as those
Youth, unjustified, triumphing on his way,
Quiet hero of this world of work-a-day.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Duty Done - 1935

The swallows are back, and I'm tuning my lyre,
For today 'tis my duty to sing
A melodious lay that is graciously gay
To welcome - officially - spring
Ting-a-ling
So let's have a song with a swing.
Bing!
High cockalorum and fal-de-rah, whack!
Young Spring's in the offing! The swallows are back!

To put sense in the song matters little so long
As the lift and the lilt of it ring.
And a mention be made of the wattle-hung glade
Where the blithering birds are a-wing
Ting-a-ling
And the clamorous honey-bees cling.
Z-z-z-ing!
Tho' I'm scarce in the humor, alas and alack!
Ho, merry-down-derry! The swallows are back!

So - officially - Hi! Oh, salubrious sky!
What a dear and delectable thing
To behold such a blue as old Arcady knew
When - er - Strephan or someone was king
Ting-a-ling
And life held nor arrow nor sling.
Ping!
Ah, the fervor is forced; but I mustn't get slack,
Tho' the rhymes may run low, for the swallows are back!

But - privily - oh, my vitality's low,
And a sneer at the season I fling
For I gasp and I wheeze in the weary unease
Of the plagues that the pollen days bring
Ting-a-ling
I'm insipid as second-hand string.
Ring.
Ah, ring down the curtain! I've gone to the pack!
But, a last word in closing: the swallows are back.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Fair Exchange

Would you be much impressed, my dear,
Now you've adopted shorts,
If males like me came dressed, my dear,
In skirts, to divers sports?
With gussets, flares and pleats and things
Like that, we'd give our fancy wings
To grace the links and courts.

You should not worry very much,
Since male attire you choose,
If, with a chic Parisian touch
And taste in cut and hues,
We garbed ourselves, from neck to knees,
In crepe de chine or 'summer breeze'
Of pretty pinks and blues.

Would frills and flounces seem absurd
Upon the manly form?
I don't see why, upon my word,
Such gads, should raise a storm
Of ridicule. And, if they do,
Scorn coming from one garbed like you
Is really rather warm.

Think the position out, my dear,
And be consistent, please.
And, while you dash about, my dear,
In pants shorn to the knees,
You're drawing from the normal male
The same loud laugh with which you'd hail
A man in fripperies.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Fair Risk

Rashly I shot an arrow in the air,
And, as my shaft into the zenith sped,
I knew 'twas bound to fall some time, somewhere;
And wondered if 'twould dropp upon some head.

A certain friend of mine who loitered near
Remarked, 'Don't let the thing distress you, please.
'Twill hit a politician, never fear.'
And so, my tortured conscience was at ease.

Now, when I read of Party Government,
Its wrangles, lies, and methods most unfair,
I calmly step outside my tenement
And shoot another arrow in the air.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Fair Spin

Righto!
I'll give the game a go.
They say I should be circumspect; but I don't care a hang.
I'll bang
The cows in slang . .
'Ere! Wot's the game?
Don't this Australia want a decent name
For treatin' other blokes all on the square?
I wouldn't dare
To sell crook rabbits down in Spadger's land;
Fer, if the ole tarts down there should complain
Jist once, why, all me custom
Would go right up the pole.
Upon me soul!
Yeh see, I trust 'em
An' they trust me.
Because they say, 'This rabbito, why 'e
Gives us a dinkum spin.
'E wouldn't take us in.'
Now, ain't that nice?
I don't like givin' statesmen my advice,
But - well, I'm just an ord'nary sorter bloke,
Still, I think it is getting past a joke
When coves that earns reel decent livli'oods
Rings in crook goods
Jist 'cos it pays.
Aw, spare me days!
I got some sense of wot the 'eads calls pride,
An', for to do a snide,
Crook deal like that
I'd
Sooner eat me 'at.
Fair dinkum: when I sum the 'ole thing up.
But still, I sometimes think
That us blokes - toilin' for a bit of dough -
Gives the straight game a go
Better than all the 'eads who play a game
Wot gives Australia a rotten name.
Blimey! I sooner be -

(Now, let me see
Wot's this that Wordsworth says?)
Why, spare me days!
'I'd sooner be'
(Yes, me!)
'A pagan, suckled in some creed outworn,'
Than some smug Christain 'oo puts up to scorn
Australia's name.
Aw, strike! We play the game:
Us rabbitos. An' - on the square -
Even if I 'ad 'eaps of guilt to spare,
Like some of these
Exporters that I knows,
I wouldn't go
And play the game so low.
I'd not send one crook rabbit overseas,
No, not to please
A flamin' King;
It ain't the thing.
Desertin' Aussie is a dirty trick.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Fair Warning

Let 'em come, by gum! That's all I say.
Let me see one of 'em up this way,
With their sacks a-back an' their walkin' boots
Low neck, short-panted hikin' coots
Flingin' their fags in the brambles here,
Same as that other one done last year.
He might just once; but he won't no more.
I'll nail his hide to the cow-shed door.

A mile o' fencin' and two good hust
All thro' them an' their lighted butts.
Patronisin'? You're too dead right.
These city fellers is awful bright
Three good huts an' a mile o' fence!
'Tisn't so much me own expense;
Three mile o' forest gone up in smoke!
Well, ain't it enough to nark a bloke?

The worst they done was in ninety-five.
Poor ole Ben Bray, he'd still be alive
It if wasn't for that camp-fire they left.
But a burnt-out-home an' the kids bereft
Of their dad. Yes; that was the toll that day;
An' the fellers what done it miles away.
Oh, there's fools in the forest as well as town.
I ain't lettin' none o' me neighbors down.

There's fools in the forests, as well I knows;
Chancin' a burn when the north wind blows.
An' they oughter be pinched . . . But them city skites,
Suckin' their fags an' strikin' their lights!
Just let me catch 'em! Vindictive? Me?
Ropeable, am I? Well, wouldn't you be
If you suffered the same from their smokin' butts?
Three mile o' fencin' an' four good huts!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Few Lines To Beauty

Girls!

You with the bobbed hair or Mary Pickford curls,

Likewise you others

Who still adopt the hair-dressing style,

That makes the moderns smile.

But was undoubtedly the dearest attribute of your mothers.

And, by the by,

You with the glad-eye -

We've seen you in the street

Looking particularly sweet.

And we ask you

Do you think that those girls in the city that is reputed to possess a harbor
can overtask you?

In the matter of looking nice -

We do not seek to give advice;

And, frankly, we don't know.

We have seen both types and so,

Being diplomatic,

We refrain from expressing an opinion that is too emphatic.

We'll leave it to the vote,

Yet hasten to remark that we simply dote

Upon the maiden who

Is just like you,

Fair reader!

We seek not to assume the office or prerogative of a special pleader.

And we own that this question of State Rights

Gives us uneasy dreams o' nights.

Take no notice of those churls

Who tell you that the Sydney girls

Can put it all over you in regard to female beauty.

My dears, you have a duty

At any rate,

Toward your State.

Go in

And Win!

Among you are undoubtedly quite a number of perfect peaches

And the sirens of the Sydney beaches

May yet be proved to be not exactly the pick of the basket.

Girls!

With or without curls,
The honor of your State and the noble men therein ask it.
Here I conclude.
And I trust that these few well-chosen remarks have not been in bad taste or
over-rude.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Few Remarks On Goats, Asses And The Dead Hand

I don't mind kings and dukes and things;
I don't mind wigs or maces;
I don't mind crowns or robes or gowns
Or ruffles, swords or laces
But what I do object to, and some others more than I,
Are the mad old, bad old practices these baubles signify.

Good friends, brother Australians and fellow voters;
I think that you will agree with me that few of us are doters
Upon the customs, practices, fooleries and tommyrotics of the mouldy past;
Nor are we apt to cast
A reverent eye backward upon ancient precedent:
Nor do we consent
To let the cold, clammy and unusually muddling Dead Hand
Control the destinies of this our native land.
Nay, rather do we stand
Tiptoe upon the summit of the Present, peering out,
With faces eager and expectant eyes, into the mystic Future. Have you a doubt
That in Progress, Business-like Procedure, Common-sense Habit, and Up-to-Date
Method we are all earnest believers?
Is it not so?....
Well, I don't know
So much about it. 'Twere easy to prove, good friends, that we are, in the
lump, followers of Make-Believe, triflers with Humbug and inance self-deceivers.
'Twere easy to prove that our ass-like attribute indeed surpasses
That of innumerable and intensely asinine asses.
And here, good friends, I extend to all of you my blessin',
And conclude, amidst great applause, the first lesson.

Secondly, my brothers
Right-thinking persons, men-in-the-street, common-sense individuals, and
people who call a spade a spade, and others
There are full many of us who deeply deplore
The use or display of these gauds, decorations, baubles and trappings that
belong to the unpractical, superstitious and quite unfashionable days of yore.
We deride, for instance, the notion that the caudal appendage of a deceased horse
Perched upon the cranium of an erudite justice can add to his dignity or give to

his remarks more force.

In short, we class as mere bunkum, bosh, flapdoodle and other sludge
The contention that the hind end of a horse can in any way assist the fore end of
a judge.

The wig, the gown, the staff, the rod, the mace,
We regard as obsolete, and entirely out of place.

If there is one thing more than another upon which we pride ourselves it is, I
suppose,

The fact that we scorn to wear grandpa's old-fashioned clothes.

The poor old gentleman's pantaloons, his shirts, his cravat, his fob-chain, his frill-
whiskers are all anathema to us.

Good friends, why all this fuss?

Why waste all this precious energy in denouncing the wig, the gown, the mace?

They may be, in a sense, out of place;

Yet, why should these things shock you?

Believe me, they are perfectly innocu

Ous, and furthermore, dear friends,

They serve their ends;

So why deny these toys

To that large, mentally-bogged, and much misunderstood class of elderly girls
and boys

Whose state demands some sign or symbol

To push an idea or a principle into their heads, even as the thimble

Thrusts the needle into the cloth?

Then why so wrath?

Heed ye, good friends, the parable of the beam and the mote.

Nay, I crave your pardon, but I have known a not particularly intelligent goat

To view materially essential matters with a more discerning eye; to possess, so
to speak, more innate perspicacity

Than you - that is to say, us. Nay, grasp not at the seeming audacity

Of these few remarks; for perfect perspicuity

Attends them, and I like not ambiguity.

As thinking machines the ass, the goat, good people are preferable; at least, so it
appears.

And here, the ending of my second lesson is attended by your deafening and
appreciative cheers.

My worthy friends, ye who scorn to wear my poor grandpa's clothes

Get down from your pedestals, O ye modern intellectual giants; let each decline
his scornful and uptilted nose.

Deride, would ye, grandpa's ancient mace?

Abolish it, would ye, and hunt it off the place?
What's the matter with it? It's not eating anything, is it?
And it might prove handy if a masked burglar, or a Trust or a mad dog paid the House a visit.
Gird, would ye, at grandpa's wig, at his gown trimmed with the overcoats of late lamented rabbits?
But, Oh! my up-to-date brothers, what have ye to say about grandpa's and great grandpa's and great-great-grandpa's ridiculous customs, absurd precedents, inane systems and obsolete habits?
What about that musty, dusty, mouldy, mildewed, hoary, Tory, injurious, time wasting, insane, inane, self-ridiculed, unwieldy and utterly unprofitable system of Party Government? Great-great-great-great-grandpa's cherished System, good friends?
Does it serve our modern ends?
Or is it, think you, obsolete and absurd?
I pause for a reply....What! Not a word?
Do I hear you raving to have it abolished?
Yearn ye to see this thing demolished?
Go to the ass, ye dullards! He doesn't eat mouldy sawdust when there's good hay about.
And here, kind friends, I pass to 'fourthly,' flattered by your encouraging shout.

Friends, countrymen and fellow-voters of this fair land,
All ye smart, up-to-date people who scorn dear grandpa's raiment, are you feeling his dead hand?
Think ye that ancient fist should interfere so in the vital affairs of to-day?
Or are ye so apathetic that you don't care a tuppenny curse either way?
'Tis cheap and easy to scoff at granpa's gauds and trappings and to the Devil send 'em;
But have ye ever seriously considered such things as elected Ministries or the Initiative and Referendum?
Not you! You shirk, good friend, you shirk.
That means Work!

Friends, I am done....I know not what ye intend to do about it, and I haven't much hope; but, for my part,
I say unto ye, in a spirit of true brotherly love, and with my hand upon my heart, That I have enjoyed the acquaintance of asses who were never fooled by musty precedent. Aye, and intelligent goats
Who scorned the jam-tin diet of their forebears when there was good grass about

but they had no votes.
And what is a goat without a vote?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Forest Scene

As I went down a forest place
At the closing of the year
To find me peace, and gather grace
In this green gladness here.
I saw a scene I knew of old,
In many a year gone by
A loveliness to have and hold
Here, with the gully waters cold,
And the bland, blue peeping sky.

And I saw the blue wrens trooping near,
And I heard the thrushes call,
And found surcease from worldly fear
For a peace was over all.
And my mind went back to long ago,
For here was a scene I knew
Where the gums and ancient tree ferns grow,
And the ever-lasting waters flow,
And life yields little new.

And I thought of the world - of the world of men,
Who ever seek them change,
And haste, and hectic, haste again
To a goal beyond their range.
And I heard the thrush and the blue wren there
Fluting their songs of glee
For them this world was passing fair,
And they found content and gladness there.
Why came not peace to me?

Then I saw life, as men see life
I who am but a man;
And I dreamed of a scene devoid of strife,
Built on the good God's plan.
And I came me back from that forest place,
With a dream to have and hold,
Of men with naught but life to face,
Of men grown young in simple grace,
And the birds and the bush grown old!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Freak Of Spring

At any other time of year
It might have passed, but Spring is queer.
He says somethin' - I dunno
Somethin' nasty. I says, 'Ho!'
'Ho, yourself!' he says, an' glares.
I says nothin' - only stares.
'Coot!' says he . . . Then up she goes!
An' I land him on the nose.

It was Spring, Spring, Spring! Just to hear the thrushes sing
Would make a fellow laugh, or love, or fight like anything.
Which mood called I wasn't carin'; I was feelin' fine an' darin';
So I fetches him a beauty with a lovely left-arm swing.
Ben Murray staggered back a bit an' howled a wicked word
Which gave me feelin's of great joy . . . An' that's how it occurred.

'On the sawdust!' yells old Pike,
Gloatin' and bloodthirsty-like.
'On the sawdust with yeh both!
Truth to tell, I'm nothin' loth.
I peel off my coat an' vest.
Murray, with his rage suppressed,
Comes up eager, pale with spite.
'Glory!' shouts old Pike. 'A fight!'

It was Spring, glad Spring, an' the swallows on the wing
Made a man feel kind an' peaceful with their cheery twittering.
As I watched their graceful wheelin' with a pleasant sort of feelin'
Old man Pike pulled out his ticker, an' the mill-hands made a ring.
There was gold upon the wattle an' the blackwood was in bud,
An' I felt the call for action fairly sizzin' in my blood.

Murray comes on like a bull;
Both his eyes with spleen are full.
Let him have it - left an' right. . . .

Pike is bustin' with delight. . . .
Right eye once and left eye twice
Then he grabs me like a vice. . . .
Down into the dust we go
Bull-dog grip and short-arm blow.

It was Spring! Mad Spring! Just to feel him clutch an' cling
Told me plain that life was pelendid an' my strength a precious thing.
On the sawdust heap we scrambled, while the fellows yelled an' gambled
On the fight; an' Ben loosed curse-words in a never-endin' string.
Oh, I glimpsed the soft sky shinin' and I smelled the fresh-cut wood;
An' as we rolled I pummelled him, an' knew the world was good.

"Tain't a dog-fight!" shouts Bob Blair.
'Stand up straight an' fight it fair.'
I get end-up with a grin.
'Time!' yells Pike, an' bangs a tin.
'Corners, boys. A minute's spell.'
'Good lad, Jim! You're doin' well,'
Says the little Dusty, Dick. . . .
Murray's eye is closin' quick.

It was Spring, sweet Spring, an' a man must have his fling:
Healthy men must be respondin' to the moods the seasons bring.
That sweet air, with scrub scents laden, all my body was invadin',
Till each breath I drew within me made me feel I was king.
'Twas the season to be doin' - fondlin' maids, or fightin' men -
An' I felt my spirit yearnin' for another crack at Ben.

Pike bangs on his tin again.
'Time!' he roars. 'Get to it, men!'
I come eager, fit to dance;
Ben spars cautious for a chance.
With a laugh I flick him light;
Then - like lightin' comes his right
Full an' fair upon the jaw
Lord, the purple stars I saw!

It was Spring, wild Spring! When I felt the sudden sting
Of a clout all unexpected, I was just a maddened thing -
Just a savage male thing ragin'; battle all my wits engagin'.
Instant I was up an' at him, an' I punched him round the ring.
I forgot the scents an' season; I lost count of time an' place;
An' my only aim an' object was to batter Murray's face.

Pike is dancin' wild with joy;
Dusty Dick howls, 'At him, boy!'
I am at him, fast an' hard.
Then, as Murray drops his guard,
I get in one, strong an' straight,
Full of emnity an' weight.
Down he goes; the fellows shout.
'One!' starts Pike, then. . . 'Ten - an' out!'

It was Spring, gay Spring. Still were swallows on the wing,
An', on a sudden, once again I heard the thrushes sing.
There was gold upon the wattle, an' my recent wish to throttle
Murray, as he lay there groain', was a far-forgotten thing.
In the soft blue sky were sailin' little clouds as fine as fluff.
'Wantin' more?' I asked him gently; but Ben Murray said, 'Enough.'

'Well done, Jim,' says old Bob Blair.
'Tis the brave deserves the fair.'
An' he laughs an' winks at Pike
In a way that I don't like.
Widders,' grins young Dusty Dick,
'Likes a bloke whose hands is quick.
Now poor Ben can take the sack.'
But I frowns, an' turns my back.

It was Spring, the fickle Spring; an' a most amazin' thing
Came upon me sudden-like an' set me marvellin'.
For no longer was I lookin' for a wife to do my cookin',
But for somethin' sweet and tender of the kind that kiss an' cling.
Oh, for such a one I'd battle, an' I'd win by hook or crook;

But it did seem sort of foolish to go fightin' for a cook.

Standin' on the sawdust heap
I feel mean an' rather cheap,
Widows? Let the widow go!
What we fought for I don't know.
Murray offers me his hand:
'Jim, you've won; so understand,
I don't mean to block your road . . .'
But I answer, 'That be blowed!'

'Why, it's Spring, man, Spring!' (An' I gave his fist a wring)
'If you reckoned me your rival, give up thinkin' such a thing.
I just fought for fun an' frolic, so don't you get melancholic;
An', if you have notions yonder, why, buck up an' buy the ring!
Put some beefsteak on your eye, lad, an' learn how to keep your guard.'
Then I put my coat an' vest on, an' walked homeward . . . thinkin' hard.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'A Gallant Gentleman'

A month ago the world grew grey fer me;
A month ago the light went out fer Rose.
To 'er they broke it gentle as might be;
But fer 'is pal 'twus one uv them swift blows
That stops the 'eart-beat; fer to me it came
Jist, 'Killed in Action,' an' beneath 'is name.

'Ow many times 'ave I sat dreamin' 'ere
An' seen the boys returnin', gay an' proud.
I've seen the greetin's, 'eard 'is rousin' cheer,
An' watched ole Mick come stridin' thro' the crowd.
'Ow many times 'ave I sat in this chair
An' seen 'is 'ard chiv grinnin' over there.

'E's laughed, an' told me stories uv the war.
Changed some 'e looked, but still the same ole Mick,
Keener an' cleaner than 'e wus before;
'E's took me 'and, an' said 'e's in great nick.
Sich wus the dreamin's uv a fool 'oo tried
To jist crack 'ardy, an' 'old gloom aside.

An' now - well, wot's the odds? I'm only one:
One out uv many 'oo 'as lost a friend.
Manlike, I'll bounce again, an' find me fun;
But fer Poor Rose it seems the bitter end.
Fer Rose, an' sich as Rose, when one man dies
It seems the world goes black before their eyes.

Ar, well; if Mick could 'ear me blither now,
I know jist wot 'e'd say an' 'ow 'e'd look:
'Aw, cut it out, mate; chuck that silly row!
There ain't so sense in takin' sich things crook.
I've took me gamble; an' there's none to blame
Becos I drew a blank; it's in the game.'

A parson cove he broke the noos to Rose
A friend uv mine, a bloke wiv snowy 'air,
An' gentle, soothin' sort o'ways, 'oo goes
Thro' life jist 'umpin' others' loads uv care.

Instid uv Mick - jist one rough soljer lad -
Yeh'd think 'e'd lost the dearest friend 'e 'ad.

But 'ow kin blows be sof'n'd sich as that?
Rose took it as 'er sort must take sich things.
An' if the jolt uv it 'as knocked me flat,
Well, 'oo is there to blame 'er if it brings
Black thorts that comes to women when they frets,
An' makes 'er tork wild tork an' foolish threats.

An' then there comes the letter that wus sent
To give the strength uv Ginger's passin' out
A long, straight letter frum a bloke called Trent;
'Tain't no use tellin' wot it's orl about:
There's things that's in it I kin see quite clear
Ole Ginger Mick ud be ashamed to 'ear.

Things praisin 'im, that pore ole Mick ud say
Wus comin' it too 'ot; fer, spare me days!
I well remember that 'e 'ad a way
Uv curlin' up when 'e wus slung bokays.
An' Trent 'e seems to think that in some way
'E owes Mick somethin' that 'e can't repay.

Well, p'raps 'e does,- an' in the note 'e sends
'E arsts if Mick 'as people 'e kin find.
Fer Trent's an English toff wiv swanky friends,
An' wants to 'elp wot Ginger's left be'ind.
'E sez strange things in this 'ere note 'e sends:
'He was a gallant gentleman,' it ends.

A gallant gentleman! Well, I dunno.
I 'ardly think that Mick ud like that name.
But this 'ere Trent's a toff, an' ort to know
The breedin' uv the stock frum which 'e came.
Gallant an' game Mick might 'a' bin; but then
Lord! Fancy 'im among the gentlemen!

'E wus a man; that's good enough fer me,
'Oo wus 'is cobber many years before
'E writ it plain fer other blokes to see,
An' proved it good an' pleny at the war.

'E wus a man; an', by the way 'e died,
'E wus a man 'is friend can claim wiv pride.

The way 'e died... Gawd! but it makes me proud
I ever 'eld 'is 'and, to read that tale.
An' Trent is one uv that 'igh-steppin' crowd
That don't sling pral'se around be ev'ry mail.
To 'im it seemed some great 'eroic lurk;
But Mick, I know, jist took it wiv 'is work.

No matter wot 'e done. It's jist a thing
I knoo 'e'd do if once 'e got the show.
An' it would never please 'im fer to sling
Tall tork at 'im jist cos 'e acted so.
'Don't make a song uv it!' I 'ear 'im growl,
'I've done me limit, an' tossed in the tow'l.'

This little job, 'e knoo - an' I know well
A thousand uv 'is cobbers would 'ave done.
Fer they are soljers; an' it's crook to tell
A tale that marks fer praise a single one.
An' that's 'ow Mick wopuold 'ave it, as I kow;
An', as 'e'd 'ave it, so we'll let it go.

Trent tells 'ow, when they found 'im, near the end,
'E starts a fag an' grins orl bright an' gay.
An' when they arsts fer messages to send
To friends, 'is look goes dreamin' far away.
'Look after Rose,' 'e sez, 'when I move on.
Look after... Rose... Mafeesh!' An' 'e wus gone.

'We buried 'im,' sez Trent, 'down by the beach.
We put mimosa on the mound uv sand
Above 'im. 'Twus the nearest thing in reach
To golden wattle uv 'is native land.
But never wus the fairest wattle wreath
More golden than the 'eart uv 'im beneath.'

An' so - Mafeesh! as Mick 'ad learned to say.
'E's finished; an' there's few 'as marked 'im go.
Only one soljer, outed in the fray,
'Oo took 'is gamble, an' 'oo 'a 'is show.

There's few to mourn 'im: an' the less they leave,
The less uv sorrer, fewer 'earts to grieve.

An' when I'm feelin' blue, an' mopin' 'ere
About h epal I've lorst; Doreen, my wifem
She come an' takes my 'and, an' tells me, 'Dear,
Ther's be more cause to mourn a wasted life.
'E proved 'imself a man, an' 'e's at rest.'
An' so, I tries to think sich things is best.

A gallant gentleman... Well, let it go.
They sez they've put them words above 'is 'ead,
Out there where lonely graves stretch in a row;
But Mick 'ell never mind it now 'e's dead.
An' where 'e's gone, when they weigh praise an' blame,
P'raps gentlemen an' men is much the same.

They fights; an' orl the land is filled wiv cheers.
They dies; an' 'ere an' there a 'eart is broke.
An' when I weighs it orl - the shouts, the tears -
I sees it's well Mick wus a lonely bloke.
'E found a game 'e knoo, an' played it well;
An' now 'e's gone. Wot more is there to tell?

A month ago, fer me the world grew grey;
A month ago the light went out fer Rose;
Becos one common soljer crossed the way,
Leavin' a common message as 'e goes.
But ev'ry dyin' soljer's 'ope lies there:
'Look after Rose. Mafeesh!' Gawd! It's a pray'r!

That's wot it is; an' when yeh sort it out,
Shuttin' yer ears to orl the sounds o' strife
The shouts, the cheers, the curses - 'oo kin doubt
The claims uv women; mother, sweet'eart, wife?
An' 'oos to 'ear our soljers' dyin' wish?
An' 'oo's to 'eed? . . . 'Look after Rose . . . Mafeesh!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Guide For Poits

I ain't no verse-'og. When I busts in song
An' fills the air wiv choonful melerdy,
I likes fer uvver coves to come along
An' biff the lyre in company wiv me.

So, when I sees some peb beguile an hour
Be joinin' in the chorus o' me song,
I never sees no use in turnin' sour;
Fer singin' days wiv no one larsts too long.

I'd like to see the Rocks an' Little Lon
Grow centres for the art uv weavin' rhyme,
Wiv dinky 'arps fer blokes to plunk upon,
An' spruiking poits workin' overtime.

I'd love to listen to each choonful lay
Uv soulful coots who scorn to write fer gain;
To see True Art bloom down in Chowder Bay,
An' Culcher jump the joint in Spadger's Lane.

Gawstruth! fer us life's got no joy to spare,
We're short uv bird songs, 'soarin' clean an' pure.'
A bloke is 'ardly orf the bottle there
Before 'e's in the jug -- a bird fer sure.

So 'oo am I to say no blokes shall sing
Jist 'ow an' where an' when sich blokes may choose?
She's got no lines to show, nor yet no ring.
Lor' blim'me! I ain't married to me Muse!

An, square an' all, to show there's no offence,
To show that in me 'eart true friendship lies,
I gives free gratis, an wivout ixpense,
A few igzamples, just to put 'em wise.

First, choose some swingin' metre, sich as this,
That Omar used -- per Fitz -- to boost the wine.
An' 'ere's a point true artists shouldn't miss:
Sling in a bit o' slang to ev'ry line.

An' when yer full o' them alternate rhymes --
As all the true push poits is at times --
Jist ring the changes, as I'm doin' now;
An' find ixcuse to say: 'The bloomin' cow!'

Or, comin' back to Omar's style again,
It's easy fer to pen a sweet refrain
Wiv this 'ere kist a dead-'ead sort o' line,
An' this one rhymin' wiv the former twain.

An' though this style me soul 'as often vext,
Wiv care an' pains the knack is easy cort;
This line's rhymed wiv the first, an' then the next
Is cut orf short.
An' if yeh want to round it orf orl neat
Just add a couplet 'ere of equil feet.

An' 'ere's a style I've very often done:
You swing orf 'ere, an' find a second rhyme,
Then hitch the third line to the leadin' one.
An' make the fourth lap wiv the second chime,
An' then you sort o' come another time,
An' jist end up the same as you begin.

It's orl dead easy when yeh know the way,
An' 'ave the time to practise it -- But, say,
Although it sort o' takes the eye, no doubt
(An', mind yeh, I'm not sayin' but it may) --
Wivout a stock uv rhymes to see you out
This style o' rhymin's like to turn yeh grey.

The triplets comes much 'arder than the twins;
But I 'ave 'ad to bear 'em fer me sins.
'Ere, fer a single line, yeh change the style,
Switch orf an' rhyme the same as you begins;
An' then yeh comes back at it wiv a smile,
Pertendin' it's dead easy orl the while.

Them sawed-orf lines 'as often stood me friends;
Fer you kin cut 'em upto serve yer ends.
An' frequent I 'ave slung the dotin' throng

This sort o' song.
To ring su'prises on the eye an' ear
Is 'arf the game. It seems to kind o' queer
The dull monotony. yeh make a miss,
An' then do this.

Aw, 'Struth! it's pretty; but you take my tip,
It gives a bloke the everlastin' pip
'Oo tries to live upon the game and gets. . . .
Corns on 'is brain an' melancholy debts!

Wiv sweat an' tears, wiv misery an' sighs,
Yeh wring yer soul-case fer one drop of bliss
To give the cold, 'ard world; an' it replies,
'Prompt payment will erblige. Please settle this.'

The rarest treasures of yer 'eart yeh spend
On callous, thankless coots; an' in the end
It comes to this: if you can't find a muse
'Oo takes in washin', wot's the flamin' use?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Haven Marred

Jones is a man exceeding meek
And henpecked, so his neighbours say,
Who, one glad evening every week,
Sought sanctuary in his queer way.

At his suburban picture show
He'd sit and gloat, in mood serene,
Quite recompensed for all his woe
To see dumb women on the screen.

But now the picture house he shuns;
His week becomes one weary drag;
For, 'mid the crash of 'he-men's' guns,
Even the female shadows nag!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Holy War

'Young friend!' . . . I tries to duck, but miss the bus.
'E sees me first, an' 'as me by the 'and.
'Young friend!' 'e sez; an' starts to make a fuss
At meetin' me. 'Why, this,' 'e sez, 'is grand!
Events is workin' better than I planned.
It's Providence that I should meet you thus.
You're jist the man,' 'e sez, 'to make a stand,
An' strive for us.

'Young friend,' 'e sez, 'allow me to explain
But wot 'e 'as to say too well I knows.
I got the stren'th uv it in Spadgers Lane
Not 'arf an hour before'and, when I goes
To see if I could pick up news uv Rose,
After that dentist let me off the chain.
('Painless,' 'e's labelled. So 'e is, I s'pose.
I 'ad the pain.)

'Young friend,' 'e sez. I let 'im 'ave 'is say;
Though I'm already wise to all 'e said
The queer old parson, with 'is gentle way
('E tied Doreen an' me when we was wed)
I likes 'im, from 'is ole soft, snowy 'ead
Down to 'is boots. 'E ain't the sort to pray
When folks needs bread.

Yeh'd think that 'e was simple as a child;
An' so 'e is, some ways; but, by and by,
While 'e is talkin' churchy-like an' mild,
Yeh catch a tiny twinkle in 'is eye
Which gives the office that 'e's pretty fly
To cunnin' lurks. 'E ain't to be beguiled
With fairy tales. An' when I've seen 'em try
'E's only smiled.

'Young friend,' 'e sez, 'I am beset by foes.
The Church,' 'e sez, 'is in a quandary.'
An' then 'e takes an' spills out all 'is woes,
An' 'ints that this 'ere job is up to me.

'Yer aid - per'aps yer strong right arm,' sez 'e,
'Is needed if we are to rescue Rose
From wot base schemes an' wot iniquity
Gawd only knows.'

This is the sorry tale. Rose, sick, an' low
In funds an' frien's, an' far too proud to beg,
Is gittin' sorely tempted fer to go
Into the spielin' trade by one Spike Wegg.
I knoo this Spike uv old; a reel bad egg,
'Oo's easy livin' is to git in tow
Some country mug, an' pull 'is little leg
Fer all 'is dough.

A crooked crook is Spike amongst the crooks,
A rat, 'oo'd come the double on 'is friends;
Flash in 'is ways, but innercint in looks
Which 'e works well fer 'is un'oly ends.
'It's 'ard to know,' sez Snowy, 'why Fate sends
Sich men among us, or why justice brooks
Their evil ways, which they but seldom mends
Except in books.

'Young friend,' 'e sez, 'You're known in Spadgers Lane.
You know their ways. We must seek out this man.
With 'er, pray'r an' persuasion 'ave been vain.
I've pleaded, but she's bound to 'is vile plan.
I'd 'ave you treat 'im gently, if you can;
But if you can't, well - I need not explain.'
('E twinkles 'ere) 'I'm growin' partisan;
I must refrain.'

'Do you mean stoush?' I sez. 'Fer if yeh do
I warn yeh that a scrap might put me queer.'
'Young friend,' sez 'e, 'I leave the means to you.
Far be it from the Church to interfere
With noble works.' But I sez, 'Now, look 'ere,
I got a wife at 'ome; you know 'er, too.
Ther's certin things I never could make clear
If once she knoo.

'I got a wife,' I sez, 'an' loves 'er well,

Like I loves peace an' quite. An' if I goes
Down into Spadgers, raisin' merry 'ell,
Breakin' the peace an' things account uv Rose,
Where that might land me goodness only knows.
'Ow women sees these things no man can tell.
I've done with stoush,' I sez. "Ard knocks an' blows
'Ave took a spell.

'I've done with stoush,' I sez. But in some place
Deep in me 'eart a voice begun to sing;
A lurin' little voice, with motives base...
It's ten long years since I was in a ring,
Ten years since I gave that left 'ook a swing.
Ten weary years since I pushed in a face;
An' 'ere's a chance to 'ave a little fling
With no disgrace.

'Stoush? Stoush, young friend?' 'e sez. 'Where 'ave I 'eard
That term? I gather it refers to strife.
But there,' 'e sez, 'why quarrel with a word?
As you 'ave said, indeed, I know yer wife;
An' should she 'ear you went where vice is rife
To battle fer the right - But it's absurd
To look fer gallantry in modrin life.
It's a rare bird.

'Young friend,' 'e sez. An' quicker than a wink
'Is twinklin' eyes grew sudden very grave.
'Young friend,' 'e sez, 'I know jist wot yeh think
Uv 'ow us parsons blather an' be'ave.
But I 'ave 'ere a woman's soul to save
A lonely woman, tremblin' on the brink
Uv black perdition, blacker than the grave.
An' she must sink.

'Yes, she must sink,' 'e sez. 'For I 'ave done
All that a man uv my poor parts can do.
An' I 'ave failed! There was not anyone
That I could turn to, till I met with you.
But now that 'ope 'as gone - an' 'er 'ope too.'
'Old on,' I sez. 'Just let me think for one
Brief 'alf-a-mo. I'd love a crack or two

At this flash gun.'

'Righto,' I sez (an' turns me back on doubt)
'I'm with yeh, parson. I go down to-night
To Spadgers, an' jist looks this Spike Wegg out.'
'Young friend,' 'e sez, 'be sure you've chosen right.
Remember, I do not desire a fight.
But if - ' 'Now don't you fret,' I sez, 'about
No vi'llince. If I'm forced, it will be quite
A friendly clout.'

'Young friend,' 'e sez, 'if you go, I go too.
Maybe, by counsel, I may yet injuce
This evil man - ' 'It ain't no game for you,'
I argues with 'im. But it ain't no use.
'I go!' 'e sez, an' won't take no ixcuse.
So that's all fixed. An' us crusaders two
Goes down to-night to Spadgers, to cut loose
Till all is blue.

'Ow can Doreen make trouble or git sore?
(Already I can 'ear 'er scold an' so
But this ain't stoushin'. It's a 'oly war!
The blessin' uv the Church is on the job.
I'm a church-worker, with full leave to lob
A sacrid left on Spike Wegg's wicked jor.
Jist let me! Once! An' after, s'elp me bob,
Never no more!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Hymn Of Heat

When Summer comes
To silence the retreating drums
Of stubborn Winter, when content
Shall salve my chill predicament.
And I shall loll beneath the sun
And dream of duties to be done;
While Phyllis my tall beaker fills
And Strephon dances on the hills
And pipes a lay, I'll take my ease
And listen to the labouring bees.
And mock their dull industrious hums
When Summer comes.

When Summer's here
And labourers look upon their beer
Most lovingly, while winking foam
Lisps, 'Send me home! Ah, send me home!'
And they, intoning briefly, "Sluck!"
Its gladness 'neath their pinnies tuck,
I, too, mayhap, shall send a pot,
Spurlos versunken, to that spot
Its magic warms; lest that stern man
Who rules my dietetic plan
Burbles, 'Verboten!' as I fear
When Summer's here.

When Summer shines,
Then to blue seas my choice inclines
Where nymphs upon the golden sands
Hold out Nirvana in glad hands,
Or run to greet the languorous sea
And, with mer-maiden modesty,
Frisk in foam. Then would I seize
Despite my ageing arteries
Joy by the beard! Unless, alack,
A flock of olden ills come back,
As come they will, by all the signs,
When Summer shines.

When Summer comes
Oh, let me loll 'neath sunlit gums
Yet, I don't know. A man must eat,
Come winter hail or summer heat;
And, that he eat, a man must toil.
Aye, tho' arterial systems boil.
Wherefore, 'twill likely be my lot,
As hitherto when days wax hot,
To yearn again in longing lays
For brisk, crisp, Winter's bracing days
To earn a few poor meagre crumbs
When Summer comes.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Land Shanty

Sou' sou' east, with the course set fair
Heave ho, me hearties!
On the Geelong road we're cruisin' there
Seven tars with ne'er a care
Heave ho, me hearties!

When up speaks Bill of trouble aft;
But the bos'n grinned and the skipper laughed;
An' 'e sez, 'We'll trust the queer ole craft
Heave ho, me hearties!'

Stuns'ls, mains'ls, all were set
Heave ho, me hearties!
An' the fust mate sez, 'We'll make port yet,
For the seas are smooth, so don't you fret
Heave ho, me hearties!'

But the steersman sez, 'I doubt her feel,
For she ain't responding to the wheel,
An' I got me doubts of 'r starboard keel
But heave ho, me hearties!'

There weren't no sea, tho' the gale was stiff
Heave ho, me hearties!
When this mad ole, bad ole dry land skiff
Is a total loss in 'arf a jiff
Heave ho, me hearties!

'Dry land,' the skipper sez, sez 'e,
'Is a 'ard, 'ard spot; give me the sea.'
An' so in 'ospital, sez we
With a heave ho, me hearties.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Letter From England

Dear Boy

As it appears to us old fogeys
If you'll excuse the term that we adopt
You and your battery of bowling bogeys
Seem to have come a rather nasty flop.
Psychology, you know, and moral suasion,
And all these fine nuances of the game
Appear to us, at least on this occasion,
To have been, so to speak, a trifle tame.

We would not be too hard; we know your task is
Sternier than we supposed when you set out
Avoiding criticism, all we ask is.
Please dropp 'shock tactics' and cut 'stunting' out.
Try to avoid a batting ace with roots on,
Like Don's, to keep him at the crease, old chap;
Use only bowlers who can keep their boots on,
And, please, please don't count too much on that cap.

If you think it would make your prospects brighter
And help the boys to bring those Ashes back,
We'll waive that rule about the player-writer
So that you may consider using Jack.
Take his advice, my boy; he knows the Aussie
And all his tricks. So, trusting you will be
On this day fortnight in a better 'possie,'
Your ever hopeful Auntie,

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Letter To The Front

I 'ave written Mick a letter in reply to one uv 'is,
Where 'e arsts 'ow things is goin' where the gums an' wattles is -
So I tries to buck 'im up a bit; to go fer Abdul's fez;
An' I ain't no nob at litrachure; but this is wot I sez:

I suppose you fellers dream, Mick, in between the scraps out them
Uv the land yeh left be'ind yeh when yeh sailed to do yer share:
Uv Collins Street, or Rundle Street, or Pitt, or George, or Hay,
Uv the land beyond the Murray or along the Castlereagh.
An' I guess yeh dream of old days an' the things yeh used to do,
An' yeh wonder 'ow 'twill strike yeh when yeh've seen this business thro';
An' yeh try to count yer chances when yeh've finished wiv the Turk
An' swap the gaudy war game fer a spell o' plain, drab work.

Well, Mick, yeh know jist 'ow it is these early days o' Spring,
When the gildin' o' the wattle chucks a glow on everything.
Them olden days, the golden days that you remember well,
In spite o' war an' worry, Mick, are wiv us fer a spell.
Fer the green is on the paddicks, an' the sap is in the trees,
An' the bush birds in the gullies sing the ole, sweet melerdies;
An' we're 'opin', as we 'ear 'em, that, when next the Springtime comes,
You'll be wiv us 'ere to listen to that bird tork in the gums.

It's much the same ole Springtime, Mick, yeh reckerlect uv yore;
Boronier an' dafferdils and wattle blooms once more
Sling sweetness over city streets, an' seem to put to shame
The rotten greed an' butchery that got you on this game -
The same ole sweet September days, an' much the same ole place;
Yet, there's a sort o' somethin', Mick, upon each passin' face,
A sort o' look that's got me beat; a look that you put there,
The day yeh lobbed upon the beach an' charged at Sari Bair.

It isn't that we're boastin', lad; we've done wiv most o' that -
The froth, the cheers, the flappin' flags, the giddy wavin' 'at.
Sich things is childish memories; we blush to 'ave 'em told,

Fer we 'ave seen our wounded, Mick, an' it 'as made us old.
We ain't growed soggy wiv regret, we ain't swelled out wiv pride;
But we 'ave seen it's up to us to lay our toys aside.
An' it wus you that taught us, Mick, we've growed too old fer play,
An' everlastin' picter shows, an' going' down the Bay.

An', as grown man dreams at times uv boy'ood days gone by,
So, when we're feelin' crook, I s'pose, we'll sometimes sit an' sigh.
But as a clean lad takes the ring wiv mind an' 'eart serene,
So I am 'opin' we will fight to make our man'ood clean.
When orl the stoushin's over, Mick, there's 'eaps o' work to do:
An' in the peaceful scraps to come we'll still be needin' you.
We will be needin' you the more fer wot yeh've seen an' done;
Fer you were born a Builder, lad, an' we 'ave jist begun.

There's bin a lot o' tork, ole mate, uv wot we owe to you,
An' wot yeh've braved an' done fer us, an' wot we mean to do.
We've 'ailed you boys as 'eroes, Mick, an' torked uv just reward
When you 'ave done the job yer at an' slung aside the sword.
I guess it makes yeh think a bit, an' weigh this gaudy praise;
Fer even 'eroes 'ave to eat, an' - there is other days:
The days to come when we don't need no bonzer boys to fight:
When the flamin' picnic's over an' the Leeuwin looms in sight.

Then there's another fight to fight, an' you will find it tough
To sling the Kharki clobber fer the plain civilian stuff.
When orl the cheerin' dies away, an' 'ero-worship flops,
Yeh'll 'ave to face the ole tame life - 'ard yakker or 'ard cops.
But, lad, yer land is wantin' yeh, an' wantin' each strong son
To fight the fight that never knows the firin' uv a gun:
The steady fight, when orl you boys will show wot you are worth,
An' punch a cow on Yarra Flats or drive a quill in Perth.

The gilt is on the wattle, Mick, young leaves is on the trees,
An' the bush birds in the gullies swap the ole sweet melerdies;
There's a good, green land awaitin' you when you come 'ome again
To swing a pick at Ballarat or ride Yarrowie Plain.
The streets is gay wiv dafferdils - but, haggard in the sun,

A wounded soljer passes; an' we know ole days is done;
Fer somew'ere down inside us, lad, is somethin' you put there
The day yeh swung a dirty left, fer us, at Sari Bair.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Likely Lad

Child of a myriad varied voices calling
O'er countless leagues of space in divers tongues,
Tho' captious critics view your ways appalling
And fain would quiet your all too strident lungs,
Raw youth must have its fling; and ten brief summers
Hardly suffice to make you a sage;
So, 'spite your crooners, clowns and jazz-drunk strummers,
You have not done so badly for your age.

Much water has flowed down many a river
(The McIntyre at Yetman, let us say)
Since first you set ethereal waves a-quiver
With that crude babbling of your natal day.
You're growing up, my lad, and waxing wiser;
Tho' still the crabbed, impatient censors rage.
As entertainer and as advertiser
You have not done so badly for your age.

And many lonely men in lonely places,
Have hailed you as a blessing and a joy,
Condoning all your rather callow graces
And that omniscient air that you employ,
Tho' still much over-prone to raucous bawling.
As boys will be, you're learning, stage by stage,
The wiser, weightier aspects of your calling,
You have not done so badly for your age.

Since days when first we fumbled the cat's-whisker,
And strained at ear-phones, yearning for a sound,
Your lighter moods have brighter grown, and brisker,
Your interludes of wisdom more profound.
If, thro' the next ten years, you keep on growing
To man's estate, and statelier arts engage,
You may please everyone; there is no knowing.
Still, you have not done badly for your age.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Lonely Man

When I'm out among the fellows, with the work to hold my mind,
Then there's heaps of joy in livin' an' the world seems awful kind
Awful kind an' awful jolly, with no trace of melancholy,
An' I tell myself the bloke that don't enjoy it must be blind
When I'm out among the fellows; but, when I am sittin' here,
Dreamin' by my lonely fireside, then the world gets kind of queer.

I suppose it's how you take it: what they call the point of view;
An' a man don't look for dreamin' when there's work for him to do.
But he can't be ever toilin', an' at times he gets to spoilin'
All the joy the day has brought him - when he lets the black thoughts through.
It suppose it's livin' lonely, as a fellow never should;
For a lonely man gets broodin', and the broodin' isn't good.

It's never good, the sayin' is, for man to live alone.
But 'tain't because I like it that I'm batchin' on my own,
For a bloke must take what's goin', an' my life ain't all been growin'
Daffodils and hummin' dance tunes just to give my soul a tone.
It's muscle I've had to grow since days when I was small,
An' all the muscle that I've made is with the axe an' maul.

When folks are poor an' toil is hard an' times are harder still
A boy soon learns the use of time if he would eat his fill.
Long before I'd finished schoolin' I had put aside my foolin'.
Till now, at thirty an' a bit, I'm workin' at a mill.
It isn't much; then then my folks knew that my chance was dim,
Or they might have named me Reginald instead of just plain Jim.

Just Jim the Hatter, Lonely Jim, the bloke that don't say much.
I've heard how people talk of me: the gossipers an' such.
An' they say I'm slow at givin'; but I've got my way of livin',
An' I've got my bit of farm-land an' a house that ain't a hutch.
An' tho it hurts if this man sneers or that misunderstands,
I'm proud to know that all I've got was earned with my two hands.

Suppose I don't go gay at times an' throw around the cash:
It's knowin' want that frightened me from gettin' over rash.
I know I'm keen on savin'; but the pinchin' and the slavin'
An' the starvin' in the old days keeps a man from bein' flash.

I never treated neighbours mean or grudged a man a pound;
But I ain't out to buy loud cheers by throwin' it around.

An' after all - well, I don't know - it sums up much the same;
No matter how a man has lived, no matter what his aim
If it's savin', if it's spendin' - all his life is just a blandin'
Of the gay days an' the grey days: an' he's got to play the game.
So where's the use of grumblin' if the game don't suit your bent?
I tells myself this all night - an' yet I ain't content.

There's days that sometimes come to me when toilin's simple bliss,
An' every little job becomes a joy I wouldn't miss:
When the labour seems like playin', an' I catch myself a-sayin',
'Why, it's grand to think a man gets paid for doin' things like this!'
But, after, came the lonely night, when I've looked back an' said,
'To think I have to slave like that to earn a bit of bread!'

When I'm out among the fellows, oh, the world's a place to prize;
But here, beside my lonely fire, the glamour of it dies.
Sittin' here I take to gettin' gloomy views of things, an' frettin'
Till my dog looks up, and wonders, with a question in his eyes.
He's been my mate for years an' years, an' things that folks don't see
Both good an' bad has been thrashed out by my old dog an' me.

Well he knows he's safe for sharin' while I've got a bite an' sup.
When I'm fit, he's full of frolic, laughin' like a silly pup
Out for fun. But when I'm feelin' sad at night, he just comes stealin'
To the fire an' stretches out there with his brown eyes lookin' up,
Lit with such a queer soft sadness that I feel it isn't fair
My own private little worries spoils the evenin' for the pair.

Here, to-night, I've sat an' told him - while his tail flopped on the floor
Of particular conditions that have got me feelin' sore.
An' my present little worry is the matter of Ben Murray
An' his sudden-like attentions to the widow at the store.
I ain't nothin' to the widow, as Ben Murray ought to see;
But I hear he's taken fight lately, with some reference to me.

I ain't nothin' to the widow - not as yet, at any rate;
Tho' a bloke can't be dead certain what is like to be his fate.
But I own that I've been thinkin', an' there ain't no use in blinkin'
At the fact a man must settle down before it gets too late.

I ain't nothing to the widow - don't know that I ever will.
Seems to me it's awful reckless takin' lifelong chances - still...

Me an' my old dog's been talkin' quite a lot - of love an' things:
Weighin' matters; an' we reckon this here love is full of stings,
Fuller than a stingin' nettle. If a fellow wants to settle
He needs solid care an' comfort, not the stuff the poet sings.
Love an' all that talk, we reckon, is a silly sort of fake -
What's a plain man wantin' further if his wife can wash and bake?

I ain't nothin' to the widow ... Neither is Ben Murray though!
An' he won't find me unwillin' if he wants a little go.
I'm not over-keen on fightin'; but his boastin' and his skitin'
Puts my back up; an' his sneerin' often gets down pretty low.
Course, the widow's never mentioned - that's to say, by name, outright;
But I know what's gnawin' at him when I hear he's talking fight.

Talkin' fight an' acting' ugly: not reel earnest, half an' half -
Shootin' sneers into his smilin', slingin' spite nto his chaff.
Tho' a fight I'm never shirkin', when I'm with the fellows, workin',
I can give him good as he does, an' just take it with a laugh.
But at evenin' when I'm broodin', I chew over all the lot,
Till his jokes swell into insults an' his hintin' makes me hot.

He can have it - if he wants it! He won't be too long denied!
But I've heard he's mentioned fivers - wants to fight five pounds a side.
If I'm licked, of course, I lose it; an' that fool and will go and booze it:
Throw it clean into the gutter with the other cash he's shied.
I been told to-day he's saying' that his fiver saves his skin. . . .
Wonder what he meant, the blighter, that should make the fellows grin. . . .

Jumpin' Moses! . . . He can have it! Anywhere an' anywhen!
Fivers? let him talk of fivers! Holy wars, I'll make it ten!
He'll get fightin', too, in plenty. If he likes I'll make it twenty!
We shall see whose skin is safest an' whose hide is toughest then.
I ain't got no grudge against him - only what the rotter's said.
I ain't nothin' to the widow! ... Here, old dog, we'll get to bed

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Love Letter

Dearest!

You know you ever ARE the nearest
To my fond heart.

Joking apart,
I swear, by all the silly stars above you,
Darling, I love you! ...

I really don't know what more I can say.
But, lest you may
Consider this epistle too brief,
And nurse some silly - some absurd belief
That I'm neglectful. Why,
I'll try
To fill a sheet or two -
To comfort you.

What can I say?

Oh, by the way!

I noticed, somewhere, in the paper lately
That someone named - er - was it Mister Blaitley?
No - Blakeley, I think.

(Another dip of ink.)

This Mr. Blakeley says the Labor Party
Will gladly give support, both full and hearty,
To ANY man who send this person, Hughes
To - well, you know the term that I would use? . . .

Darling, I must fill out a sheet or two.

I know that you

Are not much interested in politics -
(You are so full of such distracting tricks)
And I remember that last time you noted
You said you simply doted
Upon one candidate's absurd moustache.

Dear, you were rash

Now, let me see, 'twas Brown - No? Smithson, was it?

I recollect the fool lost his deposit.

But, anyhow,

I want to warn you now

Against a repetition of such acts.

Let us get down to facts.

Can you believe -
Can you, my precious pippin, e'er conceive
That I (despite my faults and obvious failings) could -
(No; that's no good.)
But can
You realise that a crowd of sane, honest, intelligent, right-thinking, earnest,
idealistic politicians can evolve a really patriotic plan
(That's getting scientific,
But I am most remarkably prolific)
Can
They evolve a plan
Predicating that any ordinary and, say, unspecified man
(Your pardon! I do not
Refer to Mister Watt)
But do you think they can
With decency declare that ANY MAN
May get then into Office - if he can?
Indubitably, NO!!
The more I go -
However, inter alia,
Think you such men give heed to our Australia?
Think you those burning
Questions waiting on the threshold yearning
To be discussed
Have got them 'fussed'?
No, sweetest, no.
It's just the Game you know.
Think you they're patriotic,
Or just, well, say neurotic?
Think you they take the view
That these shrewd moves advance, say, me and you?
My dear, they don't.
And, while the Party System lasts, they won't.
Those vital questions,
Those statesmanlike suggestions
Regarding - well - why, emigration, say
And some reduction in a member's pay,
That linger on the doormat, palpitating,
Will go on waiting,
While puerile politicians 'play the game.'
Ain't it a shame? . . .
My cabbage! I'd forgotten

You always thought that politics were 'rotten.'
Pardon this letter.
Next time I shall endeavour to do better
If you are bored, old thug, it truly grieves me.
I hope this missive finds you as it leaves me.
So, dear, I'll meet you on the block at six.
And spite all politics,
We'll carry on.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Love Song

O! Hernia! My hernia.
'Twas here we parted dear
A parting that for four long weeks
Held me in sickness here.

But three short hours I knew you, love
Well I remember yet
I left a tram in Collins street
And suddenly, we met.

No mortal could have parted us
While reason held its sway
They drugged me, Gentle Hernia
And carried you away.

And then I knew my Hernia
Where ere what ere you are
Our parting at Coonara Street
Has left me with a scar.

A scar that I shall bear thro life
A memory of you.
And Hernia! O Hernia,
My bank-book has one too.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Matter Of Degree

B. SMITH would most undoubtedly be very, very cross
If some rude person called him Jap, and yet, I'm at a loss
To see how he could argue otherwise in that respect:
A Jap is human - or a rumour's rife to that effect.
And he talks and argues much the same as B.
So, if SMITH is not a twin
To his cherished Yellow-skin,
Why it's only just a matter of degree,
Just a trifling little matter of degree.

Now, a Jap is not a monkey. though he's oft compared with such,
And he doesn't look unlike one, so it hardly matters much.
A monkey has a fearsome phiz, and hands that grab at things,
And he imitates his betters - all of which the matter brings
To a very clear conclusion, seems to me,
Which you cannot fairly funk:
If a Jap is not a monk
Ey, it's patently a matter of degree.
And we needn't mind a matter of degree.

Of native monkeys hereabout, of course, you haven't heard;
And a monkey's not a native bear, which, clearly, is absurd,
And yet, a bear clings to a tree with young bears on its back
(My word! we're getting on a rather interesting tack)
Yes, it clings there like the cheerful chimpanzee.
So, if monkeys are not bears
So, overlooking certain petty matters of degree,
We are forced to these conclusions with undoubted certaintee:
B. SMITH'S a Jap, a Jap's an ape (according unto SMITH),
An ape's a bear, a bear's a bunyip, and the last's a myth!
It's as clear as any argument can be
That if our dear friend SMITH
Is not a simple myth
It's an unimportant matter of degree,
Quite a microscopic matter of degree.

A Matter Of Privacy

Ben Bowyang spluttered with rage suppressed, 'Hi, there!' And his brow was black,

As two by two and three by three the tourists left the track,
Climbing the fence to his 'tater' patch, and down thro' his orchard land,
Flannelled or fashioned in strides and shorts - a saucy suburban band -
Giggling gambolling into his yard calling inane 'Cooees'

While Bowyang frothed at the mouth and fumed. But his voice was a futile wheeze,

And, heading the horde, in a blazer bright, monarch of all he surveyed,
Strode little Fitzmickle, the martinet, a Don in the drapery trade.

'You've trampled me taters,' Bowyang roared. 'Pinched bloom from me orchard bough!

You've pelted me poddies an' dished me fence! Look at that nettin' now!
Ain't you no respect for a privit home, you towerist coots from town?'

But Mr Fitzmickle, he turned on his heel with a very superior frown.

'Come, ladies,' he said, 'come, gentlemen. Unmannerly rustic brute!

My card, with name and address, my man, if you wish to prosecute.'

Then back they trampled thro' the 'tater' patch, back o'er the orchard land,
While Bowyang gaped like a stranded fish, with the pasteboard cluthed in his hand.

Mr Fitzmickle, the martinet, sat in his smug retreat -

A very respectable villa set in a very respectable street.

For Mr Fitzmickle found harbor here when the contry boors came down
To dawdle about for their Show-week spree and clutter the streets in town.

Then in to him rushed his terrified wife, eyes wide, and breathing hard.

'Come quick!' she gasped. 'There's a mob of rougns gone crazy in our back yard!

They've trampled herbaceous borders down, they've kicked the canary's cage -'

'Enough!' cried Fitzmickle, all pink with wrath; and his rage was a ratepayer's rage.

Poker in hand, he rushed without; but paused by the scullery door

For there, on his seedlings, trodden and tossed, stood one whom he'd seen before.

And, gathered about in the burgeoning beds, were strangely silent men;

Till one with a beard spoke up and said, 'Explain to the gentleman, Ben.'

Ben Bowyang smiled, and his voice was bland as he said, 'Aw, well; we're 'ere Jist sorta returnin' yer social call as you made on us last year.

My card!' And he bounced a clod from the face of the proud Fitzmicklian cat
But Mr Fitzmickle oblivious lay. He was having a fit on the mat.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Message: Armistice Day 1936

I got dreamin' that a message come in some mysterious way
From one ole pal of mine, gone West this many an' many a day,
A bloke the name of Ginger Mick, a fightin' cove I knoo.
(But 'e's Digger Corporal Mick Esquire, late A.I.F., to you)
'E got 'is on Gallipoli, an' sleeps there with the best,
Not leavin' very much be'ind, excep' one small request.
'Look after things,' was all 'e said, when 'e was mortal 'urt.
Dead sure 'is mates - that's me an' you - would never do 'im dirt.

(Think of it in the Silence, with yer 'eads bowed low:
Do we keep the unspoke compact with the men we used to know?)

For I dreams it in the silence of a dark Remembrance Eve;
An' the message seems to tell me it is gettin' late to grieve.
'But if you seem to miss us still, then get the sob-stuff o'er,
An' think about the things wot we went an' fought a war.
Send up a pray`r an' dropp a tear an' bend a reverent knee -
(Says Digger Corporal Ginger Mick, A.I.F., says 'e)
But is them things we fought for still the things most dear to you:
The honor an' the glory an' the mateship that we knew?'

(Think of it in the Silence, when the Last Post plays -
The splendid glimpse of Truth we 'ad, once, in the bitter days)

'Grief is a passin' compliment,' the message seems to say;
But tears don't carry on the job for men that drift away.
We 'ad small time or taste for such where guns was raisin' 'ell,
When we got busy plantin' blokes an' wishin' 'em farewell.
We blowed sad music over 'em - plain Digs, or Brass 'at Knuts -
But we played a quick-step comin' back, to show we 'ad the guts.
Our speech was rough, our ways was tough - tough as our bloody game.
Are the rough, tough, lads still honored, like when the Terror came?'

(Think of it, in the Silence, when their spirits hover near:
The vision and the vows that held while still the land knew fear.)

'E's sleepin' on Gallipoli. At least, 'is bones is there:
Bones worth a ton of livin' flesh that won't play fair -
Not till the Terror comes again. 'An' when it does,' says 'e,

If gods you've worshipped let you down, well, don't blame me.'
'E's seen a lot, an' learned a lot most like, where 'e 'as gone;
An' 'eaven 'elp us when we meet if we ain't carried on.
A vulgar person, Ginger Mick, a fightin' cove I knoo -
(But Digger Corporal Ginger Mick, if you please, to you.)

(Think of it in the Silence; an', if you pray, pray deep
That all we 'ave an' all we are old loyalties shall keep.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Mixed Crew

Tho' it sounds a trifle mystic,
Somewhat vague and cabbalistic,
When you come to analyse the inner side
Of political alliance
You will find it is a science
That embraces matters delicate and wide.
It involves the close cohesion of the faction or cabal,
And the very fleeting friendship of the temporary pal.

But pull for the shore, lads, pull for the shore.
Never mind wot boat yer in, struggle at yer oar.
Cook is on the gunwale, cursin' us fer cows;
Deakin's in stern-sheets. Mauger's at the bows;
The stormy winds are blowin' an' the enemy's at hand;
We must settle it among us when we're safely on the land.

There's the Temporary Fusion;
Which is mainly an illusion
When you view it in the light of ev'ry day.
But politically? - truly
'Tis a state in which, unduly,
You are never pledged or promised either way.
An ideal party union, where a man may trim his sail;
Though vulgar folk allude to it as 'sitting on a rail.'

But pull for the shore, lads, pull for the shore.
We'll settle in the harbour when the hurricane is o'er.
Quick is partly inside; Irnine's partly out;
Wille Kelly's overside, floundering' about;
Forrest's at mast'ead, letting out a roar.
Never mind who owns the boat. Pull for the shore.

Then there's the Coalition,
Which is entered on condition
You can swallow certain principles with ease.
'Tis corruption sugar-coated;
And no matter how you've voted

In the past, you may change it if you please.
Though the common crowd may scoff at the reversal of your vote,
If you murmur 'Coalition' you may safely turn your coat.

But pull for the shore, lads, pull for the land.
Never mind who owns the craft, lend a willin' hand.
Smith is on the bowsprit, yellin' 'Anti-Sosh'!
Reid is on the towline, draggin' in the wash;
Jawbone Neild is founderin', shoutin' for a rope;
But pull, lads, pull, for the shore's our only hope.
Note you now the Understanding,
Quite devoid of party branding,
Where the parties undertake to understand
That, in certain set conditions,
They'll consider their positions,
And reach out for what they want with either hand.
And for the country's welfare and the nation's lasting good,
They agree to understand that they are all misunderstood.

But pull for the shore, lads, pull for the shore.
Groom is on the fore'atch with 'arf a dozen more;
Knox is in the chart-room makin' up his mind;
Wilks is on a hen-coop, draggin' on behind.
Never mind the company; only keep afloat.
You can't be too particular who's mannin' of the boat.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Morning Song

The thrush is in the wattle tree, an', 'O, you pretty dear!
He's callin' to his little wife for all the bush to hear.
He's wantin' all the bush to know about his charmin' hen;
He sings it over fifty times, an' then begins again.
For it's Mornin'! Mornin'! The world is wet with dew,
With tiny drops a-twinkle where the sun comes shinin' thro'.

The thrush is in the wattle tree, red robin's underneath,
The little blue-cap's dodgin' in an' out amongst the heath;
An' they're singin', boy, they're singin' like they'd bust 'emselves to bits;
While, up above, old Laughin' Jack is having forty fits.
For it's Mornin'! Mornin'! The leaves are all ashine:
There's treasure all about the place; an' all of it is mine.

Oh, it's good to be a wealthy man, it's grand to be a king
With mornin' on the forest-land an' joy in everything.
It's fine to be a healthy man with healthy work to do
In the singin' land, the clean land, washed again with dew.
When sunlight slants across the trees, an' birds begin to sing,
Then kings may snore in palaces, but I'm awake - and king.

But the king must cook his breakfast, an' the king must sweep the floor;
Then out with axe on shoulder to his kingdom at the door,
His old dog sportin' on ahead, his troubles all behind,
An' joy mixed in the blood of him because the world is kind.
For it's Mornin'! Mornin'! Time to out an' strive!
Oh, there's not a thing I'm askin' else but just to be alive!

It's cranky moods a man will get an' funny ways of mind;
For I've a memory of one whose thoughts were all unkind:
Who sat an' brooded thro' the night beside the blazin' log,
His home a mirthless, silent house, his only pal a dog.
But it's Mornin'! Mornin'! I nurse no thought but praise,
I've more good friends than I could count, tho' I should count for days.

My friends are in the underbrush, my friends are in the trees,
An' merrily they welcome me with mornin' melodies.
Above, below, from bush an' bough each calls his tuneful part;
An' best of all, one trusty friend is callin' in my heart.
For it's Mornin'! Mornin'! When night's black troubles end.
An' never man was friendless yet who stayed his own good friend.

Ben Murray, he's no friend of mine, an' well I know the same;
But why should I be thinkin' hate, an' nursin' thoughts of blame?
Last evenin' I'd no friend within, but troubles all around,
An' madly thought to fight a man for ten or twenty pound.
But it's Mornin'! Mornin'! my friend within's alive,
An' he'd never risk a twenty - tho' he might consider five.

But where's the call to think of strife with such good things about?
The gum-leaves are a-twinkle as the sun comes peepin' out.
The blue-cap's in an' out the fern, red robin's on the gate,
An' who could hear the song of them a hold a thought of hate?
Oh, it's Mornin'! Mornin'! No time for thinkin' wrong.
An' I'd be scared to strike a man, I feel so awful strong.

Grey thrush is in the wattle, an' it's, 'O, you pretty dear!
He's callin' to his little wife, an' don't care who should hear
In the great bush, the fresh bush, washed again with dew.
An' my axe is on my shoulder, an' there's work ahead to do.
Oh, it's Mornin'! Singin' Mornin'! in the land I count the best,
An' with the heart an' mind of me I'm singin' with the rest.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A New Damon And Pythias

CHARLES:

So, brother, I am out and yu are in.
Farewell, farewell, to all my splendor bright!
Yet, just to know 'tis you, dear Agar Wynne,
Tinges my melancholy with delight.
Indeed, I find it very hard to go;
Yet pleasure surely mingles with my woe.

Ay, you are in, and I am in - the soup!
For me the shades; for you the favored place.
Yet doth it cheer me when my spirits droop
Just to behold yur ever welcome face.
Aside. (But by the gods, just give me half a show,
The merest chance to kick, and out you go!)

AGAR:

Sweet Frazer, though I ill disguise my joy
In winning thus to fame, despite my foes;
It pains me to the heart, my dear old boy,
To think 'tis you whom I must so depose.
Nay, but it brings the hot tears to mine eyes,
To know that you must sink that I may rise.

Agar is in, and Charles is out, you say.
Tis sure a cruel fortune wills it so.
My joy is clouded o'er with grief to-day.
Because, my dear old friend, you have to go.
Aside. (But, give me strength, and I shall scheme and plan
To keep you out for ever, if I can!)

CHARLES:

Dear Agar, when I gaze into your eyes,
Those kindly orbs whose depths so well I know,
Nay, I am filled with wonder and surprise
That I did not resign long years ago.
For who is Charles, to hold a place on high,

When such a man as Agar Wynne is by?

Indeed, the sorrow I so lately felt
Has given place to purest joy alone:
For now, at last, discerning Fate has dealt
Bare justice, and you sit upon my throne.
Aside. (But give me half a chance, that's all I crave;
I'll dig with joy your Legislative grave!)

AGAR:

Nay, rare Charles Edward, 'tis your blind regard
For him you love prompts that unselfish speech.
Ah, would that Fate - blind Fate, so doubly hard
Had never placed these sweets within my reach!
If 'twere not for my Party, friend, I'd say,
'Cleave you to office, Charles; I will away.'

Forgive these tears; for now my joy has flown.
And in its stead come pangs of dull despair.
Ah, could I but contrive, my friend, mine own!
To yield you of my triumph even a share!
Aside. (Now, by the Sacred Fuse, you've got the sack
And I'll raise Cain to stop your getting back.)

CHARLES:

Agar! These tears are tears of sorrow rare!
My past neglect of you brings keen regret.

AGAR:

Dear Charles, if you've a kerchief you could spare,
Pray lend it me. Mine own is sopping wet.
Both, aside. (Now, having pulled his leg, I shall retire
And, to confound him, with my friends conspire.)

Exit both, apparently in tears, but eyeing each other furtively from
behind their respective handkerchiefs.

UNIMPORTANT CLERK (Advancing):

Well, spare my days! Of all the blessed guff!
And if, next week, Wynne's out and Frazer's in.
They'll probably dish up the same old stuff,
While honest men can only stand and grin.
More change! More toil! More worry for our sins!
A plague on all their childish Outs and INs!

Now must we shed the Labor livery,
And learn new manners in the Lib'ral school.
And, mayhap, in a twelve-month we shall be
Once more returned unto the Labor rule.
Oh, that the gods would blast such tricks as these,
And send this land Elective Ministries!

Bell rings. Exit.
CURTAIN.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A New Year Thought

Brother, who on some near morrow
Makes a pledge conceived in sorrow
Makes a New Year resolution
Seeking plenary ablution.
Makes a vow to cease from sinning
With this New Year's beginning
Here's a thought to give you gladness,
Here's relief from old year sadness.

Brother, you and I are men.
We have sinned; and yet again
Shall we sin. An old year's dying
Still shall find us ever trying.
Yet here is a thought worth knowing,
While our wild oats we are sowing,
Sowing where we may not reap
Here's a thought to have and keep.

Why waste effort in our sinning,
For no goodlier grace we're winning?
Let our failings serve an end
That shall stand us as a friend.
But when we make resolutions
Bets of New Year institutions
Let us heed the later breaking
In an effort of their making.

Thus, philosophy is giving
Some excuse for our loose living.
For, while these resolves we make
Now to hold, and now to break,
We are in our misbehaving
Helping greatly with the paving
Built of potsherd, scrap and shred
That we'll some day have to tread.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A New Year's Toast

Here's to every Aussie fellow,
Who refused to show the yellow
When depression's clammy hand
Cast its shadow o'er the land.

Here's to them who never altered
When the timid feared and faltered,
But with dogged confidence
Backed their nation's sound good sense.

Here's to them who, ne'er reviling,
Took the knock and came up smiling -
Battlers with their steadfast gaze
Fixed ahead on better days.

Aussie cobbbers, strong thro' striving,
Chastened by ill-luck are thriving;
Now that better days are near
Here's a prosperous New Year!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Post-Cup Tale

I'ad the money in me 'and!
Fair dinkum! Right there, by the stand.
I tole me wife at breakfus' time,
Straight out: 'Trivalve,' I sez 'is prime.
Trivalve,' I sez. An', all the week,
I swear ther's no one 'eard me speak
Another 'orse's name. Why, look,
I 'ad the oil straight from a Book
On Sund'y at me cousin's place
When we was torkin' of the race.
'Trivalve,' 'e sez. ''Is chance is grand.'
I 'ad the money in me 'and!

Fair in me 'and I 'ad the dough!
An' then a man 'as got to go -
Wot? Tough? Look, if I 'adn't met
Jim Smith (I ain't forgave 'im yet)
'E takes an' grabs me be the coat.
'Trivalve?' 'e sez. 'Ar, turn it up!
'Ow could 'e win a flamin'Cup?'
Of course, I thort 'e muster knoo.
'Im livin' near a trainer, too.

Right 'ere, like that, fair in me fist
I 'ad the notes! An' then I missed -
Missed like a mug fair on the knock
Becos 'is maggin' done me block.
'That airy goat?' 'e sez. 'E's crook!
Fair knocked me back, 'e did. An' look,
I 'ad the money in me 'and!
Fair in me paw! An', un'erstand,
Sixes at least I coulder got -
Thirty to five, an' made a pot.
Today I mighter been reel rich
Rollin' in dough! Instid o' which,
'Ere's me - Aw! Don't it beat the band?
I 'AD THE MONEY IN ME 'AND!
Put me clean off, that's wot 'e did...
Say, could yeh len' us 'arf a quid?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Quest For Tophet

'Twas a hell of a Hell they glimpsed, my son,
In superstitious days
When cultured man had scarce begun
To shed barbaric ways:
With gridirons set above the flame
For naughty gentlemen.
Who uttered lies that earned them blame
And righteous folk condemn.
'Twas a terrible sort of a Hell, my son,
That crude man pictured then.

But picture a land laid waste, my lad,
In scientific style,
While supermen of a world gone mad
Plan forms of torture vile;
While innocent children fight for breath
In a gas-filled city's street,
And mothers of men call on kind Death
As a friend whose kiss is sweet.
If you're looking about for a Hell, my lad,
You will find this hard to beat.

'Twas the deuce of a Devil they raised, my son,
To rule in their ancient Hells
Horns and a tail, yet a figure of fun,
With a hint of the cap and bells.
With a fork for weapon, he roamed the earth
To garner the souls of men,
Who had slipped from grace: and, with shouts of mirth,
He pitched them into his Pen.
'Twas a humorous sort of a Devil, my son,
That dull folk fled from then.

But picture a Devil at work, my boy,
In his foetid chemical lair.
As he brews Hell broths with a ghoulish joy
To foul god's clean sweet air.
Picture a Devil with bombs on high -
Mass murderer, reeking sin,

As he rains gaunt death from a smiling sky,
And goes, with a maniac grin.
If you're seeking a Devil sans mercy, boy,
He is here, 'neath your Brother's skin.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Song Of Anzac

'When I'm sittin' in me dug-out, with me rifle on me knees,
An' a yowlin', 'owlin' chorus comes a-floatin' up the breeze
Just a bit o' 'Bonnie Mary'
Or 'Long Way to Tipperary'
Then I know I'm in Australia took an' planted overseas...'

So we sang in days remembered - fateful days of pain and war
When the young lads went forth singing, ship-bound for an unknown shore.
They were singing, ever singing, careless lads in careworn days,
Sturdy youths, but yet unblooded to red war's unholy ways.
From a land untouched by slaughter
Fared they forth across the water:
Some to Destiny's grim gateway where the scarlet poppy sways.

* * * *

'They were singin' on the troopship, they were singin' in the train;
When they left their land behind them they were shoutin' a refrain.
An' I'll bet they have a chorus
Gay an' glad in greetin' for us
When their bit of scrappin's over an' they sail back home again...'

So we sang to dull the aching that was looming even then
When the boys went out to battle, to come back stern fighting men.
So we strove to keep hope buoyant while they lived untouched by war,
But they came back, not with singing, when those anxious days were o'er
Disillusioned and war-weary,
And, for all their smiles were cheery,
Some came bitter, some came broken, some, they came back nevermore.

And today again they're marching, rugged veterans, grey and grave
These, who joined the carefree chorus, shouting many an olden stave
To the tramping cohorts' motion;
To the rolling of the ocean;
In their singing seeking kinship that high youth must ever crave.
Aye, today again they're marching with old faith and fellowship;
Grave and grey, with memory marching, but no song lifts to the lip.
Year by year the Boys are gathered; year by year the count grows fewer;
But the flame, new-lit on Anzac, goes before them burning pure;

And the Song of Anzac ringing
High above them, sounding, swinging,
Tells that memory of Anzac shall endure while these endure.

* * * *

They are marching with the old days, with the singing in their hearts,
With the memory of mateship that for not one hour departs:
Silent men, with sober faces,
Marking now the vacant places
Yearly growing, yearly showing where life ends and hope re-starts.
That trimphant Song of Anzac that the living Anzac hears -
Hears imperfectly and dimly,
As he tramps on gravely, grimly
Haunts the old familiar roadway he has trodden thro' the years.
Done are these with youth's vain dreaming who have yet to pay earth's price,
These who harked to young mates singing,
These who saw their young souls winging,
Ever singing, blithely singing, to the gates of Paradise.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Song Of Rain

Because a little vagrant wind veered south from China Sea;
Or else, because a sun-spot stirred; and yet again, maybe
Because some idle god in play breathed on an errant cloud,
The heads of twice two million folk in gratitude are bowed.

Patter, patter... Boolconmatta,
Adelaide and Oodnadatta,
Pepegoona, parched and dry
Laugh beneath a dripping sky.
Riverina's thirsting plain
Knows the benison of rain.
Ararat and Arkaroola
Render thanks with Tantanoola
For the blessings they are gaining,
And it's raining - raining - raining!

Because a heaven-sent monsoon the mists before it drove;
Because things happened in the moon; or else, because High Jove,
Unbending, played at waterman to please a laughing boy,
The hearts through all a continent are raised in grateful joy.

Weeps the sky at Wipipee
Far Farina's folk are dippy
With sheer joy, while Ballarat
Shouts and flings aloft its hat.
Thirsty Thackaringa yells;
Taltabooka gladly tells
Of a season wet and windy;
Men rejoice on Murrindindie;
Kalioota's ceased complaining;
For it's raining - raining - raining!

Because a poor bush parson prayed an altruistic prayer,
Rich with unselfish fellow-love that Heaven counted rare;
And yet, mayhap, because one night a meteor was hurled
Across the everlasting blue, the luck was with our world.

On the wilds of Winininnie
Cattle low and horses whinny,

Frolicking with sheer delight.
From Beltana to The Bight,
In the Mallee's sun-scorched towns,
In the sheds on Darling Downs,
In the huts at Yudnapinna,
Tents on Tidnacoordininna,
To the sky all heads are craning
For it's raining - raining - raining!

Because some strange, cyclonic thing has happened - God knows where
Men dream again of easy days, of cash to spend and spare.
The ring fair Clara coveted, Belinda's furs are nigh,
As clerkings watch their increments fall shining from the sky.
Rolls the thunder at Eudunda;
Leongatha, Boort, Kapunda
Send a joyous message down;
Sorrows, flooded, sink and drown.
Ninkerloo and Nerim South
Hail the breaking of the drouth;
From Toolangi's wooded mountains
Sounds the song of plashing fountains;
Sovereign Summer's might is waning;
It is raining - raining - raining!

Because the breeze blew sou'-by-east across the China Sea;
Or else, because the thing was willed through all eternity
By gods that rule the rushing stars, or gods long aeons dead,
The earth is made to smile again, and living things are fed.

Mile on mile from Mallacoota
Runs the news, and far Baroota
Speeds it over hill and plain,
Till the slogan of the rain
Rolls afar to Yankalilla;
Wallaroo and Wirrawilla
Shout it o'er the leagues between,
Telling of the dawning green.
Frogs at Cocoroc are croaking,
Booboorowie soil is soaking,
Oodla Wirra, Orroroo
Breathe relief and hope anew.
Wycheproof and Wollongong

Catch the burden of the song
That is rolling, rolling ever
O'er the plains of Never Never,
Sounding in each mountain rill,
Echoing from hill to hill...
In the lonely, silent places
Men lift up their glad, wet faces,
And their thanks ask no explaining
It is raining - raining - raining!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Spring Song

The world 'as got me snouted jist a treat;
Crool Forchin's dirty left 'as smote me soul;
An' all them joys o' life I 'eld so sweet
Is up the pole.
Fer, as the poit sez, me 'eart 'as got
The pip wiv yearnin' fer -- I dunno wot.

I'm crook; me name is Mud; I've done me dash;
Me flamin' spirit's got the flamin' 'ump!
I'm longin' to let loose on somethin' rash....
Aw, I'm a chump!
I know it; but this blimed ole Springtime craze
Fair outs me, on these dilly, silly days.

The young green leaves is shootin' on the trees,
The air is like a long, cool swig o' beer,
The bonzer smell o' flow'rs is on the breeze
An 'ere's me, 'ere,
Jist mooching around like some pore, barmy coot,
Of 'ope, an' joy, an' forchin destichoot.

I've lorst me former joy in gettin' shick,
Or 'eadin' browns; I 'aven't got the 'eart
To word a tom; an' square an' all, I'm sick
Of that cheap tart
'Oo chucks 'er carcis at a feller's 'head
An' mauls 'im ... Ar! I wish't that I wus dead!...

Ther's little breezes stirrin' in the leaves,
An sparrers chirpin' 'igh the 'ole day long;
An 'on the air a sad, sweet music breaves
A bonzer song --
A mournful sorter choon thet gits a bloke
Fair in the brisket 'ere, an' makes 'im choke...

What is the matter wiv me? ... I dunno.
I got a sorter yearning 'ere inside,
A dead-crook sorter thing that won't let go
Or be denied --

A feelin' I want to do a break,
An' stoush creation for some woman's sake.

The little birds is chirpin' in the nest,
The parks an' gardings is a bosker sight,
Where smilin' tarts walks up an' down, all dressed
In clobber white.
An', as their snowy forms goes steppin' by,
It seems I'm seekin' something on the sly.

Somethin' or someone -- I don't rightly know;
But, seems to me, I'm kind er lookin' for
A tart I knoo a 'undred years ago,
Or, maybe, more.
Wot's this I've 'eard them call that thing? ... Geewhizz!
Me ideel bit o' skirt! That's wot it is!

Me ideel tart! ... An, bli'me, look at me!
Jist take a squiz at this, an' tell me can
Some square an' honist tom take this to be
'Er own true man?
Aw, Gawd! I'd be as true to 'er, I would --
As straight an' stiddy as ... Ar, wot's the good?

Me, that 'as done me stretch fer stoushin' Johns,
An' spen's me leisure getting on the shick,
An' 'arf me nights down there in Little Lon.,
Wiv Ginger Mick,
Jist 'eading 'em, an' doing in me gilt.
Tough luck! I s'pose it's 'ow a man is built.

It's 'ow Gawd builds a bloke; but don't it 'urt
When 'e gits yearnin's fer this 'igher life,
On these Spring mornin's, watchin' some sweet skirt --
Some fucher wife --
Go sailin' by, an' turnin' on his phiz
The glarssy eye -- fere bein' wot 'e is.

I've watched 'em walkin' in the gardings 'ere --
Cliners from orfices an' shops an' such;
The sorter skirts I dursn't come too near,
Or dare to touch.

An, when I see the kind er looks they carst ...
Gorstooth! Wot is the use o' me, I arst?

Wot wus I slung 'ere for? An' wot's the good
Of yearnin' after any ideel tart?
Ar, if a bloke wus only understood!
'E's got a 'eart:
'E's got a soul inside 'im, poor or rich.
But wot's the use, when 'Eaven's crool'd 'is pitch?

I tells meself some day I'll take a pull
An' look around fer some good, stiddy job,
An' cut the push fer good an' all; I'm full
Of that crook mob!
An', in some Spring the fucher 'olds in store,
I'll cop me prize an' long in vain no more.

The little winds is stirrin' in the trees,
Where little birds is chantin' lovers' lays;
The music of the sorft an' barmy breeze ...
Aw, spare me days!
If this 'ere dilly feelin' doesn't stop
I'll lose me block an' stoush some flamin' cop!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Square Deal

'Dreamin'?' I sez to Digger Smith.
'Buck up, ole sport, an' smile.
Ain't there enough uv joy to-day
To drive the bogey man away
An' make reel things worth while?
A bloke would think, to see you stare,
There's visions on the 'ill-tops there.'

'Dreamin',' sez Digger Smith. 'Why not?
An' there is visions too.
An' when I get 'em sorted out,
An' strafe that little bogey, Doubt,
I'll start me life all new.
Oh, I ain't crook; but packed in 'ere
Is thoughts enough to last a year.

'I'm thinkin' things,' sez Digger Smith.
'I'm thinkin' big an' fine
Uv Life an' Love an' all the rest,
An' wot is right an' wot is best,
An' 'ow much will be mine.
Not that I'm wantin' overmuch:
Some work, some play, an' food an' such.'

'See 'ere,' I sez. 'You 'ark to me.
I've done some thinkin' too.
An' this 'ere land, for wot yeh did,
Owes some few million solid quid
To fightin' blokes like you.
So don't be too damn modest or
Yeh'll get less than yeh're lookin' for.'

'Money?' sez Digger. 'Loot?' sez 'e.
'Aw, give that talk a rest!
I'm sick uv it. I didn't say
That I was thinkin' all uv pay
But wot was right an' best.
An' that ain't in the crazy game
Uv grabbin' wealth an' chasin' fame.

'Do you think us blokes Over There,
When things was goin' strong,
Was keepin' ledgers day be day
An' reck'nin' wot the crowd would pay?
Pull off! Yeh got it wrong.
Do you think all the boys gone West
Wants great swank 'eadstones on their chest?

'You coots at 'ome 'as small ideer
Uv wot we think an' feel.
We done our bit an' seen it thro',
An' all that we are askin' you
Is jist a fair, square deal.
We want this land we battled for
To settle up - an' somethin' more.

'We want the land we battled for
To be a land worth while.
We're sick uv greed, an' 'ate, an' strife,
An' all the mess that's made uv life.'...
'E stopped a bit to smile.
'I got these thoughts Out There becos
We learned wot mateship reely was.'

.

The 'ills be'ind the orchard trees
Was showin' misty blue.
The ev'nin' light was growin' dim;
An' down I sat 'longside uv 'im,
An' done some dreamin' too.
I dreams uv war; an' wot is paid
By blokes that went an' blokes that stayed.

I dreams uv honour an' reward,
An' 'ow to pay a debt.
For partin' cash, an' buyin' farms,
An' fitting chaps with legs an' arms
Ain't all - there's somethin' yet.
There's still a solid balance due;
An' now it's up to me an' you.

There's men I know ain't yet woke up,
Or reckernized that debt
Proud men 'oo wouldn't take yeh down
Or owe their grocer 'arf-a-crown-
They ain't considered, yet,
There's somethin' owin' - to the dead,
An' Diggers live for more than bread.

The 'ills be'ind the orchard trees
Jist caught the settin' sun.
A bloke might easy think that there,
'Way back be'ind the range somewhere,
Where streaks uv sunlight run,
There was a land, swep' clear uv doubt,
Where men finds wot they dreams about.

'Beauty,' sez Digger, sudden-like,
'An' love, an' kindliness;
The chance to live a clean, straight life,
A dinkum deal for kids an' wife:
A man needs nothin' less...
Maybe they'll get it when I go
To push up daisies. I dunno.'

'Dreamin',' sez Digger Smith. 'Why not?
There's visions on the hill.'...
Then I gets up an' steals away,
An' leaves 'im with the dyin' day,
Dreamin' an' doubtin' still...
Cobber, it's up to me an' you
To see that 'arf 'is dream comes true.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A War March

Ow! Wow! Wow!

(Funeral note sustained by flutes, suggesting a long-bodied, short-legged, large-headed dog in anguish.)

Ow! Wow!

We are the people who make the row;
We are the nation that skites and brags;
Marching the goose-step; waving the falgs.

Hoch!

We talk too much, and we lose our block,
We scheme and spy; we plot, we lie
To blow the whoe world into the sky.

The Kaiser spouts, and the Junkers rave.

Hoch! for the Superman, strong and brave!

But what is the use of a Superman,
With 'frightfulness' for his darling plan,
If he has no cities to burn and loot,
No women to ravish, no babies to shoot?
Shall treaties bind us against our wish?

Rip! Swish!

(Violins: Tearing noise as of scraps of paper being destroyed.)

Now at last shall the whole world learn
Of the cult of the Teuton, strong and stern!
Ho! for the Superman running amok!

Hoch!

Um - ta, um - ta, tiddley - um - tum!

(Uncertain note, as of a German band that has been told to move on.)

Pompety - pom pom - tiddeley - um - tum!

Way for the 'blond beasts!' Here they come!

While big guns thunder the nations' doom.

Boom!

Room! Room!

Room for the German! A place in the sun!

He'll play the Devil now he's begun!

Ker-r-r-rump!....Bump!...

(Drums: Noise of an exploding cathedral.)

Ho, the gaping wound and the bleeding stump!

Watch the little ones how they jump!

While we shoot and stab, and plunder and grab,
Spurred by a Kaiser's arrogant gab;
While the Glorious Junker
Grows drunker,
And drunker, on blood.
Blood! Blood!
Sword or cannon or fire or flood,
Never shall stay our conquering feet -
On through city and village street -
Feet that savagely, madly tread,
Over the living; over the dead.
Shoot! Shoot!
Burn and pillage and slay and loot!
To the sound of our guns shall the whole world rock!
Hoch!

Shrieks!

(Flutes, piccolos and trombones render, respectively, the cries of children, shrieks of women and groans of tortured non-combatants. Violins wail mournfully.)

Shrieks! Shrieks!

Hoch der Kaiser! The whole land reeks
With tales of torture and savage rape,
Of fiends and satyrs in human shape;
Fat hands grabbing where white flesh shrinks;
And murdered age to the red earth sinks.

Kill! Kill!

Now at length shall we gorge our fill,
And all shall bow to the German will!
By the maids we ravish our lust to slake,
By the smoking ruin that mark our wake,
By the blood we spill, and the hearths we blast....

This is The Day! The Day at last!....

Praise to God! On our bended knees,
We render thanks for boons like these.
For God and the Kaiser our cohorts flock!

Hoch!

(Scrap of German hymn-tune interpolated here.)

Ach! Donnerwelter! Himmel! Ach!

(Medley of indescribable noises rendered by full orchestra, symbolic, partly of a German band that is being severely kicked by an irate householder, and partly innumerable blutwursts suddenly arrested in mid-career.)

Ach! Ach!

'Dot vos not fair to shoot in der back!'

Who is this that as dared to face

Our hosts unconquered, and, pace by pace,

Presses us backward, and ever back.

Over the blasted, desolate rack?

What of the plans we planned so well?

We looked for victory - this is Hell!

Hold! Hold!

Mark the heaps of our comrades bold;

Look on the corpses of Culture's sons -

Martyrs slain by a savage's guns.

Respite now, in this feast of death!

Time! An Armistice! Give us breath!

Nay? Then we cry to the whole wide world,

Shame on our foe for a plea denied!

Savages! Brutes! Barbarians all!

Here shall we fight with our backs to the wall!

Boom! Boom! Boom!

(Ten more thousands gone to their doom.)

Boom!

(Bass drums only, for 679,358 bars, symbolising a prolonged artillery war.

Into this there breaks suddenly the frenzied howl of the long-bodied, short-legged, large-deaded dog already mentioned.)

Hate! Hate! Hate! Hate!

We spit on the British here at our gate!

Foe of humanity! Curst of the world!

On him alone let our hate be hurled!

For his smiling sneers at the Junkers' creed,

For his cold rebuke to a Kaiser's greed;

For his calm disdain of our noble race,

We fling our spite in his scornful face.

Under the sea and high in the air,

Death shall seek for him everywhere;

The lurking death in the submarine,

The swooping death in the air machine,

Alone of them all he had sealed our fate!

Hate! Hate! HATE!

(Prolonged discord, followed by deep, mysterious silence - imposed by censor - for 793 bars.)

Bang!

(Deep staccato note as of a bursting blutwurst.)

Ow! Wow! Wow!

(Dying howl of a stricken hound. Silence again for an indefinite number of bars. Then, in countless bars, saloons, tea-shops, coffee-houses, cafes and restaurants throughout the British Empire and most of Europe, a sudden, loud, triumphant chorus, toned by a note of relief, and dominated by 'The Marseillaise' and 'Tipperary.' A somewhat uncertain but distinctly nasal cheer is heard from the direction of New York.)

Peace! Peace!

At last the sounds of the big guns cease;
At last the beast is chased to his lair,
And we breathe again of the good, clean air.
The gates have fallen! The Allies win!
And the boys are marching about Berlin!
The Kaiser's down; and the story goes
A British Tommy has pulled his nose.
The German eagle has got the pip:
Vive les Allies!...Hooroo!...Hip! Hip!...

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Warning To Ladies

Deah Ladies,
Let me warn you, theah are feahful taimes to come,
And a mos' ter-ific strugge is at hand;
And we have no taim to speah
If we wish to do ouah sheah
To defend, like Joan of Awk, ouah native land.
Foah a really frightful monstah is preparing to devouah
All that's uppab-clauss and propah and quait naice;
And if we should be behaind
In the battle aye shall faind
All ouah priveleges vanish in a traice.

O, it makes me shuddah, ladies, when Ai ventuah to reflect
On the ravages this mongstah contemplates.
He will break up all ouah homes,
And where'er the creatuah roams,
We'll be sundered from ouah lawful Tory mates.
We'll be tawn from ouah poah husbands in a most fe-rocious way,
O, deah ladies, can you realise ouah lot?
For the monstah has his eye
On the Sacred Marriage Tie;
And he'll eat up all the babes we haven't got.

And remembah, deahest ladies, all ouah comfort now depends
On destroying this wild Socialistic beast.
Ouah sassiety diversions
Would be vulgah mob excursions
If we pandered to the monstah in the least.
He is bent on confiscating all the houses, land and wealth
Of ouah husbands, and ouah brothahs, and ouah friends.
He is jealous of his bettahs.
And he calls ouah men-folk sweatahs,
He'll do anything to gain his awful ends.

He's vulgah and unchivalrous this feahful Labah thing.
He is teaching all ouah servants to despise us.

He would drag us to his level,
And he'd send to the - ah - devil
All the luxuries with which his toil supplies us.
He harps upon equality when, as of course you know,
And as all the very naicest people know,
It would simply mean disaster
To imagine ev'ry master
Quaite as ignorant as workers or as 'low.'

O, smaite the Socialistic monstah! Smaite him hard, mai deahs!
O, gathah up youah skirts and join the fray.
Pray, do not shirk the battle, or, with wailing and with teahs,
You'll regret youah negligence on polling day,
We must teach the vulgah working class their raight position here;
We must keep them in their places; we must faight them without fear,
Or there'll be a bittah wail, mai deahs,
If Socialists prevail, mai deahs,
And all 'raight thinking' people and the 'naicest' disappear.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

A Woman's Way

Women is strange. You take my tip; I'm wise.
I know enough to know I'll never know
The 'uman female mind, or wot su'prise
They 'as in store to bring yer boastin' low.
They keep yeh guessin' wot they're up to nex',
An' then, odds on, it's wot yeh least expecks.

Take me. I know me wife can twist me round
'Er little finger. I don't mind that none.
Wot worries me is that I've never found
Which way I'm gittin' twisted, till it's done.
Women is strange. An' yet, I've got to own
I'd make a orful 'ash uv it, alone.

There's this affair uv Rose. I tells yeh straight,
Suspicious don't describe me state uv mind.
The calm way that Doreen 'as fixed the date
An' all, looks like there's somethin' else be'ind.
Somethin' - not spite or meanness; don't think that.
Me wife purrs sometimes, but she ain't a cat.

But somethin'. I've got far too wise a nob
To be took in by 'er airs uv repose.
I know I said I'd chuck the 'ole darn job
An' leave 'er an' the parson deal with Rose.
But now me mind's uneasy, that's a fack.
I've got to manage things with speshul tack.

That's 'ow I feel - uneasy - when I drive
Down to the train. I'm thinkin' as I goes,
There ain't two women, that I know, alive
More difrint than them two - Doreen an' Rose.
'Ow they will mix together I dunno.
It all depends on 'ow I run the show.

Rose looks dead pale. She ain't got much to say
('Er few poor bits uv luggage make no load)
She smiles when we shake 'ands, an' sez Goodday
Shy like an' strange; an' as we take the road

Back to the farm, I see 'er look around
Big-eyed, like it's some queer new land she's found.

I springs a joke or two. I'm none too bright
Meself; but it's a slap-up sort uv day.
Spring's workin' overtime; to left an' right
Blackwood an' wattle trees is bloomin' gay,
Botchin' the bonzer green with golden dust;
An' magpies in 'em singin' fit to bust.

I sneak a glance at Rose. I can't look long.
'Er lips is trem'lin'; tears is in 'er eye.
Then, glad with life, a thrush beefs out a song
'Longside the road as we go drivin' by.
'Oh, Gawd A'mighty! 'Ark!' I 'ear 'er say,
'An' Spadgers Lane not fifty mile away!'

Not fifty mile away: the frowsy Lane,
Where only dirt an' dreariness 'as sway,
Where every second tale's a tale uv pain,
An' devil's doin's blots the night an' day.
But 'ere is thrushes tootin' songs uv praise.
An' golden blossoms lightin' up our ways.

I speaks a piece to boost this bonzer spot;
Tellin' 'er 'ow the neighbourhood 'as grown,
An' 'ow Dave Brown, jist up the road, 'as got
Ten ton uv spuds per acre, usin' bone.
She don't seem to be list'nin'. She jist stares,
Like someone dreamin' dreams, or thinkin' pray'rs.

Me yap's a dud. No matter 'ow I try,
Me conversation ain't the dinkum brand.
I'm 'opin' that she don't bust out an' cry:
It makes me nervis. But I understand.
Over an' over I can 'ear 'er say,
'An' Spadgers less than fifty mile away!'

We're 'ome at last. Doreen is at the gate.
I hitch the reins, an' quite the eager pup;
Then 'elp Rose down, an' stand aside an' wait
To see 'ow them two size each other up.

But quick - like that - two arms 'as greeted warm
The sobbin' girl... Doreen's run true to form.

"Ome on the bit!" I thinks. But as I turn,
'Ere's Wally Free 'as got to poke 'is dile
Above the fence, where 'e's been cuttin' fern.
The missus spots 'im, an' I seen 'er smile.
An' then she calls to 'im: 'Oh, Mister Free,
Come in,' she sez, 'an' 'ave a cup uv tea.'

There's tack! A woman dunno wot it means.
What does that blighter want with cups uv tea?
A privit, fambly meet - an' 'ere Doreen's
Muckin' it all by draggin' in this Free.
She might 'ave knowed that Rose ain't feelin' prime,
An' don't want no strange comp'ny at the time.

Free an' 'is thievin' cow! But, all the same,
'Is yap did seem to cheer Rose up a lot.
An' after, when 'e'd bunged 'is lanky frame
Back to 'is job, Doreen sez, 'Ain't you got
No work at all to do outside to-day?
Us two must 'ave a tork; so run away.'

I went... I went becoz, if I 'ad stayed,
Me few remarks might 'ave been pretty 'or.
Gawbli'me! 'Oo is 'ead uv this parade?
Did I plan out the scheme, or did I not?
I've worked fer this, I've worried night an' day;
An' now it's fixed, I'm tole to 'run away.'

Women is strange. I s'pose I oughter be
Contented; though I never understands.
But when I score, it 'urts me dignerty
To 'ave the credit grabbed out uv me 'ands.
I shouldn't look fer credit, p'raps; an' then,
Women is strange. But bli'me! So is men!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Accent Conscious

Trouble brews along the border for the word has got around
That blokes an' coves an' coots must mind their tongues;
Out about the long dry stages
Where the willie-willie rages
Strange sounds are issuing from leathern lungs.
Vowels, consonants and diphthongs in the old bark hut take place
Of the talk of clips or cattle or 'wot won the 'urdle race.'

For the world grows regimented and the olden orders pass
With those ancient heroes that we knew of old.
Out beyond the sandy ranges
Culture grows and fashion changes
And a bloke has got to talk the way he's told.
For the craze of 'standardising' has Australia in its grip,
And Lawson's friends, Joe Wilson, and his mates have got the pip.

These old battlers, so accustomed to the old Australian drawl,
Find it hard to knuckle down to modern ways.
Tho' the purists may deride them,
'Twas their speech identified them,
For they talked the Aussie lingo all their days.
But the Man from Snowy River strives to change his 'Oi' to 'I';
And Clancy of the Overflow now wears an old school tie.

I have long since sought the reason why all men should be as peas
In speech, in thought, in action, e'en in strife.
Uniformity around them
Serves but further to confound them,
Since it washes all the color out of life.
But the bloke who beat the favorite now sports jodhpurs with an air,
And the Man from Ironbark marcel's his hair.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Accorjins

Where have the old accorjins gone?
I was askin' the coves at the Show;
Matt from the Mallee an' Dandenong Don,
An' a score of the fellers I know
Ole fellers, like me - an' they're missin' 'em sore;
For this wireless, it never makes up
For the merry ole music we knowed of yore
When Brindle was a pup
As they puts it
An' Bravo collared the Cup.

Where are the old accorjins now
Like me father used to play?
Times when we rested from harrers an' ploughs
An' we made rare holiday.
Or Accorjin Alf, poor half-wit coot,
To the bush dance used to come
An' beat the time with his hobnail boot,
Like the top of an big bass drum
'Ladies' Chain!'
Keep time to the top o' the drum.

Pipe in the sou'-west side of his mouth,
Hat on the back of his head,
Alf 'ud be there, come flood, come drouth,
For the dance in the shearin' shed.
Leaky bellers an' keys all broke,
Reeds near wearin' away;
But they put the ginger into a bloke,
Them toons as he used to play.
Hum a couple.
Reel toons of an older day.

'Hie to the Weddin' an' 'Belle Mahone,'
'Wait Till the Clouds Roll by' ...
An' me an' yer ma crep' out alone,
Out under the starlit sky
Aw, jazz an' the wireless, things like these
Is a wonder to men, alright.

But gimme that ole accorjin's wheeze,
An' the bush, and a starlit night.
Kin yeh hear it?
A mopoke's call in the night.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Adulations Artful Aid

Some of us may be tall, ma'am;
Some of us may be dark;
Some handsome; tho' not all, ma'am,
Are touched by Beauty's spark.
But tall, and dark AND handsome, too?
Oh, lady! If you please!
It's really very nice of you;
But do you think they're really due
Superlatives like these?

We'd hate to doubt your word, ma'am,
Since you're informed in art,
Tho' much we'd have preferred, ma'am,
To play a humbler part.
But in meek deference to you,
Well, lady, we'll admit
We're tall and dark, and handsome, too,
It seems a rather boastful view,
But one gets used to it.

And now we're getting used, ma'am,
To thoughts that flattery brings,
You might well be induced ma'am,
To say some more nice things.
Are there not moral qualities,
Innate in each rare male,
That one of your discernment sees
Truth, strength, wit, wisdom - things like these?
Speak, ma'am. Let truth prevail.

We're so unused to praise, ma'am,
So used to blame most dire,
That flattery these days, ma'am,
Creates a new desire.
A complex quite inferior
(See Freud) its sickly hue
Cast o'er us. But if you'd say more
Along such lines - why, then, Encore!..
Thanks, ma'am. The same to you.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Advance Australia

Borrowin' over the water; I've seen it all before
Raisin' loans (said Old George Jones)
Was a trick we learned of yore.
Borrowin' over the water
In the old Australian way
Splash the cash an' cut a dash
An' leave the kids to pay.

Steel rails an' sausage skins, cotton goods an' fal-de-rals,
Drapery an' rollin'-stock an' pocket knives an' sich;
That was how we took it out
When we was but a growin' lout;
But sich-like habits calls for doubt
Now we are grown an' rich.

Borrowin' over the water for reproductive works
That ain't produced; sich habits used
To mark the crowd that shirks.
That's why we're heaped with taxes
In this sad year A.D.
Thro' the ancient tricks of politics
In borrowin' overseas.

Airyplanes an' motor-cars, guns an' bombs an' bayonits
The cash is here to buy the things an' meet the whole expense.
But seems we'll never mend our ways;
An' habits learned in olden days
Sticks hard; so we keep up the craze
An' borrow for defence.
Advance Australia! Pile the loans.
The kids'll pay (said Old George Jones).

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Aesthete In The Avenue

Within the wooded avenue I stood,
And I was proud.
I looked upon the scene and found it good;
For here, I vowed,
Reigned Beauty rare. Sweet praises filled my mouth
For this, the loveliest city of the south;
Yet not a soul could hear,
Altho' my lyric praise with fervor flowed;
For, as I spoke, there rumbled down the road
A lorry-load of beer.

I tried again. I spoke of civic pride,
Aesthetic joy.
With those rare phrases, culled from far and wide,
Poets employ.
I waxed in aphoristic ecstasy,
Hymning the loveliness of sky and tree;
Yet not a single soul
Gave heed to me; for sudden thunders grew
As round the bend there lumbered into view
A waggon piled with coal.

'Goths!' I exclaimed. 'Did you raise Beauty here
In this green place
But for the sport of flinging coal and beer
In her sweet face?'
A large truck missed me by a hair's-breadth then
Manned by a crew of large, unlovely men
Who jeered and darned my eyes.
'Vandals!' I shouted. 'Nay, repent your sins!'
Then leapt again to dodge a load of skins
That smelled unto the skies.

Still on they came, truck, waggon, rank on rank,
I dodged, I leapt;
The threw myself upon a grassy bank
And there I wept,
Wept for the city . . . A park-keeper came,
A mean, ungracious man, who took my name.

'O man!' I cried. 'Alas,
See how I weep. Must beauty disappear?'
Said he: 'Buzz orf! You can't do that there 'ere.
Spoilin' our nice noo grass!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Affable Alf

Have you heard the inscrutable mutable Alf,
The mannerly man with the silvery tongue?
Ever loquacious,
Smiling and gracious.
Loud in the land have his praises been sung.
He has magnetised all with his eloquent speakin'
The Great oratorical oracle, Deakin.

His somewhat sporadical radical speeches
Have over-persuaded us all, and his style
His easy urbanity
Tickles our vanity;
And we are won by his affable smile.
He captivates all with his eloquence sinister,
Does the persuasive, evasive Prime Minister.

His fine pyrotechnical technical phrases,
His grand perorations, exordiums, too,
'Spite their obscurity,
Are of a purity
And of a quality equalled by few,
And he knows all the tricks of portfol-i-o seekin',
That clever illusionist, fusionist Deakin.

But, beware of mysterious serious Alf.
His weird cabalistical, mystical call
His impetuosity,
Plus his verbosity,
Acts like a strange anaesthetic on all.
But, when you get over the charm of his speakin',
You'll come to a frangible, tangible Deakin.

You'll find an accessible cessible man,
With political frailties many as most o' them.
'Spite his euphonical
Gifts histrionical,
Critics political point, to a host o' them.
He is but a man after all and a weak 'un
A most, inexcusable fusible Deakin.

His most omnifarious various views
He'll alter to suit the occasion that pays him,
Though lacking in clarity.
Any disparity
In his fused following's powerless to daze him.
Regarded apart from his eloquent speakin',
O, what a lamentable, rentable Deakin!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

African Interlude

I t'inkin' da war now go for stop
Between Black Sammo, da slush,
An' Nicko, da boss of da fry-fish shop.
All sound of da conflic' hush
Since da corner-a cop he putta da foot
Down firm an' talk tinna tack;
For Nicko see wer he notta so goot
If he make-a da beezness slack.

For da corner-a cop made food for t'ink
When he spika to Nick an' say
He apply-a da sanc' so quick like-a wink
An' Nicko, he have-a to pay.
If da customer stop for come to da shop
How da beezness carryin' on?
More better, Nick t'inkin', for war to flop
If he goin' for lose da mon'.

So da cop make term for da peace discush,
All da same like lig-a-da-Naish,
'Twix' Nicko, de boss, an' Sammo, da slush,
An' dey bote getta com-a-da-saish:
For Sammo he getta two Friday free
Each-a mont' for kick-a da heel;
An' Nicko he getta clean plate two, t'ree,
Four time for each-a day meal.

But, Nicko, he go wit' da t'oughtful eye
An' mooch-a; he shake-a da head;
He donna look like-a he satisfy
When all-a been done an' said.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Aha! Beware

Aha! Beware! I know your guilty past!
I was a witness of that secret crime.
One word! and all your fondest hopes I blast.
I bide me time.
I hold you in me grip, unhappy man,
And I shall cr-r-rush you if you thwart me plan.

Hist! Have a care, lest I divulge the plot.
I saw you forge the will! With these two eyes
I recognised the corpse, and, know the spot
Where it now lies.
I know the hand that sped the fatal blow,
And stole the widder's che-ild. Aha! I know!

Be warned! Seek not to sully my fair fame.
Who stole the papers?. . . Ah!. . . Then have a care
The man that pawned the spoons - I know his name;
And I'm aware
Who lured the girl aboard the lugger. Aye!
All - all is known to me, for I was nigh.

I know who shook the fowls! ... Then do not seek
To try my patience over much, for lo,
You're doomed if but one little word I speak;
For well I know
Who killed the dog and set the house alight
And robbed the clothes-line at the dead o' night.

Remember! All your secrets I could tell.
To me your cupboard doors are all ajar.
Each hidden skeleton I know full well.
Push me too far,
And I shall tell the world who dodged his rent,
And privately ate sausages in Lent.

'Twas I that lurked unseen within your lair!
'Twas I that overheard the villain's plot!
I saw you filch the marriage lines! Beware!
I heard the shot!

How little you suspected who was by
When you purloined the jools. Aha! 'Twas I!

You cannot hide your covert crimes from me;
To me your private life's an open book.
Then do not cross my path or, suddenly
One word! One look!
And all your guilty past, the world shall know,
And to the dust your pride be humbled low.

My mind is the receptacle for all
The peccadilloes of mine enemies.
I hold them sternly at my beck and call,
Just as I please.
And it was I who hid in that dark lane
And heard them plan the wrecking of the train.

Hist! If you speak one word all, all is lost!
Once thwart my will and, lo, your doom I seal!
Eye you frustrate my plans count well the cost;
I shall reveal
Your sin, and on you heap anathema!
Hist! We shall meet again. Farewell. Aha!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Aldermen And Antirrhinum

I walked out with an alderman, all on a bright spring day.
He was an august alderman, and much had he to say
Of roads and drains and bridges Then, as he pulled up short,
His veins stood out in ridges, his breath fled with a snort.
Then anger aldermanic came as the tempest comes;
His aspect grew satanic, his eyes stuck out like plums;
And, as it rent asunder the ambient atmosphere,
Rolled detonating thunder of civic wrath severe:

'Tear down them antirrhinum! Tear down them columbine!
Or else, by gum, we'll fine 'em. We'll mulct in a fine!
I won't have antirrhinum! To Tophet I consign 'em!
Surveyors can't align 'em plumb with our buildin' line!
(They were begonias truly; but that did not unduly
Affect his wrath unruly. The darn things weren't in line.)
'A blot on civic beauty! The Mayor must do his jooty,
An' have them antirrhinum abolished, or resign!'

Then, as his rage he swallowed, and joined the traffic's stream,
I diffidently followed, and sought to change the theme.
'Think you the vernal season,' quoth I, 'grows subtly sweet?'
Said he: 'That ain't no reason for shovin' in the street
Them bloomin' antirrhinum three inches off the line.
Our officers must fine 'em. It's breakin' Bylaw nine,
Part seven. Schedule thirty. Clause eight in Section A.'
He really seemed quite shirty; and so I sneaked away.)

But still, o'er traffic crashes, I heard his strident tones
'Them antirrhinum clashes with our pretty safety zones!
Calliopsis an' eschscholtzia! In streets where soft trams roll!
It's a pitcher that revolts yeh, if yeh got a civic soul! . . .'
And then his fuming faded; faint and far it died away.
'Pon my word, I felt quite jaded; I'd had a trying day.
And, tho' it seem splenetic, from this truth I may not shrink
Aldermen are NOT aesthetic. Not so very - do you think?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

All Fools' Day

Now is the day when arrant fools
Play outworn tricks on sober men!
But, for the thoughtful soul that schools
His mind to conning o'er again
Past folly, that he may see clear
Faults of commission and neglect,
This is the day in all the year
For help-inducing retrospect!

Myself, when young and confident,
Walked ever proudly on my way;
With eyes set onward as I went
I gave small heed to yesterday.
But, growing old, the once bright star
Waned to a faint and sickly flame;
So faint I'd turn and gaze afar
For help along the way I came.

A chastening exercise for me
This yearly task of harking back;
For what a piteous fool I see
Comes tumbling up that thorny track!
I would cast ashes on my head
Did consolation not recall
That in the end, when all is said,
Both young and old, well - aren't we all?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

An Appeal To End Appeals

Sir, - I try to do my duty as a patriotic man
With sane views about the science of gastronomy;
And I'd ask the promulgators of each food consuming plan
To consider man's interior economy.

I shall not go into details. But I merely wish to say
My observance hitherto has been meticulous
Of the many noble slogans: but I fear the scheme today
Has at last begun to merge with the ridiculous.

Very nobly I responded to the urge to 'Eat More Fruit';
I bought it and consumed it with avidity.
I was keen to serve my country; and the diet seemd to suit
(If we waive a tendency to slight acidity)
Then the ringing slogan sounded thro' the contry: 'Eat More Wheat!'
I assimilated faithfully that cereal
Then we were asked to eat more eggs, to eat more oats, more meat;
While tissue waxed - both moral and material.

And now, sir, to my horror, 'Eat more butter' is the plan.
But I ask you: Can I hope to rise superior?
There are symptoms. And I fear the patriotic outer man
Is at issue, so to speak, with the interior,
On, I long to do my gastronomic duty; yet I shrink
I shudder - tho' I swear I am no sceptic
But butter! Slabs of butter! There are limits, don't you think?
Sir, I remain,
Yours faithfully,
'DYSPEPTIC.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

An Appeal To Women

O ye women! WIMMIN! WEEMIN!!
See our tears repentant streamin'!
See the pearly drops a-gleamin',
Streamin' from our rheumy eye!
Mark our weskits palpitatin'.
Pray ye, be accommodation'.
Spare a thought commiseratin',
Say the Tory shall not die!
Spare him, who has been your master,
From political disaster.
Doom approaches fast and faster.
Save him - and the Marriage Tie!

Long ago, when, in the gloaming,
Hungry mastodons went roaming
With a view to seeking out what they might scoff.
There was little chance of spooning
In the park; and honey-mooning,
As a fashion, was most obviously 'off.'
For a honeymoon's a failure, and the gladness of it's gone
If you spend the latter end of it inside a mastodon.

So the troglodyte, new-married,
Cut his honeymoon, and tarried
In his cavern with his little bit of frock;
And instead of hugs and kisses,
He caressed his lawful missus
With a bit of cold, hard tertiary rock.
For the 'proper sphere' for women in that neolithic race
Was amongst the goods and chattels, and she had to keep her place.

But, as troglodytes expanded,
Rose a section that demanded
More consideration for the women-folk;
And the good old Tory faction
Met, and moved to 'take some action'
To oppose this foolish Socialistic joke.
But they had a way of dealing with such people in those days;
And, therefore, rocks gave way to clubs and other gentler ways.

Hark, O, woman! WOMMAN! WOOMAN!!
You would not be so inhuman
As to seal the Tory's doom an'
Join the Socialist hordes?
O, ye women of the classes!
Rise ye in your cultured masses!
Haste, before the Tory passes.
Be ye saviours of your lords.
Lo, have we not fought your battles!
(Hark! The foeman's armor rattles!)
Would ye be his toys and chattels?
Save us from Progression's swords!

Passing down the ancient ages,
Skipping many pregnant pages,
We arrive at that old magnate of the mines
Solomon, in all his glory
Rich monopolist and Tory,
Who possessed some wives and countless concubines.
And I shall not pause to dwell upon the Queen of Sheba's visit;
For such gossip isn't tolerated 'midst the 'naicest,' is it?

After that wise king was pensioned,
Someone (who and when not mentioned)
Said that men should have no more than one wife each.
Then the good old crusted Tory
Rose, with language loud and gory,
And delivered a prolonged impassioned speech.
He called this new proposal 'Socialist froth and foam
That attacked the marriage contract and the sanctity of home.'

Ay, he raved with indignation,
Formed an ancient Federation
Of Defence, and backed it up with piles of cash.
But the rabid 'One-wife' section
Fought and carried the election,
And their legislation ill-advised and rash.
Old Time has sprinted somewhat since that scheme was first begun,
And now the Tory (I'm informed) is satisfied with one.

O, ye women! WIMMIN! WEEMIN!!

Don't ye hear the Tory screamin'?
All along he's been esteemin'
Womankind, since ages dim.
He has pampered you and prized you;
E'er adored and idolised you,
And, moreover, recognised you
As his equal. Fly to him!
Has he not passed legislation
Granting you emancipation?
If you'd save your reputation
Haste to grant his ev'ry whim!

Once again, with hasty fingers,
Let us turn the page. Who lingers
There will find that ancient history repeats.
O'er and o'er the same old story,
Telling how the dear old Tory
Abdicates (perhaps) when womankind entreats.
Well, he did admit her equal to his dog at any rate.
So we'll pass - with your permission - to affairs of recent date.

Ah! did not the tender Tory
Listen to her tearful story
When she pleaded for a vote a while ago?
Did he not cry out in anguish
To behold his sister languish
For the franchise that the men enjoyed! Oh no.
'Tis recorded - mayhap wrongly - that he fought her tooth and nail.
And he sneered at her pretensions, but his sneers did not prevail.

Does the Tory change? I doubt it.
Watch him, how he goes about it,
Like his prototype the troglodyte B.C.,
When her mood he wants to soften,
See him smite her hard and often
With large, heavy chunks of deadly orat'ry.
But the outlook of she-troglodytes has much improved to-day;
For, although they may not now it, they're his last and only stay.

Hark ye, women! Women voters!
Social queens and League promoters!
Are ye ever to be doters

On the male-bird of your type!
Since Tory Adam bit the pippin
He has blamed you for his slippin'
And his sinnin'. Here's a rippin'
Chance to pay back ev'ry stripe.
Nay, it were a shame to lose it.
You have got the franchise - use it!
HE said that you would abuse it.
Now! TMUMBS DOWN! The time is ripe!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

An Apt Pupil

Knockin' about (said Benny, the Tough)
By the Rocks an' Woolloomooloo,
Oh, I was a low-brow, right enough,
And a bit of a bounder, too.
Kickin' about with me larrikin band,
I was always gittin' in bad;
Till the kindly cops took me in hand,
An', lissen, I've been glad.

I was a tough when life begun,
An' me ideels was not high
Doin' the things that 'are not done,'
Disgracin' me old school tie.
Me feet was set on the downward road,
A crook I was, an' a cad,
Till the genteel cops taught me a Code
An', lissen, I was glad.

Doin' sich things as I never had ort,
Soilin' the family name,
With never a notion of good, clean sport
Or the pride of playin' the game.
The dirtiest fighter in all the Rocks,
That's the sort of name I had,
Till the manly cops taught me to box;
An', lissen, I was glad.

Playin' the game with a good straight bat,
Scornin' the bottle an' boot;
Turnin' meself from a wharfside rat
To a reel nice-livin' coot.
Learnin' to battle without 'arf-bricks
Or with pickets, as once I had
For the good cops taught me their rastlin' tricks
An', lissen, I was glad.

But flesh is weak; an' I fell from grace,
An' I goes an' I drifts right back,
An' burgled a bit of a jeweller's place;

An' a cop gets on me track,
But I meets his rush with a good straight right,
An' I reckon he got reel mad
To think that the cops taught me to fight.
But, lissen, I was glad.

Then a crowd of his pals come off their beats;
But I takes to me heels an' clears,
An' I leads 'em a marathon thro' the streets
While they lumbers and puffs in the rear.
Then I loses 'em all when I'd had me fun,
An' I sprints like a race-course prad.
For me cobbers the cops taught me to run,
An', lissen, was I glad?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

An Echo From Africa

Da ruction happen by Nicko's place
Las' week, in da deada da night.
Da copper he very near cop da case
Accounta da fish-shop fight
In da great beeg international way
Dat wrecka da oyster bar.
Now Nicko he grinda da tooth an' say,
'Da white-a man rule, by gar!'

Sammo, da slush, wit' da dark-tan face,
Scale an' clean-a fish
Long time he toila by Nicko's place,
Washa da dirty dish.
But Nicko he say, 'Da t'ings get slow;
Dis war make da beezness slack.
Dat Sammo, da slush, he have to go.'
So Nicko he sacka da black.

Las-a night, when Sammo he come for da mon',
His eye got da look like-a dirt.
But, Nicko, he say to heem, like in fun,
'Take-a dat, black scuma da eart'.
Den Sammo he scowl aroun' da shop
An' he grabba da long, fat eel,
An' he smacka poor Nicko right in da chop
So he fall head over heel!

But Nicko come up wi' da Musso glare,
An' he seize-a da ten-poun' schnap.
Ah, I only wisha dat you been dere;
You see-a da bonza scrap!!
Dey smash-a da souce-bot, smash-a da chair,
Dey smash-a da glass partish,
Dey smash-a da pot-plant topa da stair;
An' da place all cover wit' fish!

Den Sammo he tread on da gar-fish head,
An' da foot fly up in da air,
An' he come-a down flop an' lie like dead

When he banga da head on da chair.
An' Nicko he grab heem quick by da feet
An' drag heem outa da door,
An' he say, as he fling heem into da street,
'Dat feenish my Afric war.'

But Nicko he same like a change man now;
All over da shop he fuss;
He flash-a da eye an' he knit-a da brow,
An' he stick out da jaw like-a Muss.
An' he look each customer close by da face
For da sign of da bad, black drop.
Den he grind-a da tooth if he twig da trace:
'Abyssin! Get outta my shop!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

An Epitaph

I've lived a rather careless life,
And many a fault have I;
But I'd have you not stress the strife
What time I come to die.
I'd rather have you talk about
My qualities humane;
As one who cut the rough stuff out,
And has not lived in vain.
So, when you seek to laud my worth,
Write this - let truth prevail:
'He lived for many years on earth,
Yet never killed a whale.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

An Error In Creation

There was once a man who made a weird machine,
Employing dynamite and kerosene.
His subsequent destruction
Was a matter of deduction,
And a circumstance that might have been foreseen.

This gloomy incident I merely state
In case you have a yearning to create.
In which event, be wary,
Else, mayhap, a sad quan-dary
Will arise and face you when it's far too late.

Now, take the case of Toryphat, M.P.,
Created by the voters - you and me.
Then in matters legislative
He becomes, in turn, creative.
And creates a Deakook Fusion Ministree.

You will notice that this question, as a whole,
Is a matter over which we've some control;
For, it we'd contemplated
Ere the members we created,
We would not have landed things in such a hole.

And, in regard to this strange Ministree,
We are the folk responsible, you see.
For it couldn't have existed
Had not some of us assisted
In creating its supporters - Q.E.D.

Then, when a weird political machine
Of Tory flare and Fusion kerosene
Blows our policies to blazes,
All our most embittered phrases
Won't recover e'en the smallest smithereen.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

An Old Man Muses

Can it be I - this Hindenburg, deferring
To demagogues, catch phrases, lucky charms
And all this mummery about me stirring?
Can it be I, lord of high feats of arms,
Smiling complacence on a rabble's blunders,
Counting a mountebank amongst my peers
I, who commanded with the voice of thunders?
Ah, what a role betrays me with the years!

Can it be I - condoning, cavallering
This sorry paint-and-tinsel paladin.
This braggart upstart, raging, racketeering
Like some cheap western gangster 'muscling in,'
Apeing the arts in which I loomed a master:
Acting with arms as children play with toys:
Mouthing fierce phrases, pregannt with disaster,
To lure brief loyalty from brain-sick boys?

Can it be I who saw the vision splendid
Shaping before these ageing eyes of mine,
When half a world, before my day had eneded,
Hurtled its might against my stubborn Line?
The Line of Hindenburg! the natons raging
Before an avatar who reached the sky! ...
And now? - A hapless figurehead, fast ageing,
The mighty Hindenburg! Can this be I?

Strange trick of Fate ... And yet, sometimes I wonder,
While factions rage and puny tyrants bray,
If victory might yet be snatched for blunder
Till gloriously dawned against The Day!
If - To what end? Youth seeks in other fashion
It's destiny. 'Tis world-worn age that drools
Of glories gone ... Enough to veil compassion
With weary tolerance. Poor dupes! Poor fools!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

An Old Master

We were cartin' lathes and palin's from the slopes of Mount St. Leonard,
With our axles near the road-bed and the mud as stiff as glue;
And our bullocks weren't precisely what you'd call conditioned nicely,
And meself and Messmate Mitchell had our doubts of gettin' through.

It had rained a tidy skyful in the week before we started,
But our tucker-bag depended on the sellin' of our load;
So we punched 'em on by inches, liftin' 'em across the pinches,
Till we struck the final section of the worst part of the road.

We were just congratulatin' one another on the goin',
When we blundered in a pot-hole right within the sight of goal,
Where the bush-track joins the metal. Mitchell, as he saw her settle,
Justified his reputation at the peril of his soul.

We were in a glue-pot, certain --- red and stiff and most tenacious;
Over naves and over axles --- waggon sittin' on the road.
'Struth,' says I, 'they'll never lift her. Take a shot from Hell to shift her.
Nothin' left us but unyoke 'em and sling off the blessed load.'

Now, beside our scene of trouble stood a little one-roomed humpy,
Home of an enfeebled party by the name of Dad McGee.
Daddy was, I pause to mention, livin' on an old-age pension
Since he gave up bullock-punchin' at the age of eighty-three.

Startled by our exclamations, Daddy hobbled from the shanty,
Gazin' where the stranded waggon looked like some half-foundered ship.
When the state o' things he spotted, 'Looks,' he says, 'like you was potted,'
And he toddles up to Mitchell. 'Here,' says he, 'gimme that whip.'

Well! I've heard of transformations; heard of fellers sort of changin'
In the face of sudden danger or some great emergency;
Heard the like in song and story and in bush traditions hoary,
But I nearly dropped me bundle as I looked at Dad McGee.

While we gazed he seemed to toughen; as his fingers gripped the handle
His old form grew straight and supple, and a light leapt in his eye;
And he stepped around the waggon, not with footsteps weak and laggin',
But with firm, determined bearin', as he flung the whip on high.

Now he swung the leaders over, while the whip-lash snarled and volleyed;
And they answered like one bullock, strainin' to each crack and clout;
But he kept his cursin' under till old Brindle made a blunder;
Then I thought all Hell had hit me, and the master opened out.

And the language! Oh, the language! Seemed to me I must be dreamin';
While the wondrous words and phrases only genius could produce
Roared and rumbled, fast and faster, in the throat of that Old Master --
Oaths and curses tipped with lightning, cracklin' flames of fierce abuse.

Then we knew the man before us was a Master of our callin';
One of those great lords of language gone for ever from Out-back;
Heroes of an ancient order; men who punched across the border;
Vanished giants of the sixties; puncher-princes of the track.

Now we heard the timbers strainin', heard the waggon's loud complainin',
And the master cried triumphant, as he swung 'em into line,
As they put their shoulders to it, lifted her, and pulled her through it:
'That's the way we useter do it in the days o' sixty-nine!'

Near the foot of Mount St. Leonard lives an old, enfeebled party
Who retired from bullock-punchin' at the age of eighty-three.
If you seek him folk will mention, merely, that he draws the pension;
But to us he looms a Master -- Prince of Punchers, Dad McGee!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Another Economic Riddle

I venerate economists
As very learned blokes,
But when in paradox they speak
Their meaning oft I vainly seek,
Suspecting subtle jokes.
They say the whole world's down and out;
But here's what I can't see:
If every land, beyond all doubt,
In all the world is up the spout -
Then who's the mortgagee?

Do we owe money in the moon,
Or some celestial land?
Or have we creditors in Mars,
Or other fixed and unfixed stars,
Who hold our notes of hand?
If not, why all the fuss and fret?
I've conned it o'er and o'er,
And find no clear solution yet.
If all the earth is deep in debt,
Who is the creditor?

When men go into bankruptcy
The case is plain as day:
What is not in the dear wife's name
Grim creditors will promptly claim,
And assets melt away.
But when a whole wide world's in soak
And cannot raise the tin,
Here's where I half suspect a joke:
When all the earth goes stoney broke,
Who puts the bailiffs in?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Another Fusion

There's been fierce argument of late
In my vicinities,
Between the Commonwealth and State,
For I fell out with me.

I am a sturdy Federalist,
A staunch Australian;
And I have waved an angry fist
At me, the States' Rights man.

The argument began like this:
I to myself one night
Remarked: 'There's something sore amiss
That cries to be put right.

'This argument 'twixt Commonwealth
And State must cease, 'tis plain.
'Tis interfering with my health
And rending me in twain.'

'Then, as a free,' myself replied,
'Elector of the State,
I hold my Rights can't be denied,
And I've been wronged of late.

'The Commonwealth's extravagance'
'Hold on,' I said, 'hold on!
A fool could tell you at a glance
Where all the money's gone.

'Of late the States' expenditure
Has risen high and higher.'
'What rot,' me thought. 'That's pretty pure!'
Then shouted, 'I'm a liar!'

I rose to smite the Fed'ralist
And - what do you suppose?
I found, with my avenging fist,
The States' Rights person's nose.

And yet, it did seem strange, because
Though, truly, as I've said,
I hit the State elector, 'twas
The Federal nose that bled.

'See here,' I said, 'this game won't do.
We'll have to stop and think.
There's something wrong with me and you.
Let's go and have a drink.'

We entered, without further hitch,
A pub across the way,
And had a single drink, for which
We both appeared to pay.

'Enough of this!' the States' man brayed.
'You asked me over here
To have a drink, and when I've paid,
You drink the bloomin' beer!'

'Nay,' quoth the Fed'ralist, 'I think
You err. To me 'tis clear
I paid the money for the drink,
And you consumed the beer.

'I don't know what you are to me,
A foe, or friend, or brother.
To settle it I think I - we
YOU better have another.'

We had another. Then we sat
Awhile, morose and mute;
Then drifted into friendly chat
About our late dispute.

'I think I see a point we've missed,
And that suggests a plan.'
At length said I, the Fed'ralist,
To Me, the States' Rights man.

'It may seem strange to you at first;
We both wear one same hat,
We have one coat, one shirt, one thirst;
Why should we stop at that?

'To buy two drinks to quench one thirst
Is utterly absurd;
Unless, of course, you're on a burst
Or jag (excuse the word).

'But, since, we're one in thirst and dress
Why not be one in view?
I can't see why we don't possess
But one opinion too.

'For I begin to think 'tis true,
Whatever else we be,
That while I'm virtually you
You're practically me.

'We're both one man. It's all a fake!
You're me, and I am you;
Though politicians try to make
Us think that we are two.

'And if a thing suits one it should,
Quite clearly, suit the two.
And if this Federation's good
For me, it's good for you.

"'Tis folly that we two should fight,
And wrangle, and abuse;
So, seeing things in this new light,
It's up to us to fuse.'

We fose forthwith, I'm pleased to say,
We're now a single man.
And that man is, from now, always,
A good Austral-i-an.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Antarctic Pioneers

Because some unimportant man
In politics talks loud and high,
Or some wild, economic plan
To lift depression takes his eye,
The apathetic citizen
Pays little heed in these dark days
To Mawson and his merry men
Back from the desolate sea ways.

'A rather chilly trip,' says he,
What time the page he idly flicks,
With visions of an ice-bound sea,
Then turns again to politics.
Fish, fur and iceberg, seal and whale;
He gives the thing a passing glance
And misses all the wondrous tale
With all its high significance.

Because the voyagers return
With no tale that the mind beguiles
Of mystic caves where jewels burn
And treasure lies about in piles.
We turn aside with weary sighs;
The story hasn't 'pep' enough.
And, after all, what profit lies
In all this scientific stuff?

But, later, when this ice-locked wealth
By sturdy labor is set free;
And fortune comes, almost by stealth,
Out of a wild Antarctic sea,
We'll come with tardy praises then,
And look back gladly thro' the years
For Mawson and his merry men,
To set them with the Pioneers.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Anticlimax

Now, my gift of crude invective is astonishingly high,
And I've quite a flair for fierce vituperation,
But I have to sit and watch the precious moments drifting by,
Just because my countrymen seek moderation.
But, ah, what verbal lightnings round my foeman's head might play
If I once became a freeman of the candid U.S.A.

Now 'a partly vocal crea puff with a taste for comic song'
Seems forced and weak and unimaginative;
While an 'economic shyster' I consider far from strong
In an artist with a claim to be creative.
I'd surely think of terser terms, original and tense
To fling abroad, while keeping to the strict Pickwickian sense.

For I have walked with bullockies back of the far Barcoo;
I've drunk with shearers, hit the track with stockmen;
And surely there is none upon the earth, I don't care who,
More famed for epithets that truly shock men.
Oh, I could 'trade a line of talk' to sting a heart of wood
Or blister brazen monkeys - well, I mean, I think I could.

Yet, when I reconsider it and con my lessons o'er,
I begin to doubt these mighty reputations;
Robbed of their scarlet adjective, their minds seem but a store
Of long outworn and crude reiterations,
And the fiercest trick of speech that these, my mates, can teach me now
Is to shake the ambient ether with, 'Oh, 'im? They silly cow!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Anzac

Anzac! And war's grim storm . . .
The scream of a pass'ng shell
Torn earth, and - a quiet form . . .
'Pass, comrades. All is well.'

Nay, but his spirit lives; be very sure.
Year follows year, and earthly things depart;
But what he dying, gave us shall endure
Now and for ever in the nation's heart.
Now and for ever; tho' the flesh be gone,
Still shall that Spirit bid us, 'Carry on!'

Anzac! The mounds increase;
Marking where soldiers fell
Earth's healing scars; and peace.
'Sleep, comrades. All is well.'

And be full certain that they do but sleep,
Who, falling, yet were well content to find
Fit sanctuary in the hearts that keep
That spirit and that memory enshrined.
High on Gallipoli, lights that once shone,
Again flame o'er the ocean: 'Carry on!'

Anzac! The tramp of marching feet
The toll of a passing-bell.
Bowed heads along a city street
'Pass, soldier. All is well.'

Pass, soldier. When your dwindling ranks grow small;
When, one by one, old comrades you shall greet;
When the last, lonely veteran's footfall
Goes echoing adown this city street,
Still may that Spirit, tho' all else be gone,
Cry to our sons: 'Australia! Carry on!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Anzac Eve

For some, it was the last sun that should set,
For many, their last glimpse of fecund day
A splendid sun, dipping, reluctant yet,
Into blue water west of Mudros Bay;
And they - new burnished coin to squander free
In 'that red purchase' on Gallipoli.

They guessed not; or, half guessing, did not reck
That for the doomed no other sun should rise
But to reveal the still forms that would fleck
The Anzac Beach; staring with lifeless eyes
Where carrier pigeons, white against the blue,
Bore the dread tale for other skies they knew.

They sang, they laughed; and laughing cursed again
The long monotony of Mudros Bay.
Like hounds released, the eager shouting men
Crowded the decks and whiled the time away
At cards; half fearing what they most desired
Might be denied them yet; and no shot fired.

And, as that sun set in the azure vast,
Who counted one day more or one day less?
How many deemed it was for them the last
To light a world of blood and bitterness?
Yet bitterness for many a heart lay there
When next the sun blazed over Sari Bair.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Anzac Square: What The Digger Said

Said the Digger: 'Soon forgot! Soon forgot, the deeds of war.
Better so, may be. . . Why not?
Beauty fades and laurels rot;
Last year's roses are no more.
Fame?' the one-armed Digger said,
'What of glory when you're dead?'

'Stone and brass,' the Digger said. 'Stone and brass: tho' these endure,
Marble flaunting o'er my head
Would be dead, as I'd be dead.
How may any man be sure
That the hearts of men shall hold
Memories of tales once told?

This alone I surely know: earth I am, and earth shall be,
Only Mother Earth can show,
When I go where all men go,
Aught of this that had been me.
Mother Earth, once stained so red,
She must know,' the Digger said.

'Would you raise, in braggart heaps, stone, cold stone, to mark the fame
Of full many a man who sleeps
Where the earth of Anzac keeps
Guard o'er legions lacking name
Plinth and pillar reared to show
Pomp and pride they cannot know?

'They ask no portentous pile, boasting to a heedless sky,
Stirring men a little while,
Subject, then, for sigh or smile,
Not for this do soldiers die,
With our passing let Pride be,
All we ask is Memory:

'Memory of such fair worth as a fighting man may claim,
And a plot of hallowed earth
In the city of our birth:
Earth that bears a hallowed name.

Let it be envisioned there:
Anzac worth in Anzac Square.

'Memory,' the Digger said. 'If so be the city judge
Soldiers worthy, who have bled.
Worthy of her love, the dead,
Shall the city, then, begrudge
One wide acre of her soil
For who saved the whole from spoil?

'Here, it may be, by God's grace, our son's sons may sit at last,
In the People's market place,
Knowing truly, as they trace
Memory of me long past,
'Tis enshrined forever there:
Anzac worth in Anzac Square.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Arch Criminal

When muddled mentors take the stage
To gird against our erring,
They simulate an awful rage,
They funk the task and straight engage
A palpable red-herring.
Fearing at higher marks to aim,
The futile knuckle-rapper,
With flaming words of bitter blame,
Plays at the rather outworn game
Of 'Flagellate the Flapper.'

Altho', my sweet, you may be neat
And winsome, too, from head to feet,
In face and form a nymph complete,
In manner softly winning;
One touch of powder Number Two,
And heaven's gates are closed to you;
Tho' still ajar for those who do
This sad world's heavy sinning.

The man whose greed outstrips his need
(While lesser folk deplore it)
Is due for stern rebukes indeed.
Yet, gently, brother; Why give heed
To this? Be wise; ignore it.
For, lo, this fellow may be rich
Of social rank delectable.
For bwetter curn the urgent itch
To censure, lest you hurt him; which
Would hardly be repectable.

So, precious pet, they'd fain forget
Sins of the mighty, while they fret
O'er lip-stick, rouge and cigarette,
And graver sinning palliate.
As Public Enemy you rank
Now No. 1 for those who shrank
Ever from bigger game, and thank
Their stars you can't retaliate.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Armistice Day 1933

This we have said: 'We shall remember them.'
And deep our sorrow while the deed was young.
Even as David mourned for Absolem
Mourned we, with aching heart and grievous tongue.
Yet, what man grieves for long? Time hastens by
And ageing memory, clutching at its hem,
Harks back, as silence falls, to gaze and sigh;
For we have said, 'We shall remember them.'

'Age shall not wither...' So the world runs on.
We grieve, and sleep, and wake to laugh again;
And babes, untouched by pain of days long gone,
Untaught by sacrifice, grow into men.
What should these know of darkness and despair,
Of glory, now seen dimly, like a gem
Glowing thro' dust, that we let gather there?-
We who have said, 'We shall remember them.'

Grey men go marching down this street today:
Grave men, whose ranks grow pitifully spare.
Into the West each year they drift away
From silence into silence over there.
Unsung, unnoticed, quietly they go,
Mayhap to rest; mayhap a diadem
To claim, that was denied them here below
By those who vowed, 'We shall remember them.'

'We shall remember them.' This have we said.
Nor sighs, nor silences devoutly planned
Alone shall satisfy the proud young dead;
But all things that we do to this their land
Aye, theirs; not ours; of this be very sure;
Theirs, too, the right to credit or condemn.
And, if the soul they gave it shall endure,
Well may we say, 'We have remembered them.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Armistice: To His Dead Cobber From The Sentimental Bloke

I'm sittin' 'ere, Mick - sittin' 'ere today,
Feelin' 'arf glum, 'arf sorter - reverent,
Thinkin' strange, crooked thorts of 'ow they say:
'The 'eads is bowed thro' all a continent';
An' wond'rin - wond'rin 'in a kind of doubt
If other coves is feelin' like I do,
Tryin' to figure wot it's all about,
An' - if it's meanin' anythin' to you.

Silence... The hour strikes soon thro' all the land
An 'eads bend low. Old mate, give me your 'and.
Silence - for you, Mick, an' for blokes like you
To mark the Day - the Day you never knoo.

The Day you never knoo, nor we forget...
I can't tell why I'm sittin' 'ere this way,
Scrawlin' a message that you'll never get -
Or will you? I dunno. It's 'ard to say.
P'raps you'll know all about it, where you are,
An' think, 'Ah, well, they ain't too bad a lot.'
An' tell them other digs up on your star
That now, or nevermore, they ain't fergot.

Silence... Not ere alone, Mick - everywhere -
In city an' in country 'eads are bare.
An', in this room, it seems as if I knoo
Some friend 'oo came - Ole cobber! Is it you?

Me 'eart is full,
Mick... 'Struth! I ain't the bloke,
As you well know, to go all soft an' wet.
Fair's fair, lad. Times I've known when you 'ave spoke
Like you was tough an' 'ard as 'ell - an' yet
Somethin' be'ind your bluff an' swagger bold
Showed all them narsty sentiments was kid.

It was that thing inside yeh, lad, wot told.

It made you go an' do the thing you did.

Silence... There's mothers, Mick. You never knoo
No mother. But they're prayin' for you too.
In every heart - The Boys! The Boys are there,
The Boys... That very name, lad, is a pray'r.

The Boys! Old cobber, I can see 'em still:
The drums are rollin' an' the sunlight gleams
On bay'nits. Men are marchin' with a will
On to the glory of their boy'ood's dreams.
Glory? You never found it that, too much.
But, lad, you stuck it - stuck it with the rest,
An' if your bearin' 'ad no soulful touch,
'Twas for OUR souls that you went marchin' - West.

Silence... The children too, Mick - little kids,
Are standin'. Not becos their teacher bids:
They've knoo no war; but they 'ave stopped their play
Becos they know, they feel it is The Day.

So may it be thro' all the comin' years.
But sorrow's gone, lad. It's not that we know.
The sobbin's passed, 'ole cobber, an' the tears,
An' well we un'erstand you'd 'ave it so.

But somethin' deeper far than that 'as come,
Somethin' a mind can't get within its bound,
Somethin' I can't explain. A man is dumb
When 'e thinks... Listen! 'Ear the bugles sound!

Silence!

* * * *

Well, Mick, ole cock, I dunno why I've wrote,
It's just to ease a thing inside wot says
'Sit down, you sloppy coot, an' write a note
To that ole cobber of the olden days.
'E'll know - for sure 'e'll know'. 'So, lad, it's done,
Work's waitin', an' a man can't get in wrong:
Our goal is still ahead. But yours is won:

That's the one thing we know, lad, an - So long.

Silence... It's over, Mick; so there you are.
I know you're 'appy up there on yer star.
Believe us, lad; that star shall never fall
While one is left to say, 'Gawd keep 'em all!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Art Is Long - Hair Is Shorter

When artists wore a flowing mane,
Then, in a sentimental vein,
With pastorals they lured the eye,
Or sad, sweet scenes of sea and sky.
But now that hair sprouts from the face
They chuck their paint about the place
And, in the modern manner, seek
To baffle one with the unique.

I've often wondered if this surge
Of hirsute foam denotes some urge
Artistic that controls and sways
The hand and brain to newer ways.
For instance, might we not expect
An artist in dundrearies decked
In other manner to behave
From him who wore a monkey shave?

I've known but one of this quaint throng
Who wore both hair and whiskers long,
But he, poor bloke, was short of cash,
And wore a full beard and moustache
That he might draw on this supply
When price of brushes soared to high ...
But there are ways, it seems to me.
To test my novel theory.

If some brave man would range the land
And catch a few of this quaint band
And hold them captive for a while
Who knows what tricks of school and style
One might evolve if, to each man,
We gave a different hirsute plan?
You doubt, perhaps? But all the same,
There might be money in the game.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

As Between Pensioners

'Tis precious stuff,' said old George Jones
'When men sore needs a fall;
Tho' how or why it comes, I owns
I ain't got clear at all.
Some sez that in the sun, a spot
Controls it in some way.'
'It's this 'ere wireless, like as not,'
Said old Pete Parraday.

'Wireless,' scoffed grey-haired Joey Park.
'Wot wireless did they use
When ole man Noah sailed the ark?
It's them black cockytoos.
Last week I seen more than a few,
An' then wot did I say '
'Tis wireless - I'm tellin' you!'
Said old Pete Parraday.

'Cockies? Sun-spots?' said Daddy Shore,
'Jist foolish talk an' vain.
It's this 'ere Abbysinian war
An' guns as causes rain.
Ain't it been proved by natcharil laws
Time an' again, the way '
'It's this 'ere wireless is the cause,'
Said old Pete Parraday.

Said old George Jones, 'Ain't you ashamed
To talk the way you do?
It's providence gits mostly blamed
When things is lookin' blue.
Ain't the rain now due? For ain't we got
O'er all this world full sway?'
'Too right. But wireless helps a lot,'
Said old Pete Parraday.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

As Old George Said

Said old George Jones: 'All in a hundred years.
'Tis little time enough, and well may make
This youthful country proud among its peers
Of progress wooed and won for progress sake.
A splendid city shining by the sea
And all that count of wealth and worth she owns
Speaks well enough for our first century,'
Said old George Jones.

"Tis with a country much as 'tis with men:
The fevered morn o' life goes all for gain -
For all the things gain signifies; an' then,
We pause to con life's lesson o'er again
And find, if be that wisdom comes with years,
That gettin', gainin', holdin', scarce atones
Nor pays for all man's toil an' sweat and tears,'
Said old George Jones.

'Not with the golden profit won thro' trade,
Not with the tawdry treasure that we wrest
From this scarred earth, nor things men's hands have made
Comes any answer to man's age-long quest.
Not at the gates of such material goals
Nor pedigreed cities builded high with stones
Lies ought to serve or satisfy men's souls,'
Said old George Jones.

Said old George Jones, 'This is an old man's pray'r:
That gainin' shall not ever wholly serve
This land o' mine when I drift elsewhere
To seek what share o' peace I may deserve;
But that the treasure of the one true worth
Shall gleam at last above my whitening bones
For wiser mortals of a wiser earth,'
Said old George Jones.

Asking Too Much

You can't expect it! Goodness me!
T'would be a dreadful policy!
What sort of Ministerial dunce
Would try to do two things at once?

How can they deal with city needs,
While Bungalong or Rooville pleads,
For culverts, and Wow-wow grows sick
Through want of bridges o'er its 'crick?'

The logic of the thing's so plain:
To legislate on tram and train
Can't dig a single, blighted spud
Or help one milker chew her cud.

Then what's the use? One might say more:
What are our legislators for?
Such vaunted measures as Defence
Won't build a single dog-leg fence.

Your splendid dreams of nationhood
Don't do the cocky any good.
Besides, there's something more than that,
They're apt to interfere with Fat!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Aunt Evangeline Approves

My Aunt Evangeline has come
To visit Melbourne town,
Garbed for its Glad Centenary
In frill and festal gown.
And Aunties says in mincing tones
As she surveys the scene,
Quaite pretty work. But just one touch
Of Ort, Ai think would help so much.'
Says Aunt Evangeline.

'Now, take those sweet Venetian masts,
Which clowns call 'lolly sticks,'
Some naice ort-muslin maight be used
In colahs that will mix.
Then what they need is pampas grass
Dyed pink and puce and green
To stick in those - ah - funnel things
Such deah, sweet memories it brings,'
Says Aunt Evangeline.

'Crepe papah, swung from pole to pole
Festooned with Christmas
Maight add a touch of tasteful
Mai deah, it's taste that
So on these freightful buildings,
Paint a pretty watah scene,
With storks and - ah - conv
To please ortistic folk laike us.
Says Aunt Evangeline.

My Aunt Evangeline says, 'H'm!
Theah's something lacking yet
Something appropriate . . . Of course!
Whai how could Ai forget?
Ten thousand aspidistra plants
So graceful when they're green
Along those guttahs in the street
And on those pylons. They'd look sweet!'

Says Aunt Evangeline.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Autumn Interlude

I said goodbye to the bees last Friday week,
To blooms, and to things like these, for Winter bleak
Was shouting loud from the hills, and flinging high
His gossamer net that fills frail Autumn's sky.
So I said goodbye to the bees; for I knew that soon
I should bask no more 'neath the trees on some high noon
And hark to the drowsy hum close overhead.
For the cold and rain must come, now Summer's dead.

So I wallowed a while in woe and wooed unease;
And I rather liked it so; for it seemed to please
Some clamoring inner urge - some need apart,
And I felt self-pity surge, here, in my heart
As I said goodbye to the bees, my tireless friends
Who toil mid the flowers and the trees till daylight ends
Who toil in the sun, yet seem to find no irk,
While I loll in the shade and dream; for I do love work.

Ah, fate and the falling leaf! How dear is woe.
How subtly sweet is grief (Synthetic). So
I said goodbye to the bees; and then I wrote
This crown of threodites, while in my throat
I choked back many a sob and salt tears spent.
But I felt I'd done my job, and was content.
For I'd penned my piece to the bees - the poet's tosh
Of the Autumn's drear unease. Ah, me! Oh, gosh!

I said goodbye to the bees last Friday week....
Then the tempest shook the trees, the swollen creek
Went thundering down to the plain, the wind shrieked past,
And the cold, and the wet, wet rain were here at last....
Then, a hot sun, scorning rules, shone forth, alack!
And those blundering, blithering fools, the bees came back,
Humming a song inance in the rain-washed trees. . . .
Now it's all to do again. . . . Oh, blast the bees!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Autumn Song

With the advent of the Autumn
Trees behave as Nature taught 'em;
Maple, Sumach, Plum and Poplar, and the Chestnut known as Horse,
Ere they shed the Summer fashion,
Break into a perfect passion
Of sweet rivalry in color (if deciduous, of course).

Autumn comes, and Claret Ashes,
Liquidambers, showing splashes
From her palette, don the motley - Joseph's coats of many a hue:
Russet-red and golden-yellow
As the season waxes mellow.
As for me, like certain gum-trees, I perversely grow more blue.

I would quaff in ample measure
Every draught of Autumn's pleasure
Were it not a grim foreboding spreads its color thro' the mind.
And I know that Autumn breezes
Bring the first hint of the wheezes;
For, when Fall the Summer follows, Winter is not far behind.

Would I were like lucky mortals
Who, with Winter at the portals,
Shed their ills like Autumn leaves and welcome days of snow and ice.
Still, why not accept the present?
Fall brings favors amply pleasant.
Seat me - Ishoo! - in the sunlight. Autumn could be very dice.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Ave A 'Eart!

"Ere! 'Ave a 'eart!' 'e sez. 'Why, love a duck!
A 'uman bein' ain't a choppin' block!
There ain't no call fer you to go an' chuck
A man about when 'e 'as took the knock.
Gaw! Do yeh want to bust 'im all apart!
'Ere! 'Ave a 'eart!

'Aw, 'ave a 'eart!' 'e weeps. 'A fight's a fight;
But, strike me bandy, this is bloody war!
It's murder! An' you got no blasted right
To arst a 'uman man to come fer more.
'E 'ad no chance with you right frum the start.
Aw, 'ave a 'eart!

'Yeh've pulped 'is dile,' 'e whines; 'yeh've pinched 'is gun;
Yeh've bunged 'is eye 'an bashed in 'arf 'is teeth.
'Struth! Ain't yeh satisfied with wot yeh've done?
Or are you out to fit 'im fer a wreath?
The man's 'arf dead a'ready! Wot's yer dart?
Say, 'ave a 'eart!

I never did 'ear sich a bloke to squeal
About a trifle. This 'ere pal uv Spike's
Don't seem to 'ave the stummick fer a deal
Uv solid stoush: rough work don't soot 'is likes.
'E ain't done much but blather frum the start,
"Ere 'ave a 'eart!

A rat-face coot 'e is, with rat-like nerves
That's got all jangled with ixceedin' fright,
While I am 'andin' Spike wot 'e deserves.
But twice 'e tried to trip me in the fight,
The little skunk, now sobbin' like a tart,
'Aw, 'ave a 'eart!

This 'ere's the pretty pitcher in Ah Foo's
Back privit room: Spite Wegg, well on the floor,
Is bleedin' pretty, with a bonzer bruise
Paintin' one eye, an' 'arf 'is clobber tore.

While me, the conq'rin' 'ero, stan's above
'Owlin' me love.

The rat-face mutt is dancin' up an' down;
Ah Foo is singin' jazz in raw Chineese;
The parson's starin' at me with a frown,
As if 'e thort sich things could never be;
An' I'm some bloke 'e's but 'arf rekernised
'E's 'ipnertised.

Foo's furniture is scattered any'ow,
Artisic like, in bits about the floor.
An' 'arf a dozen blokes, drawn by the row,
Nosey but nervis, 'overs near the door.
I ain't no pitcher orf no chocklit box.
I've took some knocks.

I ain't no pitcher. But - O Glory! - But
Ther's dicky-birds awarblin' in me soul!
To think that I ain't lost that upper-cut!
An' my left-'ook's still with me, good an' whole.
I feared me punch was dead; but I was wrong.
Me 'eart's all song!

Then, as Spike makes a move, I raised me mits
Fearin' a foul; an' Rat-face does 'is block.
'E loosens up a string uv epi-tits
That seem to jolt the parson with a shock.
Filthy an' free they was, make no mistakes.
Then Snowy wakes.

All through the fight 'e 'ad seemed kind uv dazed,
Ubsorbin' it like some saint in a dream.
But now 'e straightened up, 'is ole eyes blazed
An', as the filth flowed in a red-'ot stream,
'Is voice blew in like cool winds frum the south:
'Shut that foul mouth!

'Shut your vile mouth, or, by the Lord! - 'Is 'and
Went up, an' there was anger on 'is face.
But Rat-face ducked. 'E weren't the man to stand
Agin that figger uv avengin' grace.

Ducked, or 'e might uv stopped one 'oly smite
Frum Snowy's right.

'Young friend,' 'E turns to me. An' then I 'ear
A yell: 'The cops! The cops is in the Lane!
'Parson,' I sez, 'we are de tropp, I fear.
Mid 'appier scenes I'll vencher to ixplain.
'Ang to me 'and, an' wave no fond farewell;
But run like 'ell!'

Some say wrong livin' reaps no good reward.
Well, I dunno. If I 'ad not cut loose
In Spadgers, in them days long, long deplored,
'Ow could I knowed the run uv Foo's caboose?
That back-way entrance, used fer Chiner's friends'
Un'oly ends.

Out by a green door; down a flight uv stairs;
Along a passige; up another flight;
Through 'arf a dozen rooms, broadcastin' scares
To twenty yellow men, pea-green with fright;
Me an' the parson, through that 'eathen land,
Trips 'and in 'and.

Out uv dark corners, voices 'ere an' there
Break sudden with a jabberin' sing-song,
Like magpies flutin' on the mornin' air.
We pays no 'eed to them, but plug along,
Twistin' an' turnin' through them secret ways,
Like in a maze.

I bust a bolted door. The parson gasps:
The air inside is 'eavy with the drug.
A fat Chow goggles at the broken hasps;
Another dreams un'eedin' on a rug.
Out by the other door-past piles uv fruit
'Ow we did scoot!

Red lanterns - lacquer-work - brass pots - strange smells
Silk curtains - slippers - baskets - ginger jars
A squealin' Chinee fiddle-tinklin' bells
Queer works uv art - filth - fowls - ducks - iron bars

To winders - All pass by us in a stream,
Like 'twuz a dream.

Down to a cellar; up agen, an' out
Bananers - brandy jars - we rush pell-mell,
Turnin' to left, to right, then round about
(The parson, after, said it seemed like 'ell)
Through one last orful pong, then up a stair
Into clean air.

We're in a little yard; no thing to stop
Our flight to freedom but a fence. 'Now, jump!'
I grabs 'is rev'rince, 'eaves 'im to the top,
An' bungs me own frame over with a bump.
'Dam!' sez the parson - or it sounded so
But I dunno.

Seems that 'is coat got 'itched up on a nail.
'E jerks it free an' gently comes to earth.
'Peter the 'ermit's 'ome!' I sez. 'All 'ail!'
An' makes punk noises indicatin' mirth.
The parson, 'e walks on, as still as death.
Seems out o' breath.

I walk beside 'im; but 'e sez no word.
To put it straight, I'm feelin' pretty mean
Feelin' a bit ashamed uv wot's occurred
But still, I never planned to 'ave no scene
With Spike. I didn't start the flamin' row,
Not any'ow.

I tells 'im so. But still 'e never spoke.
I arsts 'im 'ow else could the thing be done.
I tells 'im straight I'd let no flamin' bloke
Take pot shots at me with no flamin' gun.
'E stops, an' pats me shoulder with 'is 'and:
'I understand.

'Young friend.' 'Is face is orful stern an' grave.
'The brawl was not your seekin', we'll suppose.
But does it 'elp this girL we wish to save?
'Ow can sich mad brutality serve Rose?

May be, in anger, you fergot, young friend,
Our Christian end?'

'Not on yer life!' I tells 'im. 'Spike's in soak,
Whether the cops 'ave got 'im now or not.
An' that removes one interferin' bloke
Wot 'ad a mind to queer our 'oly plot.
Tomorrer we'll find Rose, an' work good works
With gentler lurks.'

'Gentler?' 'e sez. 'I 'ope so.' Still 'e's grave.'The ways uv 'Eaven's strange,' 'e
sez, 'an' yours
Is stranger still. Yet all may work to save

One strugglin' soul, if 'Eaven's grace endures.'
'E's dreadful solemn.
'I must own I feel
Grieved a great deal.

'Your face,' 'e sez, 'is very badly cut -'
'Now, look,' I chips. "Old on. Let's git this right.
'Oo was it tried to stoush that rat-face mutt?
'Oo was it barracked for me in the fight?
'Oo was it used that word uv evul sense
Up on that fence?'

'Young friend!' . . . Indignant? 'Struth! I see 'im try
To keep reel stern. But soon I rekernise
The little twinkle stealin' in 'is eye,
That won't keep out, no matter 'ow 'e tries.
An' then - 'is twitchin' lips smile wide apart:
'Aw, 'ave a 'eart!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Averted Violence

Stripped to the buff they circled round,
And jagged and swung and crossed;
To uppercut and smash and pound
No chances either lost;
Till folks opined, in some alarm,
That they might do each other harm.

Fiercely, they swung the left and right,
With punch and bash and clout:
Each grimly hopeful that he might
Secure the glad knock-out.
And, as they watched the 'claret' spurt,
The crowd feared someone might be hurt.

The ribs of one were bruised and sore,
His chin was badly gashed;
The other's face was streaked with gore;
And yet they biffed and bashed.
And someone said, 'It this goes on
There'll be an injury anon.'

Harder and swifter rained the blows,
And fiercer grew the fray;
At chest and chin and eye and nose
Each boxer biffed away;
Till cried the audience in fright,
If they're not stopped they'll start to fight!

But on they battled, bruised and dazed,
Scarce able now to stand;
Until the Law stepped in and raised
A stern, restraining hand.
'Ah!' sighed the crowd, freed from suspense,
'It might have led to violence.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Bacchus Marsh

Here she bides, a buxom lady,
Blest by peace and great content;
Dwelling by her byways shady,
Where the elm trees boughs are bent;
Shutting out the world's wild clamor,
Lending to her streets a glamour,
Gracious and beneficent.

Fortune came to her full easy,
Asking little of man's toil;
So she prospered in those breezy
Days when wealth sprang from the soil
And kind earth, munificently,
As the placid seasons passed,
For man's fortune proffered gently
Rich and gracious gifts in plenty,
Drawn from out her storehouse vast.

Portly dame, untuned to trouble,
Destined through the years to be
While the ills of earth redouble
Sheltered in tranquility,
Asking neither fame nor glory,
And with quiet dilligence
Tending earth that tells the story
Of an age long gone and hoary,
And the young world's turbulence.

Brown hills, broody in the diatnce,
Fecund fields that won their worth
Out of nature's mad insistence
To remould her tortured earth
These have left their age-old traces
In the glacier's graven trail,
Thro' the wondrous green oasis
Where the pleasant river races

To the sea from this calm vale.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Ballad Of Bopard Defied

As I came to a playing-field on happy summer day
Two strudy youths I did espy; at cricket they did play.
One had the ball, one had the bat, and, with a right good smack,
As one tossed up the crimson sphere, the other smote it back.
Now, as I reached the bowler's end, I saw the young man quail;
His hand they shook, his knees went crook, his face was ashen pale;
Then, with a gulty kind of look, he cast the ball away,
And in a weak and trembling voice these words to me did say:
(In a tearful, pleading voice, with plenty of temolo and shivering grass.)

'Don't tell them that you saw me,
Or that I misbehaved.
Their methods over-aw me;
But I would not be enslaved.
I love my freeders, msiter, as much as any man;
But, oh, I love my bit of cricket, too.
And I dearly love to bowl,
But the great Board of Control,
They would chain me to their chariot if they knoo.'
(Adopt severe judicial manner, frowning darkly.)

'Young man,' I said, 'it grieves me this state of things to find,
For it is all too clear to me you have the crim'nal mind.
Thus to play without a licence and the noble Board defy
Is very reprehensible. 'Tut, tut!' I said, 'Fie, fie!
With salt tears streaming from his eyes, he bowed his head in shame.
'Come, come,' I said, 'there's hope for you. Buck up and play the game.'
Then I eyed the other stripling; but, much to my dismay,
In tones most ungrammatical these words I heard him say: -
(In ringing, defiant accents, full of roughneck pride.)

'Go tell them that you seen me;
Go bowl it in their ear.
But no Board won't come between me
An' the game I 'old so dear,
I don't want to go to Indier or England with no team,
Fair Ostral-i-ar is good enough fur me!
I will never sell me soul
To no crool Board of Control;

For me favorite game is ping-pong, an' I'm free!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Ballad Of Captious Critics

Stuffed with tradition and trammels of yore,
Cramped in their studies, they sneer and scold
At the strange, new passions young hearts would pour
Thro' a sunlit land, and a tale unfold
Of youth's ambition - new-minted gold
Fresh from life's furnace, all aglow
With none of its worth are their hearts cajoled,
If it waken no echo of things they know.

Their minds close cluttered with olden lore,
Their praise for the new is charity doled;
Their memories, clogged with a moss-grown store
Of dead men's wisdom, naught also may hold,
The flight of an eaglet, overhold,
Is an impudent thing, so their judgements go;
And the song of a bush bird leaves them cold,
If it wakes no echo of things they know.

Songs have sprung from this virgin shore,
Tales that are turned from an unworn mould,
These be but follies that grieve them sore
Rhymes the old troubadours have not trolled.
Themes must be borrowed from urn of old;
For originality irks them so,
And the voice of the bush must be controlled,
If it wakes no echo of things they know.

ENVOI

Prints - aye, and reprints, tales retold.
Shadows - for these do their plaudits grow;
But the bard stays dumb, and the book unsold
If it waken no echo of things they know.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Ballad Of Lieges

Son of our King: When yoemen sailed
From Britain to expand her sway,
The coward from High venture quailed,
The weakling sank beside the way.
None save the strong in that far day,
The brave, stood clear-eyed at the prow
To plan such parts as venturers play.
Here be their kin who greet you now.

Britain had failed if these had failed -
Stout pioneers whose sterner clay,
Reckless of that the task entailed,
Faced the unknown with no dismay.
Out to vast wildernesses they
Blazed pain-strewn paths, for axe plough
To earn this fruitful century's pay.
Here be their kin who greet you now.

When o'er an Empire bugles wailed
To summon liegemen to the fray,
In sons the olden urge prevailed;
Nor life, nor love might bid them stay.
Unblooded, in red war's array
They proved the breed, they kept the vow,
They paid the price as liegemen may.
Here be their kin who greet you now.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Ballarat

The digger's cultured daughter:
Her youth was wildly free.
Now by the placid water
Of tree-girt Wendouree
She walks, a gracious lady,
Where sculptured beauty gleams
By verdant paths and shady,
And dreams her golden dreams.

Her father was a digger,
Bearded and blunt and crude,
His hand quick to the trigger
Should tyranny intrude.
With lifts of sudden riches
He heaped his hoyden lass,
Whose flowering new bewitches
With beauty all who pass.

For she has sown her gardens
To hide the scars of greed,
And, where the old dump hardens,
Springs many a fruitful seed.
And, as she gathers graces
In loveliness to last,
Serenity replaces
A turbulence long past.

Her father was a miner,
Great in his day and age;
But here to ideals finer
She shapes her heritage.
Until it spreads in glamor,
A wonder to behold
Of peace come after clamor,
Of grace that followed gold.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Barley Grass

Wavin' corn upon the hillside,
Twinklin' daisies on the rise,
Mystic bushes across the ranges,
Wattle in its spring-time guise,
Stately gums that mark the twinin's
Of the ole creek - let 'em pass.
Leave me here to lie, a-lazin'
In the noddin' barley grass.

Barley grass was noddin', noddin'
'Long the dear ole township track
Where, in school days, we were ploddin':
Four mile there an' four mile back.
Teacher, on the summer mornin's,
Called us, scoldin', from the class,
An' we wasted precious moments
Pickin' out the barley grass.

Barley grass insinuatn',
In a summer long ago,
Gained a girl maternal ratin',
Made a chap a holy show.
'Some one's been to walk with some one
Down the creek-side with a lass.
Fie, it ain't no use denyin'
Tell-tale seeds of barley grass.'

Came a time, when fortune frownin'
Sent a spring in cruel guise:
Wilted corn upon the hillside,
Brown soil barren on the rise,
Droopin' gums along the ole creek
Dry beneath a sky of brass;
An' we longed for just the sight of
One green tuft of barley grass.

But we battle on together,
Her an' me that mockin' spring,
Never losin' faith or doubtin'

What the future was to bring.
Watchin', waitin' for the dawnin',
For the time of trial to pass;
An' 'twas her that found one mornin'
That first peep of barley grass.

We don't want no wreath of roses,
We don't want no immortelles,
When the last of us reposes
In the last of earthly spells.
Plant above - we ain't presumin'
To be writ on stone or brass
Just a modest, unassumin',
Simple bit of barley grass.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Beauty's Blemish

You are as young, O lady mine,
As ere you were in olden days,
Your lips are red, your blue eyes shine,
And still you have your girlish ways.
I hate to think what years have flown
Since first I praised these things, mine own.

Your frocks still have that youthful cut,
Garbing a svelte form, slim and flat.
You should be spreading, darling but
Your middle-age has brought no fat.
Indeed, you sometimes seem at nights
A flapper, seen in certain lights.

My fond eyes have surveyed you, sweet,
Thro' all these years and found no fault.
Your lustrous hair, your tiny feet
Are still perfection. Yet a halt
In my high praise wakes sudden fears:
You're growing old behind the ears!

Yet, even then, I'd not repine
If that grey matter which should fill
That pretty head, O lady mine,
Gained age, 'twere compensation still;
And I'd forgive the ravaging years,
If you'd mature above the ears.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Beef Tea

She never nagged; she never said no word;
But sat an' looked at me an' never stirred.
I could 'a' bluffed it out if she 'ad been
Fair narked, an' let me 'ave it wiv 'er tongue;
It silence told me 'ow 'er 'eart wus wrung.
Poor 'urt Doreen!
Gorstruth! I'd sooner fight wiv fifty men
Than git one look like that frum 'er agen!

She never moved; she never spoke no word;
That 'urt look in 'er eyes, like some scared bird:
' 'Ere is the man I loved,' it seemed to say.
"E's mine, this crawlin' thing, an' I'm 'is wife;
Tied up fer good; an' orl me joy in life
Is chucked away!
If she 'ad bashed me I'd 'a' felt no 'urt!
But 'ere she treats me like—like I wus dirt.

'Ow is a man to guard agen that look?
Fer other wimmin, when the'r blokes go crook,
An' lobs 'ome wiv the wages uv a jag,
They smashes things an' carries on a treat
An' 'owls an' scolds an' wakes the bloomin' street
Wiv noisy mag.
But 'er—she never speaks; she never stirs . . .
I drops me bundle . . . An' the game is 'ers.

Jist two months wed! Eight weeks uv married bliss
Wiv my Doreen, an' now it's come to this!
Wot wus I thinkin' uv? Gawd! I ain't fit
To kiss the place 'er little feet 'as been!
'Er that I called me wife, me own Doreen!
Fond dreams 'as flit;
Love's done a bunk, an' joy is up the pole;
An' shame an' sorrer's roostin' in me soul.

'Twus orl becors uv Ginger Mick—the cow!
(I wish't I 'ad 'im 'ere to deal wiv now!
I'd pass 'im one, I would! 'E ain't no man!)

I meets 'im Choosdee ev'nin' up the town.
'Wot O,' 'e chips me. 'Kin yeh keep one down?'
I sez I can.
We 'as a couple; then meets three er four
Flash coves I useter know, an' 'as some more.

"Ow are yeh on a little gamble, Kid?"
Sez Ginger Mick. 'Lars' night I'm on four quid.
Come 'round an' try yer luck at Steeny's school.
'No,' sez me conscience. Then I thinks, 'Why not?'
An' buy 'er presents if I wins a pot?
A blazin' fool
I wus. Fer 'arf a mo' I 'as a fight;
Then conscience skies the wipe . . . Sez I 'Orright.'

Ten minutes later I was back once more,
Kip in me 'and, on Steeny Isaac's floor,
Me luck was in an' I wus 'eadin' good.
Yes, back agen amongst the same old crew!
An' orl the time down in me 'eart I knew
I never should . . .
Nex' thing I knows it's after two o'clock
Two in the morning! An' I've done me block!

'Wot odds?' I thinks. 'I'm in fer it orright.'
An' so I stops an' gambles orl the night;
An' bribes me conscience wiv the gilt I wins.
But when I comes out in the cold, 'ard dawn
I know I've crooled me pitch; me soul's in pawn.
My flamin' sins
They 'its me in a 'eap right where I live;
Fer I 'ave broke the solim vow I give.

She never magged; she never said no word.
An' when I speaks, it seems she never 'eard.
I could 'a' sung a nim, I feels so gay!
If she 'ad only roused I might 'a' smiled.
She jist seems 'urt an' crushed; not even riled.
I turns away,
An' yanks me carkis out into the yard,
Like some whipped pup; an' kicks meself reel 'ard.

An' then, I sneaks to bed, an' feels dead crook.
Fer golden quids I couldn't face that look
That trouble in the eyes uv my Doreen.
Aw, strike! Wot made me go an' do this thing?
I feel jist like a chewed up bit of string,
An' rotten mean!
Fer 'arf an hour I lies there feelin' cheap;
An' then I s'pose, I muster fell asleep....

' 'Ere, Kid, drink this' . . . I wakes, an' lifts me 'ead,
An' sees 'er standin' there beside the bed;
A basin in 'er 'ands; an' in 'er eyes
(Eyes that wiv unshed tears is shinin' wet)
The sorter look I never shall ferget,
Until I dies.

' 'Ere, Kid, drink this,' she sez, an' smiles at me.
I looks — an' spare me days! It was beef tea!

Beef tea! She treats me like a hinvaleed!
Me! that 'as caused 'er lovin' 'eart to bleed.
It 'urts me worse than maggin' fer a week!
'Er! 'oo 'ad right to turn dead sour on me,
Fergives like that, an' feeds me wiv beef tea . . .
I tries to speak;
An' then — I ain't ashamed o' wot I did
I 'ides me face . . . an' blubbers like a kid.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Before The War

'Before the war,' she sighs. 'Before the war.'
Then blinks 'er eyes, an' tries to work a smile.
'Ole scenes,' she sez, 'don't look the same no more.
Ole ways,' she sez, 'seems to 'ave changed their style.
The pleasures that we had don't seem worth while
Them simple joys that passed an hour away
An' troubles, that we used to so revile,
'Ow small they look', she sez. "Ow small today.

'This war!' sighs ole Mar Flood. An' when I seen
The ole girl sittin' in our parlour there,
Tellin' 'er troubles to my wife Doreen.
As though the talkin' eased 'er load 'uv care,
I thinks uv mothers, 'ere and everywhere,
Smilin' a bit while they are grievin' sore
For grown-up babies, fightin' Over There;
An' then I 'ears 'em sigh, 'Before the war.'

My wife 'as took the social 'abit bad.
I ain't averse - one more new word I've learned
Averse to tea, when tea is to be 'ad;
An' when it comes I reckon that it's earned.
It's jist a drink, as fur as I'm concerned,
Good for a bloke that toilin' on the land;
But when a caller comes, 'ere am I turned
Into a social butterfly, off-'and.

Then drinkin' tea becomes a 'oly rite.
So's I won't bring the family to disgrace
I guts a bit 'uv coachin' overnight
On ridin' winners in this bun-fed race.
I 'ave to change me shirt, an' wash me face,
An' look reel neat, from me waist up at least,
An sling remarks in at the proper place,
An' not makes noises drinkin', like a beast.

"Ave some more cake. Another slice, now do.
An' won't yeh 'ave a second cup uv tea?
'Ow is the children?' Ar, it makes me blue!

This boodoor 'abit ain't no good to me.
I likes to take me tucker plain an' free:
Tea an' a chunk out on the job for choice,
So I can stoke with no one there to see.
Besides, I 'aven't got no comp'ny voice.

Uv course, I've 'ad it all out with the wife.
I argues that there's work that must be done.
An' tells 'er that I 'ates this tony life.
She sez there's jooties that we must not shun.
You bet that ends it; so I joins the fun,
An' puts 'em all at ease with silly grins
Slings bits uv repartee like "Ave a bun,"
An' passes bread an' butter, for my sins.

Since I've been marri'd, say, I've chucked some things,
An' learned a whole lot more to fill the space.
I've slung all slang; crook words 'ave taken wings,
An' I 'ave learned to entertain with grace.
But when ole Missus Flood comes round our place
I don't object to 'er, for all 'er sighs;
Becos I likes 'er ways, I likes 'er face,
An', most uv all, she 'as them mother's eyes.

'Before the war,' she sighs, the poor ole girl.
'Er talk it gets me thinkin' in between,
While I'm assistin' at this social whirl. . . .
She comes across for comfort to Doreen,
To talk about the things that might 'ave been
If Syd 'ad not been killed at Suvla Bay,
Or Jim had not done a bunk at seventeen,
An' not been heard uv since 'e went away.

They 'ave a little farm right next to us
'Er and 'er husband - where they live alone.
Spite uv 'er cares, she ain't the sort to fuss
Or serve up sudden tears an' sob an' moan,
An' since I've known 'er some'ow I 'ave grown
To see in 'er, an' all the grief she's bore,
A million brave ole mothers 'oo 'ave known
Deep sorrer since them days before the war.

'Before the war,' she sez. 'Yeh mind our Syd?
Poor lad. . . . But then, yeh never met young Jim
'Im 'oo was charged with things 'e never did.
Ah, both uv you'd 'ave been reel chums with 'im.
'Igh-spirited 'e was, a perfect limb.
It's six long years now since 'e went away
Ay, drove away.' 'Er poor ole eyes git dim.
'That was,' she sighs, 'that was me blackest day.

'Me blackest day! Wot am I sayin' now?
That was the day the parson came to tell
The news about our Syd. . . . An', yet, some'ow
My little Jim!' She pauses for a spell. . . .
'Your 'olly'ocks is doin' reely well,'
She sez, an' battles 'ard to brighten up.
'An' them there pinks uv yours, 'ow sweet they smell.
An' - Thanks! I think I will 'ave one more cup.'

As fur as I can get the strength uv it,
Them Floods 'ave 'ad a reel tough row to how.
First off, young Jim, 'oo plays it high a bit,
Narks the ole man a treat, an' slings the show.
The come the war, an' Syd 'e 'as to go.
'E run 'is final up at Suvla Bay
One uv the Aussies I was proud to know.
An' Jim's cracked 'ardy since 'e went away.

'Er Jim! These mothers! Lord, they're all the same.
I wonders if Doreen will be that kind.
Syd was the son 'oo played the reel man's game;
But Jim 'oo sloped an' left no word be'ind,
His is the picter shinin' in 'er mind.
'Igh-spirited! I've 'eard that tale before.
I sometimes think she'd take it rather kind
To 'ear that 'is 'igh spirits run to war.

'Before the war,' she sez. 'Ah, times was good.
The little farm out there, an' jist us four
Workin' to make a decent liveli'ood.
Our Syd an' Jim! . . . Poor Jim! I grieves me sore;
For Dad won't 'ave 'im mentioned 'ome no more.
'E's 'urt, I know, cos 'e thinks Jim 'urt me.

As if 'e could, the bonny boy I bore. . . .
But I must off 'ome now, an' git Dad's tea.'

I seen 'er to the gate. (Take it frum me,
I'm some perlite.) She sez, 'Yeh mustn't mind
Me talkin' uv Jim, but when I see
Your face it brings 'im back; 'e's jist your kind.
Not quite so 'an'some, p'r'aps, nor so refined.
I've got some toys uv 'is,' she sez. 'But there
This is ole woman's talk, an' you be'ind
With all yer work, an' little time to spare.

She gives me 'and a squeeze an' turns away,
Sobbin', I thort; but then she looks be'ind,
Smilin', an' wavin', like she felt reel gay,
I wonders 'ow the women work that blind,
An' jist waves back; then goes inside to find
A lookin'-glass, an' takes a reel good look. . . .
'Not quite so 'an'some, p'r'aps, nor so refined!
Gawd 'elp yeh, Jim,' I thinks. 'Yeh must be crook.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Benalla

A country lass with rosy cheeks,
A healthy maid with merry ways;
Labor 'mid loveliness she seeks,
And strives to crowd with joy her days.
For she was raised upon a farm;
Upon a farm she grew in grace,
And in that clear air won this charm,
This sweet allure of form and face.

Where she had won the art to grow,
About her house, about her door,
Such loveliness as these days show,
Ask of the years that went before.
But learn she did, as scenes attest
By tree-girt lawn and flowery way,
Even her bridge-heads flank some nest
Of nodding roses, richly gay.

Beyond her home the wheatlands roll,
To yield their tithes upon her dower;
Yet, 'spite her soft, aesthetic soul,
She gives not all to field and flower.
For, show the lass a well-set horse;
Show her a dog with grace or speed;
Set her upon some sunlit course,
And she knows full content indeed.

A country lass with rosy cheeks,
Deft and delightful, who can be
A hostess rare to one who seeks
Her kindly hospitality.
And here she reigns, a queen indeed,
About her flowery realm to ride,
Mounted upon a well-bred steed,
A good hound trotting by her side.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Bendigo

A golden maid whose golden voice
Calls to the northern lands,
Of riches she has had her choice.
Twin treasures to make men rejoice
Came easy to her hands:
The golden harvest of broad fields,
Or that dark gift of sudden yields
Won from her golden sands.

But men have scorned her worthier pride
In rich and fruitful soil;
And, spreading desolation wide,
Ranged all her verdant countryside
To ravage and despoil.
And now grey wastes of tortured earth
Await the glory of rebirth
Thro' nature's patient toil.

She has the wish, she has the will
To gather beauty round.
Though gold's fierce lure stays with her still,
She lives to plan and strive until
Springs from this barren ground
Earth's only treasure, scorned of yore,
And smiling verdure clothes once more
Full many a bare, bleak mound.

She guards the gateway of the north
The broad lands of the sun.
Hospitably her hand goes forth,
Eager to vindicate the worth
Of happier tasks begun,
And in gay gardens to express
A newer urge to loveliness
And kinder virtues won.

A virile lass, in no wise strange,
Of true Australian breed:
Where drab days into sunlight charge

Across the Great Dividing Range
She scatters now the seed
That shall bring yields a thousandfold
When gardens count for more than gold
And peace outvalues greed.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Bert

Did you ever meet Bert? 'E's all over the town,
In offices, shops an' in various places,
Cocky an' all; an' you can't keep 'im down.
I never seen no one so lucky at races.
Backs all the winners or very near all;
Tells you nex' day when the races are over.
'E makes quite a pot, for 'is wagers ain't small;
An' by rights 'e 'ad ought to be livin' in clover.

But, some'ow or other - aw, well, I dunno.
You got to admit that some fellers is funny.
'E don't dress too well an' 'is spendin' is low.
I can't understand wot 'e does with 'is money.
'E ought to be sockin' a pretty fair share;
An' tho' 'e will own 'e's a big money-maker,
'E don't seem to save an' 'e don't seem to care
If 'e owes a big wad to 'is butcher an' baker.

'E don't tell you much if you meet on the course;
But after it's over 'e comes to you grinnin',
Shows you 'is card where 'e's marked the first 'orse,
An' spins you a wonderful tale of 'is winnin'.
Can't make 'im out, 'e's so lucky an' that.
Knows ev'ry owner an' trainer an' jockey:
But all of 'is wagerin's done on 'is pat.
Won't spill a thing, even tho' 'e's so cocky.

Oyster, that's Bert. 'E's as close as a book.
But sometimes I've come on 'im sudden an' saw 'im
Lip 'angin' down an' a reel 'aggard look,
Like all the woes in the world come to gnaw 'im.
But, soon as 'e sees you, 'e brightens right up.
'Picked it again, lad!' 'e sez to you, grinnin'.
'A fiver at sevens I 'ad in the Cup!
That's very near sixty odd quid that I'm winnin'.'

Mystery man - that's 'is style for a cert,
Picks the 'ole card, yet 'e's shabby and seedy;
'E must 'ave some sorrer in secret, ole Bert

Some drain on 'is purse wot is keepin' 'im needy.
A terrible pity. Some woman, no doubt.
No wonder 'e worries in secret an' souses.
If I 'ad 'is winnin's, year in an' year out,
Why I'd own a Rolls Royce an' a terris of 'ouses.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Bill

'Gentle brother, answer truly,
Tell what you be.
But, I pray, tax not unduly
Your sagacitee.
Is your brand u-ni-fi-cation
Is't, or is your appellation
Something mild and shorter still?
Answer truly, Brother Bill.'

Gentle brother answered truly,
Though in language hot
For his temper was unruly:
'Don't talk blinded rot!
Blow u-ni-fi-blanky-cation!
If you want me name an' station
My true moniker is Bill,
An' I work at Johnson's mill.'

'Gentle brother, wax not ireful.
I'm not out for jokes.
Yea, and consequences direful
Smite bad-temepered blokes.
I've no doubt, all day perspiring,
You graft hard. I'm not inquiring
Who you are or what you do,
But what are you? Answer true.'

Brother Bill stood wildly staring,
Anger in his eye;
And, beligerently glaring,
Thus he made reply:
'Up at Johnson's mill I'm working,
And I ain't a bloke for shirking.
If you want me answer true,
I'm a better man that you!'

'Gentle brother, of your senses
You seem quite bereft.
Just consider how immense is....'
Here's Bill's dirty left
Took the catechist right squarely,
And Bill forthwith bounced him fairly,
Punched till he was out of breath.
Bill despised a shibboleth.

Note ye how each platform spouter,
Playing at 'the game,'
Strives to label ev'ry doubter
With a foolish name.
With sly tricks and ruses clever
They are keenly seeking ever
To affix a party brand
To all voters in the land.

List, ye party politicians,
Talking near and far,
We don't want vague propositions
As to what you are.
For the shibboleths of party
Rightly earn the curses hearty
Of all honest men and true.
Let us hear of what you DO.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Billy'

At the risk of seeming silly,
I would ask you, 'Where is Billy?'
Here's a crisis, here's a fight,
And he's missing. Strike a light!
Blithering blazes! Here's a mill -
Rough house stuff; and where's our Bill?

Where's the speech with phrases frilly,
Trouncing foemen willy nilly,
Waving arms, gesticulations,
Posturing and wild gyrations?
Briefly, where's the vaudeville
That, in olden days was Bill?

Where's the harsh voice, rising shrilly
To uphold the views of Billy?
Far too grave grow politics,
Lacking all his circus tricks.
Missing! Missing! And, alack!
Some folk say he won't come back.

Not so I. I see him dreaming
In some chamber, planning, scheming,
Till, when we are on the verge
Of disaster, he'll emerge
With the only sane, safe plan,
For deliverance of man.

Then with one fine, regal, gesture,
He will don again the vesture
Of authority and right,
Crying, 'Come, I see the light!'
Gosh! But wouldn't we look silly
If once more we followed Billy?

Billy's Policeman

I knew a policeman once
And this is true as it ever could be
Who made me feel an awful dunce;
'Cos I lost my dad, and it frightened me.
He came and took me by the hand
'Well, now,' said he; 'young fella-me-lad,
No need to cry, I understand.
You'll soon be back with mummy and dad.'

I knew the big policeman well
Before he'd talked the teeniest while.
Such a lot of things he had to tell;
And he had the cheeriest, merriest smile.
I've got a nipper at home like you
So high, young fella-me-lad,' he said.
And all at once - as true as true
I forgot to cry, and I laughed instead.

And then the big policeman said:
'Ho, that's the stuff for the troops, old son!'
The funniest things came into his head;
And I laughed and laughed at every one.
And when they found my mummy and dad,
And he patted my head and said good-bye.
Somehow or other I felt quite sad;
But I knew he'd be sorry to see me cry.

I know that all policemen now
Are just like that, and it's silly to think
They frown and bully and make a row,
Why, you ought to have seen my merry one wink!
And when I pass where he has his beat,
When I'm out for a walk with mummy and dad,
I wave to my big friend in the street,
'What Ho,' says he, 'young fella-me-lad.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Bird - Seed

Old Pete Parraday, he isn't very wise
Or so the local gossips say - They love to criticise
His crazy views and values, and the things he counts worth while.
'Better had he saved his money,' say his critics, with a smile;
'And not become a pensioner with all his silly chat
Of finches, wrens and robins, and such trivial thngs as that.
It's livin' lonely all these years has filched his brains away.'
'An' left me kind o' peacefuller,' grins old Pete Parraday.

Old Pete Parraday, he sits beside the road
Resting from the hefting of his week-end load:
Bread and meat and groceries to serve his simple need,
And a tiny paper packet with the tag, 'Bird Seed.'
'I allus gits three-pennyworth - I've never needed more
For them there little Pommy-birds wot hops about me door
Goldfinches, starlings an' stranger-folk like they
Wot ain't brung up to grubs an' things,' says old Pete Parraday.

'The robins likes their meal-worms; the blue-wrens tackles grubs;
Grey thrushes goes for take-allis like the boozers goes for pubs;
But the little vegetarians for food has far to roam;
An' so I buys 'em bird-seed to make 'em feel at 'ome
Goldfinches, sichlike, them little stranger-folk . . .
I know 'ow people counts me soft an' reckons I'm a joke
When I talks about me bird friends. I've seed 'em nudge an' wink.
But I valyers them there mates o' mine. Cos why? They makes me think.

'They makes me think of beauty, of the glory of the earth,
An' they leads me on to dreamin'. An' wot is dreamin' worth?
Some folk might call it crazy; but it's heaven's gift to me.
Aye, vision sich as never is or was by land or sea.
Man cannot live by bread alone, nor dreams be put in words;
An', if I'm mad, I'm happy mad, an' talkin' to me birds.
Three-pennyworth o' bird-seed counts more to me that way
Then all the wealth of Sheba's queen,' says old Pete Parraday.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Bird Song

Crow

I detest the Carrion Crow!
(He's a raven, don't you know?)
He's a greedy glutton, also, and a ghoul,
And his sanctimonious caw
Rubs my temper on the raw.
He's a demon, and a most degraded fowl.

Blue Wren

I admire the pert Blue-wren
And his dainty little hen-
Though she hasn't got a trace of blue upon her;
But she's pleasing, and she's pretty,
And she sings a cheerful ditty;
While her husband is a gentleman of honour.

Cuckoo

I despise the Pallid Cuckoo,
A disreputable "crook" who
Shirks her duties for a lazy life of ease.
I abhor her mournful call,
Which is not a song at all
But a cross between a whimper and a wheeze.

Kookaburra

I suspect the Kookaburra,
For his methods are not thorough
In his highly-praised campaign against the snakes,
And the small birds, one and all,
Curse him for a cannibal -
Though he certainly is cheerful when he wakes.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Bird Song - Crow

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Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Birds, Batsmen And Bowlers

The throstle now in English lanes
Bids Summer strew her dear delights. . . .
But we, intent on cricket gains,
Watch well our valiant willow knights.
With eager eyes on cabled news,
We watch each bravely mounting score;
With ears half frozen, we refuse
To go to bed; but crane for more
From out the ether, as we sit
And 'listen-in,' tho' midnight's gone.
While glorious centuries they hit
(And if it isn't Bradman, it's Ponsford;
and if it isn't Ponsford, it's Woodfull;
and if it isn't Woodfull, it's McCabe;
and if it isn't McCabe, it's Chipperfield;
and if it isn't Chipperfield -)
Gosh! Can this sort of thing go on?
Our hope lies not alone in Don;
Others remain to carry on.

The Merry Mavis, fluting free
In England now by wood and weald,
Calls from the edge of Arcady. . . .
But, as our bowlers take the field,
We mark them with a mental eye,
Striving against the mimic foe,
Despite one Shaw. (Let Mavis cry,
The foolish fowl.) We see them mow
The wickets down; this way and that,
Turning the ball. Rare joy we sup
To mark their cunning beat the bat -
(And if it isn't Wall, it's O'Reilly;
and if it isn't O'Reilly, it's Grimmett;
and if it isn't Grimmett, it's Fleetwood-Smith;
and if it isn't Fleetwood-Smith -)
Oh Gosh! Can our men keep this up?
The Test? Alas, what bitter cup -
Hey! Shut that kookaburra up!

Birthday Honours

My natal day was yesterday;
And so I said to Fate,
'What gifts bring you, by one, by two,
To ease my parlous state?'
'I proffer blindly,' Fate replied,
From chance-found joys and ills.
For you, the 'flu; and this beside,
A sheaf of monthly bills.'

My natal day was yesterday;
And so I said to Chance,
'What gifts bring you, by one, by two,
My fortunes to enhance?'
Said Chance, 'I bring no obvious thing.
Ungessed escape bring I
From dangers rife always in life
That closely pass you by.'

My natal day was yesterday;
And so I said to Life,
'What gifts bring you, by one, by two,
To salve me in the strife?'
But Life said, 'Nought. Long since I brought
My gifts, glum misanthrope;
And these for you I here renew;
Myself and human hope.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Black And White

They fights their fights and they hunt their game,
As they did before the white man came,
Far in the unexplored Outback,
Where still Australia's mostly black.

They little know of white men's laws,
Or of Australia's cherished cause,
Or any of that bag of tricks
Of policies or politics.

Yet, tho' they little dream of it,
Our wild black brothers do their bit;
For while they hanker for a fight
They help to keep Australia white.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Black Saturday

They say a touch of spring is in the air;
They say the wattle trees with bloom are gay;
They say each garden now begins to wear
(Not that I care)

A festal garb that waxes day by day
In loneliness. They tell, too, of blue skies
Aglow with hope . . . I laugh them all to scorn,
And gaze upon these things with listless eyes
That see nought but a vista most forlorn.

They say that bird songs come now with a rush
Of rarest melody; the ambient air
Thrills to the voice of blackbird and of thrush
(I answer 'Tush!
Let 'em go sing their heads off. I don't care.')

They say a kindly sun beams o'er the earth.
They say - Bah! Who pays heed to what they say?
Life is a sham; a mockery is mirth;
I'm making out my income tax today.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Black-Out

These English actors are too mild,
Who seek to have their wrongs redressed.
No manager may be beguiled
By supplication or request.

Some sterner action is required,
A union boss they should engage,
If coloured folk are not desired
To 'crab their acts' upon the stage.

Ours is the method when in doubt;
And they should follow in our track.
And, if they'd keep these niggers out,
They promptly should 'declare them black.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Blokes

Blokes ~ 'Erb

Do you know 'Erb? Now, there's a dinkum sport.
If football's on your mind, why, 'Erb's the sort
To put you wise. It's his whole end and' aim.
Keen? He's as keen as mustard on the game.
Football is in his blood. He thinks an' schemes
All through the season; talks of it an' dreams
An' eats an' sleeps with football on his mind.
Yes: 'Erb's a sport - the reel whole-hearted kind.

'A healthy, manly sport.' That's wot 'Erb says.
You ought to see his form on football days:
Keyed up, reel eager, eyes alight with joy,
Full of wise schemes for his team to employ.
Knows all about it - how to kick a goal,
An' wot to do if they get in a hole.
Enthusiasm? Why, when 'Erb gets set
He is a sight you couldn't well forget.

There ain't a point about it he don't know
All of the teams and players, top to toe.
The rules, the tricks - it's marvellous the way
He follers - Wot? Good Lord, no, he don't play.
'Erb? Playin' football? Blimey! have a heart!
Aw, don't be silly. 'Erb don't have to play;
He knows more than them players any day.

He's never had a football in his hand,
'Cept once, when it was kicked up in the stand.
No, 'Erb ain't never played; he only sits
An' watches 'em, an' yells, an' hoots and splits
His sides with givin' mugs some sound advice
An' tellin' umpires things wot ain't too nice.
Aw, look; your ejication ain't complete
Till you know 'Erb. You reely ought to meet.

~~

Blokes ~ Fred

Do you know Fred? Now there's a man to know
These days when politics are in the air,

An' argument is bargin' to an' fro
Without a feller gittin' anywhere.
Fred never argues; he's too shrewd for that.
He's wise. He knows the game from A to Z.
All politics is talkin' thro' the hat;
An' everyone is wrong - exceptin' Fred.

Fred says there ain't no sense in politics;
Says he can't waste his time on all that rot.
Trust him. He's up to all their little tricks,
You'd be surprised the cunnin' schemes he's got.
Fred says compulsory voting is a cow.
He has to vote, or else he would be fined,
But he just spoils his paper anyhow,
An' laughs at' em with his superior mind.

But when a law comes in that hits Fred's purse,
You ought to hear him then. Say, he does rouse;
Kicks up an awful row an' hurls his curse
On every bloomin' member in the House.
He gives 'em nothin'; says they all are crook,
All waitin' for a chance to turn their coats;
Says they are traitors; proves it by the book.
An' can you wonder that he never votes?

Aw, say, you must know Fred. You'll hear his skite
Upon street corners all about the place.
An' if you up an' say it serves him right,
He answers that it only proves his case:
Them politicians wouldn't tax him so
Unless they were all crooked, like he said,
Where is the sense in votin' when they go
An' rob a man like that. Hurray for Fred!

~~

Blokes ~ Gus

Do you know Gus? Now, he should interest you.
The girls adore him - or he thinks they do.
He owns a motor bike, not of the sort
That merely cough a little bit, or snort.
His is a fiery, detonating steed
That makes the town sit up and take some heed
A thunderous thing, that booms and roars a treat,

With repercussions that awake the street.

That's Gus. Dead flash. One of the rorty boys,
Whose urge is to express themselves with noise,
He wakes the midnight echoes, when to sleep
We vainly strive, with detonations deep.
And Gus has visions, as he thunders by,
Of maidens who sit up in bed, and sigh,
'It's Gus! It's Gus, the he-man. What a thrill!
'Mid Jovian thunders riding up the hill!'

You can't blame Gus. He has to make a row.
He's got to get publicity somehow.
How else could he stir consciousness in us
That in this world there really is a Gus?
You can't blame Gus. But oft I long, in bed,
That some kind man would bash him on the head -
A hard, swift blow to give him pain for pain.
It would be quite safe. It couldn't hurt his brain.

~~

Blokes ~ Bert

Did you ever meet Bert? 'E's all over the town,
In offices, shops an' in various places,
Cocky an' all; an' you can't keep 'im down.
I never seen no one so lucky at races.
Backs all the winners or very near all;
Tells you nex' day when the races are over.
'E makes quite a pot, for 'is wagers ain't small;
An' by rights 'e 'ad ought to be livin' in clover.

But, some'ow or other - aw, well, I dunno.
You got to admit that some fellers is funny.
'E don't dress too well an' 'is spendin' is low.
I can't understand wot 'e does with 'is money.
'E ought to be sockin' a pretty fair share;
An' tho' 'e will own 'e's a big money-maker,
'E don't seem to save an' 'e don't seem to care
If 'e owes a big wad to 'is butcher an' baker.

'E don't tell you much if you meet on the course;
But after it's over 'e comes to you grinnin',
Shows you 'is card where 'e's marked the first 'orse,

An' spins you a wonderful tale of 'is winnin'.
Can't make 'im out, 'e's so lucky an' that.
Knows ev'ry owner an' trainer an' jockey:
But all of 'is wagerin's done on 'is pat.
Won't spill a thing, even tho' 'e's so cocky.

Oyster, that's Bert. 'E's as close as a book.
But sometimes I've come on 'im sudden an' saw 'im
Lip 'angin' down an' a reel 'aggard look,
Like all the woes in the world come to gnaw 'im.
But, soon as 'e sees you, 'e brightens right up.
'Picked it again, lad!' 'e sez to you, grinnin'.
'A fiver at sevens I 'ad in the Cup!
That's very near sixty odd quid that I'm winnin'.'

Mystery man - that's 'is style for a cert,
Picks the 'ole card, yet 'e's shabby and seedy;
'E must 'ave some sorrer in secret, ole Bert
Some drain on 'is purse wot is keepin' 'im needy.
A terrible pity. Some woman, no doubt.
No wonder 'e worries in secret an' souses.
If I 'ad 'is winnin's, year in an' year out,
Why I'd own a Rolls Royce an' a terris of 'ouses.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Bobbie

Gin you're gangin' doon the city
Come next Sabbath afternoon,
An' you'll catch a glimpse o' Tartan
An' you'll hear a skirlin' tune;
An' you'll see a crowd o' laddies
Lookin' verra dour an' staid,
Wi' just here an' there a Cairngorn,
An' a wee tiny speck o' plaid;
Dinna think from their expression
They are on some mission sad
For their thoughts are back wi' Bobbie,
Wi' the braw, brave ploughman lad.

Once again they'll see him treadin'
Dreary-eyed behind the plough,
With his thoughts amonsgt the angels
And a brave light on his brow.
Once again they'll see him sparking
By the burnside and the glen,
Wi' another sort of angel
An' a sonsy lass ye ken.
Aye, a thousand sober Scotsmen
On the Sabbath afternoon,
Will be back again with Bobbie
With a graceless, godlike gloom.

But they'll not tell of his tailin's;
He was human, he was young,
But they'll join him in his dreaming,
And the rare brave songs he sung
Singing songs of bonny Scotland,
That will never fade with time:
Noble thoughts of truth and beauty
That is genius put in rhyme
And they'll love him for his dreaming
Aye, and for his failin's, too,
When their thoughts go back to Bobbie,
Sweetest singer Scotland knew

'Bobbie' For Brotherhood

Lang syne I penned a mickle rhyme
That muckle grief brocht to my soul;
For critics said 'twas aye a crime
Nae Scottish patriot could thole
Whit way I ca'ed their honored bard,
Wi' kind intention, 'Bobbie' Burns.
Aye, mon, they smote me fine an' hard
Wi' sic' fierce words as nae yin learns
Save native sons, those braw, stern men
O' mountain crag an' heather glen.

Misdoubtin' whit my critics said,
An' sair distressed about my plight,
A notion cam' intil my head
To haud a Scottish plebiscite.
Forbye I passed frae Scot to Scot
Spierin' whit way they named their bard,
An' aye the same reply I got
Wi'out dispute in sic' regard;
For ilka mon gie'd answer straight
Wi' ne'er a thocht tae heesitate.

A mon frae Glasea first I speired,
A humble an' unlettered loon,
An' then a scholar, red o' beard,
That cam' from Edinburgh toon;
A Hielan' chief, a rowan' chiel,
Men oot o' Leith an' Aberdeen,
Tae ane an' a' I made appeal,
Tae gowk an' greybeard, wife an' wean,
An' a', wi' unanimity
The selfsame answer gi'ed tae me.

An 'twas na' Robert, Rab or Rob
They ca'ed yon braw, poetic yin
That wakes in Scottish hearts a throb
Wi' words that mak' the whole world kin.
They named him 'Bobbie' wi'out shame,
As Bobbie he will ever be

To sic' as scorn to clothe his name
Wi' smug respectabeelity.
To humble hearts his songs defend
Beloved Bobbie, brither, friend.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Bonds

Briggs

Joseph Briggs, of Yorkshire, England, blessed country of Freetrade,
Where the large importers' profits and fine sentiments are made,
Digs
Deep into his mine of wisdom, and, with British fervency,
Bids us mark the Bonds of Empire reaching out across the sea;
Binding us to one another
Us and our benign old mother
Patriotic apron-strings of Empire we would scorn to free.

Threads -

Crimson threads of kith and kinship - thin red lines of sentiment!
What a wave of fervid friendship over all the continent
Spreads,
When some speaker bids us ponder
On those threads that reach out yonder...
But alas, there are acute grumblers whom mere threads do not content !
Ties
Silken ties! O, who would venture to disturb a single thread?
What a roar of public censure would descend upon his head !
Rise
Split the welkin with your shouting!
Cheer those ties! What? Still some doubting
Pessimists? Then here is something more substantial in their stead:

Bonds!

GOLDEN BONDS! ... Ah! Now we mention cold commercial £ s. d.
All the land is at attention. Witness how the Empire re-
Sponds.
Bonds at three or four percent'll
Beat all shackles sentimental
In the land of shops and shekels, in the country of the free.

Cash -

Cold, hard cash. O, magic metal! How the golden cables groan
When we're called upon to settle or renew our little loan.
Smash?
Never! Though it strains and quivers

When the bloated Dreadnought-givers
Try to shirk the cost of paying for a navy of our own.

Gold

Chains of gold! Brave bonds of boodle of the merchants' finest make
No assault, however rude, 'll cause those golden links to break.

Hold?

Crimson threads may snap and sever;

Silken ties may break, but never

Shall those chains; they hold for ever for the loyal traders' sake.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Bones, A.B. Is Reminded

Men of the sea (said Bones, A.B.)
Is touchy coves and curious,
They stands a lot, till some dark plot
Gets 'em all hot an' furious.
Tricks with their food brings on a mood
That's apt to be real shirty.
That's how come we once struck at sea
In days when ways was dirty
Them blastin', blazin', hazin' days
When ships an' seas was dirty.

We was 'Frisco bound in a ship ill-found
An' scarce a sound plank in 'er,
Wher cook speaks free, an' he says, says he:
'There's no plum-duff for dinner!'
'Wot? No plum-duff?' we answers gruff
An' snarky like, an' surly.
'Avast!' says we. 'We'll strike at sea
Till we gets it, late or early
Down marlinspikes! The whole crew strikes!
For we likes duff late an' early.'

The old man, he don't seem to be
No ways put out about it.
'Plum-duff?' he purrs. 'Why, sure, good sirs,
You'll get some, never doubt it.'
An', cold an' hot, 'twas duff we got
An' nothin' else thereafter.
'Wot? Had enough? You swabs, you stuff!'
The skipper roars wi' laughter.
Nought else will come. Eat some, you scum!
Wot? Sick? Excuse my laughter!'

Men of the sea (said Bones, A.B.)
Is proud an' supercilious.
But that don't do, not when a crew
Grows pasty-faced an' bilious.
Whe we bore down on 'Frisco town
A sick crew 'twas wot landed

An' skipper says: 'Now, go yer ways,
An' say I ain't free-'anded!
You strikin', bluffin', puddin'-stuffin' sweeps,
Say I'm mean-'anded!
You loafin', leerin', mutineerin' mutts,
I 'opes yer stranded!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Bosses Don'T Seem Right' - A Christmas Monologue

The thing's all wrong (I sez to `im)
Now look, there's this `ere Monday, Jim,
Comes before Christmas. Be a toff
An' lest us `ave the Monday off.
'E `ums an' `ars. An' then he's got
To talk a lot of silly rot
Abut `ow business binds a man;
An' `e don't quite see `ow `e can
Afford to give me Monday in,
Seein' he'll lose a lot of tin
Under our capit'listic plan
Which sort of binds a business man
'Lest his competitors was bound
To give the Monday all around.

If but (`e sez) they would agree
To let the trade `ave Monday free
Then `e would do it. There you are!
Shows `ow Democracy's a bar.
It's competition, don't you see,
That robs a man of liberty.
But, under Socialism . . . Wot?
Now, listen, I ain't talkin' rot.
I know that `e's me boss. But look,
Our scheme of Gover'ment's all crook.

Now, under Socialism, see,
If I said, 'I want Monday free!'
Why, under right conditions, then,
They'd treat their men like they was men;
An' seein' it was Christmas week,
We would n't `ave to go an' seek
No favors. We'd just tell `em flat:
'We're takin' Monday; an' that's that!'
Wot? Bosses? . . . Well, I s'pose there'd be
This, wot you call, Bureaucracy.

To rule us. Yes; per'aps there might;
An' as you say, it don't seem right

That they should want to boss a man
But wot about his Fascist plan?

Now, under that, we'd say, 'look `ere
Us fellers wants this Monday clear.'
An', bein' reasonable like,
Blokes would n't `ave to call a strike
To get their way Well, I suppose
There's be Dictators - coves like those
To fed a coot on castor oil
If they decided not to toil
On Monday. That seems pretty tough,
All systems seems to treat men rough.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Bottle-O Benny

Chuff! Chuff! Chuff! With a rumble and a rattle,
Waking every echo on the old bush road;
Waking, too, the wonder of the wayside cattle
With the clatter of his engine and his strange, mixed load;
With his front wheels a-wobble and his back brake squealing,
Skirting here the table-drain, grazing there a tree,
His hand upon the steering, but his mind upon his dealing,
Comes Bottle-o Benny in his old Model T.

'Any ole iron, sir? Fat, sir? Bottles, sir?
Cast-off clobber, or any ole rags?
(Pretty sticky patch that, down by the wattles, sir.)
Any ole machinery or secon'-and bags?
Charf bags, bran bags? Taken 'em orf yer 'an's, sir
Best city prices, spot cash. That's me!
This 'ere dealin' life's as 'ard as any man's, sir.'
Says Bottle-o Benny from his old Model T.

He pokes about the rubbish heap; he roots around the stable there;
He loiters in the lumber-shed and says, 'Times is lean.
Give you 'arf-a-dollar, now, for that ole table there.
Square an' all an' honest, sir, I'd 'ardly make a bean!
Yes; I've counted up the bottles; two dozen's wot I make 'em, sir.
Wot? Them sauce an' pickle 'uns?
But, jist for ole acquaintance like, I'll rid yer 'an's an' take 'em, sir.'
And he magically packs them in his old Model T.

Chuff! Chuff! Chuff! With a rattle and a rumble,
Off goes Benny by the Burnt Stump Bend.
His echoes scarce have died away ere Mum begins to grumble:
Where's that copper kettle that I put out to mend?'
And Lil says, 'Last year - (I've always had a feeling)
Last year a clothes-line went when Benny went,' says she.
But Benny won't be back again for twelve months, dealing
For unconsidered trifles in his old Model T.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Bountiful Rain

Bountiful rain, we have yearned for you, prayed for you,
When, thro' the drought days, ill visions had scope;
Thankfulness vast in the past we displayed for you
When you have come at the end of our hope.
Now you have come, is our subsequent attitude
Smacking of gracelessness far from the mind.
Is there a tinge of reproach in our gratitude
If we suggest that you can be too kind?

Farmland and forest have known your munificence;
Sweet, tender green springs anew in the fields;
Meekly and meetly we hail your beneficence,
Dreaming again fresh, glorious yields.
Bountiful rain, of your bounty give ear to us,
Yet deem us not for your bounty unfit,
If we remark that just now you appear to us
Well - overdoing it just a wee bit.

The forest's aweep, but the rain is still falling;
The farmlands are soaking, the paddocks awash;
The swollen hill-creeks thro' their gullies go brawling;
And down thro' the cowyard the dairymen slosh.
Shade of old Noah and all his zoology!
Bountiful rain! Now the drought threat has ceased,
Might we suggest, with an abject apology,
More than enough is as good as a feast.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Breathing-Time

Peace, perfect peace. . . . Come, lay aside your gun.
The danger zone is past; the gauntlet run.
The bark of Scylla ceases on her shore,
And grim Charybdis threatens us no more.
Respite, Nepenthe, leaning-posts and beer!
Football and horses! Breathing time is here!

O witless fools, who, with your cry, 'To Arms!'
Your warnings venomous, and false alarms,
Sought to estrange us from our yellow friends,
Thus all your potter and your bunkum ends!
We are secure once more; we breathe again.
No further need is there for ships or men.
'The Treaty is renewed!' Hip, Hip, Hooray! . . .
Now let us dream the happy hours away.

One pen-stroke! and our liberty appears
Secure again, for ten long, blissful years.
A diplomat or two, a little ink,
Some paper, and, Hi Presto! in a wink,
The Yellow Peril vanishes from sight,
Like vague dream shadows of a restless night.
Let gentleness and peace overspread the land;
And bid our infant warriors disband.

The War-god broods o'er Europe even yet?
What matter? We've a decade to forget
That e'er we dreamed we heard the grim dogs bark.
What child at noon is fearful of the dark?
The forges of the nations still are lit?
Their anvils ring? What do we reek of it?
With ten long years of peace and joy and light,
We laugh at our vague terrors of the night.

Are truces ever broken? Treaties scorned?

Statesmen corrupted? Diplomats suborned?
Perish the thought! What if, in some far day,
Some foresworn nation flung its bond away?
Shall we, for such as that, forego our joy,
And start at shadows, like a frightened boy?
Shall croaking pessimists, with mild alarms,
Force us, all needlessly, to fly to arms?

Down with the dolts who prate of ships and guns!
Stern Mars shall not enslave Australia's sons.
Come, gag the fools who urge us to defend
Our ports against our harmless yellow friend!
Their words are insults; their aggressiveness
May give him pain, and cause us much distress.
Ab, gaze on him! as he steps forth to sign -
Say, is his smile not peaceful and benign?

Ten years to hoard the gold in shop and mart;
Ten peaceful years to play the trader's part;
To tend the sheep; to watch the green corn sprout
To cheer the race; to gaily clap and shout
At sports of children, played by heedless men.
Ten years of sweet Areadia - and then? . . .
Heed not the voice that thunders the alarm:
'Ten years to play the man! Ten years to arm!'

(O God of Battles, who, thus long, hath spared
A heedless nation, grant we be prepared!
Ten pregnant years! Tens canty years of grace,
To make or mar the fortune of a race.
Grim years of strenuous and unceasing toil,
That all may not become a foeman's spoil -
That it may not be told, some fateful day:
'Ten years they had; ten years they fooled away.')

Peace, perfect peace. . . Ho, let the fun begin,
And split the welkin with a joyous din!
Charybdis grim has ceased to roar and rave,

And Scylla sits demurely in her cave.
Ho! clash the cymbals, and begin the race!
And thank the gods we have a breathing-space.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Bridles For Butterflies

They must not talk....That strong and silent creature,
The male of homo sapiens, bears the ban
With calm aplomb. Speech is a trivial feature
In any sport conducted by mere man.
Thus, when our flannelled Knights go forth to battle,
They dumbly concentrate upon the game.
But must athletic Eve refrain from prattle
Because of that? No, no! 'Tis not the same.

Sauce for the goose, 'tis said, is sauce for gander,
And vice versa. Futile euphony!
To differentiate, defer and pander
Was e'er the rule when dealing with the 'She.'
Sharp hooks in ears of elephants may steer them
Quite painlessly. But what sane man would try
To harness doves, or bring a halter near them,
Or bit and bridle to a butterfly?

They must not talk....Such order to a shrinking,
Press-dodging cricketer brings small distress,
But, listen girls, what sort of sloppy thinking
Seeks to extend it to the cricketress?
Go, tell the bee she may not buzz in summer
'Mid honeyed bloom. Go, bid the bush birds 'Hush!'
Emus are dumb indeed - could scarce be dumber;
But who, for that, would gag the singing thrush?

So, when you note the agonised expression
On Short-stop's flower-like face, the look of pain
That lurks 'neath Long-on's lip-stick, 'tis repression
That irks them temporarily; but in vain.
For, soon or late, the prisoned flood, o'erflowing
Each carmined lip, down thro' the land shall spill
To what far field man ne'er had means of knowing.
They must not talk? ... Sez you! ... They must - and will.

Bright

Where Feathertop frowns thro' the winter scud,
Where Buffalo broods on high,
Dwells she, a lass of royal blood,
And a sparkle lights her eye
The clear, clean glint of the sun on snow,
Where the small streams, singing down,
Into the golden Ovens flow,
To decorate her town.

Wild was she on an olden day
And a wilful lass, forsooth,
When the rough, tough diggers came her way
Ere she emerged from youth.
From her river flats they dredged the gold
And laid sad waste to these,
While they drove in thousands from their fold
The thrifty, scared Chinese.

Waxing in beauty, she has grown
To a maid of wide renown;
For the wild, swift days have long since flown.
Now, by her tree-girt town,
Where her plaited river murmuring flows
Thro' sylvan scenes and rare,
A maiden clad in beauty goes
To her hop-fields gleaming there.

Yet men still scheme to dredge these fields,
And filch their loveliness,
All for the sake of bigger yields
In gold, that count far less
Than the rare, rich harvests won today
In calm security.
Leaving but ruin and decay
To sad posterity.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Brightness Breaches And The Beak

Bright young thing: Thou on the beaches
Life is gay and pleasure laden
All in vain the law beseeches
Courtesy from man and maiden
When a car, adorned with beauty
Unadorned, swings down the road,
There's a certain civic duty,
There's a cop, and there's a code,
There's Dame Caution - stuffy ogress -
Who deplores your carefree progress.

Bright young thing, who, with one finger
Nonchalantly on the steering,
(Ever indisposed to linger)
Down the beach road goes careering -
Youth's high claims need no endorsement,
Ever at convention scoffing;
But the fiends of law-enforcement
Lurk obscurely in the offing,
Prone to pounce on any stir made
Even by a scorching mermaid.

Bright young thing: Life can be brighter
When devoid of traffic danger.
E'en this poor pedestrian blighter,
E'en that slow and aged stranger
Has some right to go on living,
On this earth superfluous lagging.
But not the Law, so far forgiving,
Tires of its paternal nagging,
Ill-content to look askance
On sun-tanned insouciance.

Bright young thing upon the beaches,
Youth is urgent, youth is eager.
But no more the Law beseeches
With its admonitions meagre
Your observance of its ruling,
Your respect for cop, and Code,

But, if you must still go fooling,
'Stepping on it' up the road,
At its end, for flapper, shiek,
Lurks, relentlessly, The Beak.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Brothers O' Mine

Brothers o' mine, brothers o' mine,
All the world over, from pole to pole
All of them brothers of mine and thine
Every wondering, blundering soul.
Banded together by grace divine,
Brothers o' mine, brothers o' mine.

Good Brother Green at the service sat
Sat in the chapel and bowed his head;
Praying most fervently into his hat;
Bending his knee when The Word was read.
For good Brother Green was a godly man
A godly keristian; and what be more,
He loved all sinners, and carefully ran
A worldly and prosperous grocery store.

'Brothers o' mine, brothers o' mine,'
Quoted the preacher, with dolorous drone:
'The Lord He hath given thee all that is thine.
Love ye not gold for itself alone.
E'er to the fallen thy mercy incline,
Love thou thy neighbour! O, brothers o' mine.'

Good comrade Hal in the tavern sat
Sat in the tavern and tossed his head,
Tilting a glass to the brim of his hat;
Bending his arm when the toast was said.
But comrade Hal was a godless man
A godless sinner; and what be more,
He loved good liquor, and carelessly ran
A long, long bill at the grocery store.

'Brother o' mine, brother o' mine,'
Shouted the tippler in riotous tone,
'Toiled thou, and sweated for all that is thine;
But love not gold for itself alone.
Gold bringeth gladness and red, red wine.
Fill up another! O, brother o' mine.'

Every Sabbath, since childhood years,
Good Brother Green at the service sat
A traveller stern in this vale of tears
Breathing his piety into his hat;
Praying for guidance and praying for light;
Vowing unworthiness more and more;
With a nice warm feeling that all was right
With the business of Green's Cash Grocery Store.

'Brothers o' mine, brothers o' mine,'
Turn not away from thy brother in sin.
Afar let the light of your righteousness shine,
A beacon to gather the wanderer in.
Lovers of wickedness, lovers of wine,
All,' said the worshipper, 'brothers o' mine.'

Every Sabbath, since childhood's years,
Comrade Hal in the tavern sat
A rioter gay in this vale of tears,
Tilting his glass to the brim of his hat;
Drinking from morn to the fall of night;
Vowing good-fellowship more and more;
With a nice warm feeling that all was right,
And a curse for the bill at the grocery store.

Brothers o' mine, brothers o' mine,
Seek ye a pew or a pewter to-day?
Where is the brotherhood vaunted divine
Here, in the tavern - or over the way?
Drink is a snare, and a mocker is wine;
But the world? - Nay, forget it, O brothers o' mine!

Monday morn, with a soul for work,
Good Brother Green stood rubbing his hands
Rubbing his hands with an oily smirk;
Seeking the trade a good name commands.
Came there a widow who pleaded for time
For a month, for a week! Ah, what would it mean!
'Sell up her sticks. This pretence is a crime!
And business is business,' quoth good Brother Green.

Brothers o' mine, brothers o' mine!

Cover your drunkenness, cover your spite!
Brother in piety, brother in wine
Are we a brotherhood? Lord give us light!
Lover of cant, or the lover of wine
Which lov'st thou of these brothers o' thine?

Heavy and dull on the Monday morn,
Comrade Hal went rubbing his head
Rubbing his head with an air forlorn;
Seeking the tavern where wine is red.
Passed he a beggar who aid invoked.
'Catch, then, brother,' he merely cried,
Spinning a coin as he smiled and joked.
'Now I go thirsty,' the tippler sighed.

Brothers o' mine, brothers o' mine
Brothers in purple, brothers in rags
Who can the bonds of your kin define?
Plead ye beggars, and jest ye wags!
'Nay, beggar brother, why dost thou whine?
All these good people are brothers o' thine.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Brown's Tram

A city clerk was Henry Brown,
Whose suburb knew nor tram nor train;
And ev'ry morn he walked to town.

From nine till five, with busy brain,
He labored in an office dim.
Each eve he walked out home again.

And all this tramping seemed to him
A waste of time, for, 'mid the strife,
He could not keep his lawn in trim.

It clouded his domestic life -
This going early, coming late -
And much distressed his little wife.

Then some wise man declared the State
Should put in trams, and for this scheme
Brown was a red-hot advocate.

At last he realised his dream;
And daily in and out of town
He trammed it with content supreme.

For, though it cost him half-a-crown
A week in fares, the time he saved
Meant much to him and Mrs. Brown.

And so they lived and pinched and slaved
And their suburban happiness
Seemed all that they had ever craved.

The little wife began to bless
The trams; nor grieved their meagre dole
Was weekly two and sixpence less.

Then Brown's employer, kindly soul,
Learned of this tram-car luxury,
And promptly rose to take his toll.

He sent for Brown and said that he
Should now contrive to come at eight
Since trams blessed his vicinity.

He also deemed it wise to state
That idleness begat much ill,
And it was wrong to sleep in late.

Yet Brown contrived to tram it still,
And trim his lawn with tender care,
And pay his rent and baker's bill.

His little wife vowed it unfair;
But bowed to stern, relentless fate,
And smiled and sewed and worked her share.

Just here, the landlord wrote to state,
Since trams improved his property,
He'd raise the rent as from that date.

'Three shillings weekly will not be
Too much - an equitable rise,
Considering the trams,' wrote he.

What profit oaths or women's sighs?
His 'sacred rights,' of wealth the fount,
A landlord has to recognise.

To what do poor clerks' lives amount?
An extra hour of slavery
Swells an employer's bank account.

The wealthy boss thanks God that he
Has saved some money out of Brown.
The landlord smiles contentedly.

The trams run gaily up and down,
A sight Brown sadly notes as he
Plods daily in and out of town.

Bushmen

Rugged men and tough men these,
Men of the lonely ways,
Hard and sturdy as their trees
Where the timbered ranges raise
Their ragged crests to rake the sky;
For the call has come again,
As oft it came in the years gone by,
And the Bush sends forth her men.

Silent men, with eyes alert,
Tramping the hillside steep,
Where the giant trees at the mountain's skirt
Their lonely vigil keep;
Fighting their way where the tangled fern
Covers an ancient track,
Plying the lore that the bushmen learn
Thro' the lonely years outback.

The men of the forest are out once more,
Searching early and late.
As they searched thro' many a day before,
For many a missing mate.
Or a wandering stranger gone astray
In the land of the towering tree,
That has become for all today
The land of tragedy.

And, while the task is a task for men,
Ne'er will they call a stop.
They will tramp the wild bushland again,
And tramp until they drop,
With never a thought for the hours ill-spared
From the labor of the day
To the men of the forest whom fate has dared,
There's nought but to obey.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'But'

Tho we seem to reach the turning
And the Government is yearning
To brings us swift releif, and make a cut
In the burden of the taxes,
As fond hope within us waxes
Sounds, like the knell of doom, the fatal 'but.'

Oh, that stultifying 'but'!
Every avenue is shut
That leads to that Nirvana that men must believe in still;
And a tantalising star
Gleams as ever yet afar,
As we trudge the weary, winding road that ever goes uphill.

Who can doubt the skies are clearing?
Who can doubt good days are nearing?
We are climbing from depression's gloomy rut.
Now from tax relief we'll borrow
Gladness, and, today, tomorrow
At the latest, end our sorrow surely - but -

Oh, the aggravating 'but'!
When the poor tax-paying mutt
Builds his pretty house of dreams where gold becomes a glut,
Some prosaic politician
Coldly lights the whole position
With the cold, hard light of truth, and dreams go phut!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Cackle

Oh, my brothers do not wrangle.
When the sweets of office dangle
At a most inviting angle
Be polite.
In the legislative struggle,
When in office safe you snuggle,
Then to jangle or to juggle
Isn't right.

And, O never, never niggle!
Though the vulgar people giggle
When they see a statesman wriggle
To a place.
And, I prithee, never niggle;
With the man who stops to peddle,
For the act upon his head'll
Bring disgrace.

And we ought to take a broad, strong view.
What's the matter if the prospect isn't new?
There is virtue in the viewing.
When it comes to merely doing,
Well, it's really not important what you do.
It's the view
Grand view!
Never let the doing part embarrass you.

When in politics you dabble
Then of course you'll have to babble,
To the vote-possessing rabble
'Tis the game.
When you engineer a shuffle
The ensuing party scuffle
Somebody is sure to ruffl
All the same.

Then be wary; do not temble;

Smile politely and dissemble,
Though your actions do resemble
Somersaults.
When your legislative symbol
Is the tricky pea and thimble
Your manipulations nimble
Are not faults.

But, I charge you, take a strong, broad view.
It is most entrancing when you have the screw.
There's no need to be exacting
In the manner of your acting;
'Tis the statesman's motto when dissensions brew
Watch the view
Wide view!
And your story of the sight will see you through.

When a banquet you've to tackle
Where the ancient chestnuts crackle,
And you have to rise and cackle
To your kind.
Mayhap some hiccoughing freak'll
Rise and, venturing to speak, 'll
Mention you as 'Misher Deakle,
Never mind.

Let your honeyed phrases trickle,
And defend the Fusion pickle;
Show them that you are not fickle
In the least.
Say that, why we do not muzzle
Labor members is a puzzle;
And they'll cheer you as they guzzle
At the feast.

And bid them take a broad, strong view.
Bid them see around both corners, same as you.
You're the saviour of the nation
At a mayoral celebration

If you do not harp too much upon the 'do.'
Praise the view
Grand view!
And they vow you are a statesman strong and true.

With this popular preamble
You may then adroitly amble
To the shocking party scramble.
Voice your fears.
Tell them Labor's sure to stumble
If it does not cease to grumble;
And each alderman will mumble
Glad 'Hear, hears.'

While the nuts they calmly nibble
Let vague phrases gently dribble;
Give them any quip or quibble.
You're immense.
But, ah prithee! do not trifle
With a hint of acts; and stifle
Any mention of a rifle
Or defence.

For there's safety in the strong, brod view.
The suppression of the hard, strong 'do'
Is a matter most essential
When the Tory consequential
Is the man you reckon on to see you thro'.
Boost the view
Great view?
And they'll all begin to think they see it too.

Budding statesmen, there is muckle
In the View when you've to truckle
To the crowd that will not buckle
Into graft.
When your policy's a muddle,
And you're sailing in a puddle
With a Fusion crowd that huddle
On a raft;

Talk in vague, unmeaning jingle;
For the crowd with which you mingle
Holds within it scarce a single
One who'll work.
Here, where HANSARD's pages rustle,
Three a show of rush and bustle,
But there's ne'er a chance to hustle;
You must shirk.
Keep your eye upon the broad, strong view.
Call the crowd's attention to it till you're blue.
Keep them watching intently,
And you can con-ven-i-ently
Hate the fact that you hvae nothing much to do.
Praise the view
Fine view!
And they may forget to keep an eye on you.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Caesar Redivivus

In the olive groves of Italy
Men minds are all aflame;
For the war-lust spreads thro' Italy,
Where war-lords call the game.
And they dream of Roman legions
And the glory that was Rome's;
Yet reck not of the misery
That stalks Italian homes.

By the vine-clad hills of Italy
Men talk and dream of war;
Of the triumphs that were Caesar's,
And the glories known of yore.
But a mockery of triumph,
And an end to dreaming vain
Comes to victor, as to vanquichsed,
With a counting of the slain.

Oh, the women-folk of Italy,
They give their sons to Mars;
For they would be Spartan mothers,
Dams of splendid avitars.
But the fever shall be ending
In numb grief and shuddering fears,
When the spurious pearls of victory
Dissolve in women's tears.

In the pleasant land of Italy
The fever runs apace,
And the man who would be Caesar
From war's lesson turns his face.
With dreams of olden Empire
Would he set men's minds aflame,
Nor count the cost to Italy
In agony and shame.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Call For Contributions

Contributions are invited to this column.

They must not be too solemn.

And, say:

They

Must not be TOO gay?

But, come along:

And, if you can give us a bit of a song

That spares my voice

You have your choice.

Grab it.

You never know: it might become a habit.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Camperdown

The dignity of Camperdown
Is not to be denied,
Where Leura looks upon the town
And that lush countryside
And comfortable, stout and sleek,
She wears the air of one who'd seek
To mind her manners rather much,
And cultivate the English touch.

A haughty lady prone to row
Her eyebrows, when the road
Brings in some traveller whose ways
Tend to offend her code.
The robust life of modern towns
Suits ill her verdant dells and downs.
She is particular, aloof;
As witness many a manor roof.

'Tis said that Leura, long ago,
Belched flames up to the sky,
And turbulently sought to throw
Stones at the passers-by.
And her rich ashes raining down,
Bequeathed great wealth to Camperdown;
But turbulence in youth begun,
Is now taboo. It 'isn't done'.

And Camperdown, of gracious mien,
Brings joy to him who views
The glamor of her peaceful scene
And placid avenues;
A proper town, that sets the pace,
And sets the scene for civic grace.
And will might many another town
Adopt the air of Camperdown.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Care Free Bloke's Cigar

There's a little spark and a wisp of smoke
By the road where the tall gums are;
And a mile away a care-free bloke
Speeds onward in his car.
No thought of evil mars his day,
And he's well a hundred miles away
And safe at home, as skies grow grey,
With another fine cigar.

There's a spurt of flame in the breathless night
And a crackling in the scrub;
There's a withered mint-bush burning bright,
And a kindling dog-wood shrub.
For yards about the bush glows red
But the care-free bloke, his paper read,
Says, 'Bonzer day. And now for bed
After a bite of grub.'

There's a sickening roar as the fire sweeps down
From the mountainside aflame
On the helpless little forest town,
And one knew how it came.
Ten miles of blackened hills gape wide
And a stricken home on the mountain side ...
But the care-free bloke toils on in pride.
He saw no spark by the bush roadside,
So how is he to blame?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Carnival Time

Now is the season of Carnival.
Who's for the sunlit course?
Who's for the beat of galloping feet
And the day and the way of the horse?
Who joins the dance, tho' Lady Chance
Pleasure or pain may yield,
Who comes to the call of Carnival?
'Seven to four the field!'

This is the week of the Carnival
And the sign of a brighter dawn
In men's affairs. Who sheds old cares
Where gay frocks fleck the lawn?
Who would forget old days of fret?
Who comes to the call of mirth
And the conquering steeds? ... They're off! Who leads?
And the hoof beats spurn the earth.

Then, Hi! for the height of Carnival,
Gayer than all gone past:
And the nameless fears of the deadening years
Forsake men's minds at last.
Bright jackets flash beneath the sun
As the roar of the crowd begins,
And lifts and swells at a great home run:
'Who leads? Who lasts? Who wins?'

Ho! for the call of Carnival!
Way for the Sport of Kings!
And men, grown sane, turn once again
To all that high hope brings.
Who's for the Carnival? Who grows gay
Where galloping Fortune speeds
Around the turn to gallop our way
With the galloping, galloping steeds?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Cataclysm

We curse our lot; we gird at fate;
Like peevish children we complain;
Hope dies, and life grows desperate
Because of ease and pleasures salin.
Because bright fortune fails to smile
And pamper us, as once she used,
But frowns a little for the while,
To bleak despair we are reduced.

Yet, o'er a narrow stretch of sea,
Where lately smiled a city fair,
Falls cataclysmic agony,
And death in horrid shapes is there.
All in an instant men are hurled -
Who knew no foe, who earned no blame -
Out of a peaceful, sunlit world
'Mid shattered homes and seething flame.

Crazed women roam the littered street
Seeking their babes; with sobbing breath
They search grim ruins, there to meet
Fresh, ghastly evidence of death -
Death, creeping death, where men have lain
Trapped 'neath the press of heavy beams
Waiting thro' hours of nameless pain
Such as men know in frightful dreams.

And we complain! . . . Poor timid fools.
Because our luxuries grow less,
Each beats his breast and drones and drools
Of gloom and shattered happiness.
While there, by very earth betrayed,
Forsaken, doomed, men still are men;
And heroism there displayed
Preserves the name of Man again.

There, where the elements conspire
To end a world at one swift stroke.
Stirred by the flame of that grim pyre,
Divinity in Man awoke. . . .
Here, petulant, with tears and blame,
We gird against Fate's mild decree
Who should bow down our heads in shame
And thank our gods for sanctuary.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Charity

Oh, loyal Orange breth-er-en.
I pray you act as Christlan men,
And, should your spleen arise, count ten
Before you speak.
Nay, bear me, brothers, I beseech.
Refrain from all un-Christian speech
Remember! He, whose Word we preach,
Was ever week.

The lazy, low Italian,
The cheating, shifty Mexican
All Papist creatures to a man;
Avid brutes at that
The scum that Rome's base agents skim
With mummary from ages dim.
Dear brothers, let us sing a n'ymn,
And pass the bat.

Oh, Orangemen, I cannot find
Words to express my state of mind
Fit epithets to name the kind
Of brutish man
Who takes the word of Popery
Concerning dim eternity.
But, brothers, let us ever be
Ker-is-ti-an.

Then, look upon the Irish too
A miserable murd'rous crew!
They'll feed you up on Irish stew,
Then cut your throat.
And - it is truth that I allege
They'll shoot you from behind a hedge
Dear brothers, recollect your pledge,
And peace promote.

Oh, loyal, loving, Orangemen,
Be tolerant and kindly when
You preach about your fellow men.
E'en as I be.
Be ever mild and circumspect.
(A curse on all the Popish sect!)
And brothers, brothers, recollect
Sweet Charity.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Cheek

When PHARAOH chased the chosen Jew, and perished in the sea,
Things seemed to hint at failure in the PHARAOH policy.
For 'tis written that the Opposition leader had his way;
But we've never been enlightened on what PHARAOH had to say.
But probably before the wave came over him he swore:
'This is the naval policy I've always battled for!'
And continued to enlarge upon his policy's success,
Till a mouthful of the salt Red Sea cut short his brief address.

For there's nothing like a cool, calm cheek;
And there's wisdom in a big bold bluff.
If you find you've made a blunder,
And your policy goes under,
You've a chance if you can bellow loud enough.
That's the time you need a brass-bound cheek;
When your theory to smithereens is blown,
Seize the other fellow's notion
In the subsequent commotion
And declare, by all the gods, it is your own.

When BRUTUS punctured CAESAR in his quaint old Pagan way,
A lot of folk were almost sure that BRUTUS won the day.
'Twas the popular opinion, and was backed by solid facts;
But we are not told what CAESAR thought about these ancient acts.
For it was not 'Et tu BRUTE' that he murmured as he fell,
But 'I'm charmed to see my policy is carried out so well.'
And if we are allowed to make a sporting sort of guess,
He's skiting still in Hades of that policy's success.

For there's nothing like a hard-boiled cheek;
And there's virtue in assurance when its strong;
In claiming a11 the credit,
And declaring that you said it
Would occur just as it happened all along.
No, there's nothing like a steel-shod cheek;
And there's something in a tall, tough skite
Should it be the white you back,

And the winner turn out black,
Buck up, and say you meant a blackish white.

O, ye proud and haughty Britons, quondam rulers of the waves,
Have you ever once reflected why it is ye are not slaves?
Nay, the glorious foundation Britain's freedom stands upon
Is the firm and fearless policy of glorious King JOHN!
For when the Barons waited on him, asking him to sign
The grand old Magna Charta, did he hesitate and whine?
No! Spake that grand old monarch, with a rather bitter smile:-
'This is the policy I've advocated all the while!'

Ay, there's nothing like a cast-iron cheek,
When you 'fuse' to give away a doubtful gift,
Saying, 'This is what we'll give
This or - some alternative.'
Lie low and watch which way the cat will shift.
Just wait and watch and polish up your cheek;
And when the Dreadnought hurling back is sent
With the curt advice to spend it
On yourself - well, let that end it;
And remark: 'Precisely. That is what we meant.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Cherchez La Femme

The Chinese are an old, old race,
In mystic lore exceeding wise.
Accustomed thro' the year to trace
Their nation's fortunes in the skies.

No mere male deity can shake
Their stolid and celestial calm.
Saturn nor Jupiter can wake
Their fear or cause the slightest qualm.

But now in trembling fear they go,
Such is their knowledge of the stars.
When Venus threatens well they know
She's far more dangerous than Mars.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Cherry

'Some I got with amber stems an' some with silver bands,
Bent ones an' straight ones an' all sorts o' brands.
A lot of pipes, sez you, for one old pensioner to own;
But, folks, as soon as Christmas comes, they won't leave me alone.
'We'll give old Pete a pipe,' they sez, forgetful in their way,
It's wot they gives me every year,' said old Pete Parraday.
'Bent ones an' straight ones, some must ha' cost real dear -
More than I'd smoke if I should live for two hundred year.

"We'll give ole Pete a pipe,' they sez. (People is awful good
Here in the bush! 'He sucks,' they sez, 'at that ole cherrywood
All bound with bits of wire an' stuff, an' cracked an' caked up too!'
But, lordy, none of 'em don't know that pipe the way I do.
I've had him over seven year, an' I just likes him fine;
For, cracked an' all, an' caked an' all, he's a good ole mate o' mine.
'Cherry,' I calls him, just for short. I own he smells no end,
But, if I was to lose him now, I'd feel I'd lost a friend.

'Yes, he knows me an' I knows him - a cranky coot some ways:
Got to be youmered, like a man; he has his sulky days.
Goes stubborn an' won't dror at all if I packs him too tight;
An', if I cuts the baccy coarse, the cow won't stay alight!
But on long winter evenin's, there by the blazin' log,
The three of us gits yarnin' - him an' me an' my ole dog -
But, lordy, if I told you all about ole Cherry here,
You'd say me brain was softnin'; you'd say; 'Ole Pete's gone queer.'

'He lost his self last winter down there along the creek,
An' a pretty dance he led me with his crazy hide an' seek.
That's how I catched pnoomonier. The doctor sez, 'Yer mad!
Risk death for that old stikin' pipe!' But I sez, 'Listen, lad,
Ole Cherry does me far more good than all your doctor's stuff!
But he jist stands an' grins at me; he knowed it sure enough.
'Cherry,' I sez, 'has been my mate -'. But he sez, 'Hold yer row!
You tough ole hunk o' hide!' he sez. 'Sit up an' drink this now.'

'Some I got with amber stems an' some with silver bands,
Bent ones an' straight ones - all sorts o' brands.
If you came into my bush hut you'd see a brave array -

Pipes of every shape an' cut,' said old Pete Parraday.
'But don't you say you seen 'em, 'cos folks is awful good.
'We'll give ole Pete a pipe,' they sez. 'Pooh! That ole cherrywood!'
Yes; folks is kind at Christmas time; but, now an' then, I grants,
I wish they'd stand a man a short, or p'raps a pair o' pants.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Christmas Scene

To this green place the tourists troop,
By twos, by threes, and group by group,
Lads in bright blazers, girls in slacks,
Hikers with rucksack on their backs.
And bush ways, till their advent stilled,
With joyous shouting now is filled
'Cooee!' each gay town-dweller cries,
And counts himself full forest wise.

An old grey bushman lounging by
Marks the sophisticated cry
And smiles a little as he says,
'The city folk got real queer ways.
What's this here 'cooee' mean at all?
Seems like a kind of mating call.
Childish they seem.' He smiles again,
The wise one in his own domain.

Here's his revenge for all he meets
Of stares and smiles in city streets,
For ridicule and laughing snubs
By city paths and city pubs.
He deems it now the crowning joke
To 'pull the legs' of city folk.
'What? Snakes?' says he. 'By gosh, you're right.
It's days like this they're apt to fight.'

So moves the pageantry today
By many a pleasant bushland way,
And laughing crowds wake merriment
Where once, mid silences there went
Some wandering band of blacks, to seek,
Their scanty fare by hill and creek,
Less than ten score of years ago.
And of the future? Who may know.

Content amid this Christmas scene
Of gleaming sky and glowing green
And happy shouts, one well might pray

For even yet some happier day
When, growing saner, kindlier still,
May devise, by wooded hill
And shaded vale, some scene of mirth
As yet unvisioned on our eath.

Is it for this our feet are set,
While war and folly men forget?
Or must this land drift back again
To primal silence, making vain
All that our vaunted progress won?
Who knows? Who cares? Here is the sun!
Glad youth calls youth by hill and creek. . . .
These are no thoughts for Christmas week.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

City Of Dreams

Oh, we might have a marvellous city
Were we only less keen on cash
Less avid for things - more's the pity
That fade and are gone in a flash,
A city where duffers in my line
In wrapt adoration fall flat
To behold its superlative skyline
But there isn't much money in that.

Oh, we might have a city most splendid
Were sordid self-seeking denied.
Were good taste and culture attended
By pride that transcends money-pride.
Then, urged by more glorious dreaming
Than moved beneath Pericles' hat,
We would out-Athens Athens in scheming
But - there isn't much money in that.

So let's build our city according
To canons commercial and sane.
Where every house is a hoarding
And every 'palace' a pain.
Let us mingle the Gothic and Moorish
In the nice neo-Georgian flat.
What odds, tho' they blither it's boorish?
Who cares? For there's money in that.

Oh, let's have a conglomeration
Of all architectural ills.
We build for ourselves, not th enation,
And to advertise somebody's pills
With piles that are proud and pretentious
And styles that are 'pretty' and fat.
And a fig for their strictures sententious!
There's not a brass farthing in that.

And so we'll grow richer and richer
While curleywigs crawl the facade
Of the home of the sur-super-picture

Or pubs where the profits are made.
Yet - We might have a marvellous city
If we only knew how to grow fat
At the game. But we don't - more's the pity.
So there isn't much money in that.

And when we have piled up the riches,
And pass, and leave never a trace,
A grave-digger, with clay on his breeches,
Will come and pitch dirt on our face.
And our passing may serve to remind him,
As he gives the grave-mound a last pat:
'Well, he's gone; and he's left nought behind him,
And there isn't much honor in that.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Cobbers And Quids

Is youth not less pedantic, less absurd,
Less prone to value things of little worth
In failing to wax wrath about a word
That bears suspicion of a lowly birth?
All words have known their low and vulgar days
Known grime and poverty when they were young;
And many a proud and pompous modern phrase
Was once the plaything of a common tongue.

But as we grow respectable and staid
Mere sound, to middle-age, parades as sense.
Grey slaves of precedent, we grow afraid
Of youth and all its sane inconsequence.
Forgetting words are no god-given things,
With queer intolerance we would insist
In terms to which the mould of ages clings
On purity that never did exist.

Language is not the gift of any god;
Rude tribesmen made it when the race was young;
And as around the weary earth we plod
Still the illiterate enrich the tongue;
And still while careless youth goes gaily rid
Of age's caution, precedent and pence,
Better a cobber who'll lend half a quid
Than all the thrifty pedant's 'commonsense.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Colac

A lady plump and pleasing
And generous and free,
Her life is spent in sleek content
Beside her inland sea;
And, round its pleasant waters,
Her pastures, rich and green,
Their treasures yield from many a field
To make her way serene.

A placid, laughing lady,
And prone to placid ways;
But yet, withal, she heeds the call
Of labor all her days
Of kind, congenial labor,
That holds nor fret nor stress
A farmer's wife whose busy life
Brings full, free happiness.

Men say the ocean covered
These fields in some dim age;
And seas, long fled, vast riches spread
To be the heritage
Of this plump Aphrodite,
Now risen from the wave
To thrive apace and wax in grace
On all the wealth they gave.

A happy, hearty lady,
She turns the gift to good,
And wins in toil from this rich soil
A fine fat livelihood.
Now, where seas long since thundered,
Her cars ply up and down
To evidence sound thrift and sense
In Colac's smiling town.

Her land of lakes and pastures
Could never harbor here,
In this lush place, a dour, hard race

Wed to an outlook drear.
And so she smiles and prospers,
A happy, hearty wife,
Whose ample charms, whose thriving farms
Reveal her zest in life.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Come Ye Home

Listening (said the old, grey Digger) . . .
With my finger on the trigger
I was listening in the trenches on a dark night long ago,
And a lull came in the fighting,
Save a sudden gun-flash lighting
Some black verge. And I fell thinking of lost mates I used to know.

Listening, waiting, stern watch keeping,
I heard little whispers creeping
In from where, 'mid fair fields tortured, No-man's land loomed out before.
And well I knew good mates were lying
There, grim-faced and death-defying,
In that filth and noisome litter and the horror that was war.

List'ning so, a mood came o'er me;
And 'twas like a vision bore me
To a deeper, lonelier darkness where the souls of dead men roam;
Where they wander, strife unheading;
And I heard a wistful pleading
Down the lanes where lost men journey: 'Come ye home! Ah, come ye home!'

'Ye who fail, yet triumph failing'
Ye who fall, yet falling soar
Into realms where, brother hailing
Brother, bids farewell to war;
Ye for whom this red hell ended,
With the last great, shuddering breath.
In the mute, uncomprehended,
Dreamful dignity of death;
Back to your own land's sweet breast
Come ye home, lads - home to rest.'

Listening in my old bush shanty
(Said grey Digger) living's scanty
These dark days for won-out soldiers and I'd not the luck of some
But from out the ether coming
I could hear a vast crowd's humming
Hear the singing, then - the Silence. And I knew the Hour had come.

Listening, silent as I waited,
And the picture recreated,
I could see the kneeling thousands by the Shrine's approaches there.
Then, above those heads low-bending,
Like an orison ascending,
Saw a multitude's great yearning rise into the quivering air.

Listening so, again the seeming
Of a vision came; and dreaming
There, I saw from out high Heaven spread above the great Shrine's dome,
From the wide skies overarching
I beheld battalions marching -
Mates of mine! My comrades, singing: Coming home! Coming home!

'We who bore the cost of glory,
We who paid the price of peace,
Now that, from this earth, war's story
Shall, please God, for ever cease,
To this Shrine that you have lifted
For a symbol and a sign
Of men's hearts, come we who drifted
Thro' long years, oh, mates of mine!
To earth, my brothers' grieving blest
Now come we home, lads - home to rest.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Conducted Tour

Walk up! Walk up to the Bureaucratic Fair!
All the tasters and the testers and the tallymen are there.
All the freaks and other fancies of the mighty tax machine.
A unique conglomeration not believed until it's seen.
Walk up! Walk up to the strangest show on earth!
And learn how the tax-collection costs near all a tax is worth;
Learn all about the latest departmental funny cracks.
Buy your tickets at the window. Two and six - plus tax.

Come and see the biscuit-biter. No performance could be brighter.
Learn how shortbread can affect the human girth.
Come and see the pastry chewer. Green complexioned, but a doer
Holds the cup for the most bilious bloke on earth!
Come and see the lip-stick licker. Quick as lightning - even quicker
Picks the British from the foreign at a lick.
Come and help the politician patch the country's sad condition.
With the latest catch-a-penny parlor trick.

Come and see the cove so pure that he bans the literature
That all Britain may devour, and stays serene.
Watch his calories increase as he scans a spicy piece,
While he gradually turns a sickly green.
Good, clean fun, but vastly funny. Every act is worth the money!
Every turn is full of merry harmless fun.
Come and see the dope-detectors, see unhappy sweet-inspectors
Testing chocolates for gin - and finding none!

Walk up! Walk up to the Bureaucratic Fair!
All the latest acquisitions of the Government are there;
All the testers and the tasters, all the poor dyspeptic blokes,
And so very, very earnest, tho' the public throw them jokes.
Walk up and see the show arranged especially for you,
And help the harried Government to earn more revenue
That stuff they spend so freely and the population lacks
Buy your tickets at the window - Two and sixpence - plus tax.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Confidential Canberra

Nay, Mr Speaker, let the ideal stay,
The picture that voters have in mind
Of Solons in debate far leagues away
Deep in the problems of poor humankind.
Here where the Cotter wends by verdant banks,
Let them imagine eloquence sublime
And for those blessings offer grateful thanks,
And vote for us again when comes the time.

Never the real! Ah, let no listening 'mike'
Whose ear ubiquitous within the house,
Gathers too truly what debates are like
When Ministers grow hot and members rouse,
When shouts across the floor fly back and forth
And loose tongues wag with little thought for care,
When words released in unconsidered wrath
Are flung regardless to the ambient air.

Think, Mr Speaker. All that Canberra means
All that it typifies is here at stake.
Must Cairns be privy to unlovely scenes,
The Leeuwin learn of all the bulls we make?
Must the unguarded phrase the tart retort
From Darwin down to Derwent and beyond
Borne on the trembling ether be a sport
Where'er loud speakers mockingly respond.

Why have we set these legislative halls
Midst sylvan scenes within the distant bush
If, broadcast, all the clamor but recalls
Forgotten pictures of a noisy push
That once in other cities held debate
Too publicly to let our words run free.
Condemn us not again to that sad fate.
Preserve our prestige! Spare our dignity.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Consummation

They may be duds or they may be drones,
Or legislators heaven-sent;
But the A.L.P. for all atones
When it gets them into Parliament.
Tho' they talk sheer drivel once they're there,
Our job is done. Why should we care?

They may be mild or they may be reds,
Or 'has-beens' who have missed the bus.
But the simple job of counting heads
Is all that matters much to us.
And the job we do with wondrous ease
Is the mass production of M.P's.

So, why blame us in peevish gloom,
And charge us with this grievous sin?
They may involve the land in doom;
But our job's done; we've got 'em in.
As from the pod come peas all green
We turn 'em out with our machine.

They may be robots, built with care,
Or silly sheep, or crazy goats;
But, once they're tied and branded there,
They art no longer men, but votes.
Thus, we our glorious aim achieve,
And triumph, tho' the nation grieve.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Convalescence

Underneath a tree I lie,
Watching with lack lustre eye,
All those little trivial things
Weakness after sickness brings;
Watching birds flit to and fro;
Watching how the grasses grow;
Watching how the leaves and trees
Blend in Autumn harmonies
And wise insects, taught by God,
Build their shelters in the sod.

Oh, how low the pride of men
Falls and grovels meekly, when
Convalescence comes at last
After long borne sufferings past,
E'en the arrogance of pain
That strange vanity - is vain
And he lies, a stricken thing,
Bereft of even suffering.

All is gone - the pain, the pride;
Arrogance is laid aside.
And he owes all things he'd do
To some worthier being, who,
Out of charity, shall seek
To assist the helpless weak
Out of charity to lend
Splendid strength he is to spend.

So beneath the tree I lie,
Reading with a languid eye
Views of that and views of this
In a world so long amiss,
And, by some strange alchemy,
Suddenly it seems to me
That, as Earth's wild turmoils cease,
Comes convalescence now and peace.

Cooked

What's the use?
Give it best;
Cut her loose;
Have a rest.
Hope is dead;
Gloom collects,
Nuff is said
Cook objects.

Moth and rust
Hither lurk;
All is bust,
Knock off work.
Nation's great
Architects,
Clean the slate;
Cook objects.

Oh the schemes
That we planned!
Dreaming dreams
For the land.
All in vain.
Hope neglects
To remain;
Cook objects.
Navy; what?
Army too?
Blessed rot;
All is blue.
It's all one
Who protects.
dropp your gun;
Cook objects.

Let her rip,

All is up.
Have to sip
Bitter cup.
Tear your hair
Woe connects
With despair,
Cook objects.
Fellow Aust
Ralians,
Trouble's crossed
All our plans.
Seek the tomb;
Fate selects
Us for doom.
Cook objects.

Death marks us
For his own.
(Grisly cuss.)
Our head-tone,
With a laugh,
He erects.
Epitaph
'Cook objects.'
dropp a tear;
Heave a sigh;
End is near;
Say goodbye.
Sell up home
And effects.
(Dismal pome)
Cook objects.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Coquette

Spring is a flirt. Unexpectedly gleaming
Over the shoulder of some far blue hill.
We glimpse the blue eyes of her, smiling and beaming,
We hold out our hands to her, all of a thrill.
A bloom in her lips, for a moment she lingers
Pouf! And she's gone with a flick of her skirt.
And Winter once more, with his icy-cold fingers,
Seizes us, freezes us. Spring is a flirt.

Spring is a minx. On the far forest ranges
Tip-toe one morning, all winsomely coy,
Her lover beholds her, and straightaway he changes
His dolerous drone to a paeon of joy:
'Come to me sweetheart! - so long have I waited.'
She blows him a kiss as she shamelessly winks;
Then - Pouf! She is off. And the storm, unaabated,
Rocks him and mocks him. Ah, Spring is a minx.

Spring is a prude. On the city man reckoning
Profits and prices in some chill retreat.
She peeps thro' the window with scandalous beckoning
Luring him out to the sun-spangled street.
He smiles. Then she falls to a frowning and pouting:
'We're not introduced, sir! You dare be so rude?'
Then sudden around him the rough winds are shouting
Reproofs, and she vanishes. Spring is a prude.

Spring is a lade. For we know every trick of it,
Every artifice, every wile:
Advancing, refusing, until we fall sick of it
Sick with the longing, athirst for her smile.
Coyly she calls us from out or a cover
Aglow with her promise. Delectable maid!
'Not yet!' - She evades us - 'Ah, not yet, my lover!
Love thrives with languishing.' Spring is a lade.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Corryong

The cattle-lands of Corryong,
The maiden of the snows
(Where silver streams the winter long
Sing pleasantly their tinkling song)
Not many a town man knows.
And here sleek cattle, deep in grass,
Watch placidly the seasons pass.

Her beauty has a wondrous worth
This maiden cleanly bright
A beauty won from her rich earth
Where the great Murray has his birth,
And gathers up his might
To scatter rich fertility
On his long journey to the sea.

Her face is laved in waters clear
Snow waters dashing down.
That flash, and hide, and reappear
To feed the pastures far and near
About this lovely town
Fair Corryong, the Cattle Queen,
Hiding her beauty here unseen.

A glory here the scene presents
Glory that may not die;
Where, up from these green, gleaming bents,
Great Kosciusko's battlements
Lift to the laughing sky.
And Corryong contentment knows
The joyous maiden of the snows.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Cosmic Comic Relief

Sadly sobbing, sadly sobbing,
Rolls the restless wireless sea,
Where the wireless waves go bobbing
Up and down so dolefully.
And nothing there the gloom assails,
Depression to undo,
Till some merry little static
In a manner most erratic
Till statics dropp their little tails
And split themselves in two.

Just to watch their comic wriggling
Moves the stratosphere to mirth,
And a giddy urge to giggling
Trails a titter round the earth.
When wireless humor flops and fails
And nought can raise a laugh,
Then some artful atmospheric
Sends the other half hysteric
Gay atmospherics dropp their tails
And split themselves in half.

Once again the world grows weary;
Sadly superheterodyne
Wax the wireless waves, and dreary,
Doleful frequencies repine!
Until, once more, loud laughter hails
The comic cosmic crew.
As some little stunting static,
Most absurdly acrobatic
Till statics dropp their little tails
And split themselves in two.

There is art in every antic,
So, when sitting at your set,
Rage no more with fury frantic
O'er the statics that you get.
For, far beyond your ken, great gales
Of laughter loud, with cosmic chaff

Hilarious and quite Homeric,
Sounds, as some impish atmospheric
Calls on his crowd to dropp their tails
And split themselves in half.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Country Doctors

The quiet country doctors
Of many a country town,
Whose lives are spent to service bent,
With scant hope of renown
Those sturdy country doctors,
That walk the healer's way,
At beck and call of one and all
That pain be smoothed away.

Those patient country doctors,
That journey day and night
By country roads to far abodes
To ease some sufferer's plight;
Thro' fire and flood and tempest
They make their pilgrimage
To bring release and healing peace,
The comforters of age.

Those modern country doctors,
They do not advertise;
Surcease they bring for suffering
And hope to pain-filled eyes.
These be their ends to be man's friends,
And so they shape and plan,
Divorced from greed to serve man's need,
And give their lives to man.

Those quiet country doctors,
Unsung, unknown to fame,
Refusing none what may be done
In skilful healing's name
Philosophers, friends, mentors,
Thro' pain and death and birth,
And who shall say that such as they
Are not salt of the earth?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Country Pubs

We know those little country pubs,
By cross-road and by creek,
Where faithfully the landlord scrubs
His counter once a week,
And stands before his shining bar
To cater for man's thirst
With all the best; but where the meals are
He caters with the worst.

'Wottle you 'ave?' There's beer or brandy,
Rum or half-and-half or shandy.
Wine or whisky. Bottles wink
'Wottle you 'ave, boys? Name your drink' ...
But in the grimy dining room
A slattern lass of grease and gloom
Intones in accents charged with grief:
'Wottle you 'ave? There's corn-beef.'

In the bar the talk grows gay,
The landlord beams, for trade agog,
And yokels wile dull hours away
Idly yarning o'er their grog ...
But in that cave of gastric woes
Grimly the hungry traveller eats,
To end by turning up his nose
And hoping to fill up on sweets.

'Wottle you 'ave?' - The cups are cloudy.
Linen soiled. The waitress dowdy,
Comes like an avenging fate
Snatching at the greasy plate
Soggy cabbage; soapy 'spuds'
Droning flies and smell of suds.
Now she whines, like some lost soul:
'Wottle you 'ave? There's jam-roll.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Country Roads ~ Pretty Sally

The diggers came from Bendigo,
From Albury the drovers,
From where the Goulburn waters flow
Came bearded teamsters travelling slow.
And all the brown bush rovers;
And where the road goes winding still
To dropp to Melbourne valley,
They sought the shanty by the hill,
And called for beer and drank their fill,
And sparked with Pretty Sally.

The teamsters halted by the door
To give their horses water
And stood about the bar room floor
To ogle, while they had one more,
The shanty keeper's daughter.
Diggers with gold from creek to claim
About her used to rally,
Shearers and booted stockmen came
And to the hill they gave her name,
For all loved Pretty Sally.

I see her now; a sparkling lass
Brim-full of fun and laughter.
And where the slow teams used to pass,
And swagmen paused to beg a glass,
Now motor cars speed after.
And when I seek the road anew
That dips down to the valley,
I see again that bearded crew,
And, of the lovers, wonder who
At last wed Pretty Sally.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Country Roads ~ The New Chum Road

A new chum went, to ease his care,
A-many years ago,
To loiter round Toolangi where
The stately blue gums grow.
No bushcraft had he for his quest,
No friend to be his guide,
But sought the grade that served him best,
From Yarra's plain to mountain crest,
And crossed the Great Divide.

And round and round the hills he wound
No lilting tramp song sang he
First East, then North, then West-ward bound.
An easy grade at last he found
That led him to Toolangi.
And tho' they vowed his trail a freak,
The men that followed after
No straighter, easier path might seek,
Yet named the brook the New Chum Creek,
With rough, good-humored laughter.

They followed on his trail for years
With many a stout bush load:
Till came at last wise engineers
To build a goodly road.
With plan and scale and instrument
They sought the mountain side
To find the way the new chum went,
The best, as clearly evident,
To cross the Great Divide,

So round and round that hilly around
The pleasant track goes weaving.
Who seek its hillsides, blossom bound,
By many a gum and fern-tree crowned
Will find small cause for grieving.
The New Chum Road 'tis called today;
And they who travel round it,
And drive along that verdant way,

Will find it in their hearts to say:
'Good luck to him that found it.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Country Roads ~ White Horse Road

By White Horse Tavern, White Horse Road
In olden days wound down;
And many a waggon bore its load
And many a bullock felt the goad
From town to country town.
Thro' Ringwood on, by hill and vale,
Their patient way they went.
Until they came to Lilydale,
The olden town of Lilydale.
And teamsters paused at Lilydale,
A place of calm content.

But days of bitumen and tar
Have changed the ancient mode;
And now the speeding motor car,
Where traffic-cops and bowsers are,
Go down the White Horse Road,
Upon a smooth, broad way they sail,
Till, sudden, up and down,
The bumps begin at Lilydale,
The rocky road to Lilydale,
The holey road to Lilydale,
A very peaceful town.

Beyond the town, the bumps are past,
And vexed springs settle down;
But many an angry look is cast
And many a curse speeds backwards fast
Toward that backward town.
On to the foothills leads the trail
By smooth and pleasant ways,
But, oh, that stretch thro' Lilydale!
The sleepy town of Lilydale,
Where folk still think, in Lilydale,
In terms of bullock drays.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Country Towns - Boort

She knows the Mallee's tragedy
Of thwarted hope, of pain,
Of promise wrecked, when weak men flee
And strong men pray in vain;
While day on burning day drifts by
Beneath a brazen, cloudless sky.

She knows the bane of Mallee dust
When Mallee droughts come down
To filch the last of lingering trust
And darken her small town
Darken men's hearts and minds until
Nought serves her, save a stubborn will.

All this she knows. Yet she knows, too
On thro' the tale of years
The changing luck of gamblers, who
Undaunted, scorning fears
Strive on, till fickle fortune rains
A wondrous gift of sudden gains.

And then she knows that mystic thing
Her jealous earth concealed
The glory of a Mallee spring
And many a fruitful yield
Of green corn quickened by sweet showers,
And kine that flatten mid the flowers.

So has she lived beside her lake
The good and bad years thro';
Till man-made streams now flow to slake
Her thirsty earth anew,
And man's unconquered will has planned
New life for this unstable land.

And who shall say no day may dawn
When, from the Mallee's soil
Drought's fingers are at last withdrawn,
Seeking no more their spoil;

And, man and Nature in accord,
Win, year by year, toll's meet reward

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Country Towns - Portland

Here she hides, an aged dame.
Here she dreams beside the waves.
Ever baulked of modern fame
And the deep-sea trade she craves.
Tall ships, riding at her port,
Waking her to life anew -
Here she hides, and holds the fort,
Hoping yet dreams will come true.

Charming lady, dignified,
Proud, hospitable and kind;
With full half her rights denied.
Here she waits, and calls to mind
Pictures of the olden days
When the whalers, sailing down
To her quiet waterways
Gave first promise to her town.

First came Dutton - half forgot
To establish well her claim
As the land's historic spot.
After him stout Henry came;
Followed Major Mitchell then,
Pushing forward with the task
Still she waits, denied by men
All she has a right to ask.

But Dame Portland is not done;
For her pioneering blood
Yet shall have ambition won,
And her fortunes at the flood.
Tall ships riding at her port
Thriving life about her strand;
She, the storehouse and the fort
Of her fertile hinterland.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Cow

Aw, go write yer tinklin' jingle, an' yer pretty phrases mingle,
Fer the mamby-pamby girl, all fluffy frill an' shinin' silk.
Them's the sort ter fetch yer trouble, when yer tries 'em, in the double.
Blow yer beauty! Wot's the matter with the maiden 'oo kin milk?
Them there rhymers uv the wattle! An' the bardlet uv the bottle -
'Im that sings uv sparklin' wine, an' does a perish fer the beer;
An' yer slap-dash 'orsey po-it! Garn! If you blokes only know it,
You 'ave missed the single subjec' fit ter rhyme about down 'ere.
An' although I ain't a bard, with bloomin' bays upon me brow,
I kinsider that it's up ter me ter sing about The Cow.

Cow, Cow

(Though it ain't a pretty row,
It's a word that 'ipnertises me; I couldn't tell yer 'ow.)
Though I ain't a gifted rhymmer,
Nor a blamed Parnassus climber,
I'm inspired ter sing a tune er two about the Blessed Cow.

Oh, the cow-bells are a-tinklin', and the daisies are a twinklin'
Well, that ain't the style ersackly I intended fer to sing.
'Ark, was over music greater then the buzzin' sepy-rater,
Coinin' gaily money daily fer the - no, that's not the thing!
'Omeward comes the cows a-lowin', an' the butter-cups are blowin';
But there's better butter in the - Blarst ! That ain't the proper way
See the pretty milkmaid walkin' - aw, it ain't no use er talkin'.
Listen 'ere, I want ter tell yer this: A cow's ther thing ter pay!
Sell yer 'orses, sell yer arrers, an' yer reapers, an' yer plough;
If yer want yer land ter pay yer, sacrifice yer life ter Cow

Cow, Cow

Sittin' underneath the bough,
With a bail, an' with a pail, an' with a little stool, an' thou
Kickin' when I pull yer teat there,
Swishin' flies, the pretty creatur.
Ah, there ain't no music sweeter - money squirtin' from the Cow.

Take away the wine-cup; take it. An' the foamin' flagon, break it.
Brimmin' cups uv butter-milk'll set yer glowin' thro' an' thro';
An' the reason I'm teetotal is becos me thrifty throat'll
Jest refuse ter swaller stuff that's costin' me a precious sou.
Once I wus a sinful spender. Used ter go a roarin' bender

Used ter often spend a thruppence when ther' wasn't any need.
An' the many ways I've busted money, when I should er trusted
It ter cattle an' erconomy, 'ud cause yer 'eart ter bleed
But I'm glad, me friends, that godliness 'as made me careful now;
Tho' I lorst the thing wot's next it when I cottoned ter the Cow.
Cow, Cow

Trudin' thro' the sloppy slough.
Ah, I once despised the Jews, but I kin under-stand 'em now
When they needed elevatin',
An' ole Moses kep' 'em waitin'
Fer religi'n, they went straight 'n' sorter substichooted Cow.

Listen to the lowin' cattle. Listen to the buckets rattle,
See, the sun is - ('Ere! You Bill! Yer goin' ter stay all day asleep?
'Ustle, or yer'll get a taste er - Wot? No cheek yer flamin' waster!
This is wot I get fer payin' 'arf a quid a week an' keep!
Talk about yer unions, will yer? Right, me covey, wait until yer
Come 'ere crawlin' - Where's that Sarah? Ain't she finished milkin' Spot?
Is this wot I brought yer up fer; reared, an' give yer bite an' sup fer?
'Struth! A man's own kids 'll next be talkin' Union, like as not
Garn, I ain't got time ter listen ter yer silly sniv'lin' now.
Understan' me, you was born an' bred ter think an' live fer Cow!)

Cow, Cow
I'm a capitalist now
Tho' I once wus poor an' lonely, an' a waster I'll allow.
Now I've 'an's that I kin 'ector:
I'm a Nupper 'Ouse elector;
An' the Sanitry Inspector is an interferin' cow!

Talk about yer modrun schoolin'! Edjucation's wasteful foolin'!
I got on without it; an' it only teaches youngsters cheek
(Where's young Tom? Wot? Ain't 'e back yet?
Sam, go - 'Ere You'll get the sack yet!
Wastin' time there, washin' buckets! Them wus washed larst Choosdee week!
Tell young Tom if 'e don't 'urry, I'll -. Now, mother, don't yer worry.
I'll deal Christian with 'im; but I'm not a Bible pa by 'alf.
That ole Scripchure cove's a driv'lin' idjut. When 'is son comes sniv'lin',
Why, the blazin', wasteful crim'nal goes an' kills a poddy calf!
I'm no dotin' daddy, but I know me jooty, you'll allow,
An' the children uv me loins is born to 'ave respect fer Cow.)

Cow, Cow

(Bow yer 'eads, yer blighters, bow!)

Come an' be initiated. Come an' take the milky vow,

Put yer wife an' fam'ly in it;

Work 'em ev'ry wakin' minit;

Fetch yer sordid soul an' pin it, signed an' sealed an' sold ter COW.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Culture And Cops

Five nights ago I lay at rest
On my suburban couch.
My trousers on the bedpost hung,
Red gold within their pouch.
The twin-gods Law and Order seemed
To me all powerful as I dreamed.

My life was staid, my rates were paid,
And peace was in my mind.
Nor recked I of unruly men
To evil deeds inclined
Strange, primal atavistic men
Who shock the peaceful citizen.

But all the same by stealth he came,
A man of vile intent.
What cared he that my life was pure,
Or that I paid my rent?
He willed to violate my shrine
For household treasures that were mine.

He planned to thief my household goods,
Heirlooms of divers kinds.
(I cannot understand such men,
Nor fathom their dark minds.
Why cannot they abjure all vice,
And be respectable and nice?)

With purpose vile and with a file
My window he attacked.
A stealthy scratch upon the catch
Awoke me to the fact.
Softly, with sudden fear amazed,
A corner of the blind I raised.

I saw his face!...Oh, what a man
His manhood should degrade,
And seek to rob (I checked a so
Except in honest trade!
A predatory face I saw
That showed no reverence for Law.

With whirring head I slid from bed,
Crept from my peaceful couch;
Forsook my trousers hanging there,
Red gold within their pouch.
Out through my chamber door I fled
And up the hallway softly sped.

Into the murky night I stole
To see a certain cop,
Whose forthright feet patrol the beat
A stone's throw from my shop.
In my pyjama suit went I....
Across the moon dark clouds swept by.

I saw him draped upon a post,
Like someone in a swoon.
His buttons gleamed what time the clouds
Released the troubled moon.
He gazed upon the changing sky,
A strange light in his dreamy eye.

'Now, haste thee cop!' I called aloud,
And seized him by the arm.
'There is a wretch without my house
Who bodes my treasure harm'
Toward the sky he waved a hand
And answered, 'Ain't that background grand?'

'Nay, gentle John,' said I, 'attend

A thief my goods and gold
Seeks to purloin. Go, seize the man
Before the trail is cold!
'Those spires against the sky,' said he,
'Surcharged with beauty are to me.'

'I give the man in charge!' I cried,
'He is on evil bent!
He seeks of all its treasured art
To strip my tenement!
He answered, as one in a dream,
'Ain't that a bonzer colour-scheme?

'Them tortured clouds agen the moon,'
The foolish cop pursued,
'Remind me of some Whistler thing;
But I prefer the nood.'
Said I, 'Arrest this man of vice!'
Said he, 'The nood is very nice.'

'My pants,' cried I, 'unguarded lie
Beside my peaceful couch
My second-best pair, with the stripes,
Red gold within their pouch!
Thieves! Murder! Burglars! FIRE!' cried I.
Sighed he, 'Oh, spires against the sky!'

Then, in my pink pyjamas clad,
I danced before his eyes.
In anger impotent I sought
His car with savage cries.
He pushed me from him with a moan.
'Go 'way!' he said. 'You're out of tone.'

'Why do I pay my rates?' I yelled -
'What are policemen for?
Come, I demand, good cop, demand

Protection from the law!
'You're out of drorin', too,' said he.
'Still, s'pose I better go an' see.'

I guided him a-down the street;
And now he stayed to view
The changing sky, and now he paused
Before some aspect new.
And thus, at length, we gained my gate.
'Too late!' I cried. 'Alas, too late!'

Too late to save my household gods,
My treasures rich and rare.
My ransacked cupboards yawned agape,
My sideboard, too, was bare.
And there, beside my tumbled couch,
My trousers lay with rifled pouch.

'Now, haste thee, cop!' I called again,
'Let not thy footsteps lag!
The thief can not be far away.
Haste to regain the swag!' ...
His arms I saw him outward fling.
He moaned, 'Where did you get that thing?'

With startled state I looked to where
His anguished gaze was bent,
And, hanging by my wardrobe, was
A Christmas Supplement
A thing I'd got for little price
And framed because I thought it nice.

It was a Coloured Supplement
(The frame, I thought, was neat).
It showed a dog, a little maid
Whose face was very sweet
A kitten, and some odds and ends.

The title, rather apt, was 'Friends.'

'Accursed Philistine!' I heard
The strange policeman hiss
Between his teeth. 'O wretched man,
Was I hired here for this?
O Goth! Suburbanite! Repent!
Tear down that Christmas Supplement!'

And, as athwart my burgled pane
The tortured storm-wrack raced,
He bowed his head upon his hands,
And wept and wept and wept....
So, on the whole, it seems to me,
Art and policemen don't agree.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Cup Couplets

Out of great wisdom, long stored up,
I would write me a rune of the Melbourne Cup.
Out of experience, grave and gay,
I would raise me a rhyme to the gala day.
With words of wisdom then let us begin;
For a many shall wager, but few shall win.
And first a warning: Go slow this trip,
For there's many a slip 'twixt the Cup and the tip.
And the sport of Kings, tho' it capture the town,
Is never for one with but half-a-crown.
For this oft is the tale of a Cup Day revel;
Dine with the gods and sup with the devil.
And this oft is the rule when the lucky man sups:
He is in on the Cup and he's on in his cups.
When the living is slow and the horse also
It doesn't much matter what pace you go.
When the living is slow and the horse is fast,
You may keep to a pace that is like to last.
When the living is fast and the horse is 'dead,'
There's the dickens to pay, and an aching head.
But, fast or slow, if you play the game
To the end, then the end is much the same.
So this is the motto to hold and to hug:
There is but one Cup; but there's many a mug.
And these be the sayings of Smug, the saint,
You may guess he's a grouch, but I wot he ain't.
So, out or in, if you still can grin,
Here's a glorious day to you, lose or win!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Cuppacumalonga

'Rover, rover, cattle-drover, where go you to-day?'
I go to Cuppacumalonga, fifty miles away;
Over plains where Summer rains have sung a song of glee,
Over hills where laughing rills go seeking for the sea,
I go to Cuppacumalonga, to my brother Bill.
Then come along, ah, come along!
Ah, come to Cuppacumalonga!
Come to Cuppacumalonga Hill!

'Rover, rover, cattle-drover, how do you get there?'
For twenty miles I amble on upon my pony mare,
The walk awhile and talk awhile to country men I know,
Then up to ride a mile beside a team that travels slow,
And last to Cuppacumalonga, riding with a will.
Then come along, ah, come along!
Ah, come to Cuppacumalonga!
Come to Cuppacumalonga Hill!

'Rover, rover, cattle-drover, what do you do then?'
I camp beneath a kurrajong with three good cattle-men;
Then off away at break of day, with strong hands on the reins,
To laugh and sing while mustering the cattle on the plains -
For up to Cuppacumalonga life is jolly still.
Then come along, ah, come along!
Ah, come to Cuppacumalonga!
Come to Cuppacumalonga Hill!

'Rover, rover, cattle-drover, how may I go too?'
I'll saddle up my creamy colt and he shall carry you -
My creamy colt who will not bolt, who does not shy nor kick -
We'll pack the load and take the road and travel very quick.
And if the day brings work or play we'll meet it with a will.
So Hi for Cuppacumalonga!
Come Along, ah, come along!
Ah, come to Cuppacumalonga Hill!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Dad

I've knowed ole Flood this last five year or more;
I knoo 'im when 'is Syd went to the war.
A proud ole man 'e was. But I've watched 'im,
An' seen 'is look when people spoke uv Jim:
As sour a look as most coves want to see.
It made me glad that this 'ere Jim weren't me.

I sized up Flood the first day that we met
Stubborn as blazes when 'is mind is set,
Ole-fashioned in 'is looks an' in 'is ways,
Believin' it is honesty that pays;
An' still dead set, in spite uv bumps 'e's got,
To keep on honest if it pays or not.

Poor ole Dad Flood, 'e is too old to fight
By close on thirty year; but if I'm right
About 'is doin's an' about 'is grit,
'E's done a fair bit over 'is fair bit.
They are too old to fight, but, all the same,
'Is kind's quite young enough to play the game.

I've 'eard it called, this war - an' it's the truth
I've 'eard it called the sacrifice uv youth.
An' all this land 'as reckernized it too,
An' gives the boys the praises that is doo.
I've 'eard the cheers for ev'ry fightin' lad;
But, up to now, I ain't 'eard none for Dad.

Ole Flood, an' all 'is kind throughout the land,
They aint' been 'eralded with no brass band,
Or been much thought about; but, take my tip,
The war 'as found them with a stiffened lip.
'Umpin' a load they thought they'd dropped for good,
Crackin' reel 'ardy, an' - jist sawin' wood.

Dad Flood, 'is back is bent, 'is strength is gone;
'E'd done 'is bit before this war come on.
At sixty-five 'e thought 'is work was done;
'E gave the farmin' over to 'is son,

An' jist sat back in peace, with 'is ole wife,
To spend content the ev'nin' of 'is life.

Then comes the war. An' when Syd 'esitates
Between the ole folk an' 'is fightin' mates,
The ole man goes outside an' grabs a hoe.
Sez 'e, 'Yeh want to, an' yeh ought to go.
Wot's stoppin' yeh?' 'E straightens 'is ole frame.
'Ain't I farmed long enough to know the game?'

There weren't no more to say. An' Syd went - West:
Into the sunset with ole Aussie's best.
But no one ever 'eard no groans from Dad.
Though all 'is pride an' 'ope was in that lad
'E showed no sign excep' to grow more grim.
'Is son was gone - an' it was up to 'im.

One day last month when I was down at Flood's
I see 'im strugglin' with a bag uv spuds.
'Look 'ere,' I sez, 'you let me spell yeh, Dad.
You 'umpin' loads like that's a bit too bad.'
'E gives a grunt that's more than 'alf a groan.
'Wot's up?' 'e snaps. 'Got no work uv yer own?'

That's 'im. But I've been tippin' that the pace
Would tell; an' when 'is wife comes to our place,
An' sez that Dad 'is ill an' took to bed,
Flat out with work - though that ain't wot she said
I ain't surprised; an' tells 'er when I'm thro'
I'll come across an' see wot I can do.

I went across, an' - I come back again.
Strike me! it's no use reas'nin' with some men.
Stubbon ole cows! I'm sick uv them ole fools.
The way 'e yells, 'Keep yer 'ands off my tools!'
Yeh'd think I was a thief. 'Is missus said
I'd better slope, or 'e'd be out uv bed.

'E 'eard us talkin' through the open door,
'Oo's that?' he croaks, although 'e tries to roar.
An' when 'is wife explains it's only me
To 'elp a bit: 'I want no charity!'

'E barks. 'I'll do me work meself, yeh 'ear?'
An' then 'e gits so snarky that I clear.

But 'e'll do me. I like the ole boy's nerve.
We don't do nothin' that 'e don't deserve;
But me an' Peter Begg an' ole man Poole,
We fairly 'as our work cut out to fool
The sly ole fox, when we sneaks down each day
An' works a while to keep things under way.

We digs a bit, an' ploughs a bit, an' chops
The wood, an' does the needful to 'is crops.
We does it soft, an' when 'e 'ears a row
'Is missus tells 'im it's the dog or cow.
'E sez that it's queer noises for a pup.
An' - there'll be ructions when ole Flood gits up.

It ain't all overwork that's laid 'im out.
Ole Pride in 'im is fightin' 'ard with Doubt.
To-day 'is wife sez, 'Somethin's strange in 'im,
For in 'is sleep sometimes 'e calls for Jim.
It's six long years,' she sez, an' stops to shake
'Er 'ead. 'But 'e don't mention 'im awake.'

Dad Flood. I thought 'im jist a stiff-necked fool
Before the war; but, as I sez to Poole,
This war 'as tested more than fightin' men.
But, say, 'e is an' 'oly terror when
Friends try to 'elp 'im earn a bite an' sup.
Oh, there'll be 'Ell to pay when 'e gits up!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Dad On The Test

I reckon (said Dad) that the country's pests
Is this here wireless an' these here Tests.
Up to the house and around the door,
Stretchin' their ears for to catch the score,
Leavin' the horses down in the crop.
Can you wonder that a farmer goes off pop?

I'm yellin' at Jim or I'm cursin' at Joe
All hours of the day; but it ain't no go -
Leavin' their work and hangin' around
When they think I'm down at the fallow ground;
Sneaking away when I start to rouse,
An' as soon as me back's turned, back to the house.

'Who got Wyatt? Is Sutcliffe out?'
Wot do they care if I rave an' shout?
Bribin' young Bill for to leave his job
To twiddle the switches an' twist the knob.
'Has he made his century? Who's in now?'...
And I bought that machine for the price of a cow!

There's a standin' crop, an' the rain's not far,
An' the price is rotten, but there you are:
As soon as these cricketin' games begin
The farm goes dilly on listenin' in;
Not only the boys an' the harvester crew,
But Mum an' the girls gits dotty too.
An' I reckon (says Dad) that a man's worst pests
Is this here wireless and these here Tests.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Dad's Philanthropic Plan

I knew an old philanthropist, a farming man was he,
Shrewd at a deal, but still withal a man of charity.
He had three sons - three hefty lads - Josiah, Jim and Joe,
And each of these had his own land, and made a goodly show.

But still the farming methods of Josiah, Joe and Jim
Distressed their good old parent and disturbed the mind of him.
'These sons o' mine appear to be a sight too slow,' thought he
'They need a better class o' stock and more machinery.'

Wherefore this old philanthropist, this shrewd old farming man,
He sat him down and pondered long, and thus evolved a plan
A simple scheme, beneficent, and calculated so
That it would guard the interests of Josiah, Jim and Joe.

'I have acquired,' reflected he, 'a lot of tillage land
Much more than I can work; and my affairs get out of hand.
If I can but amalgamate their properties and mine,
And call the whole the Empire Farm, the prospect will be fine.

Then rose the good old farming man and called his sons around,
And thus his philanthropic scheme did earnestly expound:
'My sons, it grieves my heart to see you struggling on the land;
And I've decided, after thought, to lend a helping hand.

'You all have been good sons to me, and this is my great plan:
We shall amalgamate the farms and work them as one man.
But first you need machinery; your methods are too slow.
The cost of this will fall on you - Josiah, Jim and Joe.

'Josiah I'll allow to buy a good, upstanding team;
And Joe a separator, for there's coin in milk and cream;
To Jim I give permission - he's a fav'rite son o' mine

To buy a brand new harvester of up-to-date design.

'Josiah, he will feed the nags, and Joe can buy some cows
And these be privileges, mind, not ev'ry dad allows
While Jim can mind the harvester till harvest comes around,
When you can fetch it, with the nags, and work it on MY ground.

'And, as Joe's cows come into milk, he'll fetch 'em up to me,
'Long with the separator; I will work it - do you see?'
But, strange to say, they did not see - Josiah, Jim nor Joe.
They said rude things that plunged their parent into deepest woe.

They called him many ugly names, such as 'a mean old man';
And told him pretty plainly their opinion of his 'plan.'
'We'll buy our harvesters,' said they, 'and work 'em on our own;
And if you get hard-pressed - why, you can have 'em for a loan.'

The poor old farmer bowed his head. 'Ingratitude!' he cried,
'And after all I've done for you, my offer is denied!'
And dad, to-day, is forced to plough and harrow, dig and sow,
For they were most ungrateful sons, Josiah, Jim and Joe.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Dandenong

Hard by the gate-way of the East
She dips within her market square
With provender for man and beast,
And goods and chattels round her there.
A cheery, buxom market dame,
A well-filled basket on her arm,
She calls her wares and makes due claim
Alike on factory and farm.

The neutral ground of her domain
Is loud with talk of crops and herds,
Where hucksters bargain for their gain
With judgment keen and weighted words;
Where sunburnt farmers, slow of speech,
Match wits with dapper city men
While she impartially from each
Takes toll and bids them come again.

With talk of rise and fall in stock,
With keen eyes for a horse's points,
The shrewd-eyed dealers hither flock
To peer in mouths and handle joints.
And shake their heads and turn away,
Then back again to name the price;
And jokes are mixed on market day
With loud-mouthed praise and sage advice.

Hard by the Western gate she sits,
Between the farmland and the town,
To gather all the scraps and bits
Of gossip that fly up and down;
And these she turns to her own good
A comfortable dame and keen,
Who earns an honest livelihood
As town and country go-between.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Dargo

Dargo is a dark-haired lass
Prone to independent ways;
Few men know her, fewer pass,
Where her pleasant river plays
But the smile in her blue eye
Promises a wealth of cheer
For the tired passer-by
Who would seek him respite here.

Long forgot, the days of gold
When the miners, crowding down,
Stirred a turbulence of old
Round about her pleasant town.
Now the quiet cattle-men.
Riding in from her high plains
Seek her portals now and then
With a tale of worthier gains.

Riding up Insolvent Track,
In the days before its change
Many a digger came not back
From that grim, forbidding range:
Came not ever back to tell
Olden tales of loss or gain
Where Maroka's waters swell
Many a stream that seeks the plain.

Still the dark-haired Dargo thrives
'Mid her lands of range and rock,
While blood horses bear men's lives
In and out amongst the stock.
And beside her pleasant streams.
Willow hung, that wind about,
Here the blue-eyed maiden dreams
As she marks the leaping trout.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Dawn

Here, in soft darkness where the whole night thro',
Dreamless, my quiet garden slumbered well.
Night's soothing fingers all adrip with dew
Crept in and out, weaving a mystic spell
O'er wilting bud and bell;
Now with deft touches deepening tints anew.
Now lifting up some languid suppliant who
Had wooed the sun too well.

In the grey twilight tall trees seem to yawn
And, waking, stretch their mighty limbs on high.
A small bird cheeps; and, silver in the dawn,
The jewelled wattles to a soft wind sigh.
Hard etched against the sky
The timbered hill-tops stand forth boldly drawn. . . .
A sunbeam, laughing, trips across the lawn,
And smiling day is nigh.

The kindly offices of night are done.
A grey thrush carols forth his matin hymn.
Then proud, triumphant of a new day won,
The magpie's trumpet tops a lofty limb.
By the pool's mirrored brim
The drowsing daisies open one by one:
'Wake, brothers, wake! Here comes our lord, the Sun!
Awake and worship him!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Definitions

We have heard it. Oft we heard it long before we came of age.
In whatever fields we practise, art whatever arts engage:
Ever praise for the performance, still begrudging utmost fame,
From who would extol the action yet withhold its hallowed name.
Thus, in painting, think how often, praise is mingled with complaint:
'No, of course the man's no 'artist' but, by jove, sir he can paint!'

As in fields of art and letters, tho' Australian pride has swelled
We may never match our betters while the title is withheld,
So in sport. Consider racing. This young champion. What a horse!
At all distances breaks records, old and new, on every course.
But the veterans, harking backward, ban the upstart with a word:
'Yes; no doubt the nag has speed. sir. But a 'racehorse'? Bah! Absurd!'

When the Digger put a show up Over There - some push or road -
He won almost fulsome praise: 'The bravest thing God made.'
But it seemed he still lacked something - something vague and undefined
That would make him, if he had it, the supremest of his kind.
And 'twas said in all good feeling of the valiant Aussie band:
'These men never will make 'soldiers'. But as fighters? Gad, sir! Grand!'

Tho' he skittled English wickets till their very hope grew bleak,
Ernie Jones was ne'er a 'bowler'. No, sir. Just a sort of freak.
There's a danger in perfection that may set a man apart,
What he gains in execution he may lose, 'twould seem, in art.
Now there's Bradman, freak run-getter, making scores till all is blue.
Can we call this man a 'batsman'. Speaking honestly, would you?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Digger Smith

'E calls me Digger; that's 'ow 'e begins.
'E sez 'e's only 'arf a man; an' grins.
 Judged be 'is nerve, I'd say 'e was worth two
 Uv me an' you.
Then 'e digs 'arf a fag out uv 'is vest,
Borrers me matches, an' I gives 'im best.

The first I 'eard about it Poole told me.
'There is a bloke called Smith at Flood's,' sez 'e;
 'Come there this mornin', sez 'e's come to stay,
 An' won't go 'way.
Sez 'e was sent there be a pal named Flood;
An' talks uv contracts sealed with Flanders mud.

'No matter wot they say, 'e only grins,'
Sez Poole. 'E's rather wobbly on 'is pins.
 Seems like a soldier bloke. An' Peter Begg
 'E sez one leg
Works be machinery, but I dunno.
I only know 'e's there an' 'e won't go.

'E grins,' sez Poole, 'at ev'rything they say.
Dad Flood 'as nearly 'ad a fit today.
 'E's cursed, an' ordered 'im clean off the place;
 But this cove's face
Jist goes on grinnin', an' he sez, quite carm,
'E's come to do a bit around the farm.'

The tale don't sound too good to me at all.
'If 'e's a crook,' I sez, 'e wants a fall.
 Maybe 'e's dilly. I'll go round and see.
 'E'll grin at me
When I 'ave done, if 'e needs dealin' with.'
So I goes down to interview this Smith.

'E 'ad a fork out in the tater patch.
Sez 'e, 'Why 'ello, Digger. Got a match?'
 'Digger?' I sez. 'Well, you ain't digger 'ere.
 You better clear.

You ought to know that you can't dig them spuds.
They don't belong to you; they're ole Dad Flood's.'

'Can't I?' 'e grins. 'I'll do the best I can,
Considerin' I'm only 'arf a man.

Give us a light. I can't get none from Flood,
An' mine is dud.'

I parts; an' 'e stands grinning at me still;
An' then 'e sez, "Ave yeh fergot me, Bill?"

I looks, an' seen a tough bloke, short an' thin.
Then, Lord! I remembers that ole grin.

'It's little Smith!' I 'owls, 'uv Collin'wood.
Lad, this is good!

Last time I seen yer, you an' Ginger Mick
Was 'owling rags, out on yer final kick.'

'Yer on to it,' 'e sez. 'Nex' day we sailed.
Now 'arf uv me's back 'ome, an' 'arf they nailed.

An' Mick....Ar, well, Fritz took me down a peg.'
'E waves 'is leg.

'It ain't too bad,' 'e sez, with 'is ole smile;
'But when I starts to dig it cramps me style.

But I ain't grouchin'. It wos worth the fun.
We 'ad some picnic stoushin' Brother 'Un-

The only fight I've 'ad that some John 'Op
Don't come an' stop.

They pulled me leg a treat, but, all the same,
There's nothing over 'ere to beat the game.

'An' now,' 'e sez, 'I'm 'ere to do a job
I promised, if it was me luck to lob

Back 'ome before me mate,' 'e sez, an' then,
'E grins again.

'As clear as mud,' I sez. 'But I can't work
Me brains to 'old yer pace. Say, wot's the lurk?'

So then 'e puts me wise. It seems that 'im
An' this 'ere Flood -- I tips it must be Jim --

Was cobbers up in France, an' things occurred.
(I got 'is word

Things did occur up there). But, anyway
Seems Flood done somethin' good for 'im one day.

Then Smith 'e promised if he came back 'ome
Before 'is cobber o'er the flamin' foam,
 'E'd see the ole folks 'ere, an' 'e agreed,
 If there was need,
'E'd stay an' do a bit around the farm
So long as 'e had one sound, dinkum arm.

'So, 'ere I am,' 'e sez, an' grins again.
'A promise is a promise 'mong us men.'
 Sez I, 'You come up to the 'ouse.
 Ole Dad won't rouse
When once 'e's got yer strength, an' as for Mar,
She'll kiss yeh when she finds out 'oo yeh are.'

So we goes up, an' finds 'em both fair dazed
About this little Smith; they think 'e's crazed.
 I tells the tale in words they understand;
 Then it was grand
To see Dad grab Smith's 'and an' pump it good,
An' Mar, she kissed 'im, like I said she would.

Mar sez 'e must be starved, an' right away
The kettle's on, she's busy with a tray.
 An', when I left, this Digger Smith 'e looked
 Like 'e was booked
For keeps, with tea an' bread an' beef inside.
'Our little Willie's 'ome,' 'e grins, 'an' dried.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Dinner And Dinty

He dreaded not dark, nor the lonely road,
For the world, as he knew it, was kind.
Nor threat of the risk, nor necessity's goad
Gave fear to his innocent mind.
He was merely abroad for a country stroll:
And where lay the peril in that?
While themes so engaging delighted his mind
As dinner and Dinty the cat.

Then the summons went out and the search was on:
For the danger was clear to all.
Dread death was abroad where the child had gone,
But he answered to never a call.
He harked to the birds, and he dreamed his dreams,
As deep in the forest he sat;
And his mind went back to those two great themes:
Dinner, and Dinty the cat.

They found him at last with a smile on his face,
As he prattled of important things;
And, in thankfulness for the heavenly grace,
Men gave to their faith wings.
They pondered in fear what might have-been,
And on terrors thro' fear begat,
But he prattled away, in a mood serene,
Of dinner and Dinty the cat.

Dinner and Dinty. How much we lost
When our joy in the simple things waned.
We have learned of evil - at what a cost?
With our wisdom, what have we gained?
For how much weariness wisdom brings
As the world grows dreary and flat,
Since we lost out joy in the innocent things,
Like dinner and Dinty the cat.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Discerning Mr. Murphy

Discerning Mr. Murphy sees
The dangers of the foolish plan
Of giving frailty its fees,
And taxing weak, misguided man.
Reluctantly, and red with shame,
He tells of girls depraved, who may
Take up the old, maternal game
On business lines, and make it pay,
If only foolish magistrates
Will give them rather higher rates.

An extra bob or two a head
Will shatter virtue's final guard;
The tax on bachelors would spread
A baby farm in every yard.
To populate our empty lands
Bring black or brown across the seas
From Hindu, Jap, or coral strands,
But lighten not the penalties
For bearing babes. Such clemence vile
Might make it worth a woman's while.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Disputed Boundaries

Taste? Good taste? It's been argued before,
But not many agree on it yet.
Much that A may condone B may deeply deplore;
So by whom is the standard set?
Are you thinking of jazz of the infantile kind
That predominates much of the day?
I am not high of brow, but I really don't mind
If you're cutting that out - Hurray!

If you must oscillate between brows that are high
And brows most deplorably low,
Then what of the midbrows who languish and sigh
For melodious classics they know?
Is there never a mean twixt the music of Brahms
And the saccharine saxophone's bray?
For Cora loathes crooning, but Susie hates psalms,
Are you cutting out both? Hurray!

Taste? Whose taste? It is hard to define,
If my preference must be confessed,
I am partial to Schubert and Hubert in mine.
Ah, but what about all of the rest?
And what of announcers who drawl in a pained
And a 'fraightfully B.B.C.' way?
If you must please your public, and still keep 'refained,'
Are you carpeting these? Hurray!

When the McIntyre rises at Yetman, no doubt
There are multitudes thrilled to the core;
But thousands, arising in wrath, count you out,
If that shuts off the cricketing score.
Do you think it is right, when you mention the price
Of fat stock, to refer in that way
To the sex of the beast? Do you think it is nice?
Oh, you're now closing down? Hurray!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Distrust Appearances

He came into the bird-shop where I stood
A hulking giant, monumental, grim,
A paragon of muscular manhood.
'What is sold here,' I thought, 'that could serve him?'
His heavy brow, his grat, prognathic jaw
Spoke brooding truculence; he wore no vest;
And, where his shirt flared one side, I saw
The matted hair upon his mighty chest.

I thought of Gog, Carnera, Hercules,
As he stood by me, breathing like a gale.
'What can he want,' I wondered, 'mid all these.
Pet dogs, birds, goldfish offered here for sale?
Bulldogs at least.' The parrots watched him, tense;
The yelping pups grew still to see him pass;
All sensed his presence, dominant, immense.
Even the goldfish goggled thro' their glass.

He scared me. Hastily I made my choice
And paid my cash. Yet loitered by the door,
Longing to hear the thinder of that voice
Rumble and break into a sudden roar;
Longing to know, amongst these playful folk
Pups, parrots, love-birds - what could be his need.
Sharks? Panthers? ... Then his piping treble spoke:
'Please, miss, three pennorth of canary seed.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Dogs

I've never met a man who hated dogs....
One meets with all sorts as through life he jogs
The mean ones, and the vain ones, and the rash,
The foolish fellows who splash up the cash.
The brisk 'live wires,' the dull, the sodden logs -
But I have ne'er met one who hated dogs.

(I think I'm fortunate in this, somehow,
For, if we ever met, there'd be a row).

Mayhap I'm prejudiced; mayhap I'm wise
To judge a fresh acquaintance by his eyes.
But show me one who has a dogs' straight look,
And I can read that fellow like a book.
I know him for a man who'd be a friend,
A mate, a sticker to the very end.

(He who can't comprehend this last remark
Is not worth one poor mongrel's joyous bark).

I left a dog up in the bush last week.
He was my one good pal, who'd never seek
To take advantage of my frailties
(And, heaven knows, I have enough of these).
He was my one good pal who trusted me,
And when the day of parting came, why, he -

(Well, maybe we had better draw the line,
I get so sloppy o'er this frined of mine).

But when I saw that look come in his eyes,
Well - you know what it is when your dog tries
To tell you things - Oh, I think it's all rot

To say a man could hate dogs. He could not.
Men surely are superior. Well, then?
Where could you find a dog who hates all men?

(My brothers, think this over, and reflect:
E'en curs hold qualities we may respect).

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Doreen

'I wish't yeh menat it, Bill.' Oh, 'ow me 'eart
Went out to 'er that evnin' on the beach.
I knew she weren't no ordinary tart,
My little peach!

To 'ear 'er voice! Its gentle sorter tone,
Like soft dream-music of some Dago band.
An' me all out; an' 'oldin' in me own
'Er little 'and.
An' 'ow she blushed! O, strike! it was divine
The way she raised 'er shinin' eyes to mine.

'Er eyes! Soft in the moon; such BOSHTER eyes!
An' when they sight a bloke...O, spare me days!
'E goes all loose inside; such glamour lies
In 'er sweet gaze.
It makes 'im all ashamed uv wot 'e's been
To look inter the eyes of my Doreen.

The wet sands glistened, an' the gleamin' moon
Shone yellor on the sea, all streakin' down.
A band was playin' some soft, dreamy choon;
An' up the town
We 'eard the distant tram-cars whir an' clash.
An' there I told Per 'ow I'd done me dash.

'I wish't yeh meant it.' 'Struth! And did I, fair?
A bloke 'ud be a dawg to kid a skirt
Like her. An' me well knowin' she was square.
It 'ud be dirt!
'E'd be no man to point wiv her, an' kid.
I meant it honest; an' she knoo I did.

She knoo. I've done me block in on her, straight.
A cove 'as got to think some time in life
An' get some decent tart, ere it's too late,
To be 'is wife.
But, Gawd! 'Oo would 'a' thort it could 'a' been
My luck to strike the likes of Per?...Doreen!

Aw, I can stand their chuckin' off, I can.
It's 'ard; an' I'd delight to take 'em on.
The dawgs! But it gets that way wiv a man
When 'e's fair gone.
She'll sight no stoush; an' so I have to take
Their mag, an' do a duck fer her sweet sake.

Fer 'er sweet sake I've gone and chucked it clean:
The pubs an' schools an' all that leery game.
Fer when a bloke 'as come to know Doreen,
It ain't the same.
There's 'igher things, she sez, for blokes to do.
An' I am 'arf believin' that it's true.

Yes, 'igher things—that wus the way she spoke;
An' when she looked at me I sorter felt
That bosker feelin' that comes o'er a bloke,
An' makes 'im melt;
Makes 'im all 'ot to maul 'er, an' to shove
'Is arms about'er...Bli'me? but it's love!

That's wot it is. An' when a man 'as grown
Like that 'e gets a sorter yearn inside
To be a little 'ero on 'is own;
An' see the pride
Glow in the eyes of 'er 'e calls 'is queen;
An' 'ear 'er say 'e is a shine champeen.

'I wish't yeh meant it,' I can 'ear 'er yet,
My bit o' fluff! The moon was shinin' bright,
Turnin' the waves all yellor where it set
A bonzer night!
The sparklin' sea all sorter gold an' green;
An' on the pier the band—O, 'Eil!... Doreen!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Down, But Not Out

Oh, how I hate these chills, these winter ills,
Bleak blasts and breezes;
Abominate the 'flu,' the fierce 'Tishoo'
All inappropriate sneezes;
How I detest th' uneasy, wheezy chest.
Yet (tho' the declaration may seem priggish)
Fate I defy; and to Cold's cohorts cry,
Indomitable ever: 'Ick! ... Ip! ... Iggish!'

I dream of coral isles where sunlight smiles
And high noon blazes,
Where luscious tropic green, is vaguely seen
Thro' dancing hazes.
I long for these; and then some biting breeze
Pierces my being like an icy splinter;
Yet once more I, with shrill defiance, cry
And fling taunts in the teeth of woeful Winter.

I know this dread disease brings me unease
Most deleterious;
And well, indeed, I know I often grow
Slightly delirious.
But, all the same, nought may my spirit tame;
Fears I have never felt nor eke confessed any;
Tho' some have said I'm partly off my head
When I bark challenges at brooding Destiny.

Oft - Ip! (Excuse me) Snisch! ... Often I wish
For sword and buckler
To slake my seething hate. To sneering Fate
I am no truckler.
Tho' my poor head, pain-wreathed, sinks to the bed,
Ah, bleak battalions, I would smite and smash you!
For, don't forget, I am my own man yet
While my unconquerable soul shouts, 'Ack! ... Harrashoo!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Drapers Dummies

What do they dream about standing there
In the windows facing the street?
Eyes transfixed in a strange, far stare,
Smiles so ineffably sweet;
Lady and gentleman dummies clad
In the newest fashion, the latest fad.
Garbed so expensively, well turned out
What have they got to commune about?

Winter comes. Now a chill wind stirs;
The rain comes pattering down
But they suddenly snuggle in coats and furs
And the coziest cloaks in town.
Field-glasses there or a race-book here
'The National? Why, of course, my dear,
I mean to be there tho' Trophet may freeze.
How could I miss it, in clothes like these?'

Spring smiles down and the days grow bright,
And the ladies, garbed anew,
Change, like the tulips, overnight
To gowns of many a hue.
As in a garden gay colors glow,
They are thinking of Henley, the Cup, the Show;
While each glad gentleman, blazer clad,
Is the beau ideal of the sporting lad.

But Henley comes, and the Show, the Cup;
Yet no superior 'gent.'
No simpering lady e'er turns up:
For, still in their windows pent.
Dressed for the revel, how like they seem
To me and to many who stand and dream:
Poor human dummies, but half alive,
Who are always 'going' but never arrive.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Duck An' Fowl

Now, when a bloke 'e cracks a bloke fer insults to a skirt,
An' wrecks a joint to square a lady's name,
They used to call it chivalry, but now they calls it dirt,
An' the end of it is cops an' quod an' shame.
Fer insults to fair Gwendoline they 'ad to be wiped out;
But Rosie's sort is jist fair game-when Ginger ain't about.

It was Jimmie Ah Foo's cook-shop, which is close be Spadger's Lane,
Where a variegated comp'ny tears the scan,
An' there's some is 'tup'ny coloured,' an' some is 'penny plain,'
Frum a lawyer to a common lumper-man.
Or a writer fer the papers, or a slaver on the prow,
An' noiseless Chows a-glidin' 'round wiv plates uv duck an' fowl.

But if yeh wanted juicy bits that 'ung around Foo's perch
Yeh fetched 'em down an' wolfed 'em in yer place.
An' Foo sat sad an' solim, like an 'oly man in church,
Wiv an early-martyr look upon 'is face;
Wot never changed, not even when a toff upon a jag
Tried to pick up Ginger's Rosie, an' collided wiv a snag.

Ginger Mick's bin at the races, an' 'e'd made a little rise,
'Avin' knowed a bloke wot knowed the trainer's cook.
An' easy money's very sweet, as punters reckernise,
An' sweetest when yeh've prized it orf a 'book.'
So Ginger calls fer Rosic, an' to celerbrate 'is win
'E trots 'er down to Ah Foo's joint to splash a bit uv tin.

There wus lights, an' smells of Asia, an' a strange, Chow-'aunted scene;
Floatin' scraps of forrin lingo 'it the car;
But Rose sails in an' takes 'er scat like any soshul queen
Sich as stokes 'erself wiv foy grass orl the year.
'Duck an' Fowl' 's 'er nomination; so ole Ginger jerks 'is frame
'Cross to git some fancy pickin's, an' to give 'is choice a name.

While Ginger paws the tucker, an' 'as words about the price,
There's a shickered toff slings Rosie goo-goo eyes.
'E's a mug 'oo thinks 'e's 'it a flamin' 'all uv scarlet vice
An' 'e picks on gentle Rosie fer a prize.

Then 'e tries to play at 'andies, an' arrange about a meet;
But Rosie fetches 'im a welt that shifts 'im in 'is seat.

Ginger's busy makin' bargins, an' 'e never seen the clout;
'E is 'agglin' wiv Ah Foo fer 'arf a duck;
But the toff's too shick or silly fer to 'cave 'is carkis out,
An' to fade while goin's good an' 'e's in luck.
Then Ginger clinched 'is bargain, an', as down the room 'e came,
'E seen the toff jump fritm 'is seat, an' call the girl a name.

That done it. Less than larf a mo, an' 'ell got orf the chain;
An' the swell stopped 'arf a ducklin' wiv 'is neck,
As Ginger guv the war-cry that is dreaded in the Lane.
An' the rest wus whirlin' toff an' sudden wreck.
Mick never reely stoushed 'im, but 'e used 'im fer a mop.
Then someone doused the bloomin' glim, an' Foo run fer a cop.

Down the stairs an' in the passidge come the shufflin' feet uv Chows,
An' a crash, as Ah Foo's chiner found it's mark.
Fer more than Mick 'ad ancient scores left over frum ole rows,
An' more than one stopped somethin' in the dark.
Then the tabbies took to screamin', an' a Chow remarked 'Wha' for?'
While the live ducks quacked blue murder frum their corner uv the floor.

Fer full ten minutes it was joy, reel willin' an' to spare,
Wiv noise uv tarts, an' Chows, an' ducks, an' lash;
An' plates uv fowl an' bird's-nest soup went whizzin' thro' the air,
While 'arf-a-dozen fought to reach Foo's cash.
Then, thro' an open doorway, three Chows' 'eads is framed in light,
An' sudden in Mick's corner orl is gentle peace an' quite.

Up goes the lights; in comes the cops; an' there's a sudden rush;
But the Johns 'as got 'em safe an' 'emmed 'em in;
An' ev'ryone looks innercent. Then thro' the anxious 'ush
The toffs voice frum the floor calls fer a gin...
But Mick an' Rose, O where are they? Arst uv the silent night!
They 'ad a date about a dawg, an' vanished out o' sight.

Then Foo an' orl 'is cousins an' the ducks torks ori at once,
An' the tabbies pitch the weary johns a tale,
'Ow they orl is puffick ladies 'oo 'ave not bin pinched fer munce;
An' the crooks does mental sums concernin' bail.

The cops they takes a name er two, then gathers in the toff,
An' lobs 'im in a cold, 'ard cell to sleep 'is love-quest off.

But down in Rosie's kipsie, at the end uv Spadger's Lane,
'Er an' Mick is layin' supper out fer two.
'Now, I 'ate the game,' sez Ginger, 'an' it goes agin the grain;
But wot's a 'elpless, 'ungry bloke to do?'
An' 'e yanks a cold roast chicken frum the bosom uv 'is shirt,
An' Rosie finds a ducklin' underneath 'er Sund'y skirt.

So, when a bloke fergits 'imself, an' soils a lady's name,
Altho' Romance is dead an' in the dirt,
In ole Madrid or Little Bourke they treats 'im much the same,
An' 'e collects wot's comin' fer a cert.
But, spite uv 'igh-falutin' tork, the fact is jist the same:
Ole Ginger Mick wus out fer loot, an' played a risky game.

To fight an' forage... Spare me days! It's been man's leadin' soot
Since 'e learned to word a tart an' make a date.
'E's been at it, good an' solid, since ole Adam bit the froot:
To fight an' forage, an' pertyect 'is mate.
But this story 'as no moral, an' it 'as a vulgar plot;
It is jist a small igzample uv a way ole Ginger's got.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Dummy Bridge

'If I'd 'a' played me Jack on that there Ten'
Sez Peter Begg, 'I might 'a' made the lot.'
"Ow could yeh?' barks ole Poole. "Ow could yeh, when
I 'ad me Queen be'ind?' Sez Begg, 'Wot rot!
I slung away me King to take that trick.
Which one! Say, ain't yer 'ead a trifle thick?'

'Now, don't yeh see that when I plays me King
I give yer Queen a chance, an' lost the slam.'
But Poole, 'e sez 'e don't see no such thing,
So Begg gits 'ot, an' starts to loose a 'Damn.'
'E twigs the missus jist in time to check,
An' makes it 'Dash,' an' gits red down 'is neck.

There's me an' Peter Begg, an' ole man Poole
Neighbours uv mine, that farm a bit close by
Jist once a week or so we makes a school,
An' gives this game uv Dummy Bridge a fly.
Doreen, she 'as her sewing be the fire,
The kid's in bed; an' 'ere's me 'eart's desire.

'Ome-comfort, peace, the picter uv me wife
'Appy at work, me neighbours gathered round
All friendly-like - wot more is there in life?
I've searched a bit, but better I ain't found.
Doreen, she seems content, but in 'er eye
I've seen reel pity when the talk gits 'igh.

This ev'nin' we 'ad started off reel 'ot:
Two little slams, an' Poole, without a score,
Still lookin' sore about the cards 'e'd got
When, sudden-like, a knock comes to the door.
'A visitor,' growls Begg, 'to crool our game.'
An' looks at me, as though I was to blame.

Jist as Doreen goes out, I seen 'er grin.
'Deal 'em up quick!' I whispers. 'Grab yer 'and,
An' look reel occupied when they comes in.
Per'aps they'll 'ave the sense to understand.

If it's a man, maybe 'e'll make a four;
But if' - Then Missus Flood comes in the door.

'Twas ole Mar Flood, 'er face wrapped in a smile.
'Now, boys,' she sez, 'don't let me spoil yer game.
I'll jist chat with Doreen a little while;
But if yeh stop I'll be ashamed I came.'
An' then she waves a letter in 'er 'and.
Sez she, 'Our Jim's a soldier! Ain't it grand?'

'Good boy,' sez Poole. 'Let's see. I make it 'earts.'
'Doubled!' shouts Begg... 'An' 'e's been in a fight,'
Sez Missus Flood, 'out in them furrin' parts.
French, I suppose. I can't pronounce it right.
'E's been once wounded, somewhere in the leg...'
'Ere, Bill! Yeh gone to sleep?' asks Peter Begg.

I plays me Queen uv Spades, an' plays 'er bad.
Begg snorts.... 'My boy,' sighs Missus Flood. 'My Jim.'...
'King 'ere,' laughs Poole. 'That's the last Spade I 'ad.'...
Doreen she smiles: 'I'm glad yeh've 'eard from 'im.'...
'We're done,' groans Begg. 'Why did yeh nurse yer Ace?'...
'My Jim!' An' there was sunlight in 'er face.

'I always thought a lot of Jim, I did,'
Sez Begg. "E does yeh credit. 'Ere, your deal.'
'That's so,' sez Poole. "E was an all-right kid.
No trumps? I'm sorry that's the way yeh feel.
'Twill take yeh all yer time to make the book.'...
An' then Doreen sends me the wireless look.

I gets the S.O.S.; but Begg is keen.
'My deal,' 'e yaps. 'Wot rotten cards I get.'
Ole Missus Flood sits closer to Doreen.
'The best,' she whispers, 'I ain't told yeh yet.'
I strains me ears, an' leads me King uv Trumps.
'Ace 'ere!' grins Begg. Poole throws 'is Queen - an' thumps.

'That saves me Jack!' 'owls Begg. 'Tough luck ole sport.'...
Sez Missus Flood, 'Jim's won a medal, too
For doin' somethin' brave at Bullycourt.'...
'Play on, play on,' growls Begg. 'It's up to you.'

Then I reneges, an' trumps me partner's Ace,
An' Poole gets sudden murder in 'is face.

'I'm sick of this 'ere game,' 'e grunts. 'It's tame.'
'Righto,' I chips. 'Suppose we toss it in?'
Begg don't say nothin'; so we sling the game.
On my wife's face I twigs a tiny grin.
'Finished?' sez she, su'prised. 'Well, p'r'aps it's right.
It looks to me like 'earts was trumps tonight.'

An' so they was. An', say, the game was grand.
Two hours we sat while that ole mother told
About 'er Jim, 'is letter in 'er 'and,
An', on 'er face, a glowing look that rolled
The miles all up that lie 'twixt France an' 'ere,
An' found 'er son, an' brought 'im very near.

A game uv Bridge it was, with 'earts for trumps.
We was the dummies, sittin' silent there.
I knoo the men, like me, was feelin' chumps:
Foolin' with cards while this was in the air.
It took Doreen to shove us in our place;
An' mother 'eld the lot, right from the Ace.

She told us 'ow 'e said 'e'd writ before,
An' 'ow the letters must 'ave gone astray;
An' 'ow the stern ole father still was sore,
But looked like 'e'd be soft'nin', day by day;
'Ow pride in Jim peeps out be'ind 'is frown,
An' 'ow the ole fool 'opes to 'ide it down.

'I knoo,' she sez. 'I never doubted Jim.
But wot could any mother say or do
When pryin' folks asked wot become uv 'im,
But dropp 'er eyes an' say she never knoo.
Now I can lift me 'ead to that sly glance,
An' say, 'Jim's fightin', with the rest, in France.'

An' when she's gone, us four we don't require
No gossipin' to keep us in imploy.
Ole Poole sits starin' 'ard into the fire.
I guessed that 'e was thinkin' uv 'is boy,

'Oo's been right in it from the very start;
An' Poole was thinkin' uv a father's part.

An' then 'e speaks: 'This war 'as turned us 'ard.
Suppose, four year ago, yeh said to me
That I'd sit 'eedless, starin' at a card
While that ole mother - Good Lord!' sez 'e
'It takes the women for to put us wise
To playin' games in war-time,' 'an 'e sighs.

An' 'ere Doreen sets out to put 'im right.
'There's games an' games,' she sez. 'When women starts
A hand at Bridge like she 'as played tonight
It's Nature teachin' 'em to make it 'earts.
The other suits are yours,' she sez; 'but then,
That's as it should be, seein' you are men.'

'Maybe,' sez Poole; an' both gits up to go.
I stands beside the door when they are gone,
Watching their lanterns swingin' to an' fro,
An' 'ears Begg's voice as they goes trudin' on:
'If you 'ad led that Queen we might 'ave made...'
'Rubbidge!' shouts Poole. 'You mucked it with yer Spade!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Dusk

Now is the healing, quiet hour that fills
This gay, green world with peace and grateful rest.
Where lately over opalescent hills
The blood of slain Day reddened all the west,
Now comes at Night's behest,
A glow that over all the forest spills,
As with the gold of promised daffodils.
Of all hours this is best.

It is time for thoughts of holy things,
Of half-forgotten friends and one's own folk.
O'er all, the garden-scented sweetness clings
To mingle with the wood fire's drifting smoke.
A bull-frog's startled croak
Sounds from the gully where the last bird sings
His laggard vesper hymn, with folded wings;
And night spreads forth her cloak.

Keeping their vigil where the great range yearns,
Like rigid sentries stand the wise old gums.
On blundering wings a night-moth wheels and turns
And lumbers on, mingling its drowsy hums
With that far roll of drums,
Where the swift creek goes tumbling amidst the ferns...
Now, as the first star in the zenith burns,
The dear, soft darkness comes.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Dust

(I'm not trying to make this thing rhyme
But, at the same time,
A little interlude like this
Is not amiss).

We interviewed a Mayor and asked gently, 'Dost
Think, my lord, that thy great city is a pleasant place wherein to dwell? For, if
not, why not?' And he answered, 'Dust!'

Just,
'Dust!'

He seemed perturbed. Something was on his mind. He could not talk. He could not

say one word excepting

Just
'Dust!'

We fear that the interview was a bit of a frost. We wanted to ask him all sort of
things about markets, and the letting of the Town Hall, and jay-walking
regulations; but all he would answer was just

'DUST!!!'

And when outside into the street we went

We knew just

What he meant.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Early Morning Tea

You are growing convalescent
As pain's fingers are withdrawn;
And you waken in a strange, white room at last;
Yet your thought is aught but pleasant
In the cold, grey winter dawn,
As you realise a weakness not yet past.
Then a little sound comes creeping
From some distant inner shrine,
And you bid farewell to sleeping
At that trebly welcome sign.

'Tis the tink-clink-tinkle of a teacup,
From morbid thought imagination stirs;
And with sharp anticipation you await the glad libation
The draught of draughts the thirsting tongue prefers.
And you listen for that soul-uplifting gurgle,
As from the precious pot you hear them pour
The golden brew you're craving . . . Then a weak, white hand is waving
To the white capped Sister smiling at the door.

More than all that Juno's daughter
Bore to tables of the great,
Sweeter far than all Olympian Hippocrene,
More than all man's heady water
Is the nectar you await,
Now to nibble bred-and-butter in between.
Say, can this be stuff man gobbles
Listlessly some afternoon?
Or, to sound of bells and bobbles,
Underneath a bright bush moon?

Hear that tink-clink-tinkle of the teacup,
And the rattle of the spoon against the cup.
Was cup-bearer ever sweeter? Then you meekly smile to greet her
And most valiantly struggle to sit up.
So, having quaffed, your head sinks to the pillow,
And you know contentment, lately past belief,
As, your heavy eyelids closing, once again you fall to dozing
While you bless all China and the precious leaf.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Earth's Oldest Show

Not in our public parks, for private gain.
This centuries-old precursor of all dramas
That lured babes in old Italy and Spain
To plague for pence their medieval mamas.
Not for the modern child: this crude display
Of brutal bouts with staves, or battles fictic;
So wise and reverend city elders say.
But we might get lighted fountains 'Ow hartistic!

Not in our playgrounds may the showman pitch
His box of tricks that, from our great-gand-daddies
And their great-great-grand-daddies, drew those rich,
Fat chuckles of pure joy, when they were laddies.
Not for our bairns: that vulgar figure, Punch
With his hypocrisy and moods plenetic,
His Mammoth nose, his ugly, malformed hunch.
But we might have colored fountains 'Ow hesthetic!

Not Punch: that wicked well-loved reprobate,
Beneath false jocularity concealing
A world of mordant and malicious hate;
Beneath his leer, sad lack of all nice feeling.
Not Judy: feckless spouse, doomed ne'er to know
Domestic peace, but e'er to find some rift in
The matrimonial lute. A sordid show!
But illuminated water! So hupliftin'.

Ponder effects upon the plastic mond:
Police made victims of a murderer's revel!
Infanticide! Wife beating! Then to find
A crude portrayal of a personal devil!
It must creat false values, such low life
As Punchinello and his gang would paint it.
A homicidal crook with half-wit wife!
But we might have rainbow fountains 'Ighbrow, hain't it?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Eats'

When Willie gets a penny piece
Straight to the lollie-shop he flies,
And, heartened by his wealth's increase,
Reviews the stock with bulging eyes.

And so it is thro' all our lives,
Till Death declares the tale complete;
Man ever toils and yearns and strives
With eyes on something good to eat.

With little child or stout M.P.
Old Nature varies not her plan;
When either has the £.s.d.
His thoughts fly to the inner man.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Echoes

Brothers!....

(That is to say, those of you that are.

For, even in the most altruistic mood, there are some I bar.)

Brothers!

Workers, shirkers, writers, skiters, philosophers and others,

Attend. I address myself only to those

Of the class that habitually looketh even beyond its nose.

To him I speak who shrewdly seeketh for the milk in the cocoanut, while his fellows are repeating the bald assertion that 'The fruit is not yet ripe!'

Him I address who knoweth the sheep from the goats, the chaff from the oats, the half-quid from the gilded sixpence, and the common sense from common tripe.

To the 'Man in the Street' I speak not, nor to the 'Right-thinking Person,' nor 'Constant Subscriber,' nor 'Vox Populi,' nor 'The Bloke on the Train,' nor any of their band.

For of the things I write they wot not, neither may they hope to understand.

But ye whom I, even I, presume to address as brother:-

Journalists, politicians, burglars, company promoters, miners, millers, navvies, shearers, confidence-men, piano-tuners, paling-splitters, bookmakers, process-workers, judges, brass-fitters, policemen and others.

Attend. Him who looketh for the hall-mark on every link, and taketh not the say-so of the label, nor the sworn affidavit of the pill advertisement

him who hath it in him to discern the fair thing from that which is over the odds, and shaketh the new-laid egg that he may know what is within it

Him I address. For lo, my brothers, maybe there is one of us born once a week or thereabouts, but we know it is written that one of the others is born every minute.

Wherefore, attend,

And lend

An ear; for I have planned for you a pleasing diversion.

Come with me, my brothers, and let us make a little excursion

Out over the land, through the cities and the country places, even to the farthest limit of Back-o'-beyond. Harken brothers! What are these sounds we hear?

Say, what is all this babbling and gabbling, this howling and growling, this muttering and spluttering, that smites the ear?

Listen again. Do you hear them, brothers? Lo, they are the Echoes calling.

They are the multitudinous echoes that sound up and down the land; crying and sighing, squalling and bawling.

In all places they sound; in the city and in the country; upon the high mountains

and along the plains, wherever man hideth; and at all times, for the night is loud with the sound of them even as is the day.

Listen again, brothers! What is it that they say?

Lo, this one shouteth. 'The Time is Not Yet Ripe!' And another bawleth.

'Capital is fleeing the Land!' And yet another howleth, 'It is

Inimical to Private Enterprise and Thrift!' And yet another screameth.

'It will Bust up the Home and ruin the Marriage Tie!'

Why do they howl these things, my brothers? I ask ye, why?

For lo, even as they shout, still other Echoes take up the cry till it is increased and multiplied even unto 70,000 times seven;

And a howl, as of 1400 she-elephants simultaneously robbed of their young, assaileth Heaven.

What say ye, brothers? What is the inner significance of these Echoes, and why do they make these divers sounds? What say ye, brothers; is it because they think?

Aha! I apprehend ye! I say ye - nay, verily, I heard ye wink.

For the noise of the falling - of the flapping of your collective eyelid was even as the banging of the bar door what time the clock telleth of eleven thirty p.m., and the voice of Hebe murmureth through the night 'Good-bye, ducky.'....But I digress.

Which is a characteristic failing I must confess!

But, nevertheless,

It hath its compensations, as is plain to any noodle,

When matter is paid for at space rates, for it pileth up the boodle....

However, to resume. Let us isolate a case, my brothers. Let us sample an Echo. Take Brown.

We all are well acquainted with Brown. Mayhap his name is Smith or Timmins, but no matter. He is the Man in the Street. He hath a domicile in the suburbs and an occupation in town.

This Brown riseth in the morning and donneth the garments of civilisation. In hot socks he garbeth his feet, and upon his back he putteth a coat which hath a little split in the tail for no sane or accountable reason.

Except that it is an echo of the first and original split that set the fashion for the season.

Then he proceedeth to feed.

And simultaneously to read

His solemn, though occasionally hysterical, morning sheet, which he proppeth against the cruet.

Remarking to his spouse, inter alia. 'I wish to goodness, Mirabel, you wouldn't cook these things with so much suet!'

(Which rhyme, though labored, is remarkably ingenious and very rare. For you will find, if you try to get a rhyme for cruet - But let that pass. This is more

digression.

Time is money; but the space writer must contrive to sneak it with discretion.)

Lo! as Brown peruseth his apper a lugubrious voice speaketh to him from out the type,

Saying: 'Despite the howls of demagogues and the ranting of pseudo-reformers, it is patent to any close student of political economy - nay, it is obvious even to the Man in the Street that the Time is Not Yet Ripe'

And Brown, with solemn gravity,

Having mainly a cavity

In that part of him where good grey matter should abide,

Pusheth the sheet aside,

And sayeth to the wife of his bosom across the breakfast dish of stewed tripe:

'Verily, this paper speaketh fair. The time is not yet ripe!'

Now, mark ye, brothers, it is the nature of a cavity to give back that which is spoken into it. This doth it repeat.

Wherefore Brown, with rising heat,

Sayeth again: 'Dammit, woman, this Labor Party will ruin the blanky country.

Of COURSE, the time is not yet ripe!

Where's my pipe?

And my umbrella and my goloshes? I'll miss that train again as sure as eggs!'

Then on nimble legs

he hasteth to the train,

And here again

he meeteth other Echoes surnamed White or Green or Black,

Each with a coat upon his back

Which hath an absurd and altogether unnecessary little split in its tail.

Brothers, do not let the moral fail.

For it is written:

If the tail of the coat of Brown be absurdly split,

So, also, shall th etails of the coats of White also Green and Black be likewise splitten;

And if the mind of Brown with a shibboleth be smit,

So, also, shall th ealleged minds of White and Green and Black be smitten.

For, lo, they use but as hat-racks those knobs or protuberances which Nature has given unto them to think with; and, even as 10,000 others of their type,

They echo again, as the train speedeth onward, the same weird cry: Lo, the Cost of Living is becoming a Fair Cow! These Trusts will have to be Outed.

But, as the paper says, the Referendum is a dangerous mistake. THE TIME IS NOT YET RIPE!'

And here and there, and elsewhere, and in divers places, not mentioned in the specifications, the foolish Echo echoeth and re-echoeth and echoeth even yet again, till it soundeth far and near and in the middle distance from Dan to

Berrsheba. Ay, even from Yarra Bend to Kow Plains:

In hundreds of trams and boats and trains;

In motor-cars and junkers and spring-carts and perambulators and hearses and Black Marias; in shops and pubs and offices and cow-yards and gaols and drawing-rooms and paddocks and street corners; and across counters and slip rails and three-wire fences, and streets and lanes and back fences; and

through telephones and speaking-tubes and pipestems and weird whiskers of every shade and color: up and down the land, and across it: from the mouths of men of every shape and size and kind and type,

The Echo soundeth and resoundeth: 'THE TIME IS NOT YET RIPE - RIPE - ripe - ripe'....

And now the Voice - the original anonymous voice that caused these divers Echoes smileth to Itself and saith: 'Verily, that was a good gag. It should help to bump 'em next elections. This unprecedented growth of Public Opinion is prime....

Snaggers, see if you can get a column interview with Sir Ponsonby Stodge on the

Obvious Inripeness of Time.

We must follow this up while we're in luck.'

And the voice of the Chief Reporter answering, saith 'Ribuck.'

Brothers, ye have heard the Echoes. In a multitude of words have I spoken of them to ye. Have I not planned for ye a pleasing diversion? Lo! then, when the Little Blue Devil sitteth upon the right shoulder and whispereth into the ear that the World is a Dead Nark; when the Spice of Life tasteth in the mouth even as the stale beer of yester's revel; when the Soul wilteth for lack of congenial employment;

Go ye forth and give ear unto the Echoes, and thus shall the Spirit be uplifted and cheered by the fatheadedness of your fellows, and ye shall reap profitable and unending enjoyment.

I say this unto ye, even I, and my word has never neem broken

More often than has been absolutely necessary or expedient considering the dreadful Socialistic trend of Legislation in this Country. Lo! I have spoken.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Echuca

With wood and wool for Adelaide
The paddle boats came down
When here this spritely river maid
Built up her river town.
Flanked by the green of spreading gums,
Where trade in waxing volume comes
Her industry to crown.

Those were the careless, easy days
The days of old romance,
When men were prone to casual ways,
But she had marked her chance,
As gateway of the north and east,
To share one day the coming feast
Of this wide land's advance.

Now she, grown old in count of years,
Stays young, who dreams her fate
Is to arise above her peers
And serve a sister State,
Handmaid of kindlier kinship when
Madness and folly fall from men
And they, with towns, grow great.

The paddle boats, with wool and wood,
Churned lazily along
When peace seemed sure, when life seemed good,
Ere all a world went wrong.
Strife wells; yet, valiant as of yore
Old Murray sings without her door
Of hope an ageless song.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Election Aftermath

1. ANTE-ELECTIONS

Now, a cove the name of Blabb, a politician,
He's a haughty sort o' high pan-jan-dee-ram;
An' he holds a very dignified position
As the member for the districk where I am.
There is times he seems to faintly reckernise me
Jist a flutter of his flipper when we meet;
Yet, other times, his actions fair surprise me,
When with a very icy eye he eyes me,
Jist as if he never knoo me in the street.
But who am I to seek his hand to grab?
So I simply sez, 'Good mornin', Mr Blabb.'
An' passes on.
'An' I hopes you're doin' nicely, Mr Blabb.'

2. ELECTIONS

Now, a cove the name of Blabb, a politician,
Is a pal o' mine, an' most perlite, at that.
He's a candidate again for th eposition
As a member for the districk where I'm at.
He will grab me hand an' pump it when I meet him,
An' he pats me on the back an' calls me Joe
Seems sort of anxious-like for me to grete him
An' as a fond an' faithful friend to treat him.
He's the nicest sort o' neighbour you could know,
But who am I to listen to his gab?
So I simply sez, 'I'll think it over, Blabb,'
An' passes on.
'I'll see wot I can do about it, Blabb.'

3. POST-ELECTIONS

Now, a coot the name of Blabb, a politician,
He's a Public Figger, an' a Man of note;
For he recently rewon the high position
As the member of the districk where I vote.
An', altho' we come to be close cobbbers lately,
Monday last he hardly knoo me when I spoke;

An' he didn't sort o' seem to want to, greatly;
But he rose his hand an' nodded most sedately,
He's an awful, absent-minded sort o' bloke.
But who am I, whose ways is drear an' drab?
So I simply sez, 'Good evenin', Mr Blabb,'
An' passes on.
'An' I hopes you ain't forgot me, Mr Blabb.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Emily Ann

Government muddles, departments dazed,
Fear and confusion wherever he gazed;
Order insulted, authority spurned,
Dread and distraction wherever he turned
Oh, the great King Splosh was a sad, sore king,
With never a statesman to straighten the thing.

Glus all importunate urging their claims,
With selfish intent and ulterior aims,
Glugs with petitions for this and for that,
Standing ten-deep on the royal door-mat,
Raging when nobody answered their ring -
Oh, the great King Splosh was a careworn king.

And he looked to the right, and he glanced to the left,
And he glared at the roof like a monarch bereft
Of his wisdom and wits and his wealth all in one;
And, at least once a minute, asked, 'What's to be done?'
But the Swanks stood around him and answered, with groans,
'Your majesty, Gosh is half buried in stones!'

'How now?' cried the King. 'Is there not in my land
One Glug who can cope with this dreadful demand:
A rich man, a poor man, a beggar man, thief
I reckon not his rank so he lessen my grief
A soldier, a sailor, a - ' Raising his head,
With relief in his eye, 'Now, I mind me!' he said.

'I mind me a Tinker, and what once befel,
When I think, on the whole, he was treated not well.
But he shall be honoured, and he shall be famed
If he read me this riddle. But how is he named?
Some commonplace title, like-Simon?-No-Sym!
Go, send out my riders, and scour Gosh for him.'

They rode for a day to the sea in the South,
Calling the name of him, hand to the mouth.
They rode for a day to the hills in the East,
But signs of a tinker saw never the least.
Then they rode to the North thro' a whole day long,
And paused in the even to hark to a song.

'Kettles and pans! Kettles and pans!
Oh, who can show tresses like Emily Ann's?
Brown in the shadow and gold at the tips,
Bright as the smile on her beckoning lips.
Bring out your kettle! O kettle or pan!
So I buy me a ribband for Emily Ann.'

With his feet in the grass, and his back to a tree,
Merry as only a tinker can be,
Busily tinkering, mending a pan,
Singing as only a merry man can . . .
'Sym!' cried the riders. ' 'Tis thus you are styled?'
And he paused in his singing, and nodded and smiled.

Said he: 'Last eve, when the sun was low,
Down thro' the bracken I watched her go
Down thro' the bracken, with simple grace
And the glory of eve shone full on her face;
And there on the sky-line it lingered a span,
So loth to be leaving my Emily Arm.'

With hands to their faces the riders smiled.
'Sym,' they said - 'be it so you're styled
Behold, great Splosh, our sorrowing King,
Has sent us hither, that we may bring
To the palace in Gosh a Glug so named,
That he may be honoured and justly famed.'

'Yet,' said Sym, as he tinkered his can,

'What should you know of her, Emily Ann?
Early as cock-crow yester morn
I watched young sunbeams, newly born,
As out of the East they frolicked and ran,
Eager to greet her, my Emily Ann.'

'King Splosh,' said the riders, 'is bowed with grief;
And the glory of Gosh is a yellowing leaf.
Up with you, Tinker! There's work ahead.
With a King forsaken, and Swanks in dread,
To whom may we turn for the salving of man?'
And Sym, he answered them, 'Emily Ann.'

Said he: 'Whenever I watch her pass,
With her skirts so high o'er the dew-wet grass,
I envy every blade the bruise
It earns in the cause of her twinkling shoes.
Oh, the dew-wet grass, where this morn she ran,
Was doubly jewelled for Emily Ann.'

'But haste!' they cried. 'By the palace gates
A sorrowing king for a tinker waits.
And what shall we answer our Lord the King
If never a tinker hence we bring,
To tinker a kingdom so sore amiss?'
But Sym, he said to them, 'Answer him this:

'Every eve, when the clock chimes eight,
I kiss her fair, by her mother's gate:
Twice, all reverent, on the brow-
Once for a pray'r, and once for a vow;
Twice on her eyes that they may shine,
Then, full on the mouth because she's mine.'

'Calf!' sneered the riders. 'O Tinker, heed!
Mount and away with us, we must speed.
All Gosh is agog for the coming of Sym.'

Garlands and greatness are waiting for him:
Garlands of roses, and garments of red
And a chaplet for crowning a conqueror's head.'

'Listen,' quoth Sym, as he stirred his fire.
'Once in my life have I known desire.
Then, Oh, but the touch of her kindled a flame
That burns as a sun by the candle of fame.
And a blessing and boon for a poor tinker man
Looks out from the eyes of my Emily Ann.'

Then they said to him, 'Fool! Do you cast aside
Promise of honour, and place, and pride,
Gold for the asking, and power o'er men
Working your will with the stroke of a pen?
Vexed were the King if you ride not with us.'
But Sym, he said to them, 'Answer him thus:

'Ease and honour and leave to live
These are the gifts that a king may give
'Twas over the meadow I saw her first;
And my lips grew parched like a man athirst
Oh, my treasure was ne'er in the gift of man;
For the gods have given me Emily Ann.'

'Listen,' said they, 'O you crazy Sym.
Roses perish, and eyes grow dim.
Lustre fades from the fairest hair.
Who weds a woman links arms with care.
But women there are in the city of Gosh -
Ay, even the daughters of good King Splosh. . .'

'Care,' said Sym, 'is a weed that springs
Even to-day in the gardens of kings.
And I, who have lived 'neath the tent of the skies,
Know of the flowers, and which to prize . . .
Give you good even! For now I must jog.'
And he whistled him once to his little red dog.

Into the meadow and over the stile,
Off went the tinker man, singing the while;
Down by the bracken patch, over the hill,
With the little red dog at the heel of him still.
And back, as he soberly sauntered along,
There came to the riders the tail of his song.

'Kettles and pots! Kettles and pans!
Strong is my arm if the cause it be man's.
But a fig for the cause of a cunning old king;
For Emily Ann will be mine in the Spring.
Then nought shall I labour for Splosh or his plans;
Tho' I'll mend him a kettle. Ho, kettles and pans!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Ep - And - Ein

Sometimes I risk a faltering step
To meet these -steins, both Ein- and Ep-:
But hesitate and halt at last,
Finding the works of each too vast
For such a finite brain as mine.
They gravel me, both Ep- and Ein-.

Ein-'s themes on space, Ep-'s things in stone
Both leave me gasping. Tho' I own
They're 'after something,' as men say,
What master minds, what years away,
Will fully grasp at last those fine
Profundities of Ep- and Ein-?

I sometimes like to think, if Ep-
Could be induced to take the step,
He might translate and bring in bounds
Vague theories that Ein- propounds
Carve them in stone, that, in the end
Mere fools like me might comprehend.

Working together thus they might
To a dull-witted world bring light.
But when each labors all alone,
Ep- at his monstrous things in stone.
Ein- with his talk of time-light-space
Just leave me with a wooden face.

Tho' here and now I own the twain
Bring but a bussing in my brain,
Yet I, like others of my kind,
Keen to be thought a 'modern' mind,
If asked, will learnedly admit,
Each is indutitably It.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Erb

Do you know 'Erb? Now, there's a dinkum sport.
If football's on your mind, why, 'Erb's the sort
To put you wise. It's his whole end and' aim.
Keen? He's as keen as mustard on the game.
Football is in his blood. He thinks an' schemes
All through the season; talks of it an' dreams
An' eats an' sleeps with football on his mind.
Yes: 'Erb's a sport - the reel whole-hearted kind.

'A healthy, manly sport.' That's wot 'Erb says.
You ought to see his form on football days:
Keyed up, reel eager, eyes alight with joy,
Full of wise schemes for his team to employ.
Knows all about it - how to kick a goal,
An' wot to do if they get in a hole.
Enthusiasm? Why, when 'Erb gets set
He is a sight you couldn't well forget.

There ain't a point about it he don't know
All of the teams and players, top to toe.
The rules, the tricks - it's marvellous the way
He follers - Wot? Good Lord, no, he don't play.
'Erb? Playin' football? Blimey! have a heart!
Aw, don't be silly. 'Erb don't have to play;
He knows more than them players any day.

He's never had a football in his hand,
'Cept once, when it was kicked up in the stand.
No, 'Erb ain't never played; he only sits
An' watches 'em, an' yells, an' hoots and splits
His sides with givin' mugs some sound advice
An' tellin' umpires things wot ain't too nice.
Aw, look; your ejication ain't complete
Till you know 'Erb. You reely ought to meet.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Escape

Sing me to sleep when I go West;
But sing you, soft and low,
No song from the olden masters'
Or I shall not want to go:
Not Schubert, wondrous harmonist,
Not great Beethoven, Grieg nor Liszt,
Nor any rare old melodist;
For I'd hate the passing so.

I'll hate to part with the good green trees
And the birds and the soft, kind sky;
For I've abiding love for these,
And I shall not want to die.
But, most of all, shall I doubly grieve
For the joys of earth when I have to leave
Those melodies to which I cleave
When the lust for life runs high.

Sing me to sleep when I go west
The latest thing you know
In jazz; and sing with brutal zest
While the saxophones moan low
And the squawkers squawk and the banjoes strum
To the bang and the boom of the big bass drum;
Then I'll come out for Kingdom Come
And gladly shall I go.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Ethics For Infants

Now, children, in this lesson of a rather novel sort
Let us dwell, however briefly, on the moral phase of sport,
Taking cricket, for example, and those vague unwritten laws
Which, when observed, bring harmony, and help the noble cause
Of sportsmanship; but, understand, opinions given here
And rules of conduct specified are just as they appear.
To me and sundry others who see eye to eye with me
While 'tis candidly admitted other folk may disagree.

Example one: When bowling we'll suppose, without intent,
You hurt a batsman badly so that half his strength be spent.
Now, the law, as I conceive it; is to give the man a chance
And to treat him rather gently while he flounders in trance.
That's sportsmanship, true sportsmanship as it appears to me;
Tho', as I have remarked before, some folk may disagree.
They would set a leg trap for him and attack him out of hand!
But that's a trick that you and I could never understand.

Example two: When bowling you have got a batsman out
But the umpire has not seen it, and the issue is in doubt;
The batsman gets the benefit and profits by the same.
And you? Why you regard it as the fortune of the game.
But, should you lose your temper and show plainly you are peeved,
Well, I and who think like me would be just a little grieved,
A little bit ashamed, you know, or so it seems to me,
Tho' remember clearly, children, other folk may disagree.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Farewell Cable Tram

Now a sad farewell to the cable-tram,
Staunch friend of the quieter days,
That glided down thro' a leisured town
Ere the urge for speed was a craze.
We'd time to spare and we took the air
On a sociable seat outside
Calm charioteers of those peaceful years
When 'the trams' were a city's pride.

Clash! Clang! The twin bells rang,
And the grip went smoothly in.
Then we floated along to a muted song
And a dearth of hustle and din.
Untouched by the need for racketting speed
That frazzles the moderns' nerves,
Scarce heeding at all the warning call:
'Sit tight! Hold on at the curve!'
Unhurried, serene, we viewed the scene,
Or chatted with Charlie or Sam.
Oh, in spite of the rage of a jazz-mad age,
I'm still for the cable-tram, I am,
The jolly old cable-tram.

But they're rooting them out, the cable-trams,
Like all earth's pleasanter things;
To oblivion brought by a Juggernaut
That needs no leading strings
And they'll serve when dead, for a shelter shed
By some shrill suburban road.
Or a garden 'nook,' unbelievably crook,
At a philistine's abode.

Clash! Clang! . . . How the breezes sang
On a sunny Sabbath Day.
And away we go with Fanny or Flo
For a tram trip down the Bay.
'What O! There's class!' Proud ponies pass
With their shining jinkers there,
And joy's complete, we've a front-row seat,

And the sea-wind's in our hair.
And never a car snorts by to mar
That peace with its swank and sham.
You may keep your noise and your clattering toys!
I'm for the cable-tram, I am!
Idyllic old cable-tram.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Fathercraft'

Well (said the small, meek man) we look for change
In this sad world, for these are stirring days;
And men pin hopes to methods new and strange
And see lost happiness thro' altered ways.
And I, who many a bitter cup have quaffed,
Hailed with delight this cult of Fathercraft.

But (said the small, meek man) I've scanned the rules
And studied well all that this author says,
Oh, I have pinned such faith to modern schools,
Hoping one day to see a great light blaze.
And now, it seems, I'm rather at a loss;
For all I glean is that the wife should be boss.

If (said the small, meek man) yielding one's pay,
Yielding one's will, seems new to Fathercraft,
And letting woman have her own sweet way;
Then (said the small, meek man) the author's daft!
I had such hopes! But, far as I can see,
Things go on in the same old way. Ah, me!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Fiduciary Friendship

'E 'ad spragged me before for the loan of a quid.
But I told 'im straight out I was broke.
Still 'e would 'ang around me, wotever I did.
'E's a regiler obstinit bloke.

'E'd tapped me for dollars an' bit me for bobs;
An' I ain't too finanshil meself.
Wot with times like they are an' not too many jobs;
So a bloke 'as to 'ang to 'is pelf.

But this Mister Theodore give me a lead
'E's a genius all on 'is own
'E put me wise yestidy - jist wot I need,
When a bloke comes along for a loan.

I rekin this Theodore's out on 'is pat
As a shrewd an' a far-seein' bloke,
Wot can 'and out the patter an' deal with a flat,
'Fore 'e's time to make up to the joke.

So today, when this cove puts the 'ard word on me,
I tells 'im straight out I'm 'is friend,
An' I'm goin' to 'elp 'im from sheer sympathy
With a few quid I'm goin' to lend.

It 'urts me, I tells 'im, to ark at 'im moan,
An' I 'aven't the 'eart to refuse.
So I gives the poor coot a fidoosary loan
In the shape of some nice I.O.U.'s.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Fire Bugs

Look 'ere. I'll bet a 'arf-a-crown
To anythink you like to name (said Bushy Bill),
If country fellers went to town,
An' burnt a few big buildin's down,
An' quids an' quids went up in flame (said Bushy Bill),
Do you suppose, by any chance,
You'd put it down to ignorance.
An' let 'em go their dilly way
To do the trick some other day? (Said Bushy Bill).
No fear. You'd take that crim'nal lot
An' likely lynch 'em on the spot.
Fine sense of property you got (said Bushy Bill).

Yet city coves come up this way,
Shootin' or goin' campin' out (said Bushy Bill).
But are they careful blokes? Not they.
An' when their camp fire gets away
They wonder what it's all about (said Bushy Bill).
They sling their matches round the place,
An' carry on a fair disgrace
Wise coots they are, all in the know,
Who reckons country coves is slow (said Bushy Bill).
But when two hundred thousand quid
Goes up, they dunno wot they did.
They can't think 'ow that green scrub caught
They never knoo. They never thought.
Look 'ere. IT'S TIME YOUS BLOKES WAS TAUGHT (said Bushy Bill).

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Fitzmickle Unbends

Mr Fitzmickle, the martinet,
Still with an iron hand
Rules house and home. Like a peevish gnome
He barks each curt command.
And he packs the family off to bed
Since a wireless 'fan' he's grown
And each obeys, while Papa stays
And harks to the Test alone.

Mr Fitzmickle, the martinet,
Sat, last Saturday night,
Glowing with pride as Australia's side
Rose to the loftiest height.
Then, just as the fun grew furious
And the batsmen forged ahead,
Came a horrible shriek, a click and a squeak;
And the speaker went stone dead!

Mr Fitzmickle, the martinet,
Fiddled, with urgent thumb,
At many a screw, in a terrible stew;
But ever the set stayed dumb.
So up the stairs in his stocking feet,
He stole to his small son there,
Whose expert hand now took command;
And the Test was again on the air.

Mr Fitzmickle, the martinet,
Frowned at his small, meek heir.
'You'll wait,' said he, 'lest the thing won't gee.
Quiet, sir! Sit over there!'
And his small son; hugging himself in glee
As the game went merrily on
Sat listening in with a rapturous grin
To the triumphs of 'Billy' and 'Don.'

Mr Fitzmickle, the martinet,
Seized with a strange wild joy,
As the centuries came, with his eye aflame,

Clutched at the startled boy
And Mrs Fitzmickle, roused from sleep,
Saw a sight to wonder at;
Fitzmickle and son, at half-past one,
Dancing a jig on the mat.

Mr Fitzmickle, the martinet,
Said with a sheepish grin,
'Why, Mother's here! Sit down, my dear,
Sit down and listen in!' . . .
And the small son whispered - when all was o'er,
And the winter dawn began
In his mother's ear: 'Ma, ain't it queer.
Pappas's just like a man!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Flames

It's human nature for a bashful bloke
To bottle up, an' hesitate, an' doubt
Till grinnin' Fate plays him some low-down joke;
Then, in excitement, he goes blurtin' out
The tale his sane mind never would impart,
So all the near-by world knows it by heart.

Good luck for me, the near-by world that day,
When I ran sobbin' thro' the scorchin' fern,
Held few to hear the foolish things I say;
No one was there my secret thought to learn,
As I went shoutin' down the mountain spur,
Only the scared birds, an' the trees, an' Her.

In fancy, many men have been thro' Hell,
Tortured by fear, when hope has almost died;
But few have gone thro' that, an' fire as well
To come on Heaven on the other side
With just one angel in it, safe an' well -
A cool, calm angel by the name of Nell.

The day the fire came sweepin' down the hill,
Lickin' the forest up like some mad beast,
We had our work cut out to save the mill;
An', when the wind swung round into the East,
An' blew the roarin' flames along the spur,
Straight for 'The Height,' I gets quick fear for Her.

Flat out I was fightin' all day long
(We saved the mill-shed, but the huts were done)
When some bloke, weak with sprintin' comes along
Comic, it seemed, to me the way he run)
Shoutin' that someone's missin' from 'The Height,'
An' all the forest at the back's alight.

I don't what he thought, an' never cared,
When I grabs at his coat an' starts to yell.
I only know that I was dreadful scared. . . .
In half a minute more, I guessed 'twas Nell.

He tell me when an' where they thought she went,
An' of the useless searchers they had sent.

I never waits for more; but turned an' ran
Straight for the spur, along the scorchin' track.
Behind me, as I went, I hear some man
I think it's Pike - bawlin', 'You fool! Come back!'
What plan was in my mind I cannot tell;
I only know I want to find my Nell.

Next thing I mind, I've left the track, an' turned
Into the blackened scrub - my eyes feel bad -
Above my head the messmate trees still burned.
An' Lord, them awful fancies that I had!
I seen her lyin' there - her face - her hair. . . .
Why, even now, them thoughts give me a scare.

I stumble on. Against a red-hot butt
I burn my hand, but never even swear;
But keep on sayin', 'Make the splitter's hut,
The splitter's hut! Get to the clearin' there.
She's at the splitter's hut; an' if she ain't . . .'
My heart turns over, an' I feel dead faint.

An' as I plug along, I hear some fool
Repeatin' words till they sound like a spell.
'I'm goin' mad,' I thinks. 'Keep cool! Keep cool!'
But still the voice goes on! 'My Nell! My Nell!'
I whips round quick to see who he can be,
This yappin' fool - then realize it's me.

They say I must have gone thro' blazin' ferns.
Perhaps I did; but I don't recollect.
My mind was blank, but, judgin' by my burns,
There's something got to me that took effect.
But once, I know, I saw a flamin' tree
Fall just behind me; but that don't trouble me.

I don't know how the reached the splitter's hut,
I only saw the ragin' fire - an' Nell.
My clothes were torn, my face an' hands were cut,
An' half a dozen times, at least, I fell.

I burst into the clearin' . . . an' I look. . . .
She's sittin' on a log there - with a book!

I seem to cross that clearin' in a stride,
Still sobbin' like a kid: 'My Nell! My nell!'
I was clean mad. But, as I reach her side,
I sort of wake, an' give that song a spell.
But, by her eyes, for all she seemed so cool,
I know she must have heard, an' feel a fool.

'Why, Mister Jim? You do look hot,' says she.
(But still her eyes says oceans more than that).
'Did you come all the way up here for me?'
Coolness? I tell you straight, it knocked me flat.
By rights, she should fall sobbin' in my arms;
But no; there weren't no shrieks an' no alarms.

I pulls myself together with a jerk.
'Oh, just a stroll,' I says. 'Don't mention it.
The mill's half burnt, an' I am out of work;
They missed you so I looked around a bit.'
'Now, that was good of you,' says she, reel bright.
'Wasn't the bush-fire such a splendid sight?'

She looks me up and down. 'Why, Mister Jim,'
She says to me, 'you do look hot, indeed.
If you go strollin' that way for a whim
Whatever would you do in case of need?'
That's what she said. But with her eyes she sent
More than her thanks; an' I was quite content.

I seen her home; or, rather, she seen me,
For I was weak, an' fumbled in my stride.
But, when we reached 'The Height,' I seen that she
Was just in breakin'; an' she went inside. . . .
I stumbles home. 'Well, Jim, lad, anyway,'
I tells myself, 'you've had a fine, full day.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

For A Canberra Tablet

Once on this historic site
Wild men of a dusky shade,
In defiance of all right,
Broke the laws that good men made.

Time goes on - It will not pause
Bringing changes in its wake;
Now 'tis wild men make the laws
For good men, like us, to break.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

For The Defence

'This Cen-TEEN-ary,' sez 'e
Sez I, 'You'll pardon me.'
(Perlite, like that, first off, and 'arf in laughter).
'You'll pardon me, I'm sure,'
I sez: 'but, speakin' pure,
Cen-TEN-ary, I think's, the word you're after.'

'Cen-TEEN-ary!' sez 'e;
An' looks fair, bang at me
All sort of snakey-eyed an' irritated.
Sez I, 'Don't be absurd,
For the dictionary word
Is Cen-TEN-ary. It's much more edjicated.'

'Cen-TEEN-ary!!' sez 'e.
Some'ow, 'e seemed to be
The sorta bloke wot gits me back up proper.
'Aw, brush yer brains!' sez I,
Gettin' 'ot. (I dunno why.)
'Cen-TEN-ary!' I sez. 'You darn clod-'opper!'

'Cen-TEEN-ary!!!' sez 'e,
As snarky as could be.
You know the sorta bloke I mean - pig-'eaded).
'Cen-TEN-ary, you fool!
Ain't you never been to school?'
Sez I. An' then things 'appened - like I dreaded.

'Cen-TEEN-ary!!!' sez 'e.
An' 'e swings a left at me
That would 'a' knocked me cold, if it 'ad landed.
'Ho! A gentleman!' I sneers;
'Full of nice, perlite idears.'
Then I ups an' tears right into 'im, two-'anded.

'Cen-TEEN-ary,' squeaks 'e.
(Still obstinit, yeh see).
Well, it weren't no time for bein' tender-'arted,
So I spreads 'im on the floor,

An' 'e never sez no more

So, please yer Worship, that was 'ow it started.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Forbidden Fruit

Eight days to beer! A sigh sweeps thro' the nation
Sweeps like a gale from 'Frisco to New York.
('Say! But it's tough, this long anticipation.
Oh boy! I'm rarin' to get at that cork!')
Six days to beer! Was ever waiting bleaker?
And how the dull days drag their slow length by!
('Aw, say! Just let me at a foamin' beaker!
But, nothin' doin'. I'm a legal guy.')

Four days to beer! How slowly Time is creeping,
Turning the pages with a laggard hand.
('Say, honey, dope me so that I stay sleeping
Until the glorious Sixth dawns o'er the land.')

Two days to beer! ('Shucks, I can't wait much longer!')

One day to beer! To luscious, legal beer!
('Ah, hold me, honey! help me to be stronger....
Now, attaboy! The glorious Sixth is here!!..')

'Here's how! ... Say! What's the stunt? This stuff is phoney!
It aint got no kick! It palls! It disappoints!
It's just the stuff that guys like Al Capone
An' such tough eggs sell in speakeasy joints!
Here's me, been lookin' for a time right regal,
Lickin' me lips an' rarin' to begin...
Sure, this is beer, all right; but now it's legal.
It don't taste half so good... Say, pass the gin'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Frank And His Little Bank

When he was quite a small boy, Frank
Was fond of useful playthings;
So he was given a toy bank
That he might learn the way things
Were done in the financial world;
So, on the playroom floor he curled,
Tho' short of pence, and had great dreams
Of wonderful financial schemes.

No lack of pennies grieved small Frank,
He simply took some paper
And posted slips into his bank
A cunning childish caper.
And soon he found that, with due care,
He could become a millionaire.
A happy child. And all day
He sang himself this little song:

'If papers I have not enough
Each standing for a penny
I take it out and tear the stuff,
And then I've twice as many.
And if my bank's not full, why then
I tear them all tn two again.
So all day long I tear and sing
And grow as rich as anything.'

In course of time Frank learned to walk
And his perambulations
Led to strange fields; he learned to talk
And made some fine orations.
He left his school, and went to work;
He sought the vote, and stood for Bourke
And, being voluble, was sent
For years and years to Parliament.

But, tho' he grew in many ways
And wondrously developed
His childish money complex stayed
Until it had enveloped
His whole attention. So that, when
Acute depression comes to men,
And things financial all go wrong,
He sings again his little song:

'When lack of money troubles brew
For any stricken nation
You simply tear your notes in two
By process of inflation.
And of this does not serve, why then
You just divide them up again
Until, with new financial health,
The whole land overflows with wealth.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Frank The Jester

There's joy in legislative halls
When Frank's in opposition;
But gloom upon the Chamber falls
When Frank holds high position.
His merry japes no longer flit
About the House to mellow it,
For cares of office dull his wit
And mar his life's great mission.

Frank's mission - and a high one, too,
Amongst the chiefest rating
Is to infuse come joy anew
Into the dull debating.
When speakers drone and lose their grip,
And every member has the pip,
Up rises Frank with merry quip
And humor scintillating.

But as a Minister, alack,
His ready wit grows clouded.
For higher roles he takes the sack;
For in a House enshrouded
By weariness, when members sup
Of dreariness the prosy cup,
And word goes round that Frank is up,
The benches soon are crowded.

I feel I earn a nation's thanks
If I, with due humility,
Suggest for such a wit as Frank's
A new and fit nobility.
If I'd my way, I'd have him sent
Our happier moods to represent
As 'Minister for Merriment
Without Responsibiitiy.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Frankenstein

We roam about the countryside
And view the farmlands rolling wide
A picture surely this of peace, of plenty.
We mark within these sylvan scenes
The whirr and clatter of machines
That help one man to do the work of twenty.

We mark the orchards fruited deep,
The flocks of well-contented sheep,
The drowsing kine all corpulent and sated.
We gaze with gladness undisguised,
And thank our stars we're civilised;
Yet long for life a shade less complicated.

For birds, now vocal in the trees,
And beasts, with grass about their knees,
Accept in simple wise the gifts abounding,
But, of all creatures, man alone,
The brainiest being ever known,
Must scratch his head and fall to self-confounding.

Alas, that man's own cleverness
Should land him in this pretty mess
Where man blames man and nation charges nation.
Tho' wise blokes con it o'er and o'er
The sum of all their labored lore
Seems but to complicate the complication.

To pluck an apple from a tree
And feed upon it seems to be
A simple act where none could be mistaken.
Alas, our world has grown so big
That, tho' one man may raise a pig,
It needs a score to sell the breakfast bacon.

From earth alone man wins his bread;
By earth alone are all things fed;
A fact we'll recognise when we grow calmer.
Justice for all may then prevail,

For farmers first, then down the scale
To the man who farms the man who farms the farmer.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Fred

Do you know Fred? Now there's a man to know
These days when politics are in the air,
An' argument is bargain' to an' fro
Without a feller gittin' anywhere.
Fred never argues; he's too shrewd for that.
He's wise. He knows the game from A to Z.
All politics is talkin' thro' the hat;
An' everyone is wrong - exceptin' Fred.

Fred says there ain't no sense in politics;
Says he can't waste his time on all that rot.
Trust him. He's up to all their little tricks,
You'd be surprised the cunnin' schemes he's got.
Fred says compulsory voting is a cow.
He has to vote, or else he would be fined,
But he just spoils his paper anyhow,
An' laughs at' em with his superior mind.

But when a law comes in that hits Fred's purse,
You ought to hear him then. Say, he does rouse;
Kicks up an awful row an' hurls his curse
On every bloomin' member in the House.
He gives 'em nothin'; says they all are crook,
All waitin' for a chance to turn their coats;
Says they are traitors; proves it by the book.
An' can you wonder that he never votes?

Aw, say, you must know Fred. You'll hear his skite
Upon street corners all about the place.
An' if you up an' say it serves him right,
He answers that it only proves his case:
Them politicians wouldn't tax him so
Unless they were all crooked, like he said,
Where is the sense in votin' when they go
An' rob a man like that. Hurray for Fred!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

French Leave

No longer wilful woman hides
Behind a law that over-rides
The dicta of her lawful lord and master.
And, they who fain would lift a hand
To erring wives, now understand
That they invite no subsequent disaster.

So, be the boss in your own home;
And, should a naughty missus roam
Unheeding, let no fear of gaol unman you.
And, in the good, old-fashioned way,
Thrash her. The law declares you may.
The only question now-a-days is - Can you?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

From Fame To Fowls

Mr Blenkinsop and I
Are much concerned to learn
That, somewhere in the further sky,
A frightful heat-belt lurks on high,
Where torrid ethers burn.
And I and Mr Blenkinsop
We take it rather hard,
Because all work will have to stop
Henceforth within the small work-shop
In Blenkinsop's back-yard.

For many years we labored there,
In Blenkinsop's back-yard.
And, in our town, plain folk would stare
And mutter: 'That's the learned pair
Who'll win the world's regard.'
We planned a gadget in that shop
To journey to the moon;
And deferential friends would stop
To speak to me and Blenkinsop
And ask of our balloon.

We'd built the thing of bits and scraps,
And loomed amongst our peers
As very scientific chaps;
Tho' privily we meant, perhaps,
To dodge the trip for years,
If not for e'er. But, while remained
The possibility,
Vast oodles of renown we gained,
And fulsome praise our townspeople rained
On Blenkinsop and me.

Alas for me and Blenkinsop!
Our name is mud in town;
For we have come an awful flop.
Gone is the kudos of our shop
And gone our vast renown.
Now I and Blenkinsop, my pard,

Walk 'mid derisive howls;
Although his lot is not so hard,
For in the Blenkinsop back-yard
Our ship now shields his fowls.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Fruit Of Earth

The winds that blow about the world
(Said Old George Jones)
See here all hope to ruin hurled,
See there triumphant flags unfurled,
Over chance-favored zones.
And no man's wisdom, no man's might
Foresees, much less controls
Some little breeze born of the night
That brings perchance a sudden blight
Or balm for tortured souls.

But growin' things and sowin' things
And watchin' of 'em grow
Not hastenin' things or slowin' things
Nor seekin' to be knowin' things
That men may never know.
'Tis so the kind earth pays a man
'Tis so content is made.
Not work, but worry slays a man;
I take what tricks Fate plays a man
An' sticks to Adam's trade.

The fears that creep about the earth
Vague fears and short-lived joys
What in reckonin' are they worth?
Too quickly swayed by grief or mirth
We live like foolish boys.
Year in, year out, earth mothers us
And offers livelihood,
This year ill fortune bothers us
Next year her bounty smothers us:
The sum of all is good.

'Tis futile man proposes things;
But Nature goes her ways
And God alone disposes things,
And Time alone discloses things
That rule our future says.
Earth yields me her fertility

And till she takes my bones,
I'll nought of man's futility.
For peace bides in humility
(Said Old George Jones).

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Fruits Of Victory

These be the fruits, O man who would out-loom
The proudest Caesar of Rome's proudest story,
When legion after legion marched to doom
That one man might be clothed in briefest glory;
Torn bodies, bloody fields and the rank lees
Of Conquest's maddening draft, and so a nation,
Fat with much spoil and many victories,
Drifted into decay and desolation.

These be the fruits: Dead men who die in vain,
Maimed broken men, to living death surrendered,
A myriad stricken homes to mourn the slain
Men? Cannon-fodder to the War God tendered,
Deluded boys, primed with vainglorious dreams
Of flashing steel, romance - war's outworn story
Sent forth to gasp young lives out in foul streams
Of fetid gas - meet attributes of glory!

These be the fruits: This tortured shred of flesh,
Lately a youth, with youth's bright gifts scarce tasted
Sent to the shambles, while, still clear and fresh
In minds of men, the Lesson lingers, wasted
The Lesson taught but lately; and so plain,
That even fools its wisdom here might borrow;
For victor and for vanquished, war's sole gain
Lies in long after years of pain and sorrow.

Fruits? Dead-sea fruits, most bitter with the taste
Of all war's grim bequest of worse confusion.
God and men's bodies, fruitful earth laid waste
Not in dire need, but for a vain delusion,
And, in the end, a tinsel god who prates
Of hollow victories, crying, 'Tomorrow
Shall we triumphant rise!' While at the gates
Lurks a land's heritage - relentless Sorrow.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Further Afric Echoes

By gar! I tell-a you, t'ings don't stop
Since da war he come wit' a rush,
When Nicko, da boss at da fry-fish shop,
He sack-a Black Sam, da slush.
I tella you how Nick t'row Sam out
An' say for to notta come back;
An' I tella how Sam play turn about
An' launch-a da count' attack.

Well, t'ings dey move like da grease-a-da-light.
Nick speak-a to four, five friend,
An' he say: 'We make-a raid tonight
An' bringa dis war for end.'
So dey find-a where Sam an' his friends hang out,
An' dey snap-a da fing' at da law
When dey make-a da plan for da midnight rout
An' da dirty sock-a-da-jaw.

But Sammo he got da spy in da camp,
An' he catch-a da hint what drp,
So he spill-a da tale of Nicka da scamp
In da ear of da corner-a cop.
Den da cop meet Nick an' his friends dat night
An' make t'rcat for the runnin' dem in
But Nick say: 'Call-a you'seluf da white
For proteck black Abb-da-sin?'

Say da cop: 'Datta be about all from you.
More bettra you buzz off, lad,
Or you cool-a da heel, an' you cobber, too.'
Den Nicko he wile like-a mad.
An' he say: 'Do dey smash-a my shop, by gar,
An' I catch-a no compensaish?'
Santa da Luce! What you t'inkin' you are
Da bloom-a League-a-da-Naish?'

Den Nick get wile, an' his frien's get wile,
An' da cop get wile like 'ell;
An' da lingua dey use, so you hear for a mile,

It not-a for me to tell,
But da cop he cool off by by an'-a by,
An' he say: 'Cut-a out da swank!
You make-a da peace, or me, I apply
Da eco-da-nomic sanc'.'

'Now I tells da boys (da cop he say)
From da ironwork out-a da back,
An' da girls from da jam-fac' over da way
To declare-a you' fry-fish black!
What-a you do den, Mista Musso-da-lin?
Datta food for t'ink, ole quince.'
But Nicko, he grinnin' da sickly grin;
An' he t'ink hard ever-a since.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Fust Mate Joe

'E's a tough ole salt,
With a 'ide well tanned,
An' it ain't 'is fault
If the craft is manned
With a motley sort er crew.
Ya-hoo!
An' it is a mixed-up crew.
But 'e's sailed, 'as 'e, on many a sea,
An' e's journeyed nigh an' fur;
'E's a tough ole, rough ole - not to mention gruff ole,
Bluff ole mar-i-ner

Fer 'e sailed among
The Labor Seas
When 'e wus young;
An' since that 'e's
Been on all sorts o' craft
Abaft
And 'fore the mast 'o craft.
Fer ther ain't no boat that's bin afloat
As 'e don't know ev'ry spar;
This sly ole, fly ole, mind-yer-weather-eye ole,
Spry ole deep-sea tar.

Once in the ship
Re-pub-li-can
'E took a trip
As a 'fore-mast man,
An' e transhipped in mid-sea,
Did 'e
Went overside at sea.
Frum a Freetrade raft to a 'Tection craft
'E knows 'em stem to starn.
'E's ratin' as a great un at the art of navigatin',
An' 'e ain't got much to larn.
To watch 'im skip,
On 's nimble feet,
Frum ship to ship
Is a 'igh ole treat.

Fer 'e don't stop long on none.
'E's done
A fair, long cruise on none.
But 'e's larned a lot from the points 'e got
Since 'is cruisin' fust began,
This saine old smarty, sail-with-any-party,
Hearty aailor-man.

Now 'e's signed fust mate
Fer another trip,
Fer to naviprate
The Fusion ship;
An' a crazy craft she is.
Gee-whizz!
An' a frail ole tub she is.
With a crew o' sorts from all the ports,
An' a chance o' mutinee.
But 'e'll see the vessel thro' it, if there's any man kin do it,
Fer a hard ole salt is 'e.

Fer the best o' mates
Is 'im thet's got
Cer-tif-i-cates
From the 'ole darn lot,
When the stormy winds do blow.
Yo-ho!
When the windy storms do blow.
On a Tory tramp 'is callin' damp
'E 'as managed to pursoo.
Now 'e 'as to larn twin-screw ways - with 'er nose a-pointin' two ways,
An' a fair ole rorty crew.

But 'is eye's glued tight
On the compass face,
An' 'e'll make a fight
Fer the anch'rin' place,
Fer the Harbor o' Recess.
O, yes,
There's a harbor at Recess.
An' 'e'll do it yet, with luck, you bet,
Fer 'e' allus bin at sea.
An' there ain't no glummer salt, lightly-go-an'-comer salt,

Rummer sort o'somer-salt than 'e.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Futility

To gild refined gold, or to paint the lily,
Or seek by other means to overstress,
As Shakespeare has it, is not merely silly,
But 'wasteful and ridiculous excess.'

Yes, men still try it, for no other reason
Than that man ever would and ever will
Strive fatuously, in and out of season,
To paint perfection's cheek more perfect still.

Yet of all futile tasks, of all the foolish,
Absurd attempts that show of wit a lack,
The worst is his who, obstinate and mulish,
Insists that he should paint a collier black.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Galloping Days

Galloping, galloping, galloping horses
Weave thro' our dreaming in burgeoning Spring;
There's sun in our hearts and there's sun on the courses,
And paeans of hope Winter's threnody forces
Over the hill-tops; for joy is a-wing.
Joy is a-wing, and the galloping rhythm
Mingles, alack, with a ruefuller rune,
For winners may rug but the losers run with 'em,
On the galloping, galloping tune.

Galloping, galloping, galloping gladly
Round the white railing and on to the turn,
While keeping in time to it, urgently madly,
Pulses are racing, ecstatic'ly, sadly;
Eyes to the thundering eagerly yearn,
Voice, upraising, are praising, are pleading,
Mid rackets gay jackets flash by and are gone.
Then the field in the sunlight, retreating, receding,
Goes galloping, galloping, galloping on.

Galloping, galloping, galloping; streaming
Now in green distances, seeming to crawl,
Like miniatures moving, like manikins seeming,
While o'er hedge and hollow a bland sun is beaming
Casting a benison over it all.
They run to the 'Distance.' The horses! The horses!
They gallop! They gallop! They turn for the 'Straight!'
They gallop, the hoses! Who nurses remorse is
A runagate cringer to galloping Fate.

Galloping, galloping, galloping ever,
Tho' cheering is over, they gallop amain;
Tho' fact and fond fancy reluctantly sever,
The round of that ultimate, straining endeavor
Still buffets and bludgeons and beats on the brain.
They gallop - Wake up, man! What profits regaining?
Luck lurks in the offing. On, on with the dance.
Aw, tear up your ticket! The sun is still shining.
The next race is starting. Who foots it with Chance?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Galloping Horses

Oh, this is the week when no rhymster may rhyme
On the joy of the bush or the ills of the time,
Nor pour out his soul in delectable rhythm
Of women and wine and the lure they have with 'em,
Nor pen philosophic if foolish discourses,
Because of the fury of galloping horses.

Galloping, galloping thro' the refrain -
The lure and the lilt of it beat on the brain.
Strive as you may for Arcadian Themes,
The silks and the saddles will weave thro' your dreams.
Surging, and urging the visions aside
For a lyrical lay of equestrian pride,
For the roar of the race and the call of the courses,
And galloping, galloping, galloping horses.

This is the week for the apotheosis
Of Horse in his glory, from tail to proboscis.
That curious quadrupled, proud and aloof,
That holds all the land under thrall of his hoof.
All creeds and conditions, all factions and forces,
All, all must give way to the galloping horses.

Galloping, galloping - sinner and saint
March to the metre, releasing restraint.
If it isn't the Cup it's the Oaks or the Steeple
That wraps in its magic the minds of the people.
Whether they seek it for profit or pleasure,
They all, willy-nilly, must dance to the measure.
The mood of the moment in all men endorses
The glamorous game and the galloping horses
Galloping horses - jockeys and courses
They gallop, we gallop with galloping horses.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Gardeners Grouch

There's a looper caterpillar in my lupins,
There are weevils weaving strands about my stocks,
There are throngs of thieving thrips
On my seedlings and my slips,
And the hoppers hop around my hollyhocks.
While the aphids eat my early antirrhinums,
All oblivious to the dreadful damage done,
And the jassids, jazzing gaily
Round dead jonquils, jar me daily
Yet I'd thought to take up gardening 'just for fun.'

I have blown 'em with a bellows filled with sulphur;
I've assaulted 'em with arsenate of lead;
I have prayed a vengeful prayer
As I sprayed 'em with a sprayer;
But the cross-grained little cuses won't stay dead!
I have bathed 'em with enough benzole emulsion
And deadly drugs to drop them in their tracks;
Then I vainly sought their slaughter
With a stong tobacco water
And I'd thought to take up gardening 'to relax.'

Now the strange, unlovely scent of lime-and-sulphur
Outvies the sweet bouquet of bud and bloom.
And the smell of Bordeaux mixture
On my person is a fixture;
So my wife won't let me in our drawing room.
Dark odors hang about herbaceous borders
Where I seek the stealthy sluglet after dark.
But my garden has undone me:
Even little children shun me
And I'd thought to take up gardening 'for a lark.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Geelong

The earliest lady in the land,
Her pride of caste is high.
Where blue Corio's gleaming strand
Dream 'neath a peaceful sky,
She sat her down by her five towns,
And, garbed in best of homespun gowns,
She watched life pass her by.

A leisured lady then, and staid,
She mused beside her Bay,
While Barwon, in the You Yangs shade,
Droned thro' the drowsy day.
But now comes unaccustomed stir,
Since Henry, to enliven her,
Sent Lizzie here to stay.

A spiteful story men once spread,
Who sought to work her wrong,
About a woman who, they said,
Bore three sons hale and strong.
And, of the three, they used to tell,
Two still survived alive and well;
The third was in Geelong.

Now, she lives down that libelled past;
Life quickens in her streets;
Her mien grows brisk, her trade is vast;
With eager hands she meets
New ways, and bustles with a will;
But, fat and comfortable still,
Smiles upon all she greets.

Alert, yet sensible and sane,
As trade comes rushing in,
She shrewdly turns it to her gain
With sturdy will to win;
And still, withal contrives to wear
A kindly and complacent air.
And woollens next the skin.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Gentlemen!

Gentlemen! a politician,
One who values his position,
Stands, with easy confidence,
Here before you on the fence.
For he knows full well, good friends,
All your aims and all your ends;
And that these you may attain
He will strive with might and main.

Gentlemen! my sole ambition
Is to see that your condition
Shall continue to improve;
Wherefore I shall shortly move
For a special grant to buy
Extra bedding for your sty
Force it from the Government
For the folk I represent.

Gentlemen! You crave nutrition;
And I hold my high position
By your will and by your votes.
Pollard you shall have, and oats!
And I know you'll vote for me
In elections yet to be,
While I cater for your needs,
Promising yet further feeds.

Gentlemen! The Opposition,
By its frequent repetition
Of base lies would have you think
They'd increase your food and drink.
Friends, their secret aim, I know,
Is to cut your rations low,
And, while they but sneer and scoff,
It is we who fill your trough!

Gentlemen! This talk of 'Nation'
Is a vile abomination!
You are asked to sacrifice
Food and swill, and pay a price
For a shibboleth like that!
You are asked to give your fat
That your children, by-and-bye,
May possess a better sty!

Gentlemen! The aspiration
To build up a mighty nation
Is a question far too big
For an ordinary pig.
Truly, we don't care a damn,
When we're bacon, pork or ham,
What the fate of pigs may be.
Let 'em root the same as we!

Gentlemen! This tortured question
Gives you mental indigestion.
Such vague things you do not heed.
Food in plenty is your need.
In my place in Parliament
It is you I represent;
And I'll face all vile affronts
For your sakes! (Delighted grunts.)

Gentlemen! The proposition
For the honest politician
Is: 'Can I secure more oats
For the folk who give me votes?
Can I fill their troughs, and give
Mush to them, that I may live?'
To that end he should employ
All his art. (Loud squeals of joy.)

Gentlemen! A politician

With my knowledge and position
Knows full well that such as you
Take the plain, right-thinking view;
For himself each fatted pig,
And for all the rest - a fig!
Gentlemen, I greet your ranks,
And accept your grunt of thanks.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

George Jones Reflects

It's up an' down, as me father said,
An' his as went before him
Good days could never turn his head
Nor the worst of seasons floor him.
(Said old George Jones). I've heard him say
Full many a time an' often,
'The man who knows no evil day
Ain't toughened so he can out-stay
Good times, in which men soften.'

See-saw. 'Tis the older law
That's ruled the world since Adam.
If men ain't sipped the bitter cup,
How can the good days cheer 'em up?
They never know they had 'em.
So, by-an'-large, I'm sorter glad
I've had a chance to share 'em
These long, lean years we've lately had.
Now good years come we've got the bad
With which we can compare 'em.

I've heard men say the land is done
Because the hard times fool 'em.
Poor simple loons, they ain't begun
To know the laws wot rule 'em.
'Men ain't learned yet to live on air,'
I've hard my ole dad chuckle.
'Stick to the land. All wealth lies where
Earth bids all men to seek it, e'er
When life gets near the knuckle.'

See-saw. 'Tis the olden law;
An' laws help them as learned 'em.
An' us ole stagers wot held fast
To earth, now clear days down at last,
Why, praise the Lord, we've earned 'em.
Hard earned (said old George Jones) most ways
High prized. New loads is lighter,
Us, who held fast can well spare praise,

Aye, even for then strengthenin' days
That makes these good days brighter.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

George Jones Wonders

'When I was young,' said old George Jones
(And rumbling from his bearded lips,
His deep voice boomed in measured tones)
Them airypplanes an' motor-ships
Was never knowed in that far day.
The wind-blown craft that roamed the sea,
The stout draught horse, the bullock dray
Was quick enough for me like me.

'We lived and toiled and fared not ill:
Life was a thing to be enjoyed.
We sold out crops and ate our fill,
And heard few tales of unemployed.
But, lately, like some secret flame,
This world beheld a puzzling thing;
Peace, progress, plenty - yet, too came
Want, idleness and suffering.

'I asked a wine man from the town
Why, 'mid these riches, such ills are.
'Bad transport,' said he, with a frown,
And went off in his motor car.
I watched him racing down the road
To where, 'mid modern haste and fret,
This new world's tangled traffic flowed,
And scatched my head, more puzzled yet.

'Men say that times be mending now,
Maybe. But still they don't explain
This thing that worries me, somehow:
The more we get, the less we gain.
The more ships speed, the less they bring;
The more man has, the less he owns.
Why darn me! 'Tis a crazy thing!
It don't make sense,' said old George Jones.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Get Work

On one fine but fatal morning in the early Eocene,
Lo, a brawny Bloke set out to dig a hole:
First of men to put a puncture in the tertiary green
Was this early, neolithic, human mole.
Gladsomely the toiler hefted his ungainly wooden spade,
As he scarified the bosom of old earth;
And our Progress forthwith started when his first spade-thrust was made,
While the cult of Work, or Graft, was given birth.

Oh, he flung the clods about him with a gay and prideful jerk,
Did this bright and early anthropoidal Bloke.
With the crowd that gathered, goggle-eyed, to watch him at his work
He would crack a pleasant, prehistoric joke.
And they gazed at him in wonder; for the custom of the mob,
When not occupied in inter-tribal strife,
Hitherto had been to eat, and sleep, and hunt, and cheat, and rob
Quite a simple and uncomplicated life.

Wherefore being new and novel, he was treated with respect,
This inventor of the job of shifting sand:
And with fresh-killed meat and fruit and furs his cave the tribesmen decked.
While his praises sounded high on ev'ry hand.
And the chieftain bade his artists in crude pictures to inscribe
On the shin-bone of a Dinosauromyth:
'Lo, the gods have sent a thing called Graft to bless this happy tribe,
And a scheme of Public Works will start forthwith.'

Ev'ry day, from early dawn till dark, the delver labored on
Till the tribesmen grew accustomed to the sight;
And the hunters, on their way to slay the mud-fat mastodon,
Would delay to say he wasn't doing right.
And the loafers from the Lower Caves, who lived by stealing meat,
All the day around the contract used to lurk;
And, when'er he paused to wipe his brow or took time off to eat,
They would yell at him in chorus: 'Aw, git work!'

Fat and lazy fur-skin-traders - wealthy men of such a size
That it took five hides to make them each a vest -
On their way to cheat their neighbors, paused awhile to criticise;
Calling, 'Loafer!' ev'ry time he stopped to rest.
They no longer stocked his larder with the trophies of the chase,
Or the neolithic substitute for beer:
For the chief said: 'He's a worker; we must keep him in his place!'
And the bloated fur-skin-traders cried, 'Hear, hear!'

And he soon became the scapegoat and the butt of all the tribe,
And he dwelt within the smallest, meanest cave,
While the rich and idle troglodytes were readiest to gibe,
Till they worried him into an early grave.
Then the minstrel (And I wot he was a wise prophetic bard,
And an anthropoid philosopher of note),
Took another mammoth shin-bone and scatched it with his shard
In his picture-script; and this is what he wrote:-

'Here lies the simple silly coot who first discovered Toil.
Him who started progress onward on her way;
Though he didn't get much fun from it, he moved some tons of soil;
But, 'tis said, he never fairly eanred his pay.
Lo, this thing called Work is blessed, for it shifts a lot of sand!
And this progress eases him who lives by tricks.
But the Bloke who lumps the Bundle, down through ev'ry age and land,
Shall be paid for harder work with harder kicks.'

Now that Paleolithic prophet on some sandstone stratum lies, With his shin-bones
of the Dinosauromyth,
But the Bloke who shoves the shovel still his thankless calling plies,
And his name is Michael Burke or Peter Smith.
In the highway doth he labor, in the searching public gaze,
And he dare not pause, his aching back to rest,
Lest he cause a howl of protest from the trader of these days
With the large gold chain across his convex chest.

Lest he cause a howl of protest from 'Pro Bono Publico.'

And lest 'Constant Reader' cry his shame aloud,
He must keep his shovel moving - and he moves it all too slow
For the critics in the great White-handed crowd.
Till they get a patent navy with a dynamo for head,
Or a petrol-tank for stomach, take my word,
He'll be ever up against it who shifts sand to earn his bread,
And the howling of the traders will be heard.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Ghost That Wouldn'T Lie Still

Once have we bashed him on the head;
Twice have we stabbed him deep;
Thrice have we left him there for dead
And yet he will not sleep;
But rise up from out his grave
To gibber and repine
And generally misbehave
By raving as lost spirits rave:
'Oh, Body-Bodyline!'

We've sneaked on him at dead of night
And bashed his grinning face
And flung him down and rammed him tight
Into his resting place.
We've tied a weight about his neck
And cast him to the brine;
But, lo, next day, he's back on deck,
Like some damp victim of a wreck,
To babble, 'Bodyline!'

We've exorcised him with due rite
Of candle, book and bell;
But back he toddled in the night
His sad tale to re-tell.
His grizly mien, when he appears,
Sends shivers down our spine
And wakes our superstitious fears
What time he blubbers thro' his tears,
'Pity poor Bodyline!'

Alas! he can not die, poor bloke,
And cease from haunting us
Les England, with a single stroke,
Gives him his quietus.
Then at the bleak crossroads shall we,
When ne'er a moon doth shine,
Inter his bones triumphantly
And write above, with savage glee:
'Hic jacet Bodyline.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Ginger's Cobber

'E wears perjarmer soots an' cleans 'is teeth,'
That's wot I reads. It fairly knocked me flat,
'Me soljer cobber, be the name o' Keith.'
Well, if that ain't the limit, strike me fat!
The sort that Ginger Mick would think beneath
'Is notice once. Perjarmers! Cleans 'is teeth?

Ole Ginger Mick 'as sent a billy-doo
Frum somew'ere on the earth where fightin' thick.
The Censor was a sport to let it thro',
Considerin' the choice remarks o' Mick.
It wus that 'ot, I'm wond'rin' since it came
It didn't set the bloomin' mail aflame.

I'd love to let yeh 'ave it word fer word;
But, strickly, it's a bit above the odds;
An' there's remarks that's 'ardly ever 'eard
Amongst the company to w'ich we nods.
It seems they use the style in Ginger's trench
Wot's written out an' 'anded to the Bench.

I tones the langwidge down to soot the ears
Of sich as me an' you resorts wiv now.
If I should give it jist as it appears
Partic'lar folk might want ter make a row.
But say, yeh'd think ole Ginger wus a pote
If yeh could read some juicy bits 'e's wrote.

It's this noo pal uv 'is that tickles me;
'E's got a mumma, an' 'is name is Keith.
A knut upon the Block le used to be,
'Ome 'ere; the sort that flashes golden teeth,
An' wears 'or socks, an' torks a lot o' guff;
But Ginger sez they're cobbers till they snuff.

It come about like this: Mick spragged 'im first
Fer swankin' it too much abroad the ship.
'E 'ad nice manners an' 'e never cursed;
Which set Mick's teeth on edge, as you may tip.

Likewise, 'e 'ad two silver brushes, w'ich
'Is mumma give 'im, 'cos 'e fancied sich.

Mick pinched 'em. Not, as you will understand,
Becos uv any base desire fer loot,
But jist becos, in that rough soljer band,
Them silver-backed arrangements didn't soot:
An' etiket must be observed always.
(They fetched ten drinks in Cairo, Ginger says.)

That satisfied Mick's honour fer a bit,
But still 'e picks at Keith fer exercise,
An' all the other blokes near 'as a fit
To see Mick squirm at Keith's perlite replies,
Till one day Keith 'owls back 'You flamin' cow!'
Then Mick permotes 'im, an' they 'as a row.

I sez 'permotes 'im,' fer, yeh'll understand
Ole Ginger 'as 'is pride o' class orl right;
'E's not the bloke to go an' soil 'is 'and
Be stoushin' any coot that wants to fight.
'Im, that 'as 'ad 'is chances more'n once
Up at the Stajum, ain't no bloomin' dunce.

Yeh'll 'ave to guess wot sort o' fight took place.
Keith learnt 'is boxin' at a 'culcher' school.
The first three rounds, to save 'im frum disgrace,
Mick kids 'im on an' plays the gentle fool.
An' then 'e outs 'im wiv a little tap,
An' tells 'im 'e's a reg'lar plucky chap.

They likes each other better after that,
Fer Ginger alwus 'ad a reel soft spot
Fer blokes 'oo 'ad some man beneath their 'at,
An' never whined about the jolts they got.
Still, pride o' class kept 'em frum gettin' thick.
It's 'ard to git right next to Ginger Mick.

Then comes Gallipoli an' wot Mick calls
'An orl-in push fight multerplied be ten,'
An' one be one the orfficers they falls,
Until there's no one left to lead the men.

Fer 'arf a mo' they 'esitates stock still;
Fer 'oo's to lead 'em up the flamin' 'ill?

'Oo is to lead 'em if it ain't the bloke
'Oo's 'eaded pushes down in Spadger's Lane,
Since 'e first learnt to walk an' swear an' smoke,
An' mixed it willin' both fer fun an' gain -
That narsty, ugly, vi'lent man, 'oo's got
Grip on the minds uv men when blood runs 'ot?

Mick led 'em; an' be'ind 'im up the rise,
'Owlin' an' cursin', comes that mumma's boy,
'Is cobber, Keith, with that look in 'is eyes
To give the 'cart uv any leader joy.
An' langwidge! If 'is mar at 'ome 'ad 'eard
She would 'a' threw a fit at ev'ry word.

Mick dunno much about wot 'appened then,
Excep' 'e felt 'is Dream uv Stoush come true;
Fer 'im an' Keith they fought like fifty men,
An' felt like gawds wiv ev'ry breath they drew.
Then Ginger gits it solid in the neck,
An' flops; an' counts on passin' in 'is check.

When 'e come to, the light wus gettin' dim,
The ground wus cold an' sodden underneath,
Someone is lyin' right 'longside uv 'im.
Groanin' wiv pain, 'e turns, an' sees it's Keith
Keith, wiv 'is rifle cocked, an' starin' 'ard
Ahead. An' now 'e sez "Ow is it, pard?"

Mick gently lifts 'is 'ead an' looks around.
There ain't another flamin' soul in sight,
They're covered be a bit o' risin' ground,
An' rifle-fire is cracklin' to the right.
'Down!' sez the mumma's joy. 'Don't show yer 'ead!
Unless yeh want it loaded full o' lead.'

Then, bit be bit, Mick gits the strength uv it.
They wus so occupied wiv privit scraps,
They never noticed 'ow they come to git
Right out ahead uv orl the other chaps.

They've bin cut orf, wiv jist one little chance
Uv gittin' back. Mick seen it at a glance.

"Ere, Kid,' 'e sez, 'you sneak around that 'ill.
I'm down an' out; an' you kin tell the boys;
Keith don't reply to 'im but jist lies still,
An' signs to Ginger not to make a noise.
'Ere, you!' sez Mick, 'I ain't the man to funk
I won't feel 'ome-sick. Imshee! Do a bunk!'

Keith bites 'is lips; 'e never turns 'is 'ead.
'Wot in the 'ell;' sez Mick, 'ere, wot's yer game?'
'I'm an Australian,' that wus all 'e said,
An' pride took 'old o' Mick to 'ear that name
A noo, glad pride that ain't the pride o' class -
An' Mick's contempt, it took the count at lars'!

All night they stayed there, Mick near mad wiv pain,
An' Keith jist lettin' up 'is watchful eye
To ease Mick's wounds an' bind 'em up again,
An' give 'im water, w'ile 'imself went dry.
Brothers they wus, 'oo found their brotherhood
That night on Sari Bair, an' found it good.

Brothers they wus. I'm wond'rin', as I read
This scrawl uv Mick's, an' git its meanin' plain,
If you, 'oo never give these things no 'eed,
Ain't got some brothers down in Spadger's Lane
Brothers you never 'ad the chance to meet
Becos they got no time fer Collins Street.

'I'm an Australian.' Well, it takes the bun!
It's got that soft spot in the 'eart o' Mick.
But don't make no mistake; 'e don't gush none,
Or come them 'brother'ood' remarks too thick.
'E only writes, 'This Keith's a decent coot,
Cobber o' mine, an' white from cap to boot.'

'E wears perjarmers an' 'e cleans 'is teeth,'
The sort o' bloke that Ginger once dispised!
But once a man shows metal underneath,
Cobbers is found, an' brothers reckernised.

Fer, when a bloke's soul-clobber's shed in war,
'E looks the sort o' man Gawd meant 'im for.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Git-Yer-Gun

Thus it happened Let me mention, lest I raise an unsought quarrel,
This occurred in times long vanished, in the land of Git-yer-gun.
'Tis a quaint, unlikely story; some folk say it has a moral;
But that's a little matter you may settle when I'm done.

Mr. Foodle led a party that was strongly democratic,
And it represented people with the Christian name of Bill.
And in all his hustings speeches Mr. Foodle was emphatic
That his crowd existed solely to uphold the people's will.

Mr. Boodle led a party that was Liberal - or Tory
(Just according to your view-point) - and it represented those
Christened (by immersion) Percy, whose hot socks proclaimed their glory;
And its policy was such as you may readily suppose.

So they strove in an election (Now, I wish it noted plainly
That this happened years ago, and in the land of Git-yer-gun)
And each side employed its talent to upbraid the other mainly,
While the voters cheered them madly, and the crowd enjoyed the fun.

The Democratic Party (Bill by name) supported Foodle
For such was the convention with this quaint old Party Plan
While the Tories fought like fury to promote the cause of Boodle,
And, of course, the crowd named Percy voted for him to a man.

And the others of the nation - all the Johns and Jeremiahs,
All the Peters, Pauls and Paddys, all the Colins and Carews,
All the Richards and the Roberts, and the Hanks and Hezekiahs
Voted for some bloque or other, each according to his views.

Then they counted up the numbers, when at last the fight was over,
And both Democrats and Tories - Bills and Percys - looked quite sour
When the numbers showed them clearly neither party stood in clover;

For a few odd Independents held the balance of the power.

Mr. Foodle called his Caucus And he put it to them plainly:
'Never mind the Bills,' said Foodle; 'we have got them in the box.
If we would escape extinction 'tis our plan to pander mainly
But with caution - to the Percys and the cause of fancy socks.

'For,' said Mr. Foodle gravely, 'understand me, votes are needed!
How to catch and how to keep them is the question of the hour.
Never mind your Public Questions; let the Big Things go unheeded;
We must compromise a little if we mean to hold the power.'

Mr. Boodle called his Caucus ... And he put it to them clearly'
'Gentlemen, ignore the Percys! We have got them in the bag!
But the Bills, we must remember, have the votes we covet dearly;
And till we contrive to get them we must let the Big Things lag.'

So began the op'ning session, with both sides electioneering;
Boodle grew more democratic; Foodle watered down his views;
Bit by bit they drew together, more and more alike appearing,
Till the voters, looking at them, vowed there wasn't much to choose.

Sometimes Foodle reigned in office, sometimes it was Mr. Boodle.
'Twas the Grand Old Party System, for the shibboleth held still.
And they vowed that ev'ry voter - (as was plain to any noodle)
Must most palpably be Percy if he wasn't christened Bill.

Meantime all the Dicks and Davids, all the Johns and Jeremiahs,
All the Mats and Pats and Peters, surnamed Smith or Brown or Burke,
Shouted with the Ned and Normans and the Hanks and Hezekiahs,
'What of those Big Public Questions? When do you begin to work?'

Still the factions went on fighting - ('Tis a right that factions cherish)
But on one important matter both the parties were agreed;
In this world of sin and sorrow Bills may die and Percys perish,

But the votes to hold his billet are a politician's need.

Boodle battled strenuously, on his rival's ground encroaching;
Fearlessly the Foodle faction sneaked the other Party's views;
Full of fight were both opponents; the elections were approaching;
And upon mere Public Business none had any time to lose.

With the public patience straining, and quite half the nation scoffing
At the Bill and Percy parties, and the voters in despair.
Lo, a party led by Doodle rose serenely in the offing;
And it said it represented folk who sported Ginger Hair.

Doodle soon became the fashion: thousands flocked around his banner;
Scores of Antonys and Arthurs, Joes and Jacobs, Mats and Micks,
(Even some stray Bills and Percys renegaded). In like manner
Flocked the Hanks and Hezekiahs, and the Davids and the Dicks.

All the Red-haired of the nation joined the mighty Doodle party;
And the Brown-haired and the Black-haired and the Grey-haired sought him too;
For, they said, 'What does it matter? He has our support most hearty.
Never mind what shade your hair is. He will see the Big Things through!'

Then, when that great Doodle Party swept the polls at next election,
What a great rejoicing followed! Heavens, how the people cheered!
And the Boodle-Foodle party - (fused for general protection)
Was so absolutely routed that it almost disappeared.

How the Dicks and Davids shouted with the Johns and Jeremiahs:
'We don't care what shade his hair is - black or brown or pink or blue!'
'Glory!' cried the Mats and Michaels with the Hals and Hezekiahs.
'Hail to Doodle! Red-haired Doodle! He will see the Big Things through!'

Mr. Doodle called his Caucus And he put it to them tersely:
'Gentlemen, it now behoves us, seeing all the votes we've got,
To be very, very careful lest we're criticised adversely.

Never mind the Red-haired voters; we have got them in the pot.

'But,' continued Mr. Doodle, 'there are others - perfect snorters.
There's this new Bald-headed Party led by Snoodle! Statesmanship
Now demands we do our utmost to win over his supporters.
Meantime, gentlemen, I'm thinking we must let the Big Things rip.

'Or, if we must tackle something to allay the public clamor,
Let us not be over-zealous and this alientate support
From our Party when the...Gracious!!!!'

I should like to go on telling how they fared; but foreign raiders
At this very hour descended on the land of Git-yer-gun;
And the Red-heads and the Bald-heads fell beneath the fierce invaders
Men who bore aloft a banner blazoned with a Rising Sun.

And they smote the Pats and Percys, and the Jims and Jeremiahs.
Bashed the Doodles, smashed the Snoodles, left the Mats and Micks for dead.
Thrust cold steel into the vitals of the Hanks and Hezekiahs,
And plugged all the Johns and Jacobs and the Josephs full of lead.

Thus it happened As I've mentioned, some folk think it has a moral.
You may judge that little matter, as I said when I began.
'Tis to me the simple story of a very ancient quarrel
'Mid the Git-yer-gun debaters with their quait old Party Plan.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Glory!

Another milestone gained and passed,
Another 'rakkud' broken,
And this year's deaths exceed the last,
Which is a hopeful token.

America can ne'er look back;. . . .
She is the land progressive
She keeps along the onward track
With 'vim' and pep excessive.

For they who meet and meekly sing,
To mark a celebration,
Such trifles as 'God Save the King'
Make no real 'he-man' nation.

The U.S.A., from south to north,
Recounts the splendid story,
For it sure is one Glorious Fourth,
When hundreds go to glory.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Going To School

Did you see them pass to-day, Billy, Kate and Robin,
All astride upon the back of old grey Dobbin?
Jigging, jogging off to school, down the dusty track -
What must Dobbin think of it - three upon his back?
Robin at the bridle-rein, in the middle Kate,
Billy holding on behind, his legs out straight.

Now they're coming back from school, jig, jog, jig.
See them at the corner where the gums grow big;
Dobbin flicking off the flies and blinking at the sun -
Having three upon his back he thinks is splendid fun:
Robin at the bridle-rein, in the middle Kate,
Little Billy up behind, his legs out straight.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Golden Silence

A word out of season
Of vapid unreason
May seem mere political twaddle at best;
But this thing needs abatement
If, with each wild statement
It mean's that a cool quarter million's gone West.

What millions are pouring
While, raving and roaring,
Not only John Lang, but a dozen or more
Political brothers
Outshouting the others
With rhetoric costly are taking the floor?

In mood apathetic
We hear energetic
But futile economists voicing their views;
And little attention
We give the dissension
Until we awoke to this dread bit of news.

Now, what are we paying
For all this dull braying?
Beyond computation the vast millions heap,
Till we're yearning to shackle
This mad, costly cackle
With curses for him who said talking was cheap.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Good Friday

So we forget? The streets bloom gay
With festive garments, many hued;
And man and maid laugh down the way
With all the joy of life imbued.
Respite from toil, surcease from care
Lend gladness to a merry voice,
As brother cries to brother there,
'Let us rejoice.'

Do we forget? The garden blooms;
Joy beckons from the sunlit hill,
Where now no triple shadow looms
To cast o'er all the earth a chill.
This day is made for carefree souls!
For holiday! For Eastertide! ...
Yet, thro' it all a bell still tolls
For One Who died.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Goophic Phantasm

Tho' I own I have no adequate proofs
Of this queer tale of the quaint old Goophs
The Goophs who dwelt in the land of Guph
Still, I think it's a credible tale enough
When applied to Goophs; tho' it's realised
That it couldn't occur to the civilised,
Sane men like us, for it's quite absurd,
And the silliest tale that ever you heard.
To us, 'tis a fantasy vain. But then,
Of course, we're superior, normal men.

Now a peaceful Gooph, when a-stroll one day,
Looked over a fence in a casual way;
And realised he was staring hard
At a pile of stones in a neighbor's yard.
'Now what,' thought he, 'are the stones there for?'
Then he suddenly shouted, 'My, this means war!
That pile in there is the very stuff
We use for war in the land of Guph!'
And from that day forth his strength was spent
In gathering stones for armament.

Now, the Goophs who heard him were sore afraid,
And the news spread forth in a single night.
Wild rumors grew, till the land was rife
With tales of terror and coming strife;
And every Gooph hied forth in haste
To gather him stones from wood and waste,
From the hills afar and fields near by,
Till the price of stones went up sky high.
And they said, 'War's madness! It can't make sense.
But a Gooph must look to his self-defence.'

Commerce languished; production waned;
Goophish relations grew cold and strained;
And there wasn't a stone in Guph at all
To build a house, or a church, or a wall.
Each sat on his pile in his own backyard
And talked and shouted and argued hard,

Of nations and factions in 'isms' and schools.
(There is never a doubt of it, Goophs were fools).
Then someone foolishly heaved a rock;
And their world blew up with a horrible shock.

Then their costly stones they flung to the air
With great abandon and little care -
These stones they valued, they cast them about
Till a number of Goophs were knocked right out.
And the land of Guph grew loud with groans;
And the end of it all was a litter of stones.
And nobody knew what they started it for,
And nobody profited. Still, 'twas war,
Mere Guphic insanity, Goophish fuss,
And, of course, it couldn't occur to us.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Got-A-Fag'

He was tall and tough and stringy, with the shoulders of an axeman,
Broad and loose, with greenhide muscles, and a hand shaped to the reins;
He was slow of speech and prudent, something of a nature student,
With the eye of one who gazes long across the saltbush plains.

Smith by name, but long forgotten was his legal patronymic,
In a land where every bushman wears some unbaptismal tag;
And, through frequent repetition of a well worn requisition,
'Smith' had long retired in favor of the title, 'Got-a-Fag.'

Not until the war was waging for a month, or may be longer,
Did the tidings reach the station, blest with quite unfrequent mails;
And, though still a steady grafter, Smith grew restless ever after,
And he pondered long o' evenings, seated on the stockyard rails.

Primed with sudden resolution, he arose one summer morning,
Casually mentioned fighting as he deftly rolled his swag;
Then, in accents almost hearty, bade his mate, 'So long, old Party!
Goin' to do some Square-head huntin'. See you later. Got a fag?'

Six long, sunburned days in saddle, down through spinifex and saltbush,
Then a two-days' railroad journey landed him at last in town,
Charged with an aggressive feeling, heightened by his forthright dealing
With a shrewd but chastened spieler who had sought to take him down.

'Smart and stern' describes the war-lord who presided at recruiting.
To him slouched an apparition, drawling, 'Boss, I've got a nag -
Ris'in' four. Good prad he's counted. Better shove me in the mounted.
Done a little bit o' shootin' - gun an' rifle. Got afag?'

Two months later, drilled and kneaded to a shape approaching martial,
Yet with hints of that lithe looseness discipline can never kill,
With that keen eye grown yet shrewder, and example to the cruder,
Private Smith (and, later, Sergeant) stinted speech and studied drill.

'Smith,' indeed, but briefly served him; for his former appellation
In its aptness seized the fancy of the regimental wag,
When an apoplectic colonel gasped, 'Of all the dashed infernal'....
As this Private Smith saluted, with 'Ribuck, boss! Got a fag?'

What he thought, or how he marvelled at the familiar customs
Of those ancient and historic lands that met his eyes,
He was never heard to mention; though he voiced one bold contention -
That the absence of wire fences marked a lack of enterprise.

Soon his shrewd resource, his deftness, won him fame in many places;
Things he did with wire and whipcord moved his Company to brag,
And when aught concerning horses called for knowledge in the forces
Came a hurried, anxious message: 'Hang the vet! Send Got-a-Fag!'

Then, one morning, he was missing, and a soldier who had seen him
Riding for the foe's entrenchments bade his mates abandon hope.
Calm he seemed, but strangely daring: some weird weapons he was bearing
Built of twisted wire and iron, and a dozen yards of rope.

In the morn a startled sentry, through the early morn-mists peering,
Saw a dozen shackled foemen down the sand dunes slowly drag.
Sore they seemed, and quite dejected, while behind them, cool, collected,
Swearing at a busy sheep-dog, rode their drover, Got-a-Fag.

To the Colonel's tent he drove them, brandishing a stockwhip featly,
Bristly calling, 'Heel 'em, Laddie!' While the warrior of rank
Sniffed, and then exclaimed with loathing: 'what's this smell of clothing buring?'
Said the drover: 'Got 'em branded: 'A - Broad Arrow,' off-side flank.'

'A,' he drawled, stan's for Australia, an' the Gov'ment brand's in order.
'Crown - G.R.' upon the shoulder marks 'em for the King an' flag.
Roped the blighters same as how we fix the calves on Kinchacowie.
But it's dead slow sorter must'rin',' he concluded. 'Got afag?'

When the weary war is over, back to his old cattle station,
If luck holds, he'll one day journey, casually dropp his swag,
Drawling, 'Been up yonder - fightin'....Not much doin'....Mostly skitin'....
Gi' me drovin' for excitement...Want rain dreadful....Got a fag?'

But in that historic country, with its store of ancient legend,
When they sit to talk at even, and grey geards begin to wag,
Then among traditions hoary they will count the wondrous story
Of that wild Australian savage known to man as Got-a-Fag.

Granny Discovers Another Tiger

That's him!! The authentic, identical beast!
The Unionist tiger, full brother to 'Sosh'!
I know by the prow of him.
Hark to the growl of him,
While all the people ejaculate 'Gosh!
Just look at him glarin' an' starin', by thunder!
Now each for himself and the weakest goes under.'

Beware this injurious, furious brute;
He's ready to rend you with tooth and with claw.
Though 'tis incredible,
Anything edible
Disappears suddenly into his maw;
Into his cavernous inner interior
Vanishes ev'rything strictly superior.

My dears, I've autoptical, optical proof
That he's prowling and growling at large in the land.
Hear his pestiferous
Clamor vociferous
Urging to war his belligerent band!
Talk about Circe and - who's this - Ulysses!
Never was monster so monstrous as this is.

I've watched this abdomenous, omnious shape
Abroad in the land while the nation has slept,
Marked his satanical
Methods tyrannical;
Rigorous, vigorous vigil I kept.
He has wicked designs on all right-thinking people!
Proclaim it aloud from the housetop and steeple!

He lays his corrodible, odible plans
While cutely disguising his ultimate claims.
Into your auricle

Words oratorical

He will declaim with ulterior aims.

And if as a foe he should happen to spot us,
One gulp - and his great epiglottis has got us!

The tremulous, emulous workers he snares

By most reprehensible, tensible schemes.

Slyly insidious,

Vilely invidious

Are his designs to encourage their dreams.

But watch, when they're under his dominant digit,

His finical, cynical smile as they fidget.

The shockingly punitive, unitive means

He uses to battle with enterprise private

Are indefensible

Quite reprehensible.

Lord only knows what at last he'll arrive at!

And when he has swallowed the whole of the nation

He'll probably start on self-assimilation.

He scoffs at convenient, lenient laws

He'd scoff every toff in the House known as Upper

If he'd a precedent;

Every resident

In the best suburb would serve him for supper.

Good gravious, voracious is hardly the name for it!

Yet we have only our blindness to blame for it.

For mark, his insidious, hideous creed

He propagates even 'mid grocers and drapers,

And they give ear to it,

Bow, and adhere to it,

'Spite all the capers of well-informed papers.

For e'en with the aid of an lens omphaloptic

They can't see the glare in his obdurate optic.

Then 'ware this obstreperous, leperous beast!
A treacherous wretch, for I know him of old.
I'm on th etrack of him,
Close at the back of him,
Tight on his tail I have taken a hold.
And if I gave over my earnest endeavor,
The nation were lodged in his larynx for ever.

It's him!! The authentic, identical beast!
I know him 'The Unionist,' brother to 'Sosh'!
See how I'm holding him,
Nagging and scolding him,
While he is yearning his betters to squash;
Yearning and burning to snare the superior
Into his roomy and gloomy interior

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Green Walls

I love all gum-trees well. But, best of all,
I love the tough old warriors that tower
About these lawns, to make a great green wall
And guard, like sentries, this exotic bower
Of shrub and fern and flower.
These are my land's own sons, lean, straight and tall,
Where crimson parrots and grey gang-gangs call
Thro' many a sunlit hour.

My friends, these grave old veterans, scarred and stem,
Changeless throughout the changing seasons they.
But at their knees their tall sons lift and yearn -
Slim spars and saplings - prone to sport and sway
Like carefree boys at play;
Waxing in beauty when their young locks turn
To crimson, and, like beaconfires burn
To deck Spring's holiday.

I think of Anzacs when the dusk comes down
Upon the gums - of Anzacs tough and tall.
Guarding this gateway, Diggers strong and brown.
And when, thro' Winter's thunderings, sounds their call,
Like Anzacs, too, they fall...
Their ranks grow thin upon the hill's high crown:
My sentinels! But, where those ramparts frown,
Their stout sons mend the wall.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Grey Thrush

Grey thrush was in the wattle tree, an', 'Oh, you pretty dear!'
He says in his allurin' way; an' I remarks, 'Hear, hear!
That does me nicely for a start; but what do I say next?'
But then the Jacks take up the song, an' I get very vexed.

The thrush was in the wattle tree, an' I was underneath.
I'd put a clean white collar on, I'd picked a bunch of heath;
For I was cleaned an' clobbered up to meet my Nell that day.
But now my awful trouble comes: What is a man to say?

I mean to tell her all I've thought since first I saw her there,
On the bark-heap by the mill-shed, with the sunlight in her hair.
I mean to tell her all I've done an' what I'll do with life;
An', when I've said all that an' more, I'll ask her for my wife.

I mean to tell her she's too good, by far, for such as me,
An' how with lonely forest life she never may agree.
I mean to tell her lots of things, an' be reel straight an' fine;
And, after she's considered that, I'll ask her to be mine.

I seen her by the sassafras, the sun was on her hair;
An' I don't know what come to me to see her standin' there.
I never even lifts my hat, I never says 'Good day'
To her that should be treated in a reel respectful way.

I only know the girl I want is standin' smilin' there
Right underneath the sassafras. I never thought I'd dare,
But I holds out my arms to her, an' says, as I come near
Not one word of that speech of mine—but, 'Oh, you pretty dear !'

It was enough. Lord save a man! It's simple if he knew,
There's one way with a woman if she loves you good an' true.
Next moment she is in my arms; an' me? I don't know where.
If Heaven can compare with it I won't fret much up there.

'Why, Mister Jim,' she says to me. 'You're very bold,' says she.
'Yes, miss,' I says. Then she looks up—an' that's the end of me....
'O man !' she cries. 'O modest man, if you go on like this—'
But I interrupt a lady, an' I do it with a kiss.

'Jim, do you know what heroes are?' says she, when I'd 'behaved.'
'Why, yes,' says I. 'They're blokes that save fair maids that won't be saved.'
'You're mine,' says she, an' smiles at me, 'an' will be all my life
That is, if it occurs to you to ask me for your wife.'

Grey thrush is in the wattle tree when I get home that day
Back to my silent, lonely house—an' still he sings away.
There is no other voice about, no step upon the floor;
An' none to come an' welcome me as I get to the door.

Yet in the happy heart of me I play at make-believe:
I hear one singin' in the room where once I used to grieve;
I hear a light step on the path, an', as I reach the gate,
A happy voice, that makes me glad, tells me I'm awful late.

Now what's a man to think of that, an' what's a man to say,
Who's been out workin' in the bush, tree-fallin', all the day?
An' how's a man to greet his wife, if she should meet him here?
But Grey Thrush in the wattle tree says, 'Oh, you pretty dear !'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Grey Thrush At The Door

'Swe-e-et! Swe-e-et!' Low at first and flattering,
Full of soft seductiveness on a wheedling note.
Who comes in mercy now, crumbs of comfort scattering
For a grey bird pleading from a cold, cold throat?
Just a thread of tallow-fat, just a scrap of meat!
Grey thrush is at the door. 'Swe-e-et! Swe-e-et!'

Grey bird, friendly bird, merry bird in summer time,
For summer is a merry time, full of tuneful mirth.
Sunny days are singing days. But winter is a glummer time
With lean days of scant fare; frost has locked the earth.
Song goes as sun goes, and harshly drives the sleet.
Where comes the almoner? 'Swe-e-et! Swe-e-et!'

'Sweet! Sweet!' Now it grows imperious:
A short call, a loud call, impatience in its tone.
Why am I left lingering? See, my plight is serious.
A poor bird all forlorn, starving and alone.
Grey Thrush is a-hungering, begging scraps to eat.
It's far beyond my breakfast time! 'Sweet! Sweet!'

Now a footstep on the floor. Now a sudden fluttering,
And Grey Thrush is waiting there beside the open door.
Kookaburra cocks an eye; greedily he's muttering;
But grey bird is first to swoop upon the proffered store,
A scrap of song in gratitude, then up, and off, away.
And the mendicant has vanished till another frosty day.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Growing Pains

Behold the undergraduate
A most amusing fellow
In all his jesting up-to-date
His sense of humor is so great,
His modern wit so mellow,
That no quip serves him lest it be
Rich in originality.

Assured of overwhelming odds,
Seizing the freshmen's persons,
Indelibly he daubs these clods,
To waken mirth in men and gods.
(Saving a few McPhersons
And other members of their race
Who have of humor, not a trace.)

The softer sort of joke that serves
Dull age - the quaint or quizzical
Gains his contempt, as it deserves;
Mere wordy wit gets on his nerves;
His jokes are ever physical,
And richer qualities attain
The more they hold of cosmic pain.

To torture victims till they squeal
Is mirthfully effectual;
Humor lacks pith unless these feel
Fierce torments: wit has no appeal
That's solely intellectual.
The quirk, the paradox outworn,
The epigram but earn his scorn.

No milder jest may give him joy
Strange, adolescent creature,
Suspended 'twixt the man and boy
No rag's worth while lest it employ
Some quaintly painful feature;
But jokes, that moved the stone-age man
To shrieks of mirth, he'll gladly plan.

Behold the undergraduate
And pity him a little,
Remembering 'twas once our fate
To linger in that loutish state
That holds of grace no tittle,
But comes alike to boy and pup
The penalty of growing up.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Growing Up

Little Tommy Tadpole began to weep and wail,
For little Tommy Tadpole had lost his little tail;
And his mother didn't know him as he wept upon a log,
For he wasn't Tommy Tadpole, but Mr. Thomas Frog.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Guardian Angels

Brothers; even those of you who are already in the sear and yellow leaf, and full of years and iniquity,
Sometimes, I doubt not, let your thoughts go back to those days of antiquity
When mother tucked you into your little bed.
After your little prayers were said;
And, having said goodnight,
She most inconsiderately took away the light.
Then came, my brothers, that dread half-hour in the day of a child;
When your mind was filled with weird imaginings and fancies wild
Of Bogey-men and Hobgoblins, Ogres and Demons; so that, for a space, you lay
Filled with a child's vague fear of the dark, and longing for the day.
Then, to comfort you, there came the thought
That guardian angels, as you had been taught,
Hovered ever near
To watch over timid little boys and girls and still their fear.
Is not that what other said?
And, in your childish mind you pictured a feathered friend roosting benevolently
at the foot of your bed.
Then were you filled with solace deep;
You sighed contentedly and went to sleep.

Brother:

I would speak to you of another kind of mother;
Of our political mamma or historical mater:
Mrs. Britannia, to wit, who lives on the other side of the equator.
You have doubtless seen her pictured upon certain coins of the realm,
Sitting on the sharp edge of a shield, holding a pitchfork, and wearing an absurd
and elaborate helm.
That is the lady; our dear old mum;
Mother of a large and parti-colored family that has given her much trouble and
promises more in the years to come.
Hitherto she has tucked us into bed.
And, for a trifling cash consideration, to allay our dread,
Has, so to speak, left us the light
In the shape of a few more or less efficient warships that might or might not be
of use in a fight;
But that was neither here nor there
So long as they served their purpose, and, like a candle of childhood's days,

dissipated the shadows and the attendant thoughts that scare.
But, behold, my brother, we are no longer an infant nation.
We have doffed our swaddling clothes, and have gone into pants, and top-hats,
and motor-coats, and split-skirts, and other habiliments of adult
civilisation.
We are no longer young enough to pet and fondle, to nurse and bounce and
dandle;
And, behold, mother has taken away the candle!
This is well enough;

And nobody would be complaining if the dear old lady didn't try to fill us up with
the stuff
That was designed alone for infant ears,
And to allay imaginery fears.
She forgets, the poor old worried mum, that we have, so to speak, arrived now
at years of discretion,
And (if you pardon the expression)
Endeavors to pull her trusting offspring's leg with the old, old tale
Of the beautiful and ever watchful guardian angel that will never fail
To banish the naughty, nasty bogeys, the wicked ogres that lurk
Around our little bed.... Brother, that guardian angel gag won't work!
We happen to know a little about this saffron-colored seraph, this Mongolian
cherub to whose tender care our doting parent would leave us;
And, unless our eyes deceive us,
He bears a most remarkable reseblance to the ogre that we fear!
We have not the least doubt that he will most obligingly hover near
Our little cot.
But we are very, very anxious concerning certain little childish possessions
we have got.
We have out own private opinions about the sort of watch he will keep;
And we have wisely, if rebelliously, decided that WE WILL NOT GO TO SLEEP!!

Speaking of guardian angels and other birds,
I should just like to say a few words
In conclusion
In reference to this guardian angel illusion.
It will be remebered that mother herself, when she was young, and not so
handy with the flatiron of war as she is to-day,
Had a little experience of her own in that way.
It was a Saxon guardian angel, with fierce whiskers and a spear,

That poor mother put her maiden trust in: and it would appear
That he treated her in a very shameful and ungentlemanly style;
For, after he had expelled the Scot burglar or the Pict fowl-thief or whoever it
was,
he remarked, with a sinister smile:
'Well, not that I am here,
My dear,
I think I'll stay for a while.'
And that's how mother got married....he did marry her in the end, or so I
understand,
And made an honest woman of her, and in time they built up a very respectable
home
in the land.
But, after all, despite his morals, he was a white man, and a decent sort of
fellow.
And things might have been very different if his color had happened to be yellow.
Since then, if any reliance can be placed on the histories that adorn my shelf,
Mother has gone in rather largely for the guardian business herself.

And this she has done, I must confess,
With considerable success.
She has played the benign guardian angel, at one time and another, to quite a
number of simple and unsophisticated folk,
Who, when her guardianship has become too insistent, have not always appeared
to
appreciate the joke.
But, my brother, this is what I should very much like to know:
Since the old girl knows so much about this thing through personal experience,
why does she want to go
And put up that rusty old bluff on her innocent and confiding little son?
In the circumstances there is only one thing for him to do, and the lesson cannot
be
learned too soon: The only reliable guardian angel for children of his age
IS A GUN!
I don't know what you think about it, brother;
But, speaking privately and strictly between ourselves, I think it's pretty crook
on the part of mother.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Gus

Do you know Gus? Now, he should interest you.
The girls adore him - or he thinks they do.
He owns a motor bike, not of the sort
That merely cough a little bit, or snort.
His is a fiery, detonating steed
That makes the town sit up and take some heed
A thunderous thing, that booms and roars a treat,
With repercussions that awake the street.

That's Gus. Dead flash. One of the rorty boys,
Whose urge is to express themselves with noise,
He wakes the midnight echoes, when to sleep
We vainly strive, with detonations deep.
And Gus has visions, as he thunders by,
Of maidens who sit up in bed, and sigh,
'It's Gus! It's Gus, the he-man. What a thrill!
'Mid Jovian thunders riding up the hill!'

You can't blame Gus. He has to make a row.
He's got to get publicity somehow.
How else could he stir consciousness in us
That in this world there really is a Gus?
You can't blame Gus. But oft I long, in bed,
That some kind man would bash him on the head
A hard, swift blow to give him pain for pain.
It would be quite safe. It couldn't hurt his brain.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Hakim Kahn

When first I found this forest place
More years ago than I can tell,
I met a man of alien race
And came to know and like him well;
A humble hawker, spare and tall,
Dark faced, a handsome, bearded man;
And often now bush folk recall
The kindly smile of Hakim Khan.

He plied his trade in ways remote,
Where bush-wives pawed his varied stock:
A working shirt, a winter coat,
Socks, handkerchiefs, a cheap print frock.
They chattered with him till, at eve,
With well-fed horse and well-kept van,
Sim Jackson's block, by Jackson's leave,
Served as camp for Hakim Khan.

And many a talk and many a tale
We had together long ago.
He told me of the pleasant vale
Of Kashmir, where the roses grow:
And, while he spoke, his fine, dark eyes
Saw nought of bush or hawker's van,
But other scenes and other skies
That held the dreams of Hakim Khan.

And while the meat, that his own hand
Had slain, cooked o'er the camp fire's glow,
He spoke of this new, kindly land,
And kind, good men he'd come to know,
His white teeth flashing in a grin,
He spoke of Jackson - "that nice man,
Grass for my horse." Small gifts could win
Deep gratitude for Hakim Khan.

For, when Sim Jackson lost his all
One summer while the bush-fires roared,
There came a figure, spare and tall,

And tossed a purse upon the board
A well-filled purse. "That help you on;
Mister, you pay back when you can.
You been good friend." And he was gone. . .
Such was the heart of Hakim Khan.

He long since left our forest place,
This hawker with the soft, dark eyes
This simple man of alien race
Who looked on life so simply wise.
Back in his well-loved Kashmir vale,
Where roses grow he ends his span.
And many a bush friend hopes the tale
Of dreams come true for Hakim Khan.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Half A Man

'I wash me 'ands uv 'im,' I tells 'em straight.
 'You women can do wot yeh dash well like.
I leave this 'arf a man to 'is own fate;
 I've done me bit, an' now I'm gone on strike.
Do wot yeh please; but don't arsk 'elp from me;
'E's give me nerves; so now I'll let 'im be.'

Doreen an' ole Mar Flood 'as got a scheme.
 They've been conspirin' for a week or more
About this Digger Smith, an' now they dream
 They've got 'is fucher waitin' in cold store
To 'and 'im out, an' fix 'im up for life.
But they've got Buckley's, as I tells me wife.

I've seen them whisperin' up in our room.
 Now they wants me to join in the debate;
But 'Nix,' I tells 'em. 'I ain't in the boom,
 An' Digger Smith ain't risin' to me bait;
'E's fur too fly a fish for me to catch,
An' two designin' women ain't 'is match.'

I puts me foot down firm, an' tells 'em, No!
 Their silly plan's a thing I wouldn't touch.
An' then me wife, for 'arf an hour or so,
 Talks to me confident, of nothin' much;
Then, 'fore I know it, I am all red 'ot
Into the scheme, an' leader uv the plot.

'Twas Mar Flood starts it. She got 'old uv 'im --
 You know the way they 'ave with poor, weak men --
She drops a tear or two concernin' Jim;
 Tells 'im wot women 'ave to bear; an' then
She got 'im talkin', like a woman can.
'E never would 'ave squeaked to any man.

She leads 'im on -- It's crook the way they scheme --
 To talk about this girl 'e's let be'ind.
Not that she's pryin'! Why, she wouldn't dream! --
 But speakin' uv it might jist ease 'is mind.

Then, 'fore 'e knows, 'e's told, to 'is surprise,
Name an' address -- an' colour uv 'er eyes!

An' then she's off 'ere plottin' with Doreen --
Bustin' a confidence, I tells 'em, flat.
But all me roustin' leaves 'em both serene:
Women don't see a little thing like that.
An' I ain't cooled off yet before they've got
Me workin' for 'em in this crooked plot.

Nex' day Mar Flood she takes 'er Sunday dress
An' 'er best bonnet up to town.
'Er game's to see the girl at this address
An' word 'er in regard to comin' down
To take Smith be su'prise. My part's to fix
A meetin' so there won't be any mix.

I tips, that girl won't 'esitate.
She don't. She comes right back with Mar nex' day,
All uv a fluster. When I see 'er state
I thinks I'd best see Digger straight away;
'Cos if I don't, 'e's bound to 'ear the row,
With 'er: 'Where is 'e? Can't I see 'im now?'

I finds 'im in the paddick down at Flood's.
I 'ums an' 'ars a bit about the crops.
'E don't say nothin': goes on baggin' spuds.
'Ow would yeh like,' I sez to 'im, an' stops.
'Ow would it be' ... 'E stands an' looks at me:
'Now, wot the 'Ell's got into you?' sez 'e.

That don't restore me confidence a bit.
The drarmer isn't goin' as I tipped.
I corfs, an' makes another shot at it;
While 'e looks at me like 'e thinks I'm dipped.
'Well - jist suppose,' I sez; an' then I turn
An' see 'er standin' there among the fern.

She don't want no prelimin'ries, this tart;
She's broke away before they rung the bell;
She's beat the gun, an' got a flyin' start.
Smith makes a funny noise, an' I sez "Ell!"

Because I tumbles that I'm out uv place.
But, as I went, I caught sight uv 'er face.

That's all I want to know. An', as I ran,
I 'ear's her cry, 'My man! Man an' a 'arf!
Don't fool me with yer talk uv 'arf a man!'...
An' then I 'ear ole Digger start to larf.
It was a funny larf, so 'elp me bob:
Fair in the middle uv it come a sob...

I don't see Digger till the other night.
'Well, 'Arf-a-man,' I sez, "Ow goes it now?"
'Yes, 'arf a man,' sez 'e. 'Yeh got it right;
I can't change that, alone, not any'ow.
But she is mendin' things.' 'E starts to larf.
'Some day,' 'e sez, 'she'll be the better 'arf.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Happy Heathen: (With Limited Apologies To G.K.C.)

The heathen's not efficient;
He sits down in the sun
And doesn't care a tupp'n'y dump
When the day's work's begun.
He works to eat and eats to live,
All day he'll dance and sing;
And if you mention overtime
He laughs like anything.

But we are most efficient!
And, goodness! Look at us!
Our nights are filled with restless dreams,
Our days with fret and fuss.
And we can have depressions
And modern things like that,
And monoplanes and motor cars
And trousers and a hat.

The heathen's not efficient;
He does not value gold;
And when we'd teach him of its worth
He simply won't be told.
He'll hang gold coins about his neck
For foolish ornament,
While half a bread-fruit or a ham
Bring him complete content.

Oh, we are most efficient;
We'd pile up heaps of gold
And leave it to ungrateful heirs
When we descend to mould.
But the heathen's not efficient;
He is lazy, free, unkempt,
And from the highly civilized
Earns nothing but contempt.

Hats

I sing of the hat, of the human lid,
The cadev, the tile, or whatever you please,
The thing that we wear - or our fathers did
For the making of comfort and greater ease.
Man suffers a roof up over his head
'Gainst the wind and the weather, to keep them out;
But as for a woman, when all is said,
It's the very last thing she thinks about.

Why queer 'creations' should deck her brow,
Or the back of her neck, or her small pink ear,
She hasn't the least idea, I vow;
For out of the blue come things of fear,
And, all in a night as it were - like that
Every matron and maid in town
Abandons the saucer she had for a hat
For a thing like a billy-can upside down.

Weird fruit salads and flower-decked tiles,
Dingle-dangles, roosters and bows,
Furs and feathers have served the styles
And what is the next craze no man knows.
But the cruel thing that I have heard said
I still deny, as I ever denied:
That the crazy affairs on the feminine head
Give evidence clear of the stuff inside.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Haw!

'Haw! Good fellow I'm not doubting
Your intentions are all right,
And your general appearance
Is intelligent and bright;
But the question you're discussing
Rather flicks me on the raw,
And it really doesn't matter;
So we'll close the subject. Haw!'

Since the every first reformer
Made suggestions in the trees
All the old earth's agitators
Meet with phrases such as these.
And it acts as brake and hobble
On the progress of mankind,
This superior aloofness
Of the static type of mind.

'Haw!' It rings throughout the ages
Since dim neolithic years,
Striving to discount the credit
Of philosophers and seers;
And the richest, fattest molluse
Spat it out in savage hate
When he marked his fellow's yearning
Towards a structure vertebrate.

'My good chap, enthusiasm's
Right enough just now and then;
But your pose is idiotic
In the sight of sober men.
Calm yourself, my worthy fellow,
Stay that wildly wagging jaw.
The-ah mattah you're debating
Isn't on the tapis. Haw!'

Spoken in a haughty fashion,
With an apathetic glance,
Then that simple interjection

Clothes a mass of ignorance.
'Haw! The fellow is a boundah!
Do not heed his fuss and fret,
And the subject he alludes to
Isn't mentioned in our set.'

Friend, if you have privileges
Fairly come by - more or less
And the claims of poorer brothers
Cause you most acute distress
When all argument has failed oyu
'Gainst their Socialistic law
Cultivate the distant manner
And the haughty Tory 'Haw!'

Cultivate the cool aloofness
When they seek with howlings rude
To assault your proud position.
Cultivate the platitude:
And, when they bring forth suggestions
Of a democratic type;
Tell then, friend, it is 'un-British,'
And, 'the time is not yet ripe.'

When with calm, unswerving reason,
And with logic merciless,
They convince your better nature
That abuses need redress,
Do not weakly yield to measures
That your prejudices hate.
But remark, 'It's not at issue,'
And that closes the debate.

Still, my friend, despite your coldness,
'Spite reactionary, 'Haws.'
These reformers somehow get there
When they have a worthy cause,
And the fat and foolish molluse
Who the vertebrates ignored,
Did not block all evolution,
So the scientists record.

As the world goes bravely onward
Leaving molluses far behind,
Progress ever has to reckon
With the static type of mind.
And the fighters in the vanguard
Recognise this simple law,
'Social evolution mainly
Is the overthrow of 'Haw!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Healesville

Healesville is a smiling lass,
'Mid her encircling hills,
Where down full many a mountain pass
The gold of wattle spills.
She holds her hands out to the Spring,
E'er upon pleasure bent;
Yet knowing that each year will bring
When comes the time of blossoming
Profit for her content.

Healesville is a sorceress,
With magic gifts imbued:
For each year, with the wattles' dress,
She finds her youth renewed.
So, ever young and ever gay,
She bids, at each rebirth,
The weary toilers here to stray,
And pass the sunlit hours away
In idleness and mirth.

Healesville keeps a boarding-house
She likes to entertain;
She scorns to play the country mouse;
But, pert and rather vain.
With lip-stick, rouge and marcelled hair,
Would add to her renown
For carefree mirth; and seeks to wear
The smart, sophisticated air
Of flappers fresh from Town.

Healesville calls you to her hills,
While summer suns look down,
To join the carnival that fills
With merriment her town.
Then as late autumn's shadows creep
Across the western plain,
And winter snowfalls clothe the steep.
She settles to her beauty sleep
Till springtime comes again.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Heat-Wave

Day after day, week after burning week,
A ruthless sun has sucked the forest dry.
Morn after anxious morn men's glances seek
The hills, hard-etched against a harder sky.
Gay blossoms droop and die.
Menace is here, as day draws to its peak,
And, 'mid the listless gums along the creek,
Hot little breezes sigh.

To-day the threat took shape; the birds were dumb.
Once more, as sullen, savage morning broke,
The silence told that trembling fear had come,
To bird and beast and all the forest folk.
One little wisp of smoke
Far in the south behind the listless gum
Grew to a purple pall. Like some far drum,
A distant muttering broke.

Red noon beheld red death come shouting o'er
These once green slopes-a leaping, living thing.
Touched by its breath, tree after tall tree wore
A fiery crown, as tho' to mock a king -
A ghastly blossoming
Of sudden flame that died and was no more.
And, where a proud old giant towered of yore,
Stood now a blackened thing.

Fierce raved the conquering flame, as demons rave,
Earth shook to thunders of the falling slain.
Brambles and bushes, once so gay and brave,
Shrank back, and writhed, and shrieked and shrieked again
Like sentient things in pain.
Gone from the forest all that kind spring gave...
And now, at laggard last, too late to save,
Comes soft, ironic rain.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Heigh, Ho!

Heigh, ho! But they're talking, talking,
As the cold, hard streets we're walking
Seeking work at any wage,
While the talkers rant and rage.

Says the judge: 'Let's look up section
Ninety-eight in this connection.'
'Right,' replied the advocate.
'But I submit that's out of date.'
'Sir!' the judge says, 'such things border
On contempt. You're out of order!'

Heigh, ho! But a man grows weary,
Time flies; and the outlook's dreary,
What care we for argument
When bread alone can bring content?'

'What,' enquires the advocate,
'Happened in the Roman State,
Back in forty-two B.C.?
Let me read some history -
Fifty pages. 'Tis but just.'
'Well,' the judge sighs, 'if you must.'

Heigh, ho! When life is over
Must we rest in fields of clover,
Listening to long, endless chater
On some point that does not matter?
Heigh, ho! I'd rather be
Where they'll find some work for me.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Her Majesty The Rose

Here in my garden at the long day's close
I sing again her Majesty the Rose.
The Rose who can with magic most complete
Bring worshippers again about her feet
Forsaking other loves, who, thro' the year
Had won them by sheer beauty, shining clear.
Now, where the Queen beside the trellis grows,
Courtiers acclaim, 'Her Majesty the Rose!'

The Rhododendron by her side appears
With all that magic quality of tears;
Patrician truly, yet still lacking, she,
That touch of rare imperial majesty.
Viola, violet worship at her feet;
Proudly the flaunting poppy would compete,
Yet fails, for all her striving, to disclose
The grace that guards her Majesty the Rose.

Oh, we have walked 'mid many lovely things
In lovely gardens - walked where Lilac swings
Her jewelled censers, wreathed in wondrous scent;
Where Gladiolus, giving great content,
Holds up her prideful head to so outshine
The meeker charm of Phlox and Columbine.
And yet, how soon, how swift their threldom goes
When once we greet her Majesty the Rose.

City of Roses, herein lies your wealth
This beauty, stealing in, almost by stealth
As garden after garden springs from earth
To bless the gardener with fresh beauty's birth.
A gift most grand, a miracle to see
Of rich content and meet prosperity
Wealth dwells in beauty, as each liegeman knows
Who bows before her Majesty the Rose.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

His Bread And His Art

It was an actor, seedy, sad,
Who stood within the gate;
Long weary marches he had had
He had not dined of late.

He sighed: 'I hope I don't intrude.
Believe me or I die:
For days I have not tasted food.
A stranded player I.'

'An actor man?' the lady said.
'What is your favourite role?'
'Hot, madam, and with butter spread,'
He answered from his soul.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Hist!

Hist! Hark!
The night is very dark,
And we've to go a mile or so
Across the Possum Park.

Step light,
Keeping to the right;
If we delay, and lose our way,
We'll be out half the night.
The clouds are low and gloomy. Oh!
It's just begun to mist!
We haven't any overcoats
And - Hist! Hist!

(Mo poke!)
Who was that that spoke?
This is not a fitting spot
To make a silly joke.

Dear me!
A mopoke in a tree!
It jarred me so, I didn't know
Whatever it could be.
But come along; creep along;
Soon we shall be missed.
They'll get a scare and wonder where
We - Hush! Hist!

Ssh! Soft!
I've told you oft and oft
We should not stray so far away
Without a moon aloft.

Oo! Scat!
Goodness! What was that?
Upon my word, it's quite absurd,
It's only just a cat.
But come along; haste along;
Soon we'll have to rush,

Or we'll be late and find the gate
Is - Hist! Hush!

(Kok!. Korrock!)
Oh! I've had a shock!
I hope and trust it's only just
A frog behind a rock.

Shoo! Shoo!
We've had enough of you;
Scaring folk just for a joke
Is not the thing to do.
But come along, slip along -
Isn't it a lark
Just to roam so far from home
On - Hist! Hark!

Look! See!
Shining through the tree,
The window-light is glowing bright
To welcome you and me.

Shout! Shout!
There's someone round about,
And through the door I see some more
And supper all laid out.
Now, run! Run! Run!
Oh, we've had such splendid fun -
Through the park in the dark,
As brave as anyone.

Laughed, we did, and chaffed, we did,
And whistled all the way,
And we're home again! Home again!
Hip Hooray!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Hitched

An'—wilt—yeh—take—this—woman—fer—to—be
Yer—wedded—wife?— . . . O, strike me! Will I wot?
Take 'er? Doreen? 'E stan's there arstin' me!
As if 'e thort per'aps I'd rather not!
Take 'er? 'E seemed to think 'er kind was got
Like cigarette-cards, fer the arstin'. Still,
I does me stunt in this 'ere hitchin' rot,
An' speaks me piece: 'Righto!' I sez, 'I will.'

'I will,' I sez. An' tho' a joyful shout
Come from me bustin' 'eart—I know it did
Me voice got sorter mangled comin' out,
An' makes me whisper like a frightened kid.
'I will,' I squeaks. An' I'd 'a' give a quid
To 'ad it on the quite, wivout this fuss,
An' orl the starin' crowd that Mar 'ad bid
To see this solim hitchin' up of us.

'Fer—rich—er—er—fer—poorer.' So 'e bleats.
'In—sick—ness—an'—in—'ealth,' . . . An' there I stands,
An' dunno 'arf the chatter I repeats,
Nor wot the 'ell to do wiv my two 'ands.
But 'e don't 'urry puttin' on our brands
This white-'aired pilot-bloke—but gives it lip,
Dressed in 'is little shirt, wiv frills an' bands.
'In sick-ness—an'—in—' Ar! I got the pip!

An' once I missed me turn; an' Ginger Mick,
'Oo's my best-man, 'e ups an' beefs it out.
'I will!' 'e 'owls; an' fetches me a kick.
'Your turn to chin!' 'e tips wiv a shout.
An' there I'm standin' like a gawky lout.
(Aw, spare me! But I seemed to be all 'ands!)
An' wonders wot 'e's goin' crook about,
Wiv 'arf a mind to crack 'im where 'e stands.

O, lumme! But ole Ginger was a trick!
Got up regardless fer the solim rite.
('E 'awks the bunnies when 'e toils, does Mick)

An' twice I saw 'im feelin' fer a light
To start a fag; an' trembles lest 'e might,
Thro' force o' habit like. 'E's nervis too;
That's plain, fer orl 'is air o' bluff an' skite;
An' jist as keen as me to see it thro'.

But, 'struth, the wimmin! 'Ow they love this frill!
Fer Auntie Liz, an' Mar, o' course, wus there;
An' Mar's two uncles' wives, an' Cousin Lil,
An' 'arf a dozen more to grin and stare.
I couldn't make me 'ands fit anywhere!
I felt like I wus up afore the Beak!
But my Doreen she never turns a 'air,
Nor misses once when it's 'er turn to speak.

Ar, strike! No more swell marridges fer me!
It seems a blinded year afore 'e's done.
We could 'a' fixed it in the registree
Twice over 'fore this cove 'ad 'arf begun.
I s'pose the wimmin git some sorter fun
Wiv all this guyver, an' 'is nibs's shirt.
But, seems to me, it takes the bloomin' bun,
This stylish splicin' uv a bloke an' skirt.

'To—be—yer—weddid—wife—' Aw, take a pull!
Wot in the 'ell's 'e think I come there for?
An' so 'e drawls an' drones until I'm full,
An' wants to do a duck clean out the door.
An' yet, fer orl 'is 'igh-falutin' jor,
Ole Snowy wus a reel good-meanin' bloke.
If 'twasn't fer the 'oly look 'e wore
Yeh'd think 'e piled it on jist fer a joke.

An', when at last 'e shuts 'is little book,
I 'eaves a sigh that nearly bust me vest.
But 'Eavens! Now 'ere's muvver goin' crook!
An' sobbin' awful on me manly chest!
(I wish she'd give them water-works a rest.)
'My little girl!' she 'owls. 'O, treat 'er well!
She's young—too young to leave 'er muvver's nest!
'Orright, ole chook,' I nearly sez. Oh, 'ell!

An' then we 'as a beano up at Mar's
A slap-up feed, wiv wine an' two big geese.
Doreen sits next ter me, 'er eyes like stars.
O, 'ow I wished their blessed yap would cease!
The Parson-bloke 'e speaks a little piece,
That makes me blush an' 'ang me silly 'ead.
'E sez 'e 'opes our lovin' will increase
I likes that pilot fer the things 'e said.

'E sez Doreen an' me is in a boat,
An' sailin' on the matrimonial sea.
'E sez as 'ow 'e hopes we'll allus float
In peace an' joy, from storm an' danger free.
Then muvver gits to weepin' in 'er tea;
An' Auntie Liz sobs like a winded colt;
An' Cousin Lil comes 'round an' kisses me;
Until I feel I'll 'ave to do a bolt.

Then Ginger gits end-up an' makes a speech
('E'd 'ad a couple, but 'e wasn't shick.)
'My cobber 'ere,' 'e sez, "'as copped a peach!
Of orl the barrer-load she is the pick!
I 'opes 'e won't fergit 'is pals too quick
As wus 'is frien's in olden days, becors,
I'm trusting later on,' sez Ginger Mick,
'To celebrate the chris'nin'.' . . . 'Oly wars!

At last Doreen an' me we gits away,
An' leaves 'em doin' nothin' to the scam
(We're honey-moonin' down beside the Bay.)
I gives a 'arf a dollar to the man
Wot drives the cab; an' like two kids we ran
To ketch the train—Ah, strike! I could 'a' flown!
We gets the carridge right agen the van.
She whistles, jolts, an' starts . . . An' we're alone!

Doreen an' me! My precious bit o' fluff!
Me own true weddid wife! . . . An' we're alone!
She seems so frail, an' me so big an' rough
I dunno wot this feelin' is that's grown
Inside me 'ere that makes me feel I own
A thing so tender like I fear to squeeze

Too 'ard fer fear she'll break . . . Then, wiv a groan
I starts to 'ear a coot call, 'Tickets, please!'

You could 'a' outed me right on the spot!
I wus so rattled when that porter spoke.
Fer, 'struth! Them tickets I 'ad fair forgot!
But 'e fist laughs, an' takes it fer a joke.
'We must ixcuse,' 'e sez, 'new-married folk.'
An' I pays up, an' grins, an' blushes red....
It shows 'ow married life improves a bloke:
If I'd bin single I'd 'a' punched 'is head!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Hitting It Up With Hitler

Now, who in the world can understand?
Since Tyranny, Freedom's whittler,
And the strong-arm band of the Iron Hand
Go hitting it up with Hitler,
Who can pretend to comprehend
This curious law-and-order
When generals dropp as the guns go pop,
And the princes streak for the border.

Where is the end when friend slays friend?
And the Factious rave and thunder,
When, trial denied, high chiefs have died,
And various 'vons' gone under;
When the President vows he will resign,
And then, somehow or other,
Is moved to sign a note benign,
Saying, 'Well done, brave brother!'

Man scarcely needs such trivial deeds
As Dillinger's or Capone's,
When a leader rash with a funny moustache,
Goes bumping off his cronies
Putting the lot right on the spot,
While the common people shiver
Lest a word ill-said bring a crack on the head,
Or a pellet of lead in the liver.

Quiet homes aflood in a bath of blood
Where else in the world could it happen,
Save in the land of that queer-named band
Like Roehm and Jung and Papen?
Is it all a fight for Freedom's right,
Or for Tyranny, Freedom's whittler,
When the Blackshirts shout and the gangs go out,
Hitting it up with Hitler?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Hoch Der Hausfrau!

Back to the kitchen, mein Gretchen!
Back to the scullery, frau!
You have dreamed your brief hour of a matriarch's pow'r:
But it's dishes and drudgery now.
Your head bent in humble submission,
Your back for the masculine flail,
Speak softly, and know your position,
Meek slave of the dominant male.

Back to the kitchen, mein fraulein!
Back to the post and the pans.
To that menial place marked for you in the race.
This earth and its glories are Man's
Seek you a strong master, my daughter,
And serve him; yet be not appalled:
But give him stout sons for the slaughter
When more cannon fodder is called.

Hausfrau! Hark you back to the kitchen!
Your visions of glory are vain.
The old Teuton gods count you chattels and clods,
And the Blond Beast has risen again.
Your masters, with arrogance drunken,
Have brought your ambitions to wreck;
Your glories are spurlos versunken.
Ach! Woman! Our heel on her neck.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Hope

When we went singing down the road,
In days when want was not a goad,
Dull care behind us flinging,
No step we stayed, no joy we missed,
To hearken to the pessimist,
But gaily went on singing.

We'd faith in this great country then;
We'd hope in her great, stalwart men,
Who built a worthy nation.
Hope? Hope was ever in our hearts,
For we seemed cast for Builders' parts
And there was our salvation.

But what has changed our outlook now?
With weary eyes and furrowed brow
The uphill road we're facing.
But why? This land is still aflame
With promise of great hope and fame.
Must age be youth disgracing?

Oh, let's go singing up the road,
Although we bear a heavy load.
What good is grieving bringing?
Still, just beneath this happy ground
Is wondrous fortune to be found.
So let us go on singing.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Hopeful Hawkins

Hawkins wasn't in the swim at all in Dingo Flat,
And to bait him was our chiefest form of bliss;
But, in justice, be it said that he had a business head.
(That's why I'm standing here and telling this.)

He was trav'ling for a company, insuring people's lives;
And stayed about a month in Dingo Flat;
But his biz was rather dull, and we took him for a gull,
An amazing simple-minded one at that.

He was mad, he was, on mining and around about the town
Prospected every reef. But worse than that
He'd talk for half a day, in a most annoying way,
On 'The mineral resources of the Flat.'

He swore that somewhere nigh us was a rich gold-bearing red,
If a fellow only had the luck to strike it;
And he only used to laugh when the boys began to chaff,
And seemed, in fact, to rather sort of like it.

Well, we stood him for a month until he well nigh drove us mad.
And as jeering couldn't penetrate his hide
We fixed a little scheme for to dissipate his dream,
And sicken him of mining till he died.

We got a likely-looking bit of quartz and faked it up
With dabs of golden paint; then called him in.
Oh, he went clean off his head; it was gold for sure, he said.
And if we'd sell our claim he'd raise the tin.

But we weren't taking any-not at least till later on;
For we reckoned that we'd string him on a while.
When he wanted information of the reef's exact location
We would meet him with a knowing sort of smile.

At last we dropped a hint that set him pegging out a claim,
And we saw that we were coming in for sport;
For the next account we heard was when Hawkins passed the word
He was fetching up an expert to report.

When we heard that expert's verdict we were blown clean out of time,
And absorbed the fact that we had fallen in.
The gold, he said, would run 'bout four ounces to the ton;
With traces, too, of copper, zinc and tin.

Old Hawkins he was jubilant, and up at Peter's store
A lovely lot of specimens was showing;
And we gazed at them and groaned, for the truth had to be owned:
We had put him on a pile without our knowing.

We couldn't let the thing slip through our fingers, so to speak.
There were thousands in the mine without a doubt.
So me and Baker Brothers, and half a dozen others,
We formed a syndicate to buy him out.

Well, he said he'd not the money to develop such a claim,
And he'd sell it if we made a decent bid.
So we made pretence at dealing, and it almost seemed like stealing
When he parted, for five hundred lovely quid.

We haven't seen the vendor in the Flat for nigh a week,
And we're wishing, on the whole, he'd never come.
The confounded mine's a duffer; for that simple-minded buffer
He had salted it. The 'expert' was a chum.

Hawkins wasn't reckoned much at all in Dingo Flat.
We'd a notion that his headpiece was amiss.
But we wish to have it stated, he was rather underrated.
(That's why I'm standing here and telling this.)

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

How We Backed The Favourite

'Sure thing,' said the grocer; 'as far as I know, sir,
This horse, Peter Pan, is the safest of certs.'
'I see by the paper,' commanded the draper,
'He's tipped and he carries my whole weight of shirts.'
The butcher said, 'Well, now, it's easy to tell now
There's nothing else in it except Peter Pan.'
And so the baker, the barman, bookmaker,
The old lady char and the saveloy man.

'You stick to my tip, man,' admonished the grip-man,
'Play up Peter Pan; he's a stayer with speed.'
And the newspaper vendor, the ancient road mender,
And even the cop at the corner agreed.
The barber said, 'Win it? There's nothing else in it.
I backed Peter Pan with the last that I had.'
'Too right,' said the liftman. 'The horse is a gift, man.'
The old jobbing gardener said, 'Peter Pan, lad!'

I know nought of racing. The task I was facing,
It filled me with pain and unreasoning dread.
They all seemed so certain. And yet a dark curtain
Of doubt dulled my mind... But I must keep my head!
I went to the races, and I watched all their faces.
I saw Peter Pan's; there was little he lacked.
And as he seemed willing, I planked on my shilling
And triumphed! And that's how the favorite was backed.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Hundreds And Thousands

But a scant 2000 folk, no more,
Sitting solemn-faced within the pews,
While the parsons preach and outward pour,
In divers tones, their own peculiar views.
Folk of sobriety,
'Proddies' and 'Pats,'
Breathing their piety
Into their hats;
Glowing with holiness,
Stern and austere;
Kneeling in lowliness,
Meek and sincere.
Only 2000.

Gaily 50,000 folk or so
Travel to and fro in tram and train;
Godless Jeremiah, Jim and Joe,
Giddy Gerty, Gwendoline and Jane.
Bent on frivolity,
Eager for fun,
Sinful in jollity
Off for a run.
Taking a peach along
Out for the day,
Walking the beach along,
Godless but gay.
Full 50,000.

What's three hundred pounds a year to him
Of Scotchbyterian mould and visage stern,
Who'll go each dinner-time, with purpose grim,
And teach those folk what they refuse to learn?
Is it o'er muckle to
Gi'e to a mon,
One that will buckle to
Preaching upon
Creeds ev'ry dinner-time,
Praying with zest,
Giving each sinner time

Texts to digest?
Merely 300?

About 10,000 working men, or less,
With dinner pail and pasty at their lunch,
All list'ning to a clergyman's address,
And solemnly reflecting as they munch.
With due propriety
Blinking their eyes,
Swallowing piety
With their hot pies;
Glad that they will have their
Church with their bun.
And they can still have their
Sunday for fun.
Nearly 10,000.

'Tis now 2000 years ago, or near,
Since parsons 'gan to roam this troubled earth;
The sects increase and multiply each year
Which moves the pagan to loud, godless mirth).
Yet do they battle on
Fighting the Deevil,
Still do they rattle on
Girding at evil;
Preaching humility,
Pleading with tears
Is it futility?
Wait a few years.
'Tis but 2000.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Hymn Of Futility

Lord, Thou hast given unto us a land.
In Thy beneficence Thou has ordained
That we should hold a country great and grand,
Such as no race of old has ever gained.
A favoured people, basking in Thy smile:
So dost Thou leave us to work out our fate;
But, Lord, be patient yet a little while.
The shade is pleasing and our task is great.

Lo, Thou hast said: 'This land I give to you
To be the cradle of a mighty race,
Who shall take up the White Man's task anew,
And all the nations of the world outpace.
No heritage for cowards or for slaves,
Here is a mission for the brave, the strong.
Then see ye to it, lest dishonoured graves
Bear witness that he tarried overlong.'

Lo, Thou hast said: 'When ye have toiled and tilled,
When ye have borne the heat, and wisely sown,
And every corner of the vineyard filled
With goodly growth, the land shall be your own.
Then shall your sons and your sons' sons rejoice.
Then shall the race speak with a conqueror's mouth;
And all the world shall hearken to its voice,
And heed the great White Nation of the South.'

And Thou hast said: 'This, striving, shall ye do.
Be diligent to tend and guard the soil.
If this great heritage I trust to you
Be worth the purchase of a meed of toil,
Then shall ye not, at call of game or mart,
Forgo the labour of a single day.
They spurn the gift who treasure but a part.
Guard ye the whole, lest all be cast away!

'Say, is My bounty worth the winning?' (Lord,
So hast thou spoken. Humbly have we heard.)
'No son of man is born who can afford

To pay Me tribute with an empty word.
Guard ye the treasure if the gift be meet.
Win ye to strength and wisdom while ye may.
For he who fears the burden and the heat
Shall gain the wages of a squandered day!

Lord, we have heard....Loud our Hosannas rang!
Voices of glad thanksgiving did we lift.
From out the fullness of our hearts we sang
Sweet hymns of praise for this Thy gracious gift.
Here, in one corner of the land, we found
A goodly garden, where abundant food
We won, with scanty labor, from the ground.
Here did we rest. And, Lord, we found it good!

Great cities have we builded here, O Lord;
And corn and kine full plenty for our need
We have; and cloth the wondrous land afford
Treasure beyond the wildest dreams of greed.
Even this tiny portion of Thy gift,
One corner of our mightly continent,
Doth please us well. A voice in prayer we lift:
'Lord, give us peace! For we are well content.'

Lord, give us peace; for Thou has sent a sign:
Smoke of a raider's ships athwart the sky!
Nay, suffer us to hold this gift of Thine!
The burden, Lord! The burden-by and by!
The sun is hot, Lord, and the way is long!
'Tis pleasant in this corner Thou has blest.
Leave us to tarry here with wine and song.
Our little corner, Lord! Guard Thou the rest!

But yesterday our fathers hither came,
Rovers and strangers on a foreign strand.
Must we, for their neglect, bear all the blame?
Nay, Master, we have come to love our land!
But see, the task Thou givest us is great;
The load is heavy and the way is long!
Hold Thou our enemy without the gate;
When we have rested then shall we be strong.

Lord, Thou hast spoken... And, with hands to ears,
We would shut out the thunder of Thy voice
That in the nightwatch wakes our sudden fears
'The day is here, and yours must be the choice.
Will ye be slaves and shun the task of men?
Will ye be weak who may be brave and strong?'
We wave our banners boastfully, and then,
Weakly we answer, 'Lord, the way is long!'

'Time tarries not, but here ye tarry yet,
The futile masters of a continent,
Guard ye the gift I gave? Do ye forget?'
And still we answer, 'Lord, we are content.
Fat have we grown upon this goodly soil,
A little while he patient, Lord, and wait.
To-morrow and to-morrow will we toil.
The shade is pleasing, Lord! Our task is great!'

But ever through the clamour of the mart,
And ever on the playground through the cheers:
'He spurns the gift who guardeth but a part'
So cloth the warning fall on heedless cars.
'Guard ye the treasure if the gift be meet'
(Loudly we call the odds, we cheer the play.)
'For he who fears the burden and the heat
Shall glean the harvest of a squandered day.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'I Dips Me Lid'

'Young sir,' 'E sez . . . Like that . . . It made me feel
Romantic like, as if me dream was reel.
'Is dress was fancy, an' 'is style was grave.
An' me ? I 'ope I know 'ow to be'ave
In 'igh-toned company, for ain't I been
Instructed careful by me wife, Doreen ?
' Sing small,' she sez. An' that's iist wot I did.
I sounds me haitches, an' I dips me lid.

'Young sir,' 'e sez . . . O' course you understand
'Twus jist a dream. But, on the other 'and,
E seemed so reel as 'e sat spoutin' there
Beside me on ole Dame Macquarie's Chair,
Lookin' across the 'arbor while 'e talked-
Seemed sumphink more that jist a ghost 'oo walked
Out o' the past . . . 'Phillip by name,' 'e said.
A queer ole cock, wif lace, an' wig on 'ead.

It 'appened this way: I 'ad jist come down,
After long years, to look at Sydney town.
An' 'struth! Was I knocked endways? Fair su'prised?
I never dreamed! That arch that cut the skies
The Bridge! I never thort there could 'a' been-
I never knoo, nor guessed - I never seen . . .
Well, Sydney's 'ad some knocks since I been gone,
But strike! This shows she keeps on keepin' on.

I'd strolled about the town for 'arf a day
Then dragged me carcass round the 'arbor way
To view the Bridge from Dame Macquarrie's Chair
Then parks me frame, an' gits to thinkin' there-
Thinkin' of older days; an' I suppose
I must 'ave nodded orf into a doze.
Nex' thing I knoo, ole Phillip come an' sat
Beside me, friendly like, an' starts to chat.

'Young sir,' 'e sez. 'You, too, in sheer amaze
Look upon this, and hark to other days,
An' dream of this fair city's early start.

In which ('e bows) I played my 'umble part-
My 'umble part - a flagpole an' a tent.'
'Come orf!' sez I. 'You was a fine ole gent.
Reel nob. I've read about the things you did.
You picked some site.' ('E bows. I dips me lid).

'Young sir,' 'e sez. 'I've dwelt in spirit 'ere
To watch this city waxin' year by year:
But yesterday, from a mere staff, a tent,
Wonder on wonder as the swift years went-
A thrivin' village, then a busy town,
Then, as a stride, a city of renown.
Oh! what a wondrous miracle of growth
Think you not so?' 'Too right,' I sez. 'My oath!'

'I've watched, young sir,' 'e sez. 'An' I 'ave feared
Sometimes; feared greatly when ill days appeared.
Yet still they fought and wrought. I had small need
To doubt the great heart of this sturdy breed.
Black war has come. Yet, over half a world,
Their sons into that bloody fray they hurled
And still they triumphed. Still their lodestar shone.'
'Sure thing,' sez I. ' They kep' on keepin' on.'

'Young sir,' 'e sez. 'The tears well in my eyes
When I behold von arch that cleaves the skies -
That mighty span, triumphant, where we view
My old friend Darwin's vision now made true:
'There the proud arch, Colossus-like, bestride
Yon glittering stream and bound the chafing tide!
'Twas so he dreamed a few short years ago.
Spoke truly, sir; they keep on keeping on.'

So Phillip spoke 'is piece, fair puffed wif pride.
An' 'im an' me dreamed by the 'arbor-side
I, of the scene before, of years to be,
An' of the marvels that men yet might see
'Im, of a lantern gleamin' thro' the fog
To light a tent, an' two men, an' a dog
Then both of us, like some queer instinct bids,
Stands up, serloots the Bridge, an' dips our lids.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

I Wonder

I wonder what the Jacks have got to laugh and laugh about.
I'm sure the worms don't see the joke when Jacky digs them out.
I wonder which is best: a rich plum-pudding stuffed with plums,
Or lemon ice, or plain boiled rice, or long-division sums.

I wonder why I wear a tie. It is not warm to wear;
But if I left it off someone would say it was not there.
I wonder, if I took a whiff of father's pipe for fun,
Would I be big and strong like him, or just his small, sick son?
I wonder when our old white hen will know her squawk betrays her.
I think she lets us find her eggs 'ust so that we shall praise her.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Ideal And Aftermath

I wed him because he looked nice (said she)
And I feared to be left on the shelf.
For I wouldn't take mother's advice (said she),
So I've no one to blame but myself.
My friends always said that he had a flat head
And a curious cranial kink;
But I feel 'neath the spell of his lovely marcel . . .
Now he's bald, and he's taken to drink.

I wed him because he looked slim (said she)
And athletic and noble and brave.
I thought there was no one like him (said she),
For he really knew how to behave.
Now he's humble and meek, and, whenever I speak,
He cringes and crawls like a tyke.
Tho' bay-windowed in front, he's the soul of a runt;
And I bully him just as I like.

I wed him because he looked sweet (said she),
Of manhood my very ideal.
I thought that my bliss was complete (said she):
I could hardly believe he was real.
But he's real right enough; tho' not quite of the stuff
I'd imagined the day I said 'Yes';
But I hardly mind that, tho' he's bald and he's fat
And slovenly, too, in his dress.

I wed him for better or worse (said she)
When with love I was slightly insane.
But there's ne'er a regret that I nurse (said she),
For I've really small cause to complain.
For I'm fifty and fat, and my arches are flat,
And I grumble and fidget and fuss.
Yet he thought me, he said a dream child when we wed.
So it's just fifty-fifty with us.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

If Cohen Would

O, Cohen, hear our song of sentiment!
Withdraw thy sordid thoughts from cent. per cent.,
And, for, the sake of Empire, gentle Yid,
Lend us a million quid.

If England's great Financial Houses would
Back up our aspirations as they should,
If we could influence cold £ s. d.
By sentiment and words of loyalty,
What joy - and cash - were ours! Ay, what a loan
We'd gaily spend - if our true aims were known.
How might we proudly flaunt our nationhood!
If Cohen only would.

If uncle owned a little sentiment,
And pondered less upon his much per cent.;
If blind financiers could he made to see
The high cash value of our loyalty,
How they would rush, with many offers rash,
And load us up with piles and piles of cash;
And gladly shower rich gifts upon the land,
Could they but understand!

Behold the grand beginning we have made!
When Empire called us, did we stand afraid?
Nay; but we said, 'We are the proud new land!
And with the nations shall we take our stand.
The arms to guard our shores shall be our own!
If, please, you will assist us with a loan,
We'll teach our foes that their designs are rash!...
Do you advance the cash?'

Alas! he turns a deaf ear to our claims;
For gushing loyalty and noble aims
With Cohen count for poor security.
There is no sentiment in £ s. d.,
For who would search grey London through and through
And hope to find the Sentimental Jew;

Then crave a loan on aspirations? Nay!
'Der bishness wouldn't bay.'

O Cohen, if thine heart we cannot touch,
Then on the old pawn-ticket, say, how much?
Thou wilt advance in cash to guard for thee
Thine old security?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

If It's Modern It's Right

By the Mediterranean shore,
In the days of the cohorts and legions,
When oodles of rain used to pour
O'er the old agricultural regions,
When a deluge came thundering down -
Tho' the vineyards of Rome did not need it -
Men cocked a shrewd eye
At the lowering sky
And agreed that the gods had decreed it.
And they said to themselves: 'There is not the least doubt
That's Jupiter Pluvius pouring it out.'

But the restless old world forged ahead,
And men waxed in wisdom and reason;
An in bluff, Merrie England, 'tis said,
When a deluge came down out of season,
And rotted their 'turmutts,' their 'spuds',
Mangelwursts and similar riches,
The wise of the land
Saw black magic at hand,
So they sizzled a couple of witches.
And they said to themselves, 'There be not the least doubt,
They hags can cast spells for a deluge or drought.'

But progress moved onward, and soon
Men derided the cult of witch-burning;
And, in times of great floods, 'twas the moon
Caused it all, said the men of deep learning.
And they proved, since she governs the tides,
She must govern all water and weather.
So men turned to this new view,
Since 'twas novel and new,
And they scrapped old beliefs altogether,
For they said to themselves, 'There is not the least doubt,
Lest the moon's on her back she must spill water out.'

But we moderns, of course, high of brow,
Are amused by these crude superstitions.
We are guided by scientist now

Astronomers, mathematicians.
'Tis sunspots, as now we know well,
Cause phenomenal floods and such troubles;
But there isn't much harm;
So still your alarm,
For it's only old Sol blowing bubbles.
But I say to myself, 'Can there be any doubt
That a brief hundred years sees this theory out?'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Ignoramus

What crass, abysmal ignorance! Forlorn!
Despite his looks, the man must be half-witted!
They gasped for air; they gazed on him in scorn,
And tried to think of epithets that fitted.
Clown! Dolt! Unlettered oaf! And yet, some spark
Of clear intelligence seemed in his bearing.
Men called him clever! But his one remark
His only one - had left them gaping, staring!

Long had they argued: first this one, then that,
Sedately, quietly, gravely polemic.
No voice was raised; each had the subject pat
A weighty matter, almost academic.
But he had said no word; but sat and read
A book by Einstein, while the rest disputed,
A hand supporting his fine, massive head;
And seemed to be all that he was reputed.

And still they talked and talked; till some one stopped,
Searching for words, and so the thread was broken.
Then he looked up; and then the bomb was dropped
As, joining the discussion, he had spoken.
His long white finger marking still his place
Upon the page he read, the question rolling
Prim and precise, he said, with smiling face:
'Excuse me, but - er - what IS body bowling?'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Illuminations

Smith is a loyalist good and true,
And a lad of the 'whole hog' class:
And yesterday, when he went to view
The Royal procession pass,
He'd flags in his buttonhole, flags in his hat,
Flags all gaudy and gay;
And he splintered the welkin from where he sat
With many a loud 'Hooray!'

Last night when the town was a blaze of light
Smith was still on his way;
And I saw him pass thro' the brilliant night,
Gaudy, vociferous, gay;
He was still in the fashion and going strong,
And I gather he'd been to sup
For he chortled a song as he went along,
Thoroughly well 'lit up.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Immune

When you're muffled to the chin and
You wear flannel next the skin and
'Spite of all, the frost creeps in and
Gets you, Winter's nearly due;
And, in snuffling citizens, a
Fierce attack of influenza
Wakes a wild, insane cadenza
With the burden 'Ar-tish-ooO!!'

Then a sight that sends me crazy
In these chilly days and hazy,
Is to see defiant Daisy
Tripping blithesomely and bold
In a blouse that's simply shocking
And a flimsy silken stocking,
All the ills of Winter mocking.
Does she ever catch a cold?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Important People

The success of the Scout movement throughout the whole world has been amply proven by the present triumphant gathering in Melbourne.

Great and important people, these
Important far beyond our ken
Who mark with adult sophistries
Their serious air of sober men,
Their fancy garb, their solemn fuss,
With code and law, their tender age.
Soon shall they count for more than us
Stale actors on an outworn stage.

They are, say we, mere children drawn
By make-believe from many lands;
Yet soon, at some swift morrow's dawn
Earth's destiny top these small hands
Must pass; and, should their creed prevail,
As well it may for all earth's good,
They shall have triumphed where we fail,
In peace and long-sought brotherhood.

Here rests a new world's shining hope,
And we, a mad world's residue,
Doomed lately in dark ways to grope,
May yet, thro' them, find dreams come true
Dreams that our blunted senses sought
To grasp in one exalted hour,
And lost - the good for which men fought
Brought into everlasting flower.

Important people? Who are we
To greet with patronising smiles
Their creed of regained chivalry
We who are cheated by crude wiles
Of greed and folly, and became
Flotsam, forlorn and tempest-tossed?
More precious far their childish game
Than wisdom in our chaos lost.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

In A Forest Garden: A Promise Of Spring

Spring surely must be near. High over head
The kind blue heavens bend to timbers tall;
And here, this morning, is the picture spread
That I have learned to love the best of all.
I hear Flame Robin call
His early love-song. Winter's might is sped;
And young crows now begin to fleck with red
This great green, living wall.

Picture of promise, that I count the best
Of many a fair familiar Bushland scene;
Lifting o'er all, the far mount's sunlit crest
Looks down where silver wattles lightly screen
Blue smoke, that peeps between
Their tall tops, from some settler's hidden nest
Looks down on golden wattles closely pressed
To blackwood's luscious green.

Before the dovecote, mirrored in the pond,
A veil diaphanous of drifting mist
Makes many a nimbus for grey gums beyond
Whose gaunt, grey limbs a mountain sun has kissed
To palest amethyst.
Now, stepping very daintily, with fond,
Soft cooings, fantails on the lawn respond,
To Spring, the amorist.

From the deep forest, on the clean crisp air,
The bushman's axe-blows echo sharply clear;
A soft cloud's tattered fleece drifts idly where
Glow azure hope. Impatient to appear
Springs now full many a spear
Of marching daffodils. Shorn of cold care,
The joyous bush birds vie with flutings rare.
Spring surely must be near.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

In Spadger's Lane

Ole Mother Moon 'oo yanks 'er beamin' dile
Acrost the sky when we've grown sick o' day,
She's like some fat ole Jane 'oo loves to smile
On all concerned, an' smooth our faults away;
An', like a woman, tries to 'ide again
The sores an' scars crool day 'as made too plain.

To all the earth she gives the soft glad-eye;
She picks no fav'rits in this world o' men;
She peeps in nooks, where 'appy lovers sigh,
To make their job more bonzer still; an' then,
O'er Spadger's Lane she waves a podgy 'and,
An' turns the scowlin' slums to Fairyland.

Aw, strike! I'm gettin' soft in my ole age!
I'm growin' mushy wiv the passin' years.
Me! that 'as called it weakness to ingage
In sloppy thorts that coax the pearly tears.
But say, me state o' mind I can't ixplain
When I seen Rose lars' night in Spadger's Lane.

'Twas Spadger's Lane where Ginger Mick 'ung out
Before 'e took to follerin' the Flag;
The Lane that echoed to 'is drunken shout
When 'e lobbed 'omeward on a gaudy jag.
Now Spadger's Lane knows Ginger Mick no more,
Fer 'e's become an 'ero at the War.

A flamin' 'ero at the War, that's Mick.
An' Rose - 'is Rose, is waitin' in the Lane,
Nursin' 'er achin' 'eart, an' lookin' sick
As she crawls out to work an' 'ome again,
Givin' the bird to blokes 'oo'd be 'er 'friend,'
An' prayin', wiv the rest, fer wars to end.

Quite right; I'm growin' sloppy fer a cert;
But I must git it orf me chest or bust.
So 'ere's a song about a grievin' skirt,
An' love, an' Ginger Mick, an' maiden trust!

The choky sort o' song that fetches tears
When blokes is full o' sentiment-or beers.

Lars' night, when I sneaks down to taste again
The sights an' sounds I used to know so well,
The moon wus shinin' over Spadger's Lane,
Sof'nin' the sorrer where 'er kind light fell:
Sof'nin' an' soothin', like it wus 'er plan
To make ixcuses fer the sins uv man.

Frum shadder inter shadder, up the street,
A prowlin' moll sneaks by, wiv eyes all 'ate,
Dodgin' some unseen John, 'oo's sure, slow feet
Comes tappin' after, certin as 'er fate;
In some back crib, a shicker's loud 'owled verse
Stops sudden, wiv a crash, an' then a curse.

Low down, a splotch o' red, where 'angs a blind
Before the winder uv a Chow caboose,
Shines in the dead black wall, an' frum be'ind,
Like all the cats o' Chinertown broke loose,
A mad Chow fiddle wails a two-note toon...
An' then I seen 'er, underneath the moon.

Rosie the Rip they calls 'er int he Lane;
Fer she wus alwus willin' wiv 'er 'an's,
An' uses 'em to make 'er meanin' plain
In ways theat Spadger's beauties understan's.
But when ole Ginger played to snare 'er 'eart,
Rosie the Rip wus jist the soft, weak tart.

'Igh in 'er winder she wus leanin' out,
Swappin' remarks wiv fat ole Mother Moon.
The things around I clean Fergot about
Fergot the fiddle an' its crook Chow toon;
I only seen one woman in the light
Ach in' to learn 'er forchin frum the night.

Ole Ginger's Rose! To see 'er sittin' there,
The moonlight shinin' fair into 'er face,
An' sort o' touchin' gentle on 'er 'air,
It made me fair fergit the time an' place.

I feels I'm peepin' where I never ought,
An' tries 'arf not to 'ear the words I caught.

One soljer's sweetheart, that wus wot I seen:
One out o' thousands grievin' thro' the land.
A tart frum Spadger's or a weepin' queen
Wot's there between 'em, when yeh understand
She 'olds fer Mick, wiv all 'is ugly chiv,
The best a lovin' woman 'as to give.

The best a woman 'as to give - Aw, 'Struth!
When war, an' grief, an' trouble's on the land
Sometimes a bloke gits glimpses uv the truth
An' sweats 'is soul to try an' understand . . .
An' then the World, like some offishus John,
Shoves out a beefy 'and, an' moves 'im on.

So I seen Rose; an' so, on that same night
I seen a million women grievin' there.
Ole Mother Moon she showed to me a sight
She sees around the World, most everyw'ere
Sneakin' beneath the shadder uv the wall
I seen, an' learned, an' understood it all.

An' as I looks at Rosie, dreamin' there,
'Er 'ead drops on 'er arms . . . I seems to wake;
I sees the moonlight streamin' on 'er 'air;
I 'ears 'er sobbin' like 'er 'eart ud break.
An' me there, pryin' on 'er misery.
'Gawstruth!' I sez, 'This ain't no place fer me!'

On my tip-toes I sneaks the way I came
(The crook Chow fiddle ain't done yowlin' yet)
An' tho' I tells it to me bitter shame
I'm gittin' soft as 'ell - me eyes wus wet.
An' that stern John, as I go moochin' by
Serloots me wiv a cold, unfeelin' eye.

The fat ole Mother Moon she's got a 'eart.
An' so I like to think, when she looks down
Wiv 'er soft gaze upon some weepin' tart
In bonzer gardens or the slums o' town;

She soothes 'em, mother-like, wiv podgy 'ands,
An' makes 'em dream agen uv peaceful lands.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

In The Doldrums

Friends!

Have you, too, noticed that calm which descends
Upon affairs today?

Search as we may,
The papers have few things indeed to say
Of even world affairs, and, as to local,
Why, they are hardly vocal.
They even lack news of diverting crimes.
These be dull times.

Even the seething world of politics
Where factions mix,
And cause, most days, at least some mild commotion,
Seem like a placid ocean -
Like some blue tropic sea, peaceful and calm.
Floored with pink coral, fringed by wavy palm,
Where all is gentleness and holy calm...
Talking of topics, even Mister Hughes
Seems, in these days, steadfastly to refuse
To air his views.
Nay, he will not
Even refer to Mister Watt.
Eh, he is far too mild.
And, friends, I fear me that we are beguiled
By this strange calm, this seeming peace, this bliss.
My friends, I - don't - like - this!
For
In the not too greatly distant yore
I've seen it all before.

And I, my friends,
Know well what it portends.
The silent politicians, friends, are scheming
While we are dozing, dreaming.
Seeming to rest from labour, they are busy
Thinking until their mighty brains grow dizzy
For why, my friends, elections darkly loom
Large in the middle-distance, and gaunt Doom
Looks down upon them, poised to spring like winking

Unless they do some stern and solid thinking . . .

And does the politician think these days of us,
Who seem so precious to him when the fuss
And fret of mad campaigning wring his withers
What time he blathers
Loud of intelligent electors? Yes;
I must confess
He thinks of us; but never quite
As sentient beings yearning for the light;
For, friends, he dotes
Ever on votes.
And, truly, as it was in the beginning
(No matter which side happens to be winning)
'Tis now, and ever will be just the same.
And we shall still be mere pawns in the game . . .

Voters! For goodness sake,
Awake!
It's up to you
To do
Some really serious thinking too.
I don't care on which side you mean to vote
Peel off the coat!
(Indeed, indeed,
You may do wonders if you will take heed)
Or else - I say it with reluctant lips
Remain, as hitherto, just poker chips.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

In The First Elective Ministry

In the neolithic age of our Australia, long ago,
There dwelt a wise old chieftain, as you probably don't know;
His royal tastes and habits I won't venture to describe,
But his plain horse-sense was noted and applauded by his tribe.

Now, this chief was not a despot, as you will, perhaps, conclude;
For, though debate was noisy and procedure somewhat crude,
There did exist a Parliament, elected in due form,
With a Premier and Ministry - which made things pretty warm.

For the style of Party Government, in vogue about that time,
Was inclined to lead to discord - not to mention down-right crime.
For boomerangs and waddies were used freely in debate;
And, as a rule, ex-Ministers were spoken of as 'late.'

For the salaries of Ministers were not to be despised;
And 'emoluments of office ' were, indeed, most highly prized.
The Premier got five 'possums and ten fat grubs a day,
While a snake and three gohannas were his colleagues' daily pay.

Then other perks and privileges happened such aa these;
The Minister controlling Rain and State Corroborees
Got all his ochre on the nod - in other words, his clothes.
So portfolios were coveted, as you may well suppose.

In consequence, the whole procedure of the House was 'fight.'
No Ministry created in the morning saw the night.
And all the posts were sinecures the shorthand writers filled;
For the press-reports read briefly: 'Sixteen wounded; seven killed.'

Now, the practical King Billy could not fail to recognise
That this bad old Party system was not either right or wise.
Public works were at a standstill, and the tribe was losing wealth.
Not to mention that the House's sittings menaced public health.

The Department of Smoke-Signalling was in a shocking state;
And Defence had been forgotten in the noise of the debate.
The Flint and Sandstone Bonus Bill was shelved time and again;
And the tribe was getting very short of able-bodied men.

The common-sensed old chief sat down and pondered hard and long;
And thought him out a simple scheme to right this crying wrong.
Then he dissolved the Parliament and called his tribe around,
And told his plan; and all agreed his arguments were sound.

'But then,' they said, 'it's most unconstitutional, you know.
Besides, we have no precedent; therefore you have no show.'
But Bill dispensed with precedent and substituted sense -
Whereat the anger of the tribal Tories was immense.

'The nation's welfare,' said the chief, 'is what I have in mind;
And this bad old Party Government must all be left behind.
Henceforth I set my Parliament a task it may not shirk,
And members will, please, understand that fighting isn't work.

'We'll have Elective Ministries, and they shall rule unharmed
For forty moons; and members must attend the House unarmed.
Next election you may club them, should their actions prove unwise;
And for the second term the victors may enjoy the prize.'

They called it 'socialistic'; but King Billy had his way.
For forty moons each Minister enjoys his place and pay.
Since only once within that time the chance of office came,
The members took to making laws, and ceased to 'play the game.'

Peace and prosperity henceforth smiled on the chieftain's reign;
And, ere he died, he said, 'Behold, I have not ruled in vain.
Down through the future ages shall my Great reform descend.
Australia shall bless my Simple Notion till the end.'

But, if you study recent history, you'll note King Bill
Was most forlornly out of it; for they are at it still.
The daily fight for fatted grubs excites the same old gang;
And debate is mainly waddy, and division boomerang.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

In Time

'In good time, when I am ready,
Wondrous schemes shall I unfold;
But we must be cautious, steady,
Cleaving to the safe and old.
Patience, prudence must prevail;
They who venture often fail.'

Thus the politician, weakly
Of the big things of the State;
While the patient public, meekly
Wait, and ever hopeful, wait;
While he slyly woos their vote
With shrewd turnings of his coat.

But, in time, when other people
Populate this troubled world,
Lo, from housetop and from steeple,
Futile curses will be hurled
Curses on the shiftless ones,
Feckless robbers of their sons.

When the last good tree has withered
In an arid, rainless clime,
Then the weary soul who blithered
Of the verdancy of Time
Will grow restless in his grave,
While his baulked descendants rave.

They will curse the generation
That has beggared them by stealth;
Curse the mad procrastination
That has robbed the land of wealth
Wealth their foolish fathers spent,
Reckless and improvident.

'What care we?' declare the spoilers.
'We have ample for to-day!
Other ages, other toilers
Let them suffer as they may.'

Let the nation's hope be killed,
That our bellies may be filled!

'If to-day our wealth be doubled,
If to-day our trade be good,
Why should we be plagued and troubled
With vague dreams of nationhood?
For our selfish purpose we
Gaily rob prosperity.'

Robbers of coming race,
Glibly crying 'In good time.'
If one good ye had to face
Sons, and answer for your crime,
With that cry still in your throats,
How, then, would ye scheme for votes?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Inevitable

At the beginning of the week
A strictly rigid path I seek,
And vow the only state for me,
In finance, is stability;
I sternly view all borrowing
As an absurd and evil thing.

But, as old Time slips by on skids,
And, with him sundry 'bobs' and 'quids,'
And my financial state gets low,
With pay-day still some laps to go,
I have to own - twixt me and you
It is inevitable, too.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Ingavar

O, the trees grow straight and the trees grow tall,
And the trees grow all around;
And the long limbs sprout the trunks about,
Where the Davlo owl is found.
And the Davlo bird is most absurd
In the early days of June;
For he sings this song the whole day long,
To a strange, fantastic tune.

'O, ink, ink, ink! I sit and think;
I brood on the Wildwood Tree;
But, near or far, on Ingavar,
No ink, no ink I see.
And late or soon the swift cartoon
Must soar to the Utmost Star.
O, ink, ink, ink! I swoon! I sink!
O, inkless, Ingavar!'

O, the trees grow long, and the trees grow strong,
And the tress grow good and green,
And the gloomy shades steal thro' the glades
Where the Halgi Tit is seen.
And the Halgi Tit he loves to sit
On the frond of a swaying fern,
And croon, and croon, to a low, loose tune
This nervous, nude Nocturn.

'Chow-white, chow-white! All night, all night,
While the moon peeps thro' the leaves,
And the sad wind soughs thro' inlaced boughs,
Where the shadows creep like thieves.
I cry, and yearn for the Nude Nocturn!
O, I seek her near and far!
Chow-white, chow-white! I croon all night,
Thro' the glades of Ingavar.'

O, the trees grow pale, and tall trees quail,
And the sacred trees whisper soft.
And the startled bush it murmurs 'Hush!'

When the Denawk swoops aloft.
And, as he swoops, he shrieks and whoops
In a ruthless, Rhythmic way;
For twixt the trees and the sobbing breeze
The Denawk seeks his prey.

'Ho, rhyme, rhyme, rhyme! All fat and prime!
I live by rhyme alone!
In bush and town I hunt it down,
And tear it flesh from bone.
With a purpose grim for the synonym
I forage near and far;
And I rend my prey in a rhythmic way
On the gums of Ingavar.'

O, yearning trees! O, burning trees
O, trees that bend and sway!
The good brown earth that gave you birth
Is very damp to-day.
In mire and mud we slid we've slid;
Our boots are filled with slime
Farewell ye gums till summer comes
Farewell till Summertime.

The Davlo hoots, the Halgi toots,
The Denawk swoops no more
Alone to yearn, the Nude Nocturn
Adorns your leafy floor.
But Trees, O, trees, what ecstacies
Thrill thro' you, root and spar,
When the Lord High Pot comes up to squat
In the Glades of Ingavar,
Afar,
Green glades of Ingavar.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Intangible Tigers

There's a moral in this: tho' I own that the preaching
Of moral and maxim in season and out
Grows stale; yet these days of depressions far-reaching
Demand any means to put worry to rout.
So in that menagerie now populated
By home-coming chickens and wolves upon mats
Consider, when finally doubt's dissipated
How often our tigers turn out to be cats.

Three-fourths of our troubles some Frenchman has told us,
But seldom occur. Tho' the ills of the mind
Loom forth as fierce tigers while doubts yet unfold us,
They turn into cats once we've put them behind.
How often the dread of some darkened tomorrow
Has ruined today; till, at Time's urgent call,
Tomorrow's false fears become yester's small sorrow
Innocuous cats, and not tigers at all.

So, here is the moral - just take it or leave it.
It doesn't much matter, you'll scorn it, no doubt.
Yet here is a truth and, if men don't receive it
I've still done my duty in pointing it out.
False troubles, false tigers engender false fearing;
So use the grey matter close under your hat
And, as you fare forth thro' life's dark forests peering,
Go armed against tigers - but still expect cats.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Introducing The Day Family

Sun Day is a simple child,
Face new washed and shining;
In the morning prim and mild
Church and mid-day dining.
If, before the shadows fall,
You should find him going
Out to romp, or play at ball
Well, well. The child is growing.

Mon Day is a sulky boy.
He frowns on work and hates it.
Tho' facing life should bring him joy,
He ill appreciates it.
But Tues Day is a bright young man,
Alert, well-dressed - oh, very
Snatching pleasure where he can,
Giving girls 'the merry.'

Wednes Day, stout and middle-aged,
Seems hard-pressed and harried;
On grave affairs is he engaged;
And very much he's married.
He holds severe and stubborn views
'Young folk, sir? Trouble breeders!'
He scans the day's financial news
And always reads the leaders.

Thurs Day, tho' his hair be scant,
Is bouyant, bland and jolly;
Tho' elderly, he's tolerant
Of many a minor folly.
He owns a city business where
He sits 'in consultation';
But all his grey-haired pals declare
That golf's his occupation.

Old Fri Day grins a toothless grin
A grandfer, stooped and shrunken.
His chest, his cheeks are caving in,

His dim old eyes deep sunken.
Yet, tho' he sit and moan and mope,
All spent and worn with working,
Oft times a cunning gleam of hope
In his old eyes seems lurking.

In Satur Day one might expect
To find a wreck, fast dying.
Yet here's a lusty stripling decked
For holiday, a-crying
To merry friends, in eager tones,
All bound for playing spaces;
Or else his favorite he 'phones
And takes her to the races.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Introduction To Ginger Mick

Jist to intraj'uice me cobber, an 'is name is Ginger Mick
A rorty boy, a naughty boy, wiv rude impressions thick
In 'is casu'l conversation, an' the wicked sort o' face
That gives the sudden shudders to the lor-abidin' race.

'Is name is on the records at the Melbourne City Court,
Fer doin' things an' sayin' things no reel nice feller ort;
An 'is name is on the records uv the Army, over there,
Fer doin' things - same sort o' things that rose the Bench's 'air.

They never rung no joy-bells when 'e made 'is first de- boo;
But 'e got free edjication, w'ich they fondly shoved 'im thro';
Then turned 'im loose in Spadger's Lane to 'ang around the street
An' 'elp the cop to re-erlize the 'ardness uv 'is beat.

Then 'e quickly dropped 'is aitches, so as not to be mistook
Fer an edjicated person, 'oo 'is cobbers reckoned crook;
But 'e 'ad a trick wiv figgers that ud make a clerk look sick;
So 'e pencilled fer a bookie; an' 'e 'awked a bit, did Mick.

A bloke can't be partic'lar 'oo must battle fer a crust;
An' some, they pinch fer preference, an' some, becos they must.
When times is 'ard, an' some swell coves is richer than they ort;
Well, it's jist a little gamble fer a rise, agin the Court.

Now, Mick wus never in it as a reel perfeshnal crook,
But sometimes cops 'as slabs uv luck, so sometimes 'e wus took,
An' 'e got a repitation, thro' 'im bein' twice interned;
But 'e didn't skite about it, 'cos 'e felt it wasn't earned.

I reckerlect one time a Beak slings Mick a slab uv guff,
Wiv 'Thirty days or forty bob' (Mick couldn't raise the stuff) -
An' arsts 'im where 'is conshuns is, an' w'y 'e can't be good,
An' Mick jist grins, an' takes it out, an' never understood.

An' that is orl there wus to Mick, wiv orl 'is leery ways.
If I wus up among the 'eads, wiv right to blame or praise,
Whenever some sich bloke as 'im wus tucked away fer good
I'd chalk them words above 'is 'ead: "E never understood.'

If I wus up among the 'eads, wiv right to judge the game,
I'd look around fer chance to praise, an' sling the flamin' blame;
Fer findin' things in blokes to praise pays divvies either way;
An' wot they're blamed fer yesterd'y brings 'earty cheers to-day.

Yes, 'earty cheers frum thortless coots 'oo feel dead sure their God
Would never 'ave no time fer crooks 'oo does a stretch in quod;
'Oo reckon 'eaven is a place where orl folk tork correck,
An' judgment, where the 'vulgar' gits it solid in the neck.

An' Ginger Mick wus vulgar. 'Struth! When things wus gettin' slow
'E took to 'awkin' rabbits, wich is very, very low-
'E wus the sort o' bloke to watch when 'e come in yer gate:
'E 'ad a narsty fightin' face that orl nice people 'ate.

'E 'ad that narsty fightin' face that peacefulfolk call grim;
But I 'ave seen it grow reel soft when kiddies spoke to 'im.
'E 'ad them narsty sullen eyes that nice folk can't enjure;
But I 'ave seen a smile in 'em that made our frien'ship sure.

There's men 'oo never knoo ole Mick, an' passed 'im in the street,
An' looks away an' sez, 'See 'im? A narsty chap to meet!
'E'd be an ugly customer alone an' after dark!'
An' Mick, 'e'd twitch 's jor at 'em, 'arf earnest, 'arf a lark.

That wus the sort o' character that Mick earned be 'is looks.
The talk uv 'im, the walk uv 'im, put 'im among the crooks.
An' Mick, 'e looks on swank an' style as jist a lot o' flam,
An' snouted them that snouted 'im, an' never give a dam.

But spite uv orl 'is 'ulkin' frame, an' langwidge flowin' free
I seen the thing inside uv Mick that made 'im good to me.
An' spite uv orl the sneerin' ways that leery blokes imploy,
I knoo 'im jist fer wot 'e wus - a big, soft-'earted boy.

Fer when a bloke 'as come to be reel cobbers wiv a bloke,
They sorter swap good fellership wivout words bein' spoke.
I never slung no guff to Mick, 'e never smooged to me,
But we could smoke, an' 'old our jor, an' be reel company.

There 'as bin times that 'e would curse to 'ave recalled by me,

When I 'ave seen 'im doin' things that coves calls charity;
An' there's been times, an' frequent times, in spite uv orl 'is looks,
When I 'ave 'eard 'im sayin' things that blokes shoves inter books.

But Ginger Mick was Ginger Mick - a leery boy, fer keeps,
'Oo 'owled 'Wile Rabbee!' in the streets, in tones that gave yeh creeps.
'E never planned 'is mode uv life, nor chose the Lane fer lair,
No more than 'e designed 'is chiv or colour uv 'is 'air.

So Ginger 'awked, an' Ginger pinched, an' Ginger went to quod,
An' never thort to waste 'is time in blamin' man or God -
An' then there came the Call uv Stoush, or jooty - wot's a name?
An' Ginger cocked 'is 'ear to it, an' found 'is flamin' game.

I intrajuce me cobber 'ere; an' don't make no ixcuse
To any culchered click that it's a peb I intrajuce.
I dunno wot 'is ratin' wus in this 'ere soshul plan;
I only know, inside o' me, I intrajuce a man.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Introduction: Rose Of Spadgers

I've crawled; I've eaten dirt; I've lied a treat;
I've dodged the cops an' led a double life;
I've readied up wild tales to tell me wife,
W'ich afterwards I've 'ad to take an' eat
Red raw. Aw, I been goin' it to beat
A big massed band: mixin' with sin an' strife,
Gettin' me bellers punchered with a knife
An' all but endin' up in Russell Street.

I've mixed it - with the blessin' uv the church -
Down there in Spadgers, fightin' mad, an' blind
With 'oly rage. I've 'ad full leaf to smirch
Me tongue with sich rude words as come to mind,
Becos I 'ated leavin' in the lurch
Wot Ginger Mick, me cobber, left be'ind.

Don't git me wrong. I never went an' planned
No gory all-in scraps or double deals.
But one thing follered on another 'eels,
Jist like they do in life, until I land
Flop in the soup - surprised, you understand,
But not averse; jist like a feller feels
'Oo reaches fer the water-jug at meals
An' finds a dinkum gargle in 'is 'and.

Su'prised but not averse. That puts it right
An', if Fate 'as these things all fixed before,
Well, wot's a bloke to do, to 'oo a fight
Was not unwelkim in the days of yore?
Pertickler when 'e knows 'is cause is right
An' 'as a gorspil spritiker to oncore.

Regardin' morils, I was on a cert;
Fer if I'd missed the step an' fell frum grace
By rudely pushin' in me brother's face
Without no just ixcuse, it might uv 'urt.
But this Spike Wegg - the narsty little squirt! -
Collected 'is becos ther' was no trace
Uv virchoo in the cow. 'Is aims was base

When 'e laid out to tempt a honest skirt.

An' so me arm was strong becoz me cause
Was on the square, an' I don't 'esitate.
The parson bloke, 'e sez all moril laws
They justified me act But, anyrate,
Before I crools this yarn we better pause
Till I gives you the dope an' git it straight.

Now, Ginger Mick, me cobber, went to war,
An' on Gallipoli, 'e wandered West.
Per'aps, less said about 'is life the best;
It was 'is death that shoved along 'is score.
But that tale's old; an' Ginger ain't no more.
'E done 'is bit an' faded, like the rest
'Oo fought an' fell an' left wot they loved best
In 'opes they'd be dealt fair by pals of yore.

An' all Mick left was Rose. 'Look after Rose.
Mafeesh!' 'e sez when 'e was on the brink.
An' there was thousan's like 'im, I suppose.
I ain't no moralizer fer to think
Wot others ort to do; I only knows
I 'ad me job, frum w'ich I durstn't shrink.

Unless you 'ave a beat down Spadgers way
I don't ixpect you ever met with Rose.
She don't move in yer circle, I suppose,
Or call to bite a bun upon yer Day.
An' if yeh got a intro, I dare say
Yeh'd take it snifty an' turn up yer nose.
Now that we don't need Micks to fight our foes
Them an' their Roses 'as to fade away.

They 'ave to simmer down an' not ubtrude,
Now we are safe an' finished with the war.
We don't intend to be unkind or rude
Or crayfish on the things we said before
Uv our brave boys. An', as fer gratichood,
Well, there's a Guv'mint, ain't there? Wot's it for?

But Mick buzzed orf too quick to wed a bride

An' leave a widder doo fer Guv'mint aid.
Spite uv ole Spadgers, Rose was still a maid;
An' spite uv Spadgers, she still 'as 'er pride
That wouldn't let 'er whimper if she tried,
Or profit by 'er misery, an' trade
On Mick's departin' an' the noise it made.
I know 'er. An' I know she'd sooner died.

I know 'er. But to them that never knows,
An' never tries to know the 'earts an' ways
Uv common folk, there wus n't much to Rose
That called fer any speshul loud 'Oorays -
Nothin' 'eroic. She's jist 'one uv those' -
One uv the ruck that don't attract our gaze.

I guess you was n't born down Spadgers way,
Or spent yer child'ood in the gutter there
Jist runnin' wild, or dragged up be the 'air
Till you was fit to earn a bit of pay
By honest toil or - any other way.
You never 'ad to battle to keep square,
Or learn, first 'and, uv every trap an' snare
That life 'as waitin' for yeh day by day.

But I 'ave read about a flower that grows
Once in a while upon a 'eap uv muck.
It ain't the flower's own choosin', I suppose,
An' bein' sweet an' pure is jist its luck.
There's 'uman blooms I've knowed the like uv those,
Strugglin' in weeds; an' 'struth! I like their pluck.

Don't make no error. I ain't givin' Rose
The 'igh-bred manners uv some soshul queen.
She were n't no shrinkin', simperin', girleen,
With modest glances droopin' to 'er toes.
She'd smash a prowlin' male acrost the nose
As quick as any tart I ever seen.
But, bli'me, she was straight an' she was clean,
As more than one mauled lady-killer knows.

Straight as a die! An' jist as clean an' sweet
An' thorny as the bloom 'oose name she bears.

To cling on to 'er virchoo weren't no feat
With 'er; she simply kep' it unawares
An' natchril, like people trust their feet,
An' don't turn silly 'and-springs on the stairs.

That's 'ow Mick found, an' left 'er - straight an' clean.
She seen the good in 'im long years before
'E proved it good an' plenty at the war.
She loved an' mothered 'im becos she seen
The big, softhearted boy 'e'd alwiz been
Be'ind 'is leery ways an' fightin' jor,
An' all 'is little mix-ups with the Lor.
She knoo 'e weren't the man to treat 'er mean.

They was a proper match. But Mick, 'e goes
An' slips 'is wind, there, on Gallipoli;
Jist pausin' to remark, 'Look after Rose.'
An', if them partin' words weren't meant fer me,
Well, I'm the gay angora, I suppose,
In this divertin' slab uv 'istory.

It ain't no soft romance, with pale pink bows,
This common little tale I 'ave to tell
Concernin' common on folk, an' wot befell
When me an' my ole parson cobber goes
An' does our bit in lookin' after Rose.
The Church admits I done my part reel well;
An' there won't be no need to ring a bell
Or call the cops in when the langwidge flows.

So, 'ere's a go. If my remarks is plain
An' short uv frills, they soots me tale; an' so,
I 'opes the rood boorjosie will refrain
Frum vulger chuckin'-orf; fer well I know
Ladies an' gentlemen uv Spadgers Lane
Won't fail to un'erstand. So, 'ere's a go.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Inured

Young man about to marry,
Don't hesitate, I pray;
No need for you to tarry
If you can only stay.

So let it be your prayer
That you can see it out;
For, if you are a stayer
You'll win to bliss, no doubt.

Tho' she may nag and scold you,
And drive you mad at first,
Let this bright thought uphold you;
The first twelve years are worst.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

It Isn'T Cricket

Hello, old cobber. Well, what's on your mind?
You're lookin' awful gloomy and mysterious
Done in your dough? The horses been unkind?
Nobody ill? I hope it's nothin' serious.
Aw, don't be funny. Foreign what? Affairs?
Well, they ain't happ'nin' this side of the Murray.
Nothin' in my young life, them blighters' cares,
Why go so far away to look for worries?

What? League o' Nations? Look, you ain't allowed
Them sort of jokes. There's nothin' goin' to happen.
I lose no sleep about that comic crowd
A lot of glum old gaspots, always yappin'
Most of 'em foreigners! . . . Aw, boy, wake up!
That paper talk don't cause my blood to curdle . . .
Time we was concentratin' on the Cup.
Dam politics. What's fancied for the hurdle?

World politics? A grown-up cove like you!
Doin' your block that way! It's childish! Reely!
I know a dozen foreign coves, I do
All ignorint. Not edjicated freely,
Like me an' you; an' - you know - insular.
Reel narrer-minded . . . Sport? They couldn't stick it
No staminer. They ain't built like we are . . .
Aw, let's talk somethin' sensible, like cricket.

War? . . . Listen to him! Ain't you wise to war?
Just politicians' talk - coves of that kidney ...
Eh? Troopships? Headin' Melbourne way? What for? ...
Perish the crows? They've just bombarded Sydney? ...
Look, this is murder! What's the bloomin' game?
Sydney? My brother? All my wife's relations!
Bombarded! ... Here; some coot must take the blame!
Where's the police? Where's this here League o' Nations?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

It Was Never Contemplated

When old ADAM bit the apple,
And thereafter had to grapple
With hard toil to earn his daily bread by sweat,
There's no doubt that he protested
That his 'rights' had been molested,
And he's probably protesting strongly yet:
'When this garden was created
It was never contemplated
It was never in the schedule or the plan
'Twasn't even dimly hinted
That my living would be stinted,
Or that Work would ever be the lot of man.'

But in spite of protestation
ADAM, with his lone relation,
Was evicted in an arbitrary way,
Even though that resolution
Wasn't in the Constitution,
And his children have been grafting to this day.
But poor ADAM'S old contention
Has become a stock convention
'Mid the ADAMS of the nations ever since,
'Mid the shufflers and the shirkers,
Crusted Tory anti-workers,
They whom nought but 'precedent' can e'er convince.

They're the ADAMS of the race; they're the men that clog the pace,
With their backs upon the vanguard and their eyes upon the rear;
Praising loud their point of view, and regarding owt that's new
With a rabid Tory hatred and a vague old-fashioned fear.
They're the men of yester-year loitering all needless here,
And meandering around and 'round in aimless, endless rings.
Ever ready to resent acts without a precedent,
Such as were not contemplated in the ancient scheme of things.
'O, it was not contemplated!
'Tis the cry of the belated,
The complaint of all the Old Worlds waterlogged;
Tis the trade-mark of the Tory;
'Tis the declaration hoary;

'Tis the protest of the busted and the bogged.
Mark, whenever it is uttered
By the lips of ancients muttered,
There is wisdom lacking here, at any rate
For, when Tories were created
It was never contemplated
That they ever would attempt to contemplate.

There are many things decided,
Quite by precedent unguided.
It was never contemplated, by the way.
When the scheme of things was shaping,
And mankind emerged from aping,
That he'd ever learn to eat three times a day;
Yet, all precedent unheeding,
Even Tories time their feeding,
And are known to be quite regular at meals;
Though in neolithic ages
'Twas laid down by ancient sages
That a man shall eat when so inclined he feels.

He's the dead weight at the back; he's the log upon the track;
He's the man who shouts the warning when the danger's past and gone;
He's the prophet of the old by defunct traditions hold;
He's the chap who sits and twaddles while the crowd goes marching on.
Of the things un contemplated in the councils of the dead;
But the nation marches by heedless of his bitter cry
Marches on and contemplates the vital things away ahead.

In the shaping of a nation
Can we crowd all contemplation
Can we plan it in a hurried week or so?
Cease your ancient whiskered story
And observe, O gentle Tory,
We are contemplating matters as we go.
E'en to-day we're contemplating
Matters princip'ly relating
To the shaping of to-morrow's onward way;
And to-morrow ev'ry grafter
Will be forming plans for after;
But we are not harking back to yesterday.

For the future days arranging;
Seeking, planning, ever changing;
Weeding out the old mistakes of yester-year;
Planting now the seed of new things
March the men who dare and do things,
Opening up the unblazed road without a fear.
And, O mark you, gentle Tory,
We shall judge your measures hoary
By the use in this day's scheme they represent;
We shall use them if we want them;
If we don't we shall supplant them,
For we do not care a damn for precedent.

He's discretion at its worst; he a harbinger reversed;
He's the obstinate old party who abhors the new and strange.
He's the man whose ancient eyes ever fail to recognise
That the Law of Man was ever Change, and ever will be Change.
He's a scoffer at the Law; he's a blemish and a flaw;
And he whines as did old ADAM when he lost the realms of bliss.
When they shored him in the cold in the parlous days of old:
'THIS WAS NEVER CONTEMPLATED! YOU'VE NO PRECEDENT FOR THIS!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

It's No Joke To One Bloke

Dear Comrade: In the game of politics
A Senator gits quite enough of kicks
Without 'is photer sittin' in the press
Wot makes 'is map look like a nasty mess
A pitcher that present 'im to the mob
A fair gazob.

Me, I ain't vain, but it is past a joke
To go an' print a crook dile of a bloke
So that the mob sez, 'Is this Digger? Struth!
'E's changed a good bit since 'is flamin' youth.
We thort 'e was a better lookin' chap.
Strike! Wot a man!

Why make me look like somethin' choice in crooks?
For, if I ain't got nothin' but me looks,
Why, gimme looks, an' bung a photer in
That gives me sex-appeal a dinkum spin
I ain't - (For w'ich remark 'e'll please excuse)
No Billy Hughes.

An' so, I sends 'erewith me dinkum chiv -
The dinkum Digger, w'ich I 'ope you'll give
A bit o' space to 'elp along your sales
An' mind you say I come from Noo South Wales!
That ought to fetch 'em. So you play your part,
An' 'ave a 'eart.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Jack'

Since Stanley felt the icy blast
Jack leads the Opposition.
A mild, scholastic man to cast
For such a tough position.
Fit for some rude iconoclast
Or thick-skinned politician.

His academic mind e'er seeks
Direct appeals to reason;
He thinks a deal before he speaks,
And ever speaks in season.
Quibbling, to him, with folly reeks,
And sophistry is treason.

All sentiment he safely locks
Within; and jokes unnerve him;
No soap or any other box
As pedestal would serve him.
He'd analyse a paradox;
And jibes can never swerve him.

A poor equipment, this, you'd say,
To meet the hurly-burly.
Where votes are wheedled in a way
Both devious and curly.
We may grow up to Jack some day.
He's sound, but somewhat early.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

January 2nd

How many have you broken up till now?
I know that yesterday you made a vow,
And most solemnly 'twas spoken;
But how many have you broken?
Oh, you kept 'em for an hour or two - But How?

You swore at twelve o'clock or thereabouts,
Most resolutely, scorning any doubts,
That the glad New Year would find you
With your vices all behind you.
And you'd be the very best of good boy scouts.

But you fell. And, oh, how quickly did you fall!
And now you're feeling low, and mean, and small;
For, despite all your devising,
You have come to realising
That you're really only human after all.

Ah, well, at least you had the will to try;
And you may reform some day before you die,
And there's this small consolation
On the road to reformation:
There's another New Year coming by and by.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Jim

'Now, be the Hokey Fly!' sez Peter Begg.
'Suppose 'e comes 'ome with a wooden leg.
Suppose 'e isn't fit to darnce at all,
Then, ain't we 'asty fixin' up this ball?
A little tournament at Bridge is my
Idear,' sez Peter. 'Be the Hokey Fly!'

Ole Peter Begg is gettin' on in years.
'E owns a reel good farm; an' all 'e fears
Is that some girl will land 'im, by an' by,
An' shar it with 'im - be the Hokey Fly.
That's 'is pet swear-word, an' I dunno wot
'E's meanin', but 'e uses it a lot.

'Darncin'!' growls Begg. We're fixin' up the 'all
With bits uv green stuff for a little ball
To welcome Jim, 'oo's comin' 'ome nex' day.
We're 'angin' flags around to make things gay,
An' shiftin' chairs, an' candle-greasin' floors,
As is our way when blokes comes 'ome from wars.

'A little game uv Bridge,' sez Peter Begg.
'Would be more decent like, an' p'r'aps a keg
Uv somethin' if the 'ero's feelin' dry.
But this 'ere darncin'! Be the Hokey Fly,
These selfish women never thinks at all
About the guest; they only wants the ball.

'Now, cards,' sez Begg, 'amuses ev'ry one.
An' then our soldier guest could 'ave 'is fun
If 'e'd lost both 'is legs. It makes me sick
'Ere! Don't spread that candle-grease too thick
Yeh're wastin' it; an' us men 'as to buy
Enough for nonsense, be the Hokey Fly!'

Begg, 'e ain't never keen on wastin' much.
'Peter,' I sez, 'it's you that needs a crutch.
Why don't yeh get a wife, an' settle down?'
'E looks reel fierce, an' answers, with a frown,

'Do you think I am goin' to be rooked
For 'arf me tucker, jist to get it cooked?'

I lets it go at that, an' does me job;
An' when a little later on I lob
Along the 'omeward track, down by Flood's gate
I meet ole Digger Smith, an' stops to state
Me views about the weather an' the war...
'E tells me Jim gets 'ere nex' day, at four.

An' as we talk, I sees along the road
A strange bloke 'umpin' some queer sort uv load.
I points 'im out to Smith an' sez, 'Oo's that?
Looks like a soldier, don't 'e, be 'is 'at?'
'Stranger,' sez Digger, 'be the cut uv 'im.'
But, trust a mother's eyes...'It's Jim! My Jim!

My Jim!' I 'ears; an' scootin' up the track
Come Missus Flood, with Flo close at 'er back.
It was a race, for lover an' for son;
They finished neck an' neck; but mother won,
For it was 'er that got the first big 'ug.
(I'm so took back I stands there like a mug.)

Then come Flo's turn; an' Jim an' Digger they
Shake 'ands without no fancy, gran'-stand play.
Yeh'd think they parted yesterd'y them two.
For all the wild 'eroics that they do.
'Yeh done it, lad' sez Jim. 'I knoo yeh would.'
'You bet,' sez Smith; 'but I'm all to the good.'

Then, uv a sudden, all their tongues is loosed.
They finds me there, an' I am intrajuiced;
An' Jim tells 'ow it was 'e came to land
So soon, while Mar an' Flo each 'olds a 'and.
But, jist as sudden, they all stop an' stare
Down to the 'ouse, at Dad Flood standin' there.

'E's got 'is 'and up shadin' off the sun.
Then 'e starts up to them; but Dad don't run:
'E isn't 'owlin' for 'is lost boy's kiss;
'E's got 'is own sweet way in things like this.

'E wanders up, and' stands an' looks at Jim.
An', spare me days, that look was extra grim!

I seen the mother pluckin' at 'er dress;
I seen the girl's white face an' 'er distress.
An' Digger Smith, 'e looks reel queer to me:
Grinnin' inside 'imself 'e seemed to be.
At last Dad sez - oh, 'e's a tough ole gun! -
'Well, are yeh sorry now for what yeh done?'

Jim gives a start; but answers with a grin,
'Well, Dad, I 'ave been learnin' discipline.
An' tho' I ain't quite sure wot did occur
Way back' - 'e's grinnin' worse - 'I'm sorry, sir.'
(It beats me, that, about these soldier blokes:
They're always grinnin', like all things was jokes.)

P'r'aps Dad is gettin' dull in 'is ole age;
But 'e don't seem to see Jim's cammyflage.
P'r'aps 'e don't want to; for, in 'is ole eye,
I seen a twinkle as 'e give reply.
'Nex' week,' 'e sez, 'we will begin to cart
The taters. Yeh can make another start.'

But then 'e grabs Jim's 'and. I seen the joy
In mother's eyes. 'Now, welcome 'ome, me boy,'
Sez Dad; an' then 'e adds, 'Yeh've made me proud;'
That's all. An' 'e don't add it none too loud.
Dad don't express 'is feelin's in a shout;
It cost 'im somethin' to git that much out.

We 'ad the darnce. An', spite uv all Begg's fears,
Jim darnced like 'e could keep it up for years;
Mostly with Flo. We don't let up till three;
An' then ole Peter Begg, Doreen an' me
We walk together 'ome, an' on the way,
Doreen 'as quite a lot uv things to say.

'Did you see Flo?' sez she. 'Don't she look grand?
That Jim's the luckiest in all the land
An' little Smith - that girl uv is, I'm sure,

She'll bring 'im 'appiness that will endure.'
She 'ugs my arm, then sez "Usband or wife,
If it's the right one, is the wealth uv life.'

I sneaks a look at Begg, an' answers, 'Yes,
Yeh're right, ole girl; that's the reel 'appiness.
An' if ole, lonely growlers was to know
The worth uv 'appy marridge 'ere below,
They'd swap their bank-books for a wife,' sez I.
Sez Peter Begg, 'Well! Be the - Hokey - Fly!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Jim'

Have you heard the magniloquent, eloquent Jim?
The yogi of Yarra, whose silvery tongue,
In days of his promise won many votes from us,
When loud in the land was the praise of him sung,
And he magnetised all with his vigor and vim -
That great oratorical oracle, Jim.

But the days of his rigorous, vigorous speech
And plausible promise have gone to the pack.
When days comes for action, the feud and the faction
Are making him seem a political hack
For the gamour is gone and his glory goes dim,
And inflation oration may jettison Jim.

The silence so golden, in olden days gone,
Is not yet debased, tho' he talked without end.
His usus loquendi has come to an end, he
Must seek for new methods if ways he would mend,
The land looks for much from her eminent son;
But talking and baulking won't get the thing done.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Jim Of Maribyrnong'

They were forthright days when Jim was born,
When they called a spade a spade.
And statesmen held in lofty scorn
he trickster's sticky trade.
For their eyes were clear and their views were strong,
And they'd be no party's too!
And big, bluff Jim of Maribyrnong
Learned wisdom in this school.

For black was black, and white was white,
When good Victoria reigned,
And argument made no wrong right,
No demagogue explained
That good might ever come of wrong,
Or black be painted white,
When big, bluff Jim of Maribyrnong
Went out to fight the fight.

'Twas thus Jim learned his politics;
And he's little changed today;
For he failed to learn those subtle tricks
That modern 'statesmen' play.
To aid the folk who'd suffered long
Thro' tyranny's base laws,
Marched big, bluff Jim of Maribyrnong,
Staunch for the Labor cause.

But times have changed a deal of late,
And the 'art' of politics;
And they say that Jim is out of date,
And will not learn new tricks.
But still unswayed by wrangling throng,
Forthright and conscience free,
Goes simple Jim of Maribyrnong
With his crude, blunt honesty.

Jim's Girl

"Oo is that girl,' sez Digger Smith,
That never seems to bother with
No blokes: the bint with curly 'air?
I've often seen 'er over there
Talkin' to Missus Flood, an' she
Seems like a reel ripe peach to me.

'Not that I'm askin" ... 'Ere 'is eyes
Goes sort uv swiv'ly, an' 'e sighs.
'Not that I'm askin' with idears
Uv love an' marridge; 'ave no fears.
I've chucked the matrimony plan,'
'E sez. 'I'm only 'arf a man.'

This Digger Smith 'as fairly got
Me rampin' with 'is "arf a man' rot.
'E 'as a timber leg, it's true;
But 'e can do the work uv two.
Besides, the things 'e's done Out There
Makes 'im one man an' some to spare.

I knoo 'is question was jist kid.
'E'd met this girl; I know 'e did.
'E knoo Jim Flood an' 'er was booked
For double when the 'Un was cooked.
But, seein' 'er, it used to start
'Im thinkin' of another tart.

'Oh, 'er?' sez I. 'She is a pearl.
I've 'eard she used to be Jim's girl;
But she was jist a child when Jim

Got out. She 'as forgotten 'im.'
I knows jist wot is in 'is mind,
An' sez, 'Wade in, if you're inclined.'

'E give me such a narsty look
I thought 'e meant to answer crook;
But, 'I ain't out for jokes,' sez 'e

'Yeh needn't sling that stuff to me.
I only was jist thinkin' - p'r'aps...
There's some,' 'e sez, 'that sticks to chaps.

'Some girls,' sez 'e, 'keeps true to chaps,
An' wed 'em when they've done with scraps,
An' come 'ome whole. Yeh don't ixpec'
No tart to tie up with a wreck?
Besides,' 'e sez ... 'Well, any'ow,
That girl's all right; I know it now.

'I know,' sez Smith. 'I got it right.
Jim used to talk to me at night
About a little girl 'e tracked.
Er name is Flo. Ain't that a fact?
That's 'er. I know she writes to 'im
Each mail. She ain't forgotten Jim.

'I'd like to swap my luck for Jim's
If 'e comes 'ome with all 'is limbs.
An' if 'e don't - well, I dunno.
I've taken notice uv this Flo,
An' wonder if' - 'e stares at me
'If there is more like 'er' sez 'e.

Now, Digger Smith as learned a lot
Out fightin' there, but 'e ain't got
The cunnin' for to 'ide 'is 'eart.
'E's too damn honest, for a start;
'Is mind's dead simple to a friend.
I've read 'im through from end to end.

I've learned from things 'e 'asn't said
Jist wot's been running in 'is 'ead.
I know there is a girl, somewhere:
Some one 'oo 'ad the 'eart to care
For 'im when 'e went to the war.
I know all that, an' somethin' more.

I know that since 'e came back 'ere
'E 'asn't seen that girl for fear
She'd turn 'im down - give 'im the bird,

An' 'and 'im out the frozen word,
Because 'e's left a leg in France;
An' 'e's afraid to take the chance.

Well, not afraid, p'r'aps, but - shook.
It's jist the form 'is nerves 'ave took.
Now 'e's been watchin' Flo an' seen
'Er style, an' 'ow she's always keen
For news uv Jim. Then 'e starts out
To 'ope, an' 'esitate, an' doubt.

'E wonders if 'is own girl spoke
Jist this same way about 'er bloke.
'E wonders if in 'is girl's eyes
That same look came; an' then 'e sighs,
An' dulls 'is senses with that dope
That 'arf a man ain't got no 'ope.

'E makes me tired. But, all the same,
I tries to work a little game.
'Look 'ere,' I sez. 'About this Flo.
Jim mightn't come back 'ome, yeh know.
You 'ave a fly; yeh're sure to score;
Besides, all's fair in love an'war.'

'Sling that!' 'e sez; but I goes on:
'Ole Jim won't blame yeh when she's gone.
'E knows, the same as me an' you,
These silly tarts, they can't keep true.'
I piles it on, until I've got
'Im where I want 'im - jumpin' 'ot.

An' then 'e says, "Ere, sling that talk!
I might be groggy in me walk;
But if yeh say them things to me
I'm man enough to crack yeh; see?'
'Righto,' sez I. 'That was me plan.
Now wot about this 'arf a man?'

'E stares at me, an' then sez, slow,
'Wot is yer game? Wot do yeh know?'
'Nothin',' I tells 'im, 'only this:

When there's a waitin' tart to kiss
Yeh're only 'arf a man; but when
There's blokes to fight, yeh're twenty men.'

'Wot tart?' 'e asks. 'Yeh mean this Flo?'
'P'r'aps not,' I sez. 'You ought to know.'...
I waits an' lets me words sink in.
An' then- 'e beats me with that grin.
'Match-makin', Bill?' 'e laughs. 'Oh, 'Eil!
You take up knittin' for a spell.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

John Galsworthy

Not for vague honors, not for treacherous power
He lived and toiled thro' this, his earthy span;
But to uphold and cultivate the dower,
God-given, for enlightenment of man,
Here was no tale of talents mis-applied,
But of gifts to the last hour multiplied.

Grave, kindly scrivener, moved to no swift wrath
By tyrannies or Greed's condoning pleas:
Pity was there for Vandal and for Goth
Clutching insensate at earth's vanities.
Pity was there, with truth and justice, when
He held his shining mirror up to men.

That they might see themselves; not as they seem
To smug content and sleek complacency
Lulled by the opiate of their false dream;
But as some wise, kind visitant might see
And weigh and, by wise standards, judge the worth
Of all the sad frailties of earth.

So he has lived; and so he lays him down
Leaving a picture with us at the end,
Not of some grim reformer's fretful frown;
But of a pitying, understanding friend.
And if, thro' him, this blundering world should gain
One mite in wisdom, life were not in vain.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'John T'

I think a great deal too much fuss
Has been aroused 'mid all of us
About this crude economist John T.
And fellows of his kidney now,
'Mid people up in Sydney now,
Are slipping in that city of the free.

He wooed them with high promises
And, 'spite the doubting Thomases,
Cupidity had urged them on to trust
Political cupidity,
Which, plus a strange stupidity,
Had lured them to a scheme of 'boom and bust.'

John T. has perspicacity;
He has a vast capacity
For measuring his moron passing well.
Tho' men of seniority,
When they're in a majority
They'll send him into office for a spell.

But even morons think a while
When trembling on the brink a while
Of chaos, and they've lately come to see,
Subtracting his aggressiveness
And picturesque expressiveness.
There's noting much remaining of John T.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Joi, The Glug

The Glugs abide in a far, far land
That is partly pebbles and stones and sand,
But mainly earth of a chocolate hue,
When it isn't purple or slightly blue.
And the Glugs live there with their aunts and their wives,
In draughty tenements built like hives.
And they climb the trees when the weather is wet,
To see how high they can really get.
Pray, don't forget,
This is chiefly done when the weather is wet.

And every shadow that flits and hides,
And every stream that glistens and glides
And laughs its way from a highland height,
All know the Glugs quite well by sight.
And they say, 'Our test is the best by far;
For a Glug is a Glug; so there you are!
And they climb the trees when it drizzles or hails
To get electricity into their nails;
And the Glug that fails
Is a luckless Glug, if it drizzles or hails.'

Now, the Glugs abide in the Land of Gosh;
And they work all day for the sake of Splosh.
For Splosh the First is the Nation's pride,
And King of the Glugs, on his uncle's side.
And they sleep at night, for the sake of rest;
For their doctors say this suits them best.
And they climb the trees, as a general rule,
For exercise, when the weather is cool.
They're taught at school
To climb the trees when the weather is cool.

And the whispering grass on the gay, green hills
And every cricket that skirls and shrills,
And every moonbeam, gleaming white,
All know the Glugs quite well by sight.
And they say, 'It is safe, the text we bring;
For a Glug is an awfully Glug-like thng.

And they climb the trees when there's sign of fog,
To scan the land for a feasible dog.
They love to jog
Through dells in quest of the feasible dog.'

Now the Glugs eat meals three times a day
Because their fathers ate that way.
And their grandpas said the scheme was good
To help the Glugs digest their food.
And it's wholesome food the Glugs have got,
For it says so plain on the tin and pot.
And they climb the trees when the weather is dry
To get a glimpse of the pale green sky.
We don't know why,
But they love to gaze on the pale green sky.

And every cloud that sails aloft,
And every breeze that blows so soft,
And every star that shines at night,
All know the Glugs quite well by sight.
For they say, 'Our text is safe and true;
What one Glug does, the other Glugs do;
And they climb the trees when the weather is hot,
For a birds'-eye view of the garden plot.
Of course, it's rot,
But they love that view of the garden plot.'

At half-past two on a Wednesday morn
A most peculiar Glug was born;
And later on, when he grew a man,
He scoffed and sneered at the Chosen Plan.
'It's wrong!' said this Glug, whose name was Joi.
'Bah!' said the Glugs. 'He's a crazy boy!'
And they climbed the trees, as the West wind stirred,
To hark to the note of the guffer bird.
It seems absurd,
But they're awfully fond of the guffer bird.

And every reed that rustles and sways
By the gurgling river that splashes and plays,
And the beasts of the dread, neurotic night,
All know the Glugs quite well by sight.

And, 'Why,' say they; 'it is easily done;
For a dexter Glug's like a sinister one!
And they climb the trees when the thunder rolls,
To soddenly salve their small, pale souls,
For they fear the coals
That threaten to frizzle their pale, pink souls.'

Said the Glug called Joi: 'This climbing trees
Is a foolish art, and things like these
Cause much distress in the land of Gosh.
Let's stay on the ground and kill King Splosh!'
But Splosh, the King, he smiled a smile,
And beckoned once to his hangman, Guile,
Who climbed a tree when the weather was calm;
And they hanged poor Joi on a snufflebust palm:
Then sang a psalm.
Did those pious Glugs 'neath the sufflebust palm.

And every bee that kisses a flower,
And every blossom, born for an hour,
And ever bird on its gladsome flight,
All know the Glugs quite well by sight.
For they say: 'Tis a simple text we've got:
If you know one Glug, why you know the lot!
So they climbed a tree in the burgeoning Spring,
And they hanged poor Joi with some second-hand string.
It's a horrible thing
To be hanged by Glugs with second-hand string.

Then Splosh, the king, rose up and said:
'It's not polite; but he safer dead.
And there's not much room in th eland of Gosh
For a Glug named Joi and a king named Splosh!'
And ever Glug flung high his hat,
And cried, 'We're Glugs! And you can't change that!'
So they climbed the trees, since the weather was cold,
As their great-grandmothers climbed of old.
We are not told
Why Grandma climbed when the weather was cold.

And every cloud that sails the blue,

And every dancing sunbeam too,
And every sparkling dewdrop bright,
All know the Glugs quite well by sight.
'We tell,' say they, 'by a simple test;
For any old Glug is like the rest.
And they climb the trees when there's weather about,
In a general way, as a cure for gout.
Though some folk doubt
If the climbing of trees is good for gout.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Jones M.P.

It was thus in the beginning: With a sporting chance of winning,
Jones contested an election years ago.
He was young, enthusiastic, and maintained that measures drastic
Were imperative to save the land from Woe.
For the laudable admiration of this budding politician,
Who with zeal to serve his bleeding country burned,
Was to make a reputation as a saviour of the nation,
And a clean and honest statesman - if returned.

The electors took a fancy to the youngster, and the chance he
Had of winning was improved where'er he went.
His high motives were respected, and, in short, he was elected;
And an Honest Man went into Parliament.
Went in to strive for glory where there held a system hoary,
Founded on the good old English party plan.
Wherefore Jones, half understanding things, submitted to the branding,
And became, perforce, a solid party man.

But when he heard a mention of the Whip
Party Whip,
He gave answer, as he curled a scornful lip,
And his honest zeal upbore him,
That his course was plain before him,
Just the clean, straight course of earnest statesmanship.
For young Jones held notions utterly absurd;
And the old campaigners sniggered when they heard
That young patriot unfolding
His stern views, and Truth upholding,
But he meant it, when he said it, ev'ry word.

For a time, in all debating, Jones was famed for boldly stating
Plain, blunt truths and keen uncomfortable facts;
Till his colleagues grew uneasy, for, in fashion bland and breezy,
He proposed to back his burning words with acts.
And they told him, with much cunning, that he might be in the running
For the leadership if he'd consent to hedge.
He was bold, ambitious, clever, but advance, they said, he'd never
While he clung to childish notions of his pledge.

Brave young Jones at first was scornful; but, ere long, with visage mournful,
He sat down to think on what he stood to lose.
And his party friends, with caution, hinted honours were his portion
If he'd but consent to water down his views.
And they e'en suggested slyly that, although they valued highly
His great services, defiance was not meet.
Till, his splendid dream departing, Jones saw plainly that a parting
With his party meant a parting with his seat.

It was then he heard the cracking of the Whip
Party Whip!
And he found the System had him in its grip,
On the one hand was devotion
To his duty, with promotion
On the other, and the hope of leadership.
For he'd come unto the parting of the ways,
And he hearkened to the voice of fulsome praise
To the promise of preferment,
And - there happened the interment
Of the self-respecting Jones of other days.

Step by step he climbed the ladder: now a wiser if a sadder
And a meaner politician, till he led,
And his party, though erratic, was lukewarmly democratic;
Thus he strove to soothe his conscience on this head.
But there came a day of clamour when his colleagues vowed the glamour
Of his visions was all bunkum and a myth;
For these champions of the nation had perceived their sole salvation
Lay in fusing with the Tory leader, Smith.

Jones at first held out, refusing all suggestions of his fusing
With this person he had hitherto abused.
But he marked his sullen backing, and he heard the whip a-cracking,
Then he abjectly surrendered all, and - 'fused' ...
Jones is now a semi-leader. O, consider, gentle reader;
Think, how many politicians can you name
Who, though starting straight and cleanly, have surrendered weakly, meanly,
When their party bid them fuse and 'play the game'?

How they shudder at the cracking of the Whip
Tory whip.
How they tremble lest the slightest fault or slip

Should offend their august master,
And upon them bring disaster,
And deprive them of their cherished membership.
'Twas to save their bleeding country in they went,
And to bleed it save themselves in Parliament;
Ev'ry worthy cause neglecting,
Their own worthless skins protecting,
And a fig for all the 'views' they 'represent.'
O, the 'freedom' of the Fusion Party man!
Noble man!
Abject creature of the grim old Tory clan,
Waiting, watching, shuffling, veering,
Scheming, plotting, engineering
Sorry product of the 'Good old Party Plan.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Jove's Opportunity

Thunder? Why, no. Some static, may have been
A far, faint rumble and a glimmering light.
This, and no more, John, have we heard and seen,
We watchers in the dark politic night.

Now we are waiting, John. With ear a-cock,
Expectant, and a little thrilled we are
To know that politicians still may stock,
These days, a weapon so spectacular.

Here is your chance. Arise! Unleash your might!
Send now, bolt after bolt, peal upon peal
While darting flashes stab the murky night
That Jovian thunder that he did not steal.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Kemal - The Posh Pasha

We have heard of the mythical lands of the East
And of caliphs and sultans galore;
Of Haroun al Raschid, of Abdul the beast,
And dark deeds by the Bosphorous shore.
But the picture we knew fades completely from view,
When we glimpse modern wonders that are
In the wonderful land of the greatest of Turks
Of Mustapha Kemal Pasha.

With a wave of his hand he has altered his land
From a fabulous country and strange
To an organised State wide-awake, up to date;
And he's made them content with the change.
Bastinado and bow-strings, and bodies in bags,
And the flash of the sharp scimitar
Are but memories dim, since they learned pep and vim
From Mustapha Kemal Pasha.

No magician of old ever dared to unfold
Such a box of tricks and strange spells.
To the joy of the males he has banished the veils
From the faces of Bosphorous belles.
Now with lip-stick and shingle they joyfully mingle
With crowds in the modern bazaar,
Whilst straw-hatted young bloods, in swish tailor-made duds,
Swear by Mustapha Kemal Pasha.

Cross-legged on a couch, cross-grained with a grouch
Old die-hards smoke hookahs and glower,
As they sigh for the days of the fez and old ways
With harems and intrigues in flower;
But the light-hearted lads give the bird to their dads,
While they puff at a fag or cigar;
To have all their trust, as Mustapha must,
Must gladden Mustapha Pasha

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Kids!

Kids!

Hundreds of 'em for the farmer! Kids of an imported brand;
Thousands of 'em for the country! Lo, the man upon the land

Bids

Loud for England's surplus youngster - five whole bob a week, 'tis said;
And their value to the nation stands at many pounds a head.

But the nation never riz 'em.

That 'would tend to Socialism';

So we have to fetch 'em over from the country where they're bred.

Kids!

Send us kids from good old Britain - sons of men who won't be slaves
From the land where countless paupers seek dishonorable graves

Quids!

We're prepared to offer for them. Ship them out across the deep,
From that dear old Freetrade country where the cost of labor's cheap.

While, of our unmarried workers

(Married men are costly shirkers)

We will take a meagre hundred at a pound a week and keep.

Kids?

We can't raise 'em in Australia, where employers by the score

For the bloke without a missus in the labor depôts roar

Bids.

Ship 'em out! The noble farmer yearns to mould their bright young lives.

Ship 'em young that for a dozen years they may not seek for wives.

When they think of getting married

Maybe they'll regret they tarried

Where the kid-encumbered worker vainly for a billet strives.

Kids?

We don't want 'em when they're babies, for their raisin' costs a heap.

We don't want 'em when they're married, with their own young broods to keep.

Skids

And brakes upon the wheels of progress are such futile folk. Just look

At the bob advertisement. You'll see their chance of work is 'crook.'

Ship 'em out in handy sizes

For the cove that advertises

For the unencumbered couple

' Man to milk and wife to cook.'

Kids?

Spare our days! Why should we raise 'em? We can get 'em ready-made

From a land where there's a surplus, thanks to good old BULL's Freetrade.

Quids

It will save the careful farmer. He can give his man the sack

Costly man who owns a missus and a child or two to whack.

Ship 'em out, he's yearnin' for 'em;

While they're young he'll just adore 'em

Then, when they grow up and marry, someone else can ship 'em back.

Ships

Pass in with cheap boy labor - 'badly needed farming hand';

Shps pass out with young Australians seeking work in other lands.

Hips

Hurrahs! are loudly sounded for the patriotic bloke

He who perpetrated this unseemly emigration joke.

Cheers for him who brings the kiddy

To a job that's sure and 'stiddy'!

It will balance the outgoing of our workless married folk.

Kids!!

Lo, we want them - want them badly! There is none denies the fact

Kids to populate the country. And behold, our noble act

Rids

England of her surplus toilers - we can do with quite a heap.

We can't breed them in the country - boys to plough and boys to reap.

And who says it is surprising

When we're daily advertising

For a hundred men - unmarried - at a pound a week and keep.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Kilmore

Kilmore cares not who comes nigh.
But, with a calm, incurious eye,
She sees the swift cars speeding by,
Then turns again to labor.
She is content to plod along.
With now a sigh, when things go wrong,
And now a smile and now a song
Or gossip with a neighbor.
Her mind dwells often in the past,
The roaring days that could not last
When men might travel not so fast,
And all the world was bigger.

She saw the coaches clatter down
To pause at her important town
With loud-voiced venturers strong and brown,
And many a bearded digger.
She saw the eager traffic flow
Upon the road to Bendigo,
With talk of many a golden show,
Of finds and fields exciting.
But wisely she contrived to hold
A treasure greater far than gold,
Where her rich pasture lands unfold
A scene far more inviting.

She smiles to dream of those old days
Of hearty men and hectic ways
When, maddened by the golden craze,
Men sought their fortunes blindly.
But she, who chose the better part
Of patient toil and simple art,
Lives on, content of mind and heart,
And generous and kindly.
So, wealthy now, she sits at ease
In this kind land of fields and trees,
Ignoring all our flippancies
And modern fads and crazes.
And, where old buildings, tumbling down,

Leave scars about her ancient town,
The hasty mock her homely gown;
The wise man waits and praises.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Kilts, Ye Ken

Noo, ye ken, we'll see 'em agen,
Wagging doon the street,
While the baton twirls an' the piper skirls
To the beat of the marching feet.
Left - right - glimmerin' bright,
Buttons and cairngorms shine;
While the pipes give forth 'The Cock o' the North'
Ho! The kilts are in the line!

Far an' faint ye hear the plaint
Comin' adoon the breeze,
Closer it comes, wi' the crackle o' drums
An' the lift o' the naked knees.
Left - right - was ever a sight
Finer by burn or glen?
Wi' the tunes ye know, like the auld 'Keel Row'
Tis the march o' the Cameron men.

Pageantry it ever shall be
An asset in any land.
But the lad who's built to carry a kilt
Losh, mon! But he is grand;
Steppin' along to some auld song
Or a war chant tipped wi' flame.
'Tis the kilt - the kilt! An' the pibroch's lilt
Callin' us - callin' us hame.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

King Billy Chips In

Boss Oberseer, Dat BULLUMTIN! Goo' day, boss Plurry 'ot!
Bloke tell me writum BULLUMTIN, bin plenty bacca got.
'You Billy, makum writin'-yabber,' bloke he say to me;
'Him quick bin pay fer writin' - plenty tsugar plenty tea.'

S'pose mine write it pretty good, you gib it two t'ree poun'?
Bin teachum mishum station plenty good write yabber down.
Mine jes' bin readin' BULLUMTIN alonga scrub. Ma word!
Mine tink it Gub'mint yabber 'bout de bee' de kin I heard.

Mine tink it pitcher budgerry - dat Lin'say an' dat Hop.
Mine tink it dem corrob'ree songs been alla same up top.
Bin plenty good, dat lubra yabber; Red Page, berry fine;
Dat White Australia policy jes' same alonga mine.

But, tell you straight, boss, all dat talk 'bout 'possum, 'roo and snake,
Bin pull your leg, mine tink it. It bin all a plurry fake.
Mine s'pose dem blokes bin walkabout dat bush down Sydney way.
Bin talkum t'ro' dere ploomin' hat 'bout eberyting dey say!

Bin catchum snake, mine tink it, outer bottle, longa pub.
Too much dam lie about dem tings dey neber seen in scrub.
Ma wud! Mine plenty bin in bush; bin plenty much out back,
But neber meet dem pfellers anywhere alonga track.

Mine tink dey catchum too much corns dey walk alonga scrub,
Dey don't bin losum sight of bed an' plenty pfeller grub.
Mine neber meet dat 'Dandalup' or 'Wang,' or 'William Cann.'
Dat 'Quan,' mine tink, drive butcher cart, an' 'Snell' bin tramway man.

Mine tell you, boss, dem blokes no good; dey all bin habin' you.
Mine tink dat 'Chimmie Pannican' bin plurry chackeroo!
So boss, you listen longa me; you make quick catchum sack,
An' Billy him bin send you plenty yabber 'bout outback.

S'pose you gib it glasserrum, mine writum Wil' Cat too.
You gib it bottle rum, mine run whole plurry show for you.
Don' bin forgettum bacca, rum, when you bin writin' nex';
Mine wantum plenty bad; ma wud! Mine bin yours, BILLY REX.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Kisses And The Rhythmic Principle

My dear ladies - that is to say, those of you who may happen inadvertently to glance through this dreadful paper
Most of you, no doubt, have felt impelled, at one time or another, to lightly caper Round and about a ballroom, clasped in the manly and purely platonic embrace of some intellectual affinity - some male bird of your type.
There comes a period in the lives of all of us when the time for such festive prancing seems deliciously ripe.
Is it not so? Then dance, dear ladies, dance every time you get a chance. Pray, do not think for a moment that I approve of those incomprehensible persons known as Wowsers.
I object to them on principle. I object to all their works, opinions and prejudices. But most of all I object to their absurd hats and totally nondescript trousers. But I digress. Ladies, I am your friend.
And ever shall I sympathetically lend
An ear to your protestations in defence of the polka-mazurka, and the schottische, and the two-step, and the waltz.
To declare that such dances are indelicate is false.
They are not!
Nor is the turkey-trot
A thing of evil.
And, as some would have us believe, an invention of the DEVIL.
Nay, even the cruelly maligned sticking-plaster
Leadeth in no sense to moral disaster
For always remember, ladies, when you are indulging in intricate terpsichorean evolutions, then that unutterably ecstatic bliss you
Experience for the moment is merely an abnormally rapid oxidisation of the mental tissue.
Dear females - diners, tarts, peaches, flappers, bits o' fluff, and perfect ladies, There are those who will tell you that dancing is a direct importation from Hades. By making such absurd and obviously idiotic assertions nothing can be gained: For the whole matter may be scientifically, psychologically and biologically explained.
For instance, we will suppose that you are treading some stately measure
Such as the Gaby-glide - with a partner whose appearance and deportment give you entire pleasure.
And we will suppose
His is emboldened to propose
A subsequent and somewhat surreptitious adjournment to the conservatory -
(You know the old, old story?)

And, being half inclined to agree, you fall to wondering whether mother would really miss you.

Do not hesitate, dear lady. Respond immediately to the extraordinary and not altogether unpleasant oxidation of the aforesaid tissue.

And now, dear lady,

Having discovered a secluded nook both cool and shady,

It is just possible that your partner may fondly place his arm around you.

Nay, do not let this dumbfound you.

Be not alarmed. No haughty glances, if you please,

For indications such as these

Betray a mind uncultured. If you would act aright,

I pray you, regard the whole matter in a scientific light.

If, for a moment, I thought you failed to recognise the rhythmic principle I should be sorely grieved.

Remember, always remember, my dear lady, that the poor young man's overcharged brain must, at all costs, be relieved.

(For, in the course of my exhaustive researches, I have discovered, after much labor and infinite pains,

That a very large proportion of dancing men are afflicted with overcharged brains.)

And then, should he, perchance, press you tenderly to his biled shirt, and ultimately kiss you;

No protests, I pray you.

Reflet, again, that this is uncontrovertibly another manifestation of the rapid, not to say furious oxidation of the aforementioned tissue.

And here, dear lady, endeth my discourse. I have nothing to add except, perhaps, that it would at this point be advisable to return to the ballroom and your maternal relation.

Not, of course, with any idea of snubbing the poor young man with the overcharged

brain; but merely as an ordinary precaution against the possible effects of over-oxidisation.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Knights Of The Never Never

When I rode with young Sid Kidman out across the Yarrowie Plain
In that year the Long Drought ended, and the northlands smiled again
As we took the old Tarcowie track and on to Booleroo,
His keen eye scanned the country, and we yarned of men we knew:
Mal Murray and Jim Spicer, of Jasser and Judell,
Bill Mitchell and old stagers whom I still remember well;
And he told of chance-missed fortunes when the game was in his grasp,
Of life along The Barrier with German Charlie Rasp.

Now, back in Kidman country where the grizzled bushmen are,
In many a stark out-station, o'er many a shanty bar,
The drovers' drawling voices talk about 'Old Sid' today:
'Bushmen like him ain't raised no more,' the grizzled veterans say,
For o'er the furthest saltbush lands his questing mind went out
To glimpse high opportunity where others saw black drought.
Shrewd-eyed, yet greatly daring, laughing he ventured forth
To stake his luck, his judgment 'gainst swift treacheries 'up north.'

'I mind the time I rode with him,' a wizened stockman says.
'He knowed that country like a map, an' all the tricks an' ways.
'Aye, and he knowed the cattle game.' The voices drone and drawl,
Till, 'The time I rode for Kidman,' is the burden of them all.
'Deserved his luck? Too right he did, seein' how he began;
But times like them don't come again for us or any man.
Them meddlin' airypans an' sich brings old days to an end.'
And so they mourn, no magnate, but a bushman and a friend.

So the best-known bushman passes in the fullness of his years;
And, with his passing, so an olden order disappears
Sid Kidman, Jimmy Tyson - rugged princes of Outback,
Who sought their fortunes far afield along the arid track;
Strong men who, taking heart of grace, unflinchingly rode forth
To play a rough, grim game, and win, against the stubborn North;
To become a land's tradition, future figures of romance,
Busmen who fought and loved their bush; the men who took a chance.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

K'shoo

When your dose is code as barble,
Ad you sduffle all the day,
Ad your head id is behavig
Id a bost unbleased way;
When your ev'ry joid is achig
With a very paidful cramb,
When your throat is dry ad tiglich,
Ad your feed are coe and damb;
When your eyes are red ad rudding
With the dears that will cub oud;
You cad safely bake your bind ub
There is very liddle doubd.
You've got a code - a code
Ad idfluedzal code;
You cahd tell how you coughd id,
But id's a got a good firb hode.
Your face is whide, your eyes are pigk,
Your doe is red ad blue;
Ad you wish that you were
Ah -
Ah -
Ah - h -
Kish - SHOO-O-O!!

I dode wad to be a boed,
Ad I do nod log for fabe,
But I have to wride to get by bread
Ad budder, all the sabe.
id is very aggravadig,
Ad this world is very hard
Whed the idfluenza fasteds
Od a sendadendal bard.
Oh, I caddod sig of subber skies!
I caddod twag by lyre!
For all the buses id the world
Are powerless to idspire.

I've got a code - a code
A bost udpleased code;

I caddod sig a sog of sprig,
I caddod bake ad ode.
For inspirashud will nod cub:
I'be feelig very blue;
Oh, would that I was
Ah -
Ah -
Ah - h -
Kish - SHOO-O-O!!

I have to wride adother verse,
Ad dode doe whad to say;
But I've got to buy some bedicid
To drive this code away;
Oh, the boed's is a hard, hard life,
His lod is very sore;
Ad if misfortune cubs to hib,
He has to toil the bore.
And dow, I thig I've bade enough.
By wridig this last verse,
To go ad buy byself sub stuff
Before by code gets worse.

I've got a code - a code
Ad agravatig code!
If I was well I'd wride you such
A charbig liddle ode.
I'd sig of labkins od the sward,
Bedeath the skies so blue,
If it wasn'd for the
Ah -
Ah -
Ah - h -
Kish - SHOO-O-O!!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Ksmith'

Hoping you will not deem it rude,
I'd like to call an interlude
In our remarkable array
Of leading statesmen of the day,
And introduce to you forthwith
That great economist, Ksmith.

Not, as you might suppose, a myth,
But very real is Ksmith;
For daily, in the morning train,
I'm privileged to gauge his brain.
One glance inside his morning sheet,
And he has grasped it all complete.

He lays it down; and then, in wrath,
To patient travellers he holds forth.
No question that the times involve,
No problem is there he can't solve.
One moment's thought, and, quick as light,
Ksmith can put the country right.

Surely a statesman's wasted here;
And I suggest, in nervous fear,
That we might move to elevate
Ksmith on high to guide the State;
Then we'd be saved. And I might see
Less of Ksmith. That would suit me.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Laissez-Faire

We'd harbored them on hovels, and in dens,
Altho' in price they counted less than cattle,
Had they not still the right, that ws all men's,
To strive and in a place in life's stern battle?
Had they not still the gift of God's free air,
His glorious sun, and every freeman's birthright
To fight the snarling pack and snatch a share?
Why should the task be ours to set the earth right?

Man may not win (we'd said) to earthly ease
Saving thro' strength, or birth, or lucky gamble.
Why, then, a truce to sentimental pleas;
Let us continue with the merry scramble
In which the valiant strong, to gain high place
Pulls down and climbs upon some weaker rival.
'Tis Nature's law. And thus a stalwart race
Is e'er upheld by glorious survival.

Upon the olden road to Jericho
We watched, not one, but myriads fall and sicken.
We grieved; but saw no duty to stoop low.
Were we accountable for all Earth's stricken?
Shrewdly we passed by on the other side,
Planning such schemes as trouble a man's mind most.
'Not ours to alter Nature's law,' we cried.
'Each for himself, and devil take the hindmost.'

And so the devil took them - not for death;
But to live on where want and squalor cherish
Undreamed-of evils, whose miasmal breath
So taints the air that all the race may perish.
Is it too late to stay the avenging hand?
Too late to hold at bay this savage Reaper
Men have invoked? Till all shall understand
And cry at last, 'I am my brother's keeper!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Landlubbers

I nigh drops dead (the bo'sun said)
When the gist of things I grip
In the land by these 'ere Southern seas
As I seen on my long last trip.
They seems a joke, them curious folk
Wot bides at the blue sea's lip,
Whose wealth is made in a world-wide trade -
Landlubbers all wot seems afraid,
For they ain't got a deep-sea ship.

No, they ain't got a deep-sea ship, they ain't,
For their 'earts ain't with the blue,
Tho' they claims the seed of the tough sea breed,
Like Drake, an' me an' you.
On their isle sea-girt they farms the dirt
Of a fertile coastal strip;
But they seems afraid of a sea-borne trade
An' the hauls their British fathers made,
For they ain't got a deep-sea ship.

Sea born an' bred (the bo'sun said)
As man an' boy I been
Nigh every place on earth's broad face,
An' all the seas atween;
But I ne'er 'ave spoke such curious folk
As I seen on this 'ere trip,
Who seeks for marts in furrin parts,
Yet for blue water have no hearts;
For they ain't got a deep-sea ship.

No, they ain't got a deep-sea ship, they ain't;
An' it don't seem like they care,
For they 'ands the job to any ole yob
Wot makes a landfall there.
In tramp an' tub they ships their grub -
Aw, it fair gives me the pip!
They've wool an' wine, an' corn an' kine,
An' the carryin' trade would suit 'em, fine,
But they ain't got a deep-sea ship!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Langwidge

'The flamin' cows!' 'e ses; 'e did, an' worse;
'Twas 'orrible the langwidge that 'e used.
It made me blood run cold to 'ear 'im curse;
An' me that taken-back-like an' confused;
W'ile them poor beasts 'e belted an' abused.
'They couldn't shift,' 'e ses, 'a blanky 'earse!
The flamin' cows!'

'The flamin' cows!' You oughter 'eard 'im curse.
You would a bin that shocked. . . . An' the idear!
'Im usin' such remarks about a 'earse;
An' 'is own brother buried not a year.
'Not move a blanky 'earee!' 'e ses. My dear,
You 'ardly could imagine langwidge worse.
'The flamin' cows!'

'The flamin' cows!' Wot would the parson say?
An' 'im so friendly-like with 'im an' 'er.
I pity 'er; I do, 'cos, in 'er way.
She is respectable. But 'i! It's fur
From me, as you well know, to cast a slur,
On anyone; but wot I 'eard that day. . . .
'The flamin' cows!'

'The flamin' cows!' I know quite well that we
Ain't wot you'd call thin-skinned; and nasty pride
Is wot I never 'ad.... But 'er! ... W'y she
She's allus that stuck-up an' full o' side;
A sorter thing I never could abide.
An' all the time 'er 'usband.... Goodness me!
'The flamin' cows!'

'The flamin' cows!' O' course 'e never knowed
That I was list'nin' to 'im all the w'ile.
'E muster bin a full hour on the road;
An', Lord, you could 'a' 'eard 'im for a mile.
Jes' cos they stuck 'im in that boggy sile:
'If they ain't blanky swine,' 'e ses, 'I'm blowed!
The flamin' cows!'

'The flamin' cows!' W'y, if it 'ad occurred,
An' me not 'eard, I'd 'ardly think it true.
An', you know well, I wouldn't breathe a word
Against a livin' soul, I don't care 'oo;
Not if the Queen of Hingland arst me to.
But, oh! that langwidge! If you only 'eard!
'The flamin' cows!'

'The flamin' cows!' 'e ses,, an' more besides.
An' fancy! 'Im! To think that 'e would swear!
W'y 'Blarst!' 'e sez... Yes! 'Blarst the'r blanky 'ides!
(Oh, you may well throw up your 'ands an' stare!)
Yes - 'Blarst,' 'e ses, 'the'r blanky 'ides an' 'air!
I'll out the blanky skin off er the'r sides!
The flamin' cows!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Last Landfall

'Outgoing: the Oonah for Burnie'....
How often the radio spoke;
Till the stout little ship and her journey
Grew into a mild sort of joke.
But no longer her donkeyman grapples
His slings by the sweet island shore
For a cargo of timber or apples.
The Oonah goes sailing no more.

No more; save the landfall she's making,
The last, on her funeral trip
To the land where she goes for her breaking
Grim graveyard of many a ship.
And a few, it may be, will go grieving
To know of that busy craft's fate,
Who many times hooved with her heaving
As Oonah rolled over the strait.

There many proud, tall-masted schooners
She passed in the night, ships o' sail;
While stars winked o'er fond honeymooners
Who whispered soft words by her rail.
And tourists and grave politicians,
Who knew the old Oonah full well,
In all sorts of weather conditions,
Have had many a story to tell.

And many a soul who sailed with her,
Since Oonah first breasted the foam,
Has taken the long voyage thither,
To every man's ultimate home.
Who knows now what mystical journey
Those sail, to the sounds of high mirth
As a ghost-ships heads hull-down for Burnie,
With a complement not of the earth.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Last Verse

Now a stream may be a lady,
Or a gentleman serene,
Who, by sunlit ways and shady,
Graces many a sylvan scene,
But that wild, wild woodman, Snowy
Crude, uncultured, swift to rage,
He's a hill bloke, flash and showy
Roaring down in his rampage.....

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Laura Days

Dreaming to-day in a forest green
Where the great gums rake the sky,
My thoughts turn back to another scene
And to old days, long gone by;
To a land of youth, and a youth's employ,
And - to filch another's phrase -
To the men who were boys, when I was a boy,
In the long gone Laura days.

To a little town that nestles down
By the hills of Beetaloo,
Where a youth dreamed dreams of fair renown,
And a man's ambition grew,
'Twas here his earliest songs were sung
And he won his earliest praise
From men who were young when he was young
In the long gone Laura days.

Spicer, Stockdale, Ballantyne,
Marrie, Mitchell and Braund;
How many a right good pal of mine
Has gone from that sunlit land.
How many a man, how many a lad,
Whose head now slowly greys,
To a song grew glad as I grew glad
In those long gone Laura days.

Susman, Sibly and Dr Cook,
Blume and Barrington,
Oh! the lives of some are a long-closed book,
But many a tale runs on.
Hollis and Harvey, Chandler, Green
Are gone their various ways,
But I see them all in the olden scene
Of the long gone Laura days.

I see them still, I see the town
Under those scrub-clad hills,
The shops where the quiet street runs down,

Wilson, Rowland, Bills.
Taylor, Weste, Felstead too,
Cole of the kindly ways,
And many other friends I knew
In the long gone Laura days.

And the names of some come slow to mind,
But the faces greet me clear,
And I hold them all as men most kind,
As I hold the old town dear;
And so in memory to the end
That old time picture stays,
For I see each face as a faithful friend
Of the far off Laura days.

To the ladies all I lift a glass,
And toast with a right good will,
Every matron, every lass, who
Shine in memory still,
Fair would I hymn them all in rhyme
With soaring song of praise,
Friends of mine from a golden time
In the long gone Laura days.

When the evening sun slants through the gums,
By my forest-rimmed abode,
Once more the old clear picture comes,
And my mind drifts down the road;
Back to the town by Beetaloo,
Where the Rocky River strays;
Back to the old kind friends I knew
In the dear dead Laura days.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Lay Of Last Monkey

I am last in the whole world wide,
For my brothers all have gone,
One by one have the martyrs died,
That mankind might live on.

High am I set in the market square,
Widely my fame abounds,
And for me a Yankee millionaire
Bids fifty million pounds.

Keen goes the bidding; fierce the fight,
There are cries on every hand....
But I mean to take to the woods tonight;
And they'll never get my gland!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Leg Theory

Oh, what a pleasant game is life
When we are bravely batting
And glorying in skill and strife.
We scorn defensive patting
As Fate sends down the easy ones
We set the ball a-soaring
Straight to the fence and pile up runs
And go on scoring, scoring.

A week it lasts, a month, a year
Ten years if luck holds steady
No crafty trick may wake our fear,
For every move we're ready
No matter how the ball is bumped.
We are so sure, so clever
We can't be caught or bowled or stumped
We're set! We're in forever!

But comes a time, as I have found,
When in our carefree playing,
Life's game in this vast cricket ground
Grows suddenly dismaying.
Just as we think we're set to peg
Away, thro' centuries rolling,
Fate shifts his fieldsmen to the leg
And starts in body bowling!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Legs And The Man

Alas, my dear, be you high-born,
Or just a Sydney cutie,
I fear you've earned a he-man's scorn
Thro' failing in your duty.
A lady would avert her eyes,
Taught by her caste to realise
That the male leg without disguise
Is not a thing of beauty.

Even when used to underpin
A dress-reforming dandy,
'Tis still a prop of reddened skin,
Mostly knock-kneed, or bandy.
And, oh, my dear, you must have known
How sensitive are those who own
These knobby knuckles thickly sown
With ebon hairs, or sandy.

And oh, my dear, be you de Vere,
Or just some saucy Sadie,
To goggle when male shanks appear
Is positively shady.
But should you giggle - Oh, dear! Oh!
No matter how grotesque the show,
All proper gentlemen must know
You're low. You ain't no lady.

But oh, my dear, and ah, my dear,
Learn etiquette. For when, dear,
You in those fetching shorts appear
At tennis now and then, dear;
Men may stare hard, they may stare long,
Their heads a-whirl, their hearts a song;
Yet, save your scorn. There's nothing wrong.
They still are gentlemen, dear.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Lilydale

Three hills lead on to Lilydale,
Where runs the White Horse Road.
Three slopes dip down into the vale
The placid vale of Lilydale,
That somnolent abode
Of dreams that compass olden days,
Of tranquil life and easy ways,
Where transient beauty tints her trees
With golden Autumn's harmonies.

For Lilydale is now a dame
Unhurried and content.
Traditions that attend her name
Serve her from all she needs of fame,
Who scorns the brandishment
Of modern haste and modern show.
And, as the speeding motors go
Down thro' her street, to hasten by,
She marks them with a sleepy sigh.

Amid her grazing kine she goes
The 'milkers', 'stores' and 'fats.'
A cow she venerates, and knows
How well to hoard the wealth that flows
From her rich river flats
One passion lures her from her course;
Her great love for a likely horse.
Tempting to revels now and then
With her twin dreamer, Yarra Glen.

Three hills lead on to Lilydale,
Three slopes dip down below.
And every hill, and every vale
Tell once more the olden tale
Of days when life moved slow;
Save when the dashing fours-in-hand
Came clattering to this new-found land,
And wakened this bucolic spot
To life's high fever - long forgot.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Limitations

"Who are these blokes with bulging brows
I see all o'er the shop?"
The layman asked. "Them's scientists,"
Replied the courteous cop.
"They are the country's biggest brains;
There's nothing they don't know
The ways of stars, the eight of suns,
And why the winds do blow."
"Then think you they could cure this cold
That leaves me leaden-eyed?"
"Well - no; they ain't quite up to that,"
The constable replied.

"But they could take a man apart
And sew him up again
As good as new; they know how trees
Grow from a tiny grain.
And they can harness wireless waves
And make hem do their will,
Or split an atom bang in two,
Or cleave a mighty hill."
"But could they make this north wind change
A point to east or west?"
"Well, no," the cop replied; "not yet.
That's far too stiff a test,

"But they can cause electric eyes
To shut and open doors,
Or answer telephones, or guide
A great ship from the shores.
Their 'ographies' and 'ologies'
And wonders that they plan,
To shove ahead this human race
Do fair amaze a man.
Why they'll have television soon,
Or so I've heard or read."
"And will that make man happier?"
The simple layman said.

"Tho' most amazing, as you say,
The things they do and know,
They cannot make the rain to fall
Or cause the breeze to blow.
They cannot build one blade of grass,
Or read a flapper's mind;
That collar stud I dropped this morn
I'll swear they could not find!... "
"Move on, there!" cried the constable
These ain't things for a joke.
Upon my word, I never see
So iggnerint a bloke!"

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Lines Written In Hospital

Upon a snowy bed I lie,
Too placid to complain,
And watch the mad world rushing by
Beyond my window-pane,
The traffic threading in and out
And wonder what it's all about.

I watch the loaded tramcars stream
By dozens into town,
With men, each thinking of some scheme
To take his neighbour down;
Each woman wond'ring what she'll buy
At Frill and Fluffum's bye and bye.

Down in the street I hear the talk
Of people passing by,
They chatter, chatter as they walk
Of all thins 'neath the sky
Of trade, of sport, of foolish things
That lack of clear reflection brings.

Placid I said I was - but no;
For all this seems to me
This madly rushing to and fro
Just sheer futility.
And, as I choke with rising wrath,
The nurse says, 'Time to take your broth.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Listen, Elaine!

Listen, Elaine. Tho' I'm not mad on racing,
I like a little flutter now and then;
But I maintain you would not be disgracing
The family, or look like some old hen
If you just wore - Now, just a minute, please!
That pinkish frock - No, wait! Let me explain.
That pinkish frock with spots - You wouldn't freeze!
You've got your furs. Aw, listen, please, Elaine!

Now, look. We've twenty pounds. Don't let us quarrel.
(Surely we can be sane and quite grown-up).
If you take most of that, what of the 'moral'
That Percy Podgrass gave us for the Cup?
Of course he's sure to win. What are vain dresses
Compared - My dear! I did not call you vain!
Nor selfish either. Gosh! What married messes
Start over clothes, and - Listen, please, Elaine.

We're partners, aren't we? Well, then, listen, darling.
We might discuss this calmly, don't you think?
Now! Please be sensible ... I am not snarling!
Rubbish! Of course, you do look nice in pink.
I always thought that spotted pink looked dandy,
And comfy, too. Supposing it should rain.
Nice sight you'd look in - What's it called - organdie ...
I was not wishing - Listen, please! Elaine!

Women just dress to spite some other tabby.
Who said you were a cat? One moment, pet.
Of course, I wouldn't have my wife look shabby.
Take what you need. We'll make a smaller bet ...
Eight - ten - twelve quid! Whew! Not much left for betting.
Still, just a flutter and expenses ... What?
Listen, Elaine. What could I be forgetting?
Hat? Stockings? Shoes to match? ... Here!
Take the lot!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Listeners Luck

'My sort,' she sez, 'don't meet no fairy prince.'
I can't 'elp 'earin' part uv wot was said
While I am sortin' taters in the shed.
They've 'ad these secret confabs ever since
Rose came. 'Er an' Doreen's been 'eart to 'eart,
'Oldin' pow-wows in which I got no part.
'My sort,' sez Rose, 'don't meet no fairy prince.'
'Er voice seems sort uv lonely like an' sad.
'Ah well,' she sez, 'there's jobs still to be 'ad
Down in the fact'ries. I ain't one to wince
Frum all the knocks I've 'ad - an' will 'ave. Still,
Sometimes I git fed-up against me will.

'Some women 'ave the luck,' she sez; 'like you.
Their lives seem made fer love an' joy an' sport,
But I'm jist one uv the unlucky sort.
I've give up dreamin' dreams: they don't come true.
There ain't no love or joy or sport fer me.
Life's made me 'ard; an' 'ard I got to be.'

'Oh, rubbidge!' sez Doreen. 'You've got the blues,
We all 'ave bad luck some times, but it mends.
An' you're still young, my dear; you 'ave your friends.
Why should you think that you must alwiz lose?
The sun's still shinin'; birds still sing, an' court;
An' men still marry.' Rose sez, 'Not my sort.

An' then - Aw, well, I thort I knoo me wife,
'Ow she can be so gentle an' so kind,
An' all the tenderness that's in 'er mind;
As I've 'ad cause to know through married life.
But never 'ave I 'Eard 'er wisdom speak
Sich words before. It left me wond'rin' - meek.

Yes, meek I felt - an' proud, all in the one:
Proud fer to know 'ow fine my wife can be;
Meek fer to think she cares fer sich as me.
''Ope lasts,' I 'ear 'er say, 'till life is done.
An' life can bring us joy, I know it can.

I know; fer I've been lucky in my man.'

There's a wife for yeh! Green! Think in the 'ead!
To think she'd go an' tork be'ind me back,
Gossip, an' paint me character that black!
I'm glad I can't 'ear more uv wot was said.
They wander off, down by the creek somewhere.
Green! Well, I said that women talk 'ot air.

I thinks uv Danny Dunn, an' wot I've planned.
Doreen don't know wot I got up me sleeve;
An' Rose don't know that she won't 'ave to leave,
Not once I come to light an' take a 'and.
Block'ead won't be the name they'll call me then.
Women can tork; but action needs us men.

Yet, I dunno. Some ways it ain't so fine.
Spite uv 'is money, Danny ain't much catch.
It seems a pity Rose can't make a match
That's reel romantic, like Doreen's an' mine;
But then again, although 'e's old an' plain,
Danny's a kinder fate than Spadgers Lane.

Bit later on I see Rose standin' by
That bridge frum where Mick waved 'is last farewell
When 'e went smilin' to the war, an' fell.
'Ow diffrint if 'e 'ad n't come to die,
I thinks. Life's orful sad, some ways.
Though it's 'ard to be sad on these Spring days.

Doreen 'as left, fer reasons uv 'er own;
An' Rose is gazin' down into the stream,
Lost, like it seems, in some un'appy dream.
She looks perthetic standin' there alone.
Wis'ful she looks. But when I've turned away
I git a shock to 'ear 'er larfin' gay.

It's that coot Wally Free; 'e's with 'er now.
Funny 'ow 'is fool chatter makes 'er smile,
An' shove 'er troubles under fer a while.
(Pity 'e don't pay more 'eed to 'is cow
Instid uv loafin' there. 'E's got no sense.

I'm sick uv tellin' 'im to mend that fence.)

'Er sort don't meet no fairy prince... Ar, well.
Fairy gawdfathers, p'raps, wot once was knights,
Might take a turn at puttin' things to rights.
Green? Block'ead, am I? You can't alwiz tell.
Wait till I wave me magic mit at Rose,
An' turn 'er into 'Mrs. Stone-the-crows.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Little Miss Muffet

Little Miss Muffet
Sat at a buffet
Willing the time away.
When there came a big cider
And sat down beside her . . .
They carried Miss Muffet away

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Logic And Spotted Dog

'Unless you 'ide that axe,' she sez, "E'll 'urt 'imself reel bad.
An' after all - Now, Bill, don't cry! - that trouble that I've 'ad,
Wiv 'im thro' croop an' whoopin' corf, 'e goes an' cuts 'imself!
Why don't you 'ang it on the wall, or 'ide it on a shelf?
But there it wus, jist thrown about. You ort to take more care!
You left it there!

'You left it there,' she sez, 'an' now . . .' I sez, "Old on a jiff.
Let's git the fac's all sorted out before we 'as a tiff
I'm mighty careful wiv that axe, an' never leaves it out.
An' I'd be mad if that young imp got knockin' it about.'
'Ole axe!' she sez. Look at 'is thumb! A precious lot you care!
You left it there!

I am marri'd to a woman; which is nacheral an' right.
I sez that over to meself, fer safety, day an' night.
Most times I sez it fond an' proud wiv gladness in me mind;
But sometimes philosophic-like an' wot yeh'd call resigned.
'An axe as sharp as that,' she sez. 'It reely isn't fair!
You left it there!

'The way you pet that axe,' she sez - 'the way it's ground an' filed,
The way you fairly fondle it, you'd think it wus a child!
An' when I pick the ole thing up to cut a bit uv stri
Yeh rave an' shout ...' 'Wait on,' I sez. 'But ir'n's a different thing.
An' you wus choppin' fencin' wire!' She sez, 'Well, I don't care.

You left it there!

I 'elps meself to spotted dog, an' chews, an' thinks a while.
'I'm reely sorry,' I begins. Then, as I seen 'er smile
I plays 'er fer the fun uv it, an' sez, 'But, all the same,
If he gits foolin' wiv that axe 'e's got 'imself to blame.'
'Er eyes spark up. 'A child like that! Now, Bill, it isn't fair!
You left it there!

I cuts another slice an' sez, 'This spotted dog's a treat.
Uv course, 'ooever left it there,' I sez, 'wus - indiscreet.
'Careless!' she sez. 'You know you are! 'E might 'a' cut 'is face!

An axe as sharp as that,' she sez, 'should be kep' in its place.'
'Quite right,' I sez. 'An' not,' she sez, 'jist thrown round anywhere.
You left it there!'

An' then I lets 'er 'ave it, an' I sez, 'Now, think a bit.
I put that axe away last night when all the wood wus split.'
'Well, that's enough about it now,' she sez. I seen 'er wince,
An' sez, 'I put that axe away, an' 'aven't used it since;
But someone else wus usin' it this mornin', I kin swear,
An' left it there.'

'Well, never mind . . . Poor Bill!' she sez. 'Was 'is poor thumb all 'urt?'
(Oh, it's entertainin' sometimes fer to argue wiv a skirt.)
'There's someone else,' I sez, an' grins, an' kids I'm doin' fine,
'Wus usin' it this mornin' fer to cut a bit uv pine.
So now,' I sez, 'apolergise! I've beat you fair an' square!
You left it there!'

Fer 'arf a mo she pets young Bill, an' would'nt meet me eye.
Thinkin' she wus - I knew she wus. An' then she lets it fly:
'If you 'ad cut that wood,' she sez, 'an' I implored you to,
There wouldn't be no need fer me to 'ave sich things to do!
It ain't right fer a woman . . .' "Ere!" I sez. 'Now, I don't care
'Oo left it there!'

'Uv course you don't!' she gits me back. 'You never care a bit!
An' it ain't right fer a woman to 'ave kin'lin' wood to split;
While there's a man about the 'ouse!' I sees the tears is near,
An' pats 'er 'air. 'Now, let it drop,' I sez. 'Don't worry, dear.'
'Ow can I let it drop?' she sobs. 'You said you didn't care
'Oo left it there'

'I do!' I yells. 'I mean - I don't - I . . .' Oh, Gaw spare me days!
When you argue wiv a woman she 'as got you either ways!
You 'ave to do it in the end; an' so I licks the dirt,
An' sez, 'Dear, I apolergise. I'm - sorry - if I 'urt.'
Yes, I'm marri'd to a woman. An' she smiles, an' strokes me 'air,
An - leaves it there.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Loneliness

A lonely soul . . . According to her lights
She has lived on, mid all our worldly strife,
Thro' that procession of mad days and nights
That most men lay to waste, and call it life.
And men have smiled a little, too, may be,
At what they deem her eccentricity.

'This have we done, and this,' the proud souls cry;
'In pomp and pageantry vast riches spent,
Builded cathedrals yearning to the sky,
And scattered gold for God's aggrandisement,
That we may be immortalised on earth
In monuments to our undying worth.

'This we have done, and this; for we were just;
Captained great armies for the Lord of Hosts,
Left erring brothers bleeding in the dust,
Our enemies - and His. The worldling boasts;
And, boasting, dies to seek a meek reward
From a remote and half-envisioned Lord.'

A lonely woman in an empty church
Upholding faith with humble prayer and song. . . .
Oh, that we groundlings had the eyes to search
And find - not emptiness, but here a throng
Invisible. Poor prideful minds, 'tis we
Who know earth's bitter loneliness - not she.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Lorne

Where the road's white bracelet runs
Round the cliff 'twixt bush and sea,
Gleaming 'neath the summer's suns
There she rests delightfully
There she rests, a jewel set
In the bracelet's shining band
Far from all the stress and fret
Of the markets of the land.

Summers come and summers go:
There she beckons pleasantly
By the gentle ebb and flow
Of her blue, eternal sea.
Where the Ocean Road dips down,
There she greets, the Southern Queen,
Weary men from mart and town,
Seeking strength from her bright scene.

Wooded slope and waterfall,
Mountain path and shining sand,
Bush and beach - she offers all
Offers with a generous hand.
All the gifts for which men sigh,
Seeking ease and soft release.
And the summers, drifting by,
Bring her loveliness increase.

In the light of Loutitt Bay,
There she smiles, the Southern Queen,
Lending to a summer's day
Grateful rest and mood serene.
Lady Lorne, the lovely one,
Jewel of uncounted price
Friend of the children of the sun,
The honeymooners' paradise.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Lotsertime

Aw, chuck the mail bags over there,
It's great to have 'em brought by air;
But, now they're here, just sling 'em round,
Out anywhere, upon the ground.
I'll pick 'em up an' make full speed
Soon as me 'orse 'as 'as a feed.
Delays don't count in this fair clime;
This is the land o' Lotsertime.

I 'ear 'ow Europe's gone fair mad
On speed. But I'm like my ole dad.
The things a man don't do today
He does termorrer, anyway.
So wot's the odds! This speed's all tripe.
Wait on until I light me pipe.
A spell for yarnin' ain't no crime;
This is the land o' Lotsertime.

The Melbourne cockies, they don't care.
There's always 'eaps o' time to spare.
They ain't air-minded like yous blokes
From Europe, or them Yankee folks.
Why should we be, when all is said?
When coves dies they're a long time dead.
Why worry while the crops is prime?
This is the land o' Lotsertime.

So, sling the mail bags over 'ere.
I'll fill me pipe again an' clear.
I hold one record, 't any rate;
I always gets there, soon or late.
The mail gets thro', dry stage or wet;
An' fire or flood ain't beat me yet.
Our troubles 'ow speed records climb
In this 'ere land o' Lotsertime.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Loving But Leaving (A Sob Song For Conscientious Crooners)

When I led you to the altar
Vows were made, you'll call to mind
Darling wife. Now a defaulter
Must I seem if I'd be kind.
For you know how well I love you,
How I've sought work far and near;
But to keep a roof above you
I must now desert you, dear.

Because I love you I must leave you,
Wife o' mine I cherish so;
Yet the parting should not grieve you
When the whole mad tale you know.
Well you know I don't deceive you.
Since the glad day we were wed
I have loved you; I must leave you
If I'd gain our daily bread.

You will pardon the pretending
When I figure in the courts,
Suits for maintenance defending,
While, with fierce, indignant snorts
The worthy Bench a bitter potion
Serves me with vile names that irk.
Yet you alone will know devotion
Moves me. For they'll give me work.

Because I love you I must leave you;
Joining the absconding band,
That, at last I may relieve you
By the labour of my hand.
If to keep you I seem laggard,
Then my country will be kind.
Sweetheart of a brutal blackguard,
Kiss me. I know you'll understand.

Lullaby

You are much too big to dandle,
And I will not leave the candle.

Go to sleep.

You are growing naughty, rather,
And I'll have to speak to father.

Go to sleep!

If you're good I shall not tell, then.

Oh, a story? Very well, then.

Once upon a time, a king, named Crawley Creep,
Had a very lovely daughter

You don't want a drink of water!

Go to sleep! There! There! Go to sleep.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Ma Mammy's Done Me In: A New Theme Song

MA-A-AMMY! Ma-a-ammy!

The sun's gone east

And he's left out west

Where, in old days, the sun shone best.

Ma-a-ammy! Ma-a-ammy!

What have you done to poor ole Uncle Sammy?

You would go talkin'

In them dear ole silent days.

You would go squawkin'

Them silly ole jazz-time lays.

Ma-a-ammy! Ma-a-ammy!

Since you introduced the din

We have done the dollars in -

Ma-Ma-Ma-a-ammy!

Say, ole lady, you did start sump'in' when you began shootin' off your mouth in the fillums. Here we was, sittin' pretty, when Al had to go an' hand you that sob-stuff an' shoot up the whole works. Say, ain't you never heard Shakespeare's wisecracks about silence being golden? I'll say it was.

The fourth largest industry in good ole U.S.A. while it kept its mouth shut! But from the minute the first squawks came out of them ole amplifiers the Britishers put the skids under us, an' we ain't stopped slidin' yet.

Who was it said that it was not until Hollywood started to say sump'in' that she proved herself plumb dumb? say, isn't that the truth?

MA-A-AMMY! Ma-a-ammy!

We was perched right up

On the world's high top,

But you spoke your piece an' we done a flop.

Ma-a-mmy! Ma-a-ammy!

Why didn't you stay in good ole Alabamy?

Ma-a-am -

Aw! What's the use? Hand us a snort of rye someone. What's the sense of talkin' to try to prove talkin' ain't good business? We been horsewoggled!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Mac'

In every little country place, all up and down the land,
From ageing cradles of the race to Never-Never Land
From the towns about the cities to the little towns out back,
There dwells a man of all trades; and he's mostly known as 'Mac.'
He's dwelt there since the Lord knows when and never seems to die;
And everybody, now and then, when his present job is thro' -
And twenty other little jobs that he has still to do.

A plumbing job, a painting job, a bit of fence to mend;
They want him in a hurry; and he's everybody's friend.
Kettle-mending, carpentry, a bit of scrub to cut -
There's nothing comes amiss to him - a door that will not shut,
A safe that will not open, or a roof that hangs askew,
A plough to mend, a pump to tend - there's nothing he can't do.
He has never learned a single trade, yet somehow has the knack;
And, no matter what the trouble is, it's safe to send for 'Mac.'

He never makes much money, yet he never seems to care,
Tho' a dozen jobs await him, he has heaps of time to spare -
A friendly yarn, a cup of tea, a piece of sage advice,
He's willing for them every day, and never counts the price
Of half an hour or half a day spent in a neighbor's need.
He sells his toil, but not his time. For what is time, indeed,
Save for a man to labor in just as he feels inclined?
So, if Smith's job amuses him, Brown's job can lag behind.

In every little country place he's known, or once was known,
Ere the urge that men call Progress claimed the broad earth for its own,
When man found pride in labor and the cunning of his hand,
Nor set a price in money on the arts he could command.
And many a little country place with pride today can show
Some sturdy structure 'built by 'Mac' nigh fifty year ago.'
Oh, they jerry-built their palaces; but many a stout bush shack
Shall stand to honor workmanship of that proud workman, 'Mac.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Mad, But Not So Mad

Though our eye in recent seasons
Has a wild and glassy glare,
And we fail to offer reasons
For the straws that deck our hair;
There are certain consolations
That are unction for the soul
When we view the older nations
Gone completely up the pole.

We may be mad, but not so mad
As others quite bereft
Of reason. Though our case is sad,
We've sparks of gumption left.
For, while we have the art to see
From this our island raft,
How mad the other nations be
That sail the economic sea,
We're not completely daft.

In regard to hops and butter,
Wheat and sugar, things like these
Our insanity is utter
As evinced by subsidies.
In regard to other matters,
As events have proved today,
We're not quite as mad as haters
Or not so far anyway.

And tho' our land's a troubled land,
But few of us are found
Making insane attempts to stand
'With ears upon the ground.'
Contortionists might very well
Attempt it without fear;
But it must come of stuff they sell
When Breweries, as judges tell,
Are standing on their ears.

Mallee Wife

Home's best (she said), and the tale
Of the hungering soil and the flail
Of the sun and the shuddering threat
Of the heat, and more heat yet;
Of more than a woman can stand,
Almost, in that merciless land,
With its lifelong, lingering strife,
For the Mallee mother and wife.

Oh, I've seen all the spurious zest
Of the city, and yet, home's best;
The sweep of the plain's vast verge,
And the calling of Life and the urge
To struggle and hope in vain,
Then struggle and hope again
That, and the faith that clings
For the solving of human things.

Home's best (she said). I have seen
The glamor of cities, the sheen
Of the silken garments rare
And they spell for me despair;
Despair for the woman who cleaves
To luxury's yellowing leaves
Despair for the weakening race,
Who, faltering, fall from grace.

Life, as I know it is stern;
And the seed of my seed must learn
That nothing has life to give
Save a man must labor to live
Struggle and ache and toil
For the gifts that come of the soil,
Since every treasure of worth
Comes of the hard, kind earth.

Home's best (she said), and the dust
And the finger of God out-thrust,
Saying, 'You toil, or die

Under this pitiless sky.'
Even as long since said
To the Parents of Man long dead;
Even as 'twas decreed
In Man's first, passionate need.

Home's best. For what do they know,
Who cleave to glitter and show,
And strive in a strange excess
Of pleasure for happiness?
What do they know of worth
Of the secret lure of the earth,
And the peace, and the exquisite ache of the battle
For my man's sake?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Mar

"Er pore dear Par.' she sez, 'e kept a store';
An' then she weeps an' stares 'ard at the floor.
'Twas thro' 'is death,' she sez, 'we wus rejoiced
To this,' she sez . . . An' then she weeps some more.

"Er par,' she sez, 'me poor late 'usband, kept
An 'ay an' corn store. 'E'd no faults ixcept
'Im fallin' 'eavy orf a load o' charf
W'ich - killed 'im - on the - ' 'Struth! But 'ow she wept.

She blows 'er nose an' sniffs. 'E would 'a' made'
She sez, 'a lot of money in the trade.
But, 'im took orf so sudden-like, we found
'E 'adn't kept 'is life insurince paid.

'To think,' she sez, 'a child o' mine should be
Rejoiced to workin' in a factory!
If 'er pore Par 'e 'adn't died,' she sobs...
I sez, 'It wus a bit o' luck for me.'

Then I gits 'as red as 'ell, 'That is - I mean,'
I sez, 'I mighter never met Doreen
If 'e 'ad not' - an' 'ere I lose me block
'I 'ope,' I sez, 'e snuffed it quick and clean.'

An' that wus 'ow I made me first deboo.
I'd dodged it cunnin' fer a month or two.
Doreen she sez, 'You'll have to meet my Mar,
Some day,' she sez. An' so I seen it thro'.

I'd pictered some stern female in a cap
Wot puts the fear o' Gawd into a chap
And 'ere she wus, aweepin' in 'er tea
An' drippin' moistcher like a leaky tap.

Two dilly sorter dawgs made outer delf
Stares 'ard at me frum orf the mantelshelf.
I seemed to sympertise wiv them there pups;
I felt so stiff an' brittle-like meself.

Clobber? Me trosso, 'ead to foot, wus noo
Got up regardless, fer this interview.
Stiff shirt, a Yankee soot split up the back,
A tie wiv yellor spots an' stripes o' blue.

Me cuffs kep' playing wiv me nervis fears
Me patent leathers nearly brought the tears
An' there I sits wiv, 'Yes, mum. Thanks. Indeed?'
Me stand-up collar sorin' orf me ears.

'Life's 'ard,' she sez, an' then she brightens up.
'Still, we 'ave alwus 'ad our bite and sup.
Doreen's been sich a help; she 'as indeed.
Some more tea, Willy? 'Ave another cup.'

Willy! O 'ell! 'Ere wus a flaming pill!
A moniker that alwus makes me ill.
'If it's the same to you, mum,' I replies
'I answer quicker to the name of Bill.'

Up goes 'er 'ands an' eyes. 'That vulgar name!'
No, Willy, but it isn't all the same,
My fucher son must be respectable.'
'Orright,' I sez, 'I s'pose it's in the game.'

'Me fucher son,' she sez, 'right on frum this
Must not take anythink I say amiss.
I know me jooty by me son-in-lor;
So, Willy, come an' give ya Mar a kiss'.

I done it. Tho' I dunno 'ow I did.
'Dear boy,' she sez, 'to do as you are bid.
Be kind to 'er,' she sobs, 'my little girl!'
An' then I kiss Doreen. She sez 'Ah Kid!'.

Doreen! Ar 'ow 'er pretty eyes did shine.
No sight on earth or 'Eaving's 'arf so fine,
An' as they looked at me she seemed to say
'I'm proud of 'im, I am, an' 'e is mine.'

There was a sorter glimmer in 'er eye,

An 'appy, nervis look, 'arf proud, 'arf shy;
I seen 'er in me mind be'ind the cups
In our own little kipsie, bye an' bye.

An' then when Mar-in-lor an' me began
To tork of 'ouse'old things an' scheme an' plan,
A sudden thort fair jolts me where I live:
'These is my wimmin folk! An' I'm a man!'

It's wot they calls responsibility.
All of a 'eap that feelin' come to me;
An' somew'ere in me 'ead I seemed to feel
A sneakin' sort o' wish that I was free.

'Ere's me 'oo never took no 'eed o' life,
Investin' in a mar-in-lor an' wife:
Someone to battle fer besides meself,
Somethink to love an' shield frum care and strife.

It makes yeh solim when yeh come to think
Wot love and marridge means. Ar, strike me pink!
It ain't all sighs and kisses. It's yer life.
An' 'ere's me temblin' on the bloomin' brink.

"Er pore dead Par,' she sez, an' gulps a sob.
An' then I tells 'er 'ow I got a job,
As storeman down at Jones' printin' joint,
A decent sorter cop for fifty bob.

The things get 'ome-like; an' we torks till late,
An' tries to tease Doreen to fix the date,
An' she gits sudden soft and tender-like,
An' cries a bit, when we parts at the gate.

An' as I'm moochin' 'omeward frum the car
A sudden notion stops me wiv a jar
Wot if Doreen, I thinks, should grow to be,
A fat ole weepin' willer like 'er Mar!

O, 'struth! It won't bear thinkin' of! It's crook!
An' I'm a mean, unfeelin' dawg to look
At things like that. Doreen's Doreen to me,

The sweetest peach on w'ich a man wus shook.

'Er 'pore dear Par'...I s'pose 'e 'ad 'is day,
An' kissed and smooqed an' loved 'er in 'is way.
An' wed an' took 'is chances like a man
But, Gawd, this splicin' racket ain't all play.

Love is a gamble, an' there ain't no certs.
Some day, I s'pose, I'll git wise to the skirts.
An' learn to take the bitter wiv the sweet..
But strike me purple! 'Willy!' That's wot 'urts.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

March Flies

Now comes the time when we douse flies
With various kinds of sprays
The sand flies, and the house flies,
And the flies with furtive ways.
But I keep my hate for the large flies
That come for the tree-lined creek
Those arch flies, the March flies
With a crosscut saw for a beak.

Now, most flies rouse in the autumn
From the summer's drowsy daze,
And they bite as nature taught 'em,
In various styles and ways.
They nip, or they stab or they burrow;
But the fly that knocks me out
Is the March fly, with the dull, dead eye
And a crosscut saw for a snout.

Now the house flies come to the table
Or busily play on the pane;
And our rage and heat they calmly treat
With the uttermost disdain.
And the buzz-flies buzz and blunder,
And the sandflies dig right in;
But my whole soul shrinks when the March fly sinks
His crosscut under my skin.

He's a sneak and an arrant coward,
And the lowest of low-down cows,
By nature ghoulishly dowered
With a weapon no law allows.
And it isn't the pain he gives me
Nor the blood he may chance to draw,
It's the loathsome way that he makes foul play
With his really terrible,
Most unbearable,
Horrible crosscut saw.

March Of Memories

Left, right - left, right . . .

We march today for memories (the grizzled Digger said)
Memories of lost dreams and comrades gone ahead
Comrades bloody war took, dreams that men have slain
(Left, right - left, right . . .) Not ours to dream again.
There was Shorty Hall and Len Pratt, Long Joe and Blue,
Skeet and Brolga Houlihan, and Fat and me and you:
Bright lads, the old bunch; eager lads and keen
That first day we marched down thro' this familiar scene.
Dreams were ours, and high hopes went with us overseas.
(Left, right - left, right . . .) And now 'tis memories.

We march again for memories (the grizzled Digger sighed)
Memories of lost mates, of foolish hopes that died.
First, Shorty got his issue on the beach at Sari Bair.
(Left, right - left, right . . .) The vision of him there
Brought the dawn of disillusion. I needed little more
To blood me to the butchery, the filthiness called war.
Shorty, like a limp rag, slung there anyhow,
Sprawling on the warm sand like I can see him now.
Always was a merry mate, a rare lad for fun.
(Left, right - left, right . . .) And Shorty, that was one.

We march today for memories; and they come crowding fast
As each year adds another page to the story of the past.
Pratt went west at Mena Base; raved of home and peace.
(Left, right - left, right . . .) His was a kind release.
For a Lone Pine shell-burst got him; and he was less than man.
'Twas a sniper's bullet bore the name of Brolga Houlihan.
We called him Happy Houlihan, the man who took a chance.
Then the Reaper paused and plotted for the rest of them in France -
Except Long Joe, the luckless, a youth ill-shaped for war.
(Left, right - left, right . . .) And Long Joe was four.

We march today for memories. Little else had we
When we marched home as veterans. Blue and you and me.
For Skeet went with a night raid, and none came back alive.
(Left, right - left, right . . .) So Skeet, he tallied five.
Five gone and four to fight; us and Blue and Fat,

Who vowed he was too big to hit; but a whizz-bang settled that.
Yet Fat was lucky to the end - an end that held no pain.
All hell erupted where he stood; and none saw him again.
And Blue marched, and you marched, and I, a war-torn three.
(Left, right - left, right . . .) Marched with memory.

We march again with memories (the grizzled Digger spake)
One year? Ten years? How soon shall we awake
To glorious reality? For lately it would seem -
(Left, right - left, right . . .) - we march within a dream.
Where Shorty is, and Blue is, and Happy Houlihan,
That seems the only real land, with rest for weary man.
For Blue went out three years ago; and cruel slow to kill
Was the war-god, the grim god who claims victims still.
But you and I, old Digger friend, will soon march with the rest.
(Left, right - left, right . . .) In the Army of the West!

Today we march with memories, and years dull the pain.
But God help the young 'uns, mate, if they must march again,
(Left, right - left, right . . .) For the young must ever dream.
But we march with memories, and ghosts go at our side -
Len Pratt and Long Joe, whom men say have died.
And you walk like a ghost, mate; you do not turn to hear.
Or is it - Did the boys say you passed last year?
Out of this tangled dreaming has your troubled spirit flown?
(Left, right - left, right . . .) And I march alone.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Masefield, Poet And Man

He comes as a man who has lived 'mid men
With the gloss and the polish off;
And truth flows free from his ready pen
For he looked on life with a keen eye then,
And he found small cause to scoff.
And he loved the sea and its ships of sail
And a sailor's way and a sailor's tale;
And he looked on the world as an epoch's close
And found what none but the venturer knows.

He comes as a poet that the gods adopt
With songs of the wild and the free
Shorn of the snivelling cadence dropped
From the lips of the sophist snugly propped
On the throne of a pink settee.
And he loves the land and the flowering wealds,
The west wind's song and the daffodil fields
As he loves the song of a howling gale
Caught in the cup of a bellying sail.

And what shall he say of us who comes here
This man who has lived as a man?
He shall follow the way of the pioneer
And our own high venturers, blind to fear,
Who strove when the race began;
And the digger's way and the drover's way
And the rough, rude life of an olden day
And the track of the lonely Overland
He shall follow them all - and understand.

And his keen mind's eye shall pierce the gilt
That would cover the old, rough life:
He shall sense the soul of a young land built
In the days when life had a strong, rude lilt
And a rhythm tuned to strife.
He shall trace again in the Anzac's soul
The spirit that made this young land whole.
And so, as he sees, shall he blame or praise
By a standard won in the world's highways.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Mateship

But when the war-worn, knowing all
Of glory, horror and hate,
Abandons all for the heart's sure call
And the need of a stricken mate.

Better than all the man-made creeds
Begotten in hate's foul fog,
Furthered by dark and bloody deeds
In the name of the under-dog;
Better than 'rights' conceived in rage,
With policy, plot and plan,
Earth's rich, rejected heritage,
The love of man for man.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Me, A Sinner'

Should it occasion much surprise
That criminals should deal in blame,
As all of us, and recognise
The full depth of another's shame.
The burglar blames the bigamist
As something partially insane,
And Bluebeards equally insist
That burglars are a sinful bane.

And, getting further up the scale,
To normal men, like you and I,
The rule is never known to fail,
While egotism throned on high,
Sets cunning traps for you and me,
Blind with the illusion of our worth,
To ape the smirking Pharisee,
And see sin stalking o'er the earth.

In a community of saints,
Where all sins save fault-finding die,
One still might look for grave complaints
Concerning haloes worn awry.
But as this sinful earth is trod,
He who, of Jezebel or Cain,
Says, 'There, but for the grace of God,
Go I,' is the most nearly sane.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Melba

Born to the sun and smiling skies,
And bird-songs to the morning flung,
To joyousness that never dies
In hearts that stay for ever young
'Twas here, beneath the shining trees,
She paused to learn the magic rune
Of those unlaboured ecstasies
That keep a weary world in tune.

The grey thrush fluting by the nest,
The golden whistler trilling high
Their gifts she captured and expressed
In magic notes that may not die.
Then to the old, grey world she gave,
Exultingly, at Art's command,
In songs that live beyond the grave,
Her message from a bright, young land.

With sheer exuberance of Art,
Won from that happy, feathered throng,
She poured our sunshine from her heart,
Translated into magic song.
And tho', alas. the singer dies,
Who bade old continents rejoice,
Not ever from our sunlit skies
Departs the memory of her voice.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Mid-Winter Monody

There's a bleak, black world without,
And the rain falls fast;
And the wind, with a whine and a shout,
Blows buffeting past
To wail thro' the tortured trees,
With cold wet breath,
Like a choir of dank banshees
Foretelling death.

I sit by the fire and I now,
And I juggle with rhymes.
Oh, the ways of our world grow odd,
And the trend of our times.
My tired eyes roam the news,
These columns tell
Of earth and its warring views,
And I sigh, 'Well, well!'

Idly I turn the page;
And I ponder then
Of the hopes and the dreams and the rage
And the folly of men.
What profits this modern show?
And where do we gain?
But - twenty short years ago,
Ah, then we were sane!

Speed-drunk and pleasure-crazed
We ravage and waste,
Dull, sentient things, half-dazed
By our own mad haste;
Selling content for gold,
Our peace for a fad.
Alas, for the wisdom of old!
We are mad! stark mad!

How, when, came earth's golden age
If ever it shone?
Wise years of the saint and the sage,

These are gone - long gone,
Never to blossom again
'Mid a peace well-won,
In a world of the simply sane.
We are doomed! We are done!

When a score more years drift on,
Then another shall dwell,
Here in my place, when I've gone.
And he'll sigh, 'Well, well!
What profits this modern show?
And where do we gain?
But - twenty short years ago,
Ah, then we were sane!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Mildura

Where the sunlight, burning down,
Lights her luscious orange groves,
Lights the river and the town;
Where the placid Murray roves;
Where each shining summer gives
Life to loveliness serene;
Here the tropic lady lives
'Mid her almost tropic scene.

Palm trees spreading to the sun,
Dusk of lemon, sheen of vine;
Vitamin and vigour won
And imprisoned, till the wine,
Gushing from the purple grape
In the press, allows again
Golden sunlight to escape
These the dower of her domain.

Gay and glad and vigorous,
Winning wealth from summertime,
Glorious gifts she gleans for us
Dwellers in a colder clime;
Conjuring from her kindly earth
Golden fruits to give men joy
Well this lady knows the worth
Of her Arcadian employ.

Tropic lady! Well she knows
Whence her brave abundance comes.
Wealth, where her broad river flows,
Bordered by its spreading gums;
Comes with waters winding down
From the cold lands of the east,
Suffering her sun-kissed town
To spread for us a kingly feast.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Modern Hygiene

'Mother, may I go in to swim?'
'My dear, you didn't oughter.
I've heard of baths filled to the brim
With something more than water.'

'Mother, I want to learn to swim.'
'Oh, have a care, my daughter!
I fear this ultra-modern whim
To lave in ale and porter.'

'Mother! They all go in to swim!'
'Think of the aftermath, dear.
Well, hang your clothes on a hickory limb,
But never drink your bath, dear.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Monday Morning

I often pause to contemplate
The sadly barren mental state
Of persons whom it is my fate
To meet on Monday morning.
They should be, after Sunday's rest,
Alert, clear-minded, full of zest;
But everywhere they are oppressed,
Bad-tempered, dull and yawning.

But I? I'm always strangely bright,
Primed with ideas and full of fight,
With brain alert and eye alight
With rare exhilaration:
All due, no doubt to my wise bent
To do no thing I should repent,
And to a Sunday wisely spent
In pious contemplation.

I do not wish to set myself
Upon some loft moral shelf
And treat my brother man, poor elf,
To haughty patronising.
And yet I feel I have to say
That I regard the laggard way
That men approach their work this day
As utterly surprising.

Oh, I could write, this gladsome morn,
With vigour of a man new-born
Rare verses, full of lilting scorn
About my fellow's failings;
Or I could write on politics
And heave a hundred verbal bricks,
Using the rhymster's thousand tricks
In homilies and railings.

But I resist; for, being kind
I know that human nature's blind
And weak and frail; I have no mind

To call down envious curses.
And, tho' I tremble on the verge,
I manfully resist the urge,
And sing, where I might shout and splurge,
These rather halting verses.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Moonlight

I love you, dear, o' morn and moon.
I love your ev'ry mood and guise;
But, neath the soft, enchanting moon,
Such loveliness the gods must prize.
'Tis then I long to dare and fight
The world for you, my queen o' night.

We wander in a jewelled bower;
And, tho' I be your humble slave,
Within that brief, enchanted hour
I know that I am strong and brave.
'Tis then red war I yearn to make
And conquer worlds for your sweet sake.

And old romance in splendour comes
From out the hills to linger nigh;
And in our cause the brave old gums
Stand sentinel against the sky.
'Tis then I would outrival Mars
For you - the sovereign of the stars!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

More For The Money

What are the wild waves saying now that their lengths are changed?
In a manner most dismaying are the stations now aranged.
And I twist and twirl and twiddle at the knobs, then, with a screech
Come sounds of a sobbing fiddle and a League of Nations speech,
Or the Abyssinian crisis with the football field's alarms,
Or the fat stock market prices mixed up with stuff by 'Brahms.'
More for my money truly in these daft days I get.
Since the waves become unruly and the solo's a duet:-
From 3HA and 3DB, or 3LO and 7NT,
From 3AR and 5CK. Sounds mingle in the cutest way:
'You are listening now . . . to a song by Bach . . .
On the Jersey cow . . . 'Hahk, Hahk, the Lahk!'
On the cult of the tomato . . .
My cutie says . . . Scratched for the Cup . . .
Von Plonken plays . . . Prime wethers up . . .
With a 'cello obligato . . .'

What are the wild waves saying, now that their paths o'erlap?
And the trumpet's brazen braying breaks in on the solemn chap
Who tell the listening nation how flames of war arise;
But a strident Sydney station yells, 'Smoke gets in your eyes.'
And you'll note if you're observant that, spite of all you say,
Your boss, the Civil Servant, goes on his own sweet way;
He deplores the sad disaster when your set so misbehaves;
But the servant rules the master, and choas rules the waves.
From 3HA and 3DB, from 3LO and 7NT,
From 3AR and 5CK. Sounds mingle in the quaintest way.
But in a while you cease to smile,
For the thing's no longer funny.
Listener, be wise. Pray, realise
You get more for your money.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Morning Glory

Singing morning has begun.
Where the wooded ranges run
To far summits, there the snow
Lingers yet. But down below
In the quiet, green-girt places,
Where full many a swift creek races
From the snow-lands to the sea,
Now breaks sudden harmony.

Where this tree-waned clearing dreams,
First a rosy promise be
As young dawn steels up the sky
Where the frozen ramparts lie.
Now, from dew-wet leaves a-glitter,
Comes a little drowsy twitter,
And the first swift spear of light
Wounds at last the stubborn Night.

Flashing now, bright javelins
Pierce the murk; and now begins
As Day's gleaming ranks deploy
Morning's canticle of joy.
First a sleepy chuckle, breaking,
Tells of Laughing Jack awaking,
Pausing; then, from tree to tree,
Leaps unbound hilarity.

Here's the signal Morning's hush
Sweetness shatters, as Grey Thrush,
Veiling with the seraphim,
Lifts his liquid matin hymn.
Golden Whistler joins him then,
Now Red Robin, now Blue Wren;
Magpie's trumpet, sounding, swelling,
Caps the eager chorus welling,
As a wealth of varied notes
Pours now from a hundred throats
Up to greet their lord, the Sun,
Morning, morning has begun!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Mother's Day

Matriarchy's coming fast,
Matriarchy's here!
Man's supremacy at last
Finds the end is near.
Since the days of troglodytes,
Man, the lord and master,
Sees his olden cherished rights,
Slipping fast and faster.

Daddy has no time to roam,
The household bills he's clearing,
Mummy's left four kids at home
And gone electioneering.
Mummy holds a sacred trust
To talk the public dizzy,
Daddy has to earn a crust,
And, gosh! it keeps him busy.

Once a chattel and a slave,
We grabbed her by her hair
And flung her in our private cave
To do our cooking there.
But, since her olden bonds were loosed,
More liberty she's craving,
And lovely woman rules the roost,
While mankind does the slaving.

Marriage is a full-time job
For Daddy, ever toiling:
He has to work, the poor old swab,
To keep the pot a-boiling.
But Mummy has the time to spare
To right a stricken nation.
Oh, cares! Oh, clubs! Oh, flowing hair!
This is emancipation!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Mr Fitzmickle Has A Test Match Fright

Mr Fitzmickle, the martinet,
Stern lord of his house and kin,
Is a small, bald man, and a cricket fan
Since the night he listened in
On his young son's set one winter morn.
Now his Test complex grows tireless;
But his small, meek wife tends a lonely life,
And the small son mourns his wireless.

Mr Fitzmickle, the martinet,
Was met at his door last night
By the low-voiced maid whose eye betrayed
A state of chronic fright,
And Mary stammered in nervous tones
'Mum-Madam's took a chill, sir.'
Fitzmickle gasped, 'What's that?' he asked,
Said Mary, 'Madam's ill, sir.'

Mr Fitzmickle, the martinet,
Clutched at his brow and groaned,
His face grew white in the evening light,
'Oh, this is the end!' he moaned.
'All hope has gone!' But Mary said,
'Please, sir; don't look so sad, sir.
A 'eadache's wot the missus got.
Don't fret. She ain't that bad, sir.'

Mr Fitzmickle, the martinet,
Glared, as his voice came back
Glared at the maid, 'You mumbling jade!
Wretch! You deserve the sack!'
'But, sir -' 'Enough! Can't you speak plain?
'Madam?'" He raved like a madman,
'Out of my sight! . . . Lord! What a fright!
I thought that you said 'Bradman'!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Mugga Mugga

Candidly, I do not hug a
Wish to go to Mugga Mugga;
To the Mugga Mugga Mountain by Yassberra's desert place,
Where they're planning - more's the pity
To erect Australia's city,
To upraise a drouthy city - monument to our disgrace.
'Tis proposed that we shall lug a
Myriad pipes to Mugga Mugga -
Water-pipes to get the wetness to the city's thirsty crowd
Water to ablute and bathe in?
Nay! The language will be scathin'
When the Mugga mugs discover: 'NOTICE - BATHING NOT ALLOWED.'
Wearily, with jar or jug, a
Citizen at Mugga Mugga
Will await his turn for water - wait with bucket, billy-can,
Kerosene-tin - any vessel
That the Cotter's muddy mess'll
Safely keep in - O, the weepin' of the Mugga Mugga man!
I can see a future Mugg
Resident arise and tug a
Show'r-bath chain without result, then curse aloud and thirst for blood
Curse the crawling Cotter trickle.
For he will be in a pickle
When the Cotter isn't coting and Molongolo's mostly mud.
I've a yearn, within, to plug a
Jaw whenever Mugga Mugga
Mountain's mentioned in my hearing, for it makes me very sore.
When I realise Dalgety
Was thrown over for the petty
Claims of parish politicians I'm inclined to raze for gore.

I'd rejoice if someone dug a
Deep, wide grave at Mugga Mugga
And interred all Canberranters, minus service, sob or stone
All nefarious State-Frighters!
Yassinine old nation-blighters!
Nay; I'd lug a Mugga-fighter there and plant him on my own!

Murray's Ride

I seldom get to hatin' men, nor had much cause to hate;
To me, it just a foolish game to play, at any rate.
But it kills the hard thought in you, an' forgiveness is complete,
To see the man you hated once a maimed thing at your feet.

We'd had a meetin' at the mill; the boss had said his say
The good old boss, who stints himself to find the men their pay
He told us, fair an' honest, he was up against the game
Unless he got the timber out before the Winter came.

I'll say this much for decent men - an' decent men they were
They saw the game that Murray played to give the boss a scare.
We saw he'd pay near anything and Ben would do him brown;
But a fair thing is a fair thing; so we truned Ben Murray down.

A truck was waitin' in the yard, full-loaded for the trip.
Just an easin' of the brake-rope was enough to let her rip
For half a mile or more down-hill along atrack, rough-made,
To where the horses wait to haul her up the other grade.

The talk was done, the numbers up, the boss had won the day,
An' we were ready to go back an' earn our bit of pay;
When Murray in a mad black rage, goes on to rave an' shout.
'You're sacked,' the old man tells him plain. 'I've had enough. Get Out!'

For close on half a minute I expected Hell to pay;
But Murray glares around the mill - then turns an' walks away.
He stops beside the loaded truck; an' each man in the mill
Watched Murray with a sidelong look; an' each man wished him ill.

I knew Ben Murray for a gab; I knew him for a fool
A decent man enough at heart when he was calm an' cool
Wild rage had hold on him that day, an', maybe, madness too;
An' scorn in me changed to dismay at what I saw him do.

He sprang behind the timber load an' leaped up to the back;
He loosed the rope to start the truck upon the down-hill track;
An' if he meant to jump or stay no man will ever know.
'If I go out,' Ben Murray yelled, 'this is the way I go!'

'Stop that mad fool!' howled old man Blair. 'He'll wreck the track below!'
But now the truck had gathered way, an', as we watched her go,
Ben Murray, with the brake-rope slack, cursed us with all his might.
She took the curve behind the huts, an' then went out of sight.

.

We found him near the wattle-clump, down in the little creek.
His head was by a coral fern, an' blood was on his cheek,
An' blood was on the wooden rails, an' he lay very still,
The man who half an hour ago had meant to boss the mill!

'He's livin' yet' says old man Blair. 'Boys, we must do our best.
Lay hold there, Jim, an' you, young Dick, an' heave that off his chest.
Man, but he's crushed! The crazy fool! Now treat him gently, lad.'
'The track ain't damaged much,' says Pike; 'but, gosh, he's got it bad!'

.

Red stains were on the wooden track an' on the sunlight ground;
A wagtail twittered by the creek, an' hopped an' fussed around;
The Laughin' Jacks were wild with mirth; but very still he lay,
As we took poor Ben Murray up an' carried him away.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Musterin'

Oh, I've ridden 'em rough an' I've ridden 'em kind,
Brumbies and prads well-bred.
Of every colour and every kind
(The old stock-rider said).
I've broken the wild Blanchwater colts
An' Walers from down Noo South,
An' every sort that bucks or bolts,
With every sort of mouth.

An' I thought I knew the musterin' game
Right thro' from A to Z.
An' every sort of nag you'd name
(The old stock-rider said).
I've wheeled 'em up in the Queensland scrub,
An' tailed 'em back o' Bourke,
To skite in many an old bush pub
I was master of all bush work.

But musterin' cattle be aeroplanes?
What profit does it bring?
An' I don't see how a bushman gains,
For it ain't a natural thing.
Soaring' and roarin' an' rampin' round
In a rackety tin machine,
When a natural horse on natural ground
Beats all yer keraseen.

I suppose it's progress as they say,
But the thing's against all laws.
So I'm saddlin' up an' I'm off away
Where they ain't got them gee-gaws.
For I got no time for aeroplanes;
But a prad with a good, kind eye,
An' the press o' the knee and the feel of the reins
Is my game till I die.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Mutton

In the everlasting summer, when the town is limp with heat,
and the asphalt of the footpath curls your boots and burns your feet:
When you're creased and crabbed and sodden, and can hardly raise a crawl,
And the perspiration's drippin' in a constant waterfall;
There's a penetratin' odor gets abroad and fairly roars;
It will creep in through the keyholes and it sneaks beneath the doors;
And it fills your happy home up from the cellar to the roof,
Until ev'ry other odour holds its breath and stands aloof.

That's Mutton! Mutton!
Everlastin' Mutton!
All-pervadin', never-fadin' smell of cookin' sheep.
Into ev'ry room 'twill roam, chasin' you from house and home,
Mutton flaunted, mutton-haunted, even in your sleep.

You can smell it in the parlour, you can feel it in the hall,
you can HEAR it in the kitchen, where it hugs you like a pall,
Hov'ring o'er your couch at midnight, wafting thro' your troubled sleep:
First to greet you in the mornin' when the day begins to peep.
Seek you vainly to evade it in an open-air retreat,
It will rise and upper-cut you, from the gratin's in the street.
Vain are all your disinfectants, for they fail the woes to drown
Of a mutton-ridden people in a mutton-scented town.

Oh, the irony of hearin' songs about the home, sweet home;
When you swelter in an oven where the kitchen odours roam.
When each kindly word is wafted on a mutton-scented breeze,
And each sigh stirs up remembrance of a week of hashed-up teas;
Where endearing terms are flavoured with a touch of mutton raw,
And you sample last week's dinner, ev'ry tender breath you draw.
Do you wonder that our home-life isn't what it ought to be?
Do you know what sets us drinkin', in our abject misery?
It's Mutton! Mutton!
Soul-destroyin' Mutton!
Over-cloudin', odour-shroudin' all in life that's bright;
By a thoughtless movement stirred, chokin' down a kindly word,
Ever-present, effervescent, mornin', noon and night.

My Epitaph

Oh, praise me now if you would please
My soul with soothing flatteries.
Praise with my living clay agrees.
'Tis sweet, I vow.
Give me kind words while I can feel
The modest blushes gently steal,
What time my virtues you reveal.
Oh, praise me now!

For, when the vital spark has fled,
No matter what kind words are said,
I'll simply go on being dead
And take no heed.
Or if, perchance, beneath the clay,
I hear some kindly critic say,
'He was a boshter'in his day!'
'Twere hard indeed.

'Twere bitter hard to be confined,
Gagged by grim Death, while fellows kind
Call my good qualities to mind,
And softly sigh.
I vow I'd writhe within my bier,
And strive to croak at least, 'Hear, hear!'
For I have ever prized that dear
Right to reply.

And, when at last I meet my doom
And moulder in the chilly tomb,
Gaunt Death might play within the gloom
Who knows what pranks.
My very skeleton would squirm
To hear, on my behalf, some worm
Or some unlettered grave-yard germ
Returning thanks.

Then, if you're keen on praising me,
I'd rather be alive to see
And hear and feel the flattery,

And know 'tis true.
And when I rise to make reply
I fain would droop a modest eye
And by my halting, speech imply
It is my due.

I do not want a monument.
Why should good money so be spent?
Nay, put it out at ten per cent.,
And when you save
Enough to purchase goodly fare,
Then spread me out a banquet rare.
No gift's appreciated there,
Within the grave.

Oh, praise me now while I am here;
In my attentive living ear
Pour adulation; never fear
I mind the row.
I love you harp upon
Those dulcet strings. Play on, play on!
Do not delay until I'm gone.
But praise me now!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

My Scenario

Oh, I've got a lovely story that I've thought out all myself.
It will make a gorgeous picture, I am sure.

(Mind, it isn't for the money, for I am not keen on pelf,
and my attitude to Art is very pure.)

It is full of real heart-int'rest, mother-love and passion rare,
And gun-fights and a bad, bold man (who dies),
And a big, strong he-man hero with divinely marcelled hair;
And I really think it ought to win the prize.

The hero falls on evil days and sinks and sinks quite low
(This is where the villain comes upon the scene),
But the mother writes a letter pointing out the way to go
(We will show the letter, close-up, on the screen):
Then Augustus (that's the hero) meets a lovely girl by chance,
With great, big, soulful, golf-ball, baby eyes,
And undying love comes to them at the very first brief glance.
Oh, I really think it ought to win the prize.

But ways of true love ne'er run smooth, and lots of dreadful things
Occur, and all their plans turn out amiss.
But thro' the fights and flights and frights she clings and clings and clings
To win him with the last, long, luscious kiss.
I don't know much of writing things - scenarios and such;
Still, one never really knows what one can do.
But the theme is so original and has so quaint a touch
That I think it ought to win the prize. Don't you?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Narcissus

A man's a mug. I've worked the 'ole thing out
To-day, down in the orchard where I sat
Runnin' the wheels red-'ot beneath me 'at,
An' wras'lin' fervud with a sudden doubt
A doubt wot's plugged me fair bang on the point
An' jolted all me glad dreams out uv joint.

It's been a pearlin' day. The birds above
Up in the trees sung fit to break their 'earts.
It seemed, some'ow, the 'ole world's makin' love,
Iexceptin' me. An' then an' there I starts
To think things out an' git me bearin's straight,
Becoz - Well, I ain't been meself uv late.

I've flopped. It was the parson put me wise,
Before 'e left. I 'ad been full uv skite.
I was the 'ero uv the piece all right.
Me chest was out, me 'ead was twice the size
It used to be. I felt I was king-pin.
Did n't the papers 'ave me photer in?

I was that puffed with pride I never stopped
To search me soul fer signs uv wear an' tear.
I loved meself so much I never dropped
To any blot or blemish anywhere.
The Lord 'Igh Muck-a-muck, wot done the trick,
An' dug the Murray with 'is little pick.

When I think back on it I go all 'ot.
I was that blind I never even seen,
Nor looked to see no changes in Doreen.
I was content to 'ave 'er on the spot
Dodgin' about the 'ouse in 'er calm way,
To chirp, 'Yes, Bill,' to everything I say.

The parson punched me. 'E's alwiz 'ad
A trick uv callin' me by fancy names.
In town 'e christened me 'Sir Gally'ad,'
'Oo was, it seems, a knight wot rescued dames,

But never spoke out uv 'is turn to none,
Becoz 'is 'eart was pure. 'E took the bun.

But now 'Narcissy' is the moniker
'E wishes on me; an' I arst fer light.
'Narcissy?' I remarks. 'Don't sound perlite.
'Oo was this bird? There looks to be a slur
Or somethin' sly about that cissy touch.'
'A bloke,' 'e sez, 'oo liked 'imself too much.'
I looks quick fer that twinkle in 'is eye
Wot tells me if 'e's kiddin' me or not.
But it ain't there. 'Fair dinkum,' I reply,
'You don't mean - You ain't 'intin' that I've got -'
'I mean,' 'e sez, 'you should give thanks through life
That you 'ave been so lucky in your wife.'

'E don't 'arp on the toon; but turns away.
'Your daffydils,' 'e sez, 'makes quite a show.'
An' latter, when it came 'is time to go,
'E shakes me 'and reel arty, twinklin' gay...
But, 'lucky in me wife?' Where did I 'ear
Somethin' like that before? It sounds dead queer.

I seeks the orchard, with a sickly grin,
To sort meself out straight an' git a grip.
Them 'ints the parson drops give me the pip.
I don't quite see where daffvdils comes in;
But, 'lucky in me wife!' Why, spare me days,
Yeh'd think I beat 'er, by the things 'e says!

I tries to kid meself: to back me skite,
An' 'old that wad uv self-content I 'ad.
It ain't no use. I know the parson's right:
Clean through the piece I 'ave been actin' bad.
I've been so full uv Me, I've treated 'er
Like she was - well, a bit uv furnicher.

Yet, 'furnicher' don't seem to put it good.
Nothin' so wooden don't describe Doreen.
All through the game, some'ow, she's alwiz been
Well, somewhere 'andy, 'elpin' where she could,
An' manidgin', an'... Bli'me! Now I see!

Wot she did manidge was the block'ead - me!...

Well, I'm the goat. I s'pose I should 'ave seen
I was n't 'ead an' tail uv all the show.
A bit uv putty in 'er 'ands I been!
An' so bullheaded that I did n't know.
Only fer 'er things might 'ave - Spare me days!
I never will git used to women's ways.

Only fer 'er Rose might... But wot's the use?
Shakespeare 'as said it right: the world's a stage;
An' all us 'uman ducks an' dames ingage
In actin' parts. Mostly the men cut loose,
An' fights, an' throws their weight about a lot.
But, listen. It's the women weave the plot.

The women... Well, it's been a bonnie day.
Blue-bonnets, dodgin' in an' out the ferns,
Looks like blue chips uv sky come down to play.
An' down the valley, where the creek track turns,
I see Rose, arm-in-arm with Wally Free.
The 'ole world's makin' love, ixceptin' me.

Huh! Women!... Yes; a man's a mug, all right...
I sees the sof' clouds sailin' in the sky,
An' bits uv thistledown go driftin' by.
'Jist like men's lives,' I think. An' then I sight,
Fair in me cabbages, ole Wally's cow.
That fence - But them plants ain't worth savin', now.

Women... I wonder 'oo Narcissy was...
Green trees agin blue 'ills don't look 'arf bad...
I s'pose 'e got the cissy part becoz
'Is ways was womanish. Well, serve 'im glad
That cow uv Wally's ort to milk a treat
With plenty good young cabbage plants to cat.

Women is often 'elpful - in a sense...
Lord, it's a lazy day! Before it fails,
I better git a 'ammer an' some nails
An' dodge acrost an' mend that bit uv fence.
It's up to me to try an' put things right,

An' - well, I'll 'elp Doreen wash up tonight.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Ned'

When Ned was a neophyte nobody heeded him.
No man could prophesy, none could foretell
How, when the day came that the populace needed him,
Quite a new Ned would emerge from his shell
For he blithered and blathered and talked without end
In a manner provoking to foe and to friend.

In days of prosperity, peevish asperity
Ever informed his debate in the House
Some hint or suspicion of fault or omission,
And Ned would arise, without thinking, and rouse.
But 'tis strange what a change has come over the fellow
Who, faced with stern duty, grown thoughtful and mellow.

When clowns are stampeded and strong men are needed
'Tis well that the man has arrived with the hour
Who, wielding a sabre, as ever, for Labor.
Sees prejudice wane as he waxes in pow'r.
And 'mid froth and faction can still keep his head.
While we gasp at the grit of the latter-day Ned.

There are men, it is written, who, when they are smitten
By fate, may develop new firmness and calm.
Tho' other men curse it, he thrives on adversity,
Lately for doggedness taking the palm.
And arising refreshed to the popular joy,
A leader new-armed, and a broth of a boy.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Nocturne

I'm standin' at the corner uv the Lane
The Land called Spadgers - waiting fer 'is jills.
The night's come chilly, an' a drizzlin' rain
Falls steady where a near-by street lamp spills
A gashly yellor light on stones all wet,
An' makes the darkest corners darker yet.

Them darkest corners! 'Struth! Wot ain't I 'eard
Uv dark deeds done there in the olden days,
When crooks inticed some silly sozzled bird
Upstage, an' dealt with 'im in unkind ways
Bashed 'im with bottles, woodened 'im with boots.
Spadgers was rood to flush an' festive coots.

If you are flush in Spadgers, 'tain't good form
To git too festive, if you valyer thrift.
To flash yer gilt an' go the pace too warm
Might make the Lane regard yeh as a gift.
Ther's nothin' loose they're likely to ferget;
An' all yeh've left is 'eadache an' regret.

Lestwise, that's 'ow it used to be. They say
The Lane's reformed, an' took to honest trade.
An' so yeh'd think, to see it uv a day,
All prim an' proper. But when ev'nin's shade
Comes down, an' fools as stacks uv beans to spill,
Why, 'umin nacher's 'urnin nacher still.

Don't git me wrong. An' jist in case you might
Misjudge the gents 'oo plys their callin' there,
In Spadgers darkest corners uv a night,
Wot time a shikkered mug 'as gonc to spare,
I'd jist ixplain they takes their point uv view
Frum diff'rint angles to sich birds as you.

F'rinstance, s'posin' blokes like me an' you
('Oo is respectabil, I 'ope) should see
Some prodigal all 'eadin' fer to do
A one-ack 'Road to Ruin' tragedy,

Would we jist let 'im flop before our eyes
Or, bein' decint 'umins, put 'im wise?

Would we not try to 'alt the wayward feet
Uv this 'ere errin' brother with a word
Before 'is moril knock-out was complete?
O' course we would. Advice is cheap, I've 'eard.
When sinners miss the step ther's few men ain't
Itchin' like 'ell to preach, an' be a saint.

Well, s'pose again, the Lane should see a bloke
Dead keen to splash around 'is surpris wealth
On rapid livin' till 'e's bust an' broke
An' rooned in repitation an' in 'ealth,
Do they tork empty words, an' let 'im go,
Jist for a chance to say, 'I tole yeh so!'

Not them. They say, ' 'Ere is a wasteful coot
'Oo will be sorry ere tamorrer's sun.'
Per meejim, then, uv bottle or uv boot
They learn 'im wisdom, an' 'is sinful fun
Is ended. An', for quick results, their style
'As all yer preachin' beaten be a mile.

Quick-action missionaries, you might say.
When they sees some stray sheep inclined to roam
An' chuck 'is 'ealth an' character away,
They takes stern measures for to lead 'im 'ome.
An', if they reaps some profits at the game,
Well, 'oo are me an' you to sling 'em blame?

I'm standin' at the corner uv the Lane
Toyin' with sich thorts idly, when I spys
A furtive coot come sloushin' through the rain
An' stop to size me up with sidelong eyes.
An' then 'e chats me, with the punkest tale
That ever got a bad man into jail.

I s'pose me face ain't clear in that 'arf-dark,
Or else 'e was near-sighted. An' I s'pose
I mighter seemed to 'im a easy mark
Me in me farmer's 'at an' country clo'es.

But, strike, it 'urt me pride to think that 'e
Would try to ring that old, old dope on me.

On me! 'Is make-up fairly yelled 'is trade,
Brandin' 'im plain a low-down city gun.
The simple country mug was never made
'Oo'd wear sich duds. It was all overdone:
'Is moleskin pants, 'is carpet-bag, 'is beard
Like some cheap stage comeejin 'e appeared.

'Hey, mate,' 'e w'ispers. 'Could yeh do a bloke
A little favor? Listen - on the square
I've done me tin. I'm bottle-green, dead broke,
An' can't git 'ome. I 'aven't got me fare.
But 'ere's me watch - reel gold - belong to Dad.
Lend us a fiver on it, will yeh, lad?'

A reel gold watch! Oh, 'elp! They worked that lay
When I was jist a barefoot kid. 'Twas old
When cheap-jacks sweated for their 'ard-earned pay
At country shows. I knoo the sort of gold
Priced in the brumy shops four an' a zac;
An' 'fore you git' 'em 'ome the gold's gone black.

'Send I may live!' I sez. 'You got a nerve!
That tale's got w'iskers longer than your own.
A slice of cold, 'ard quod's wot you deserve
For springin' duds like that! Lea' me alone;
An' try some kindergarten with that lurk.
A man's a right to crack you! Aw, git work!'

But 'e won't take a 'int nor 'old 'is jaw,
This amacher in crime with brums to sell,
But breasts right up to me an' starts to paw.
Now, likewise, that's a game I know too well:
Pawin' with one 'and while the other dips
Into yer - 'Back!' I yell, an' come to grips.

I grab 'im be the throat an' shake 'im good,
I xpectin' 'is fake w'iskers to come loose.
'A rotten way to earn yer livli'ood!'
I growl . . . 'E grunts . . . 'Is face is goin' puce.

'You imitation crook!' I sez agen.
'Wot do yeh mean by swin'lin' honest men?'

I shake 'im 'ard once more. 'The first John 'Op
That comes,' I sez, 'can 'ave you for a gift!
Me late idears uv thugs 'as all gone flop:
Me point uv view, some'ow,' 'as seemed to shift;
'Tain't philosophic, like it used to be,
Now someone's took a fly at thuggin' me.

'E's gurglin' nicely - clawin' at the air.
'You pest!' I sez. 'You scum! You sewer rat!
Why can't yeh earn yer livin' on the square,
An' be respectabil?' I'm gettin' that
Right-thinkin' I am all one virchus glow.
'Leg-gug-' 'e gurgles, musical. 'Leggo!'

We made a pretty pitcher standin' there
Nocturne, as artists sez. I felt, some'ow,
That, underneath the yeller lamp-light's glare,
'Is upturned face (It's gittin' purple now)
Was sumptin' painters would admire no end
Then a sharp voice be'ind me yelps, 'Young friend!'

'Young friend,' 'e sez, su'prised, 'wot-wot's amiss?
Yes; my ole parson friend. I drops the crook.
'You are nustook, young friend,' 'e sez; 'for this
Is not the man for 'oo we've conic to look.'
Then 'e stares closer at the gaspin' gun.
'Why! Bless me 'eart!' 'e chirps. 'It's Daniel Dunn!'

'It's Mister Dunn,' 'e sez, 'from Bungaroo!
My farmer friend!' ('Ere was a flamin' mess!)
'Is this 'ere coot,' I arsts, 'well knowed to you?'
The parson takes another gig. 'Why, yes.
You're Mister Dunn?' An' Whiskers answers "Ick!"
I notice then that Daniel's partly shick.

A dinkum farmer! Strike! I'm in all wrong!
'Sorry,' I sez. 'My fault. 'Ow could I tell?
I acted nervis when 'e come along.
But, if you're sure, it might be jist as well

To intrajuce us, 'coz it would appear
Ther's been some slight misun'erstandin' 'ere.'

Then Snowy twinkles, an' pufforms the rite.
W'iskers 'as got 'is wind back with the spell)
"Appy to meet yeh, sir,' 'e sez, perlite.
'Don't mention it,' sez me. 'I 'ope you're well?'
'Not bad, consid'rin',' 'e remarks (an' takes
Me 'and) 'the narsty weather.' So we shakes.

Then I ixplain; an' W'iskers spills 'is tale
The old yarn uv the mug 'oo puts 'is trust
In nice new city frien's uv 'is 'oo fail
To keep appointments, an' 'e wakes up bust.
We spring a overdraft, an' leave 'im there,
Bristlin' with gratiehood in every 'air.

'Jist goes to show,' I sez to Snowy then.
'If I 'ad not - well, not detained yer friend,
'E mighter fallen in with reel rough men
An' ended up all narsty in the end.
I feel to-night, some'ow, me luck's dead in,
An' I could give some crook a rotten spin.'

'Young friend,' sez Snowy, solemn, 'should we meet
This man we seek to-night - this feller Wegg,
Try to be diplermatic an' discreet;
Reason with 'im; no vi'lince, friend, I beg.'
'Wot? Vi'lince? Me?' I chirps. (I'm bublin' now)
'Wot do yeh know bout that? I'll kiss the cow!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Obadiah Bell

I am fit and I am well (so said Obadiah Bell.)
I take life as it come from day to day,
I have never been a scorner
Of the 'trouble round the corner,'
For it may be lurking half a life away.
No false vision ere bewitches
Me with dreams of fame or riches, So I'm fairly well content and free of strife.
With my job and friends and my garden and my fowls, and my club and my
bowls
and my pipe and my books and my dog and my family and my wife.
And, since I seek the safer things in life,
Most especially my family and wife.

On occasion, vagrant fears stir me with the passing years,
A sudden qualm, a flash of half-felt fright;
But I know my limitations
As a savior of nations:
And who am I to put the world aright.
So, when qualms like these assail me,
What I find may never fail me
As, contented as I may, tho' life I jog,
Are my job and friends and my fowls and my club and my bowls and my pipe
and my family and my wife and my books and my garden and my dog,
And, when I'd dissipate some mental fog,
Most especially my garden and my dog.

For a man can tell tell (so said Obadiah Bell.)
When what he has may one day disappear:
So I thank what gods there be
That all they gave to me
Has stayed with me for yet another year.
And I do such as I can
To assist my fellow man
And wish him blessed as I am with my lot
With my family and my wife, and my job and my bowls and my pipe and my
dog and my club and my friends and my little garden plot;
And, when I think of all the joy I've got,
Most especially my friends, and which is not?

Ogs

It chanced one day, in the middle of May,
There came to the great King Splosh
A policeman, who said, while scratching his head,
There isn't a stone in Gosh
To throw at a dog; for the crafty Og,
Last Saturday week, at one,
Took our last blue-metal, in order to settle
A bill for a toy pop-gun.'
Said the King, jokingly,
'Why, how provokingly
Weird; but we have the gun.'

And the King said, 'Well, we are stony-broke.'
But the Queen could not see it was much of a joke.
And she said, 'If the metal is all used up,
Pray what of the costume I want for the Cup?
It all seems so dreadfully simple to me.
The stones? Why, import them from over the sea.'
But a Glug stood up with a mole on his chin,
And said, with a most diabolical grin,
'Your Majesties, down in the country of Podge,
A spy has discovered a very 'cute dodge.
And the Ogs are determined to wage a war
On Gosh, next Friday, at half-past four.'
Then the Glugs all cried, in a terrible fright,
'How did our grandfathers manage a fight?'

Then the Knight, Sir Stodge, he opened his Book,
And he read, 'Some very large stones they took,
And flung at the foe, with exceeding force;
Which was very effective, tho' rude, of course.'
And lo, with sorrowful wails and moans,
The Glugs cried, 'Where, Oh, where are the stones?'
And some rushed North, and a few ran West;
Seeking the substitutes seeming best.
And they gathered the pillows and cushions and rugs
From the homes of the rich and middle-class Glugs.
And a hasty message they managed to send
Craving the loan of some bricks from a friend.

On the Friday, exactly at half-past four,
Came the Ogs with triumphant glee.
And the first of their stones hit poor Mister Ghones,
The captain of industry.
Then a pebble of Podge took the Knight, Sir Stodge,
In the curve of his convex vest.
He gurgled 'Un-Gluggish!' His heart growing sluggish,
He solemnly sank to rest.
'Tis inconceivable,
Scarcely believable,
Yet, he was sent to rest.

And the King said, 'Ouch!' And the Queen said, 'Oo!
My bee-ootiful drawing-room! What shall I do?'
But the warlike Ogs, they hurled great rocks
Thro' the works of the wonderful eight-day clocks
They had sold to the Glugs but a month before -
Which was very absurd; but, of course, 'twas war.
And the Glugs cried, 'What would our grandfathers do
If they hadn't the stones that they one time threw?'
But the Knight, Sir Stodge, and his mystic Book
Oblivious slept in a grave-yard nook.

Then a Glug stood out with a pot in his hand,
As the King was bewailing the fate of his land,
And he said, 'If these Ogs you desire to retard,
Then hit them quite frequent with anything hard.'
So the Glugs seized anvils, and editors' chairs,
And smote the Ogs with them unawares;
And bottles of pickles, and clocks they threw,
And books of poems, and gherkins, and glue,
Which they'd bought with the stones - as, of course, you know
From the Ogs but a couple of months ago.
Which was simply inane, when you reason it o'er;
And uneconomic, but then, it was war.

When they'd fought for a night and the most of a day,
The Ogs threw the last of their metal away.
Then they went back to Podge, well content with their fun,
And, with much satisfaction, declared they had won.
And the King of the Glugs gazed around on his land,

And saw nothing but stones strewn on every hand:
Great stones in the palace, and stones in the street,
And stones on the house-tops and under the feet.
And he said, with a desperate look on his face,
'There is nothing so ghastly as stones out of place.
And, no doubt, this Og scheme was a very smart dodge.
But whom does it profit - my people, or Podge?'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Black Jacko

Old Black Jacko
Smokes tobacco
In his little pipe of clay.
Puff, puff, puff,
He never has enough
Though he smokes it all day.

But his lubra says, "Mine tink dat Jacky
Him shmoke plenty too much baccy."

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Bob Blair

I got so down to it last night,
With longin' for what could not be,
That nothin' in the world seemed right
Or everything was wrong with me.
My house was just a lonely hole,
An' I had blisters on my soul.

Top of my other worries now
The boys are talkin' strike, an' say
If we put up a sudden row
We're sure of forcin' up our pay.
I'm right enough with what I get;
But some wants more, an' then more yet.

Ben Murray's put it up to me:
He says I got some influence
Amongst them, if I agree
'Which I will do if I have sense'
We'll make the boss cough up a bit.
That's how Ben Murray looks at it.

I don't know that the old boss can.
I've heard he's pushed to make ends meet.
To me he's been a fair, straight man
That pays up well an' works a treat.
But if I don't get in this game,
Well, 'blackleg' ain't a pretty name.

This thing has got me thinkin' hard,
But there is worse upon my mind.
What sort of luck has broke my guard
That I should be the man to find
A girl like that? . . . The whole world's wrong!
Why was I born to live and long?

I get so down to it last night
With broodin' over things like this,
I said 'There's not a thing in sight
Worth havin' but I seem to miss.'

So I go out and get some air
An' have a word with old Bob Blair.

Bob's livin' lonely, same as me;
But he don't take to frettin' so
An' gettin' megrims after tea.
He reads a lot at night, I know;
His hut has books half up the wall
That I don't tumble to at all.

Books all about them ancient blokes
That lived a thousand years ago:
Philosophers an' funny folk
What he sees in them I don't know.
There ain't much fun, when all is said,
In chap that is so awful dead.

He put his book down when I came,
He took his specs off, patient-like.
He's been in Rome; an' who can blame
The old man if he gets the spike
To be jerked back so suddenly
By some glum-lookin' coot like me.

At first he looks at me quite dazed,
As tho' 'twas hard to recognize
The silly fool at which he gazed;
An' then a smile come in his eyes:
'Why, Jim,' he says. 'Still feelin' blue?
Kiss her, an' laugh!' . . . But I says, 'Who?'

'Why, who, if not the widow, lad?'
But I says, 'Widows ain't no go.'
'What woman, then, makes you so sad?'
I coughs a bit an' says, 'Dunno.'
He looked at me, then old Bob Blair
He ran his fingers through his hair.

'God help us, but the case is bad!
An' men below, an; saints above
Look with mixed feelin's, sour an' sad,
Upon a fool in love with love.

Go, find her, lad, an' be again,
Fit to associate with men.

'Don't leave yourself upon the shelf:
It's bad for man to live alone.'
'Hold on,' says I. 'What ails yourself?
What are you doin' on your own?'
Quickly he turned away his head.
'That's neither here nor there,' he said.

I saw I'd made a clumsy break;
An' tied to cover it with talk
Of anything, for old Blair's sake.
He don't reply; but when I'd walk
Outside he says, 'What's this I hear
About the mill boys actin' queer?'

So then we yarns about the strike,
An' old Bob Brown frowns an' shakes his head.
'There's something there I hardly like;
The boss has acted fair,' he said.
'Eight years I've toiled here constantly,
An' boss an' friend he's been to me.

'I know he's up against it bad;
Stintin' himself to pay the men.
Don't listen to this tattle, lad,
An' leave that dirty work to Ben.
He tries to play on others need;
It's partly devil, partly greed.

'Ben's not a reel bad lot at heart,
But ignorant an' dull of sight,
An' crazed by these new creeds that start
An' grow like mushrooms, overnight;
An' this strange greed that's spread the more
Since the great sacrifice of war.

'Greed everywhere!' sighed old man Blair.
'Master an' man have caught the craze;
An' those who yesterday would share
Like brothers, now spend all their days

Snatchin' for gain - the great, the small.
And, of, folly of it all!

He tapped the small book by his hand.
'Two thousand years ago they knew
That those who think an' understand
Can make their wants but very few.
Two thousand years they taught
That happiness can not be bought.'

'Progress?' he shouted. 'Bah! A Fig!
Where are the things that count or last
In buildin' something very big
Or goin' somewhere very fast?
We put the horse behind the cart;
For where's your progress of the heart?

'Great wisdom lived long years ago,
An' yet we say that we progress.
The paint an' tinsel of our show
Are men more generous, or kind?
Then where's your progress of the mind?'

(I think Bob Blair's a trifle mad;
They say so, too, around these parts;
An' he can be, when he's reel bad,
A holy terror once he starts.
dare say it's readin' books an' such.
Thank God I never read too much!)

I says I'm sure I don't know
Where all this progress gets to now.
He smiles a bit an' answers low,
'Maybe you'll find out, lad, somehow.
But talkin' makes my old head whirl;
So you be off, an' - find that girl.'

I says Good night, an' out I goes;
But I was hardly at the door
When his old specs is on his nose,
An' his book in his hand once more;

An', as I take the track for home,
Bob Blair goes back to Ancient Rome.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Farmer Jack

Old farmer Jack gazed on his wheat,
And feared the frost would nip it.
Said he, "it's nearly seven feet -
I must begin to strip 'it.

He stripped it with a stripper and
He bagged it with a bagger;
The bags were all so lumpy that
They made the bumper stagger.

The lumper staggered up the stack
Where he was told to stack it;
And Jack was paid and put the cash
Inside his linen jacket.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Jim Shore

He prospered in an olden day
When down the rutted waggon track,
Thro' scenes that seem a world away,
His bullocks lumbered forth and back;
A tall old man, deep voiced, erect
Despite the load of years he bore,
His patriarchal beard, grey flecked,
He won from all men deep respect,
Doyen of drivers - old Jim Shore.

'Gee-off, Headman. Come here, Tony.
Darkey, Redman! Woo there, Roany.'
Goad upraised in stern pretending
Writhed aloft, yet ne'er descending
To fulfilment of the threat.
Men have said that never yet
Had Jim's whip-lash marked a hide
Of the sleek beasts that were his pride.
'Get on, Rodney! Steady, Moonlight!'
Thro' the disk or dappled moonlight,
Down the deep green ways of yore
Went the team of old Jim Shore.

The times have changed; it could not last,
The glamor of those halcyon days.
The loud exhaust, the siren's blast
Wake echoes now by old bush ways.
Yet oft, when dusk steals down the sky,
I sit again by my house door
To hear a ghostly team go by,
And, mingling with the night wind's sigh,
That rich deep voice of old Jim Shore.

'Gee-off, Headman. Stand up, Tony.
Darkey, Redman! Come here Roany!'
At the yoke I see them straining;
Waggon timbers are complaining;
As, from some vague spirit land,
I see the driver wave a hand,

As long ago he used to wave
Ere the years claimed him, and the grave.
'Up there , Major! Darby! Drummer!'
Again, as on some long lost summer,
The team drifts by and disappears
Down the green aisles of vanished years.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Pete Parraday

Old Pete Paraday, his mind works very slow;
But, when it fastens on a thoughts, he will not let it go.
He measures it and mumbles it until an answer comes,
Just as he mumbles bits and scraps between his toothless gums.
'I likes to think a bit,' says he. 'An', thinkin', by and large
On these 'ere modrun fashions like, 'as fairly riz me garge.'

Old Pete Paraday, he thinks the joke is rich;
'Cen-TEN-ary! Cen-TEEN-ary!' Did ever you 'ear sich?
I never knowed the like,' says he: 'sich argymints as those.
The proper word is 'Century,' as any scholard knows.
An', when I makes my century, come seven year ahead,
I'll have you call it 'Century,' an' nothin' else instead.'

Old Pete Paraday, he cackles in high glee.
'Cen-TEN-ary! Cen-TEEN-ary!' Ho, lahdidah!' says he.
'Tis these 'ere modrun misses is to blame for all sich rot.
They paints their lips and plucks their brows an' thinks they knows a lot.
But I weren't hatched but yesterdee; an', sure as you're alive,
I knows,' says old Pete Paraday, 'how many beans make five.'

Says old Pete Paraday: 'I've thought it up an' down,
An' back an' front an' crossways, an' likewise roun' an' round'.
The proper word is 'Century,' an' means one hundred years.
'Cen-TEN-ary! Cen-TEEN-ARY!' They fair gits in yer ears!
So when I reach my century, you call it just that way;
An' none of your noo-fangled stuff,' says old Pete Paraday.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types

I can not recall his heyday; for I knew him in the day
When his curly hair had thinned a bit, his waxed moustache grown grey.
That he kept the local fruit shop was a trifle in life's plan;
For our Captain Curly Taplin was a military man.
The details of his uniform grow vague now and remote,
All save a pipeclayed helmet and a gaudy scarlet coat.
'Not the Prooshians nor the Rooshians,' Captain Taplin oft averred,
'Shall take this country from us! Harrumph! My Word!'

Our Captain Curly Taplin was the pride of our old town,
Most especially the ladies; for that military frown,
That piercing eye, the gruff command that rumbled in his throat,
The fiercely spiked and waxed moustache, the glowing scarlet coat
Were ideal in the female eye. When our militiamen
Marched out - ah, what a figure was our gallant captain then -
A figure that, in these dull days, might seem a shade absurd,
But - 'My men are drilled and ready, sir! Harrumph! My Word!'

Then came dread news that sent him straight to don his scarlet coat:
Our cables had been severed, and the Russians were afloat!
He, wait for orders? Fiddlesticks! He mobilised his force,
He hung his shop about with flags and yelled till he was hoarse.
He led them out for marches, for parade drills, practice shoots.
Tho, as sergeant Jack McFee remarked, "'Twas awfu' hard on boots.'
But the captain failed to scent a hoax when nothing more occurred;
For, 'We've still to watch them Rooshians, sir! Harrumph! My Word!'

They hurried him, up by the hill, one day long, long ago
With full military honors; and I deem it fitting so.
For this archetype of Diggers, in the fights he was denied,
Would have fallen just as gamely as his grandsons later died;
For he fiercely loved the freedom that this green land offered him,
And, despite his vast vainglory and his posturing so grim,
There was something sacrificial in that eagerness absurd
For - 'One chance to face them Rooshians, sir! Harrumph! My Word!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No 20 - Mr Blades The Butcher

Mr Blades, the butcher, was a large and beefy man,
'Best him at a cattle deal,' 'twas said, 'no other can.'
He ate a lot and drank a lot and had a lot to say,
And he jollied all the ladies in his large and airy way.
His family was numerous, and helped him in 'the trade,'
And townsfolk had a deal to say of money what they made.
But Mr Blades just went his way, and had his bit of fun;
And joked about his appetite, his girth, or else his 'run.'

His 'run' - a stretch of scrubland at the back of Connor's place -
Was a joke about the district; for it did not bear a trace
Of building or improvement. Yet some said Mr Blades
Had ambitions as a squatter, and a secret scorn for 'trades' . . .
Then the cattle duffers started in the district. Connors raved,
But folk said it was wonderful how Mr Blades behaved.
Tho' he lost a hundred stores one night. But soon began the rows
When people in the town began to lose domestic cows.

Police surprised the gang one night out in the mulga shades,
And took the lot, red-handed, with their leader - Mr Blades.
Of course, the trial stirred our town, as nothing's stirred it since;
But when bad Blades got 'three years hard,' he did not even wince.
His family still strove to carry on the butcher's shop,
For folk refused to pay them, and demanded with some heat:
'Think you can charge for selling us our milkers back as meat?'

When Mr Blades came out of goal, he did not seem ashamed;
A little thinner now, perhaps, but not the least bit tamed.
He told the folk he'd paid his debts, and so, by gum, should they.
So he summoned all his debtors, and his debtors had to pay.
'For our own thieved and slaughtered cows!' wailed these bewildered folk.
But Mr Blades, the butcher, had his last and richest joke,
And, on the day he left the town, people who saw him said
He looked the picture of content - so beefy, large, and red.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 10 - Big Doc Littlejohn

Big Doc. Littlejohn, and ugly man and tall,
He wasn't very graceful, no part of him was small;
Big, frame, big head, huge hands, and red;
But gentle as a woman's as he stooped above the bed,
His great voice muted and the jaw out-thrust
And something there behind his eyes that captured human trust -
Big John Littlejohn, who drove until he died,
In his abbot buggy to the farms outside.

The family physician and the family's true friend;
No household in that wide, new land but loved him to the end;
And the old, fat midwife revered him as a saint:
'Sent straight from God, me dear,' says she. 'A human man she ain't.
No human flesh could bear it, no heart withstand the test,
The slavin', drivin', day an' night with no full hour of rest.'
But Big John Littlejohn, with one of his tired smiles,
Climbed in his abbot buggy for another seven miles.

He'd never met a vitamin, he seldom sought a knife;
But he healed full many a body and he saved full many a life.
For ten years, for twenty years, for forty years he toiled
His aid unstinted and his heart unspoiled,
The friend of rich and poor alike, at everybody's call
For large fee, for small fee, or no fee at all,
In his old abbot buggy, with his wind-blown hair,
Rushing to another case behind his bay blood mare.

They found him on one winter dawn, low-huddled in the seat
Of the old abbot buggy, with the rug about his feet;
The great frame at rest at last, the mind rid of its load,
While the blood mare nibbled at the grass beside the road.
And the sad folk who found him there, before ought else, they say,
First knelt them in the roadside mud and bent their heads to pray
For great John Littlejohn, the grey man and kind,
The healer and the friend, who left not wealth nor foe behind.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 12 - Mrs Munn, The Nurse

Mrs Munn, the midwife - Mother Munn they called her
Wallowed in the world's woes; sickness ne'er appalled her.
She spared no grisly detail as she gossipped on apace,
When - 'Me an' Doctor Littlejohn, my dear, is on a case,'
For - 'Me an' Doctor Littlejohn has awful much to do;
An' some is doin' poorly, but we 'opes to pull 'em thro','
Says Mrs Munn, the town's nurse, short and gingham gowned,
Five feet two in height and four feet around.

Mrs Munn, the midwife toddles down the street,
Telling secrets, dropping hints to friends that she may meet.
'To see the state of 'er, my dear! You 'ardly would believe;
But me an' Doctor Littlejohn ain't easy to deceive.
Gets 'er likker unbeknownst! 'Usband? he don't see.
An' she says it's indigestion, but - you can't tell me!
I knows the signs,' says Mrs Munn, with nods and winks profound
Five feet two of her and four feet around.

Mrs Munn, the midwife no laundered cap;
A black, bugled bonnet and an old print wrap
Were all she knew of uniform. Her discipline was slack,
And curious things might happen when the doctor turned his back.
Maddened by her sloven ways, wearied by her voice,
He longed to send her packing, but he had no other choice
Than Mrs Munn, whose methos were both novel and unsound
Five feet two of her and four feet around.

Mrs Munn - Mother Munn - maybe she served her turn;
For science lagged in those days and men were slow to learn.
Tho' she had great and grievous faults, she had her virtues, too;
And 'Me an' Doctor Littlejohn' pulled many a hard case thro';
Where once she messed and muddled thro', mid births and typhoid scares,
A trim, efficient Sister now has charge of such affairs;
For Mrs Munn, with all her kind, is long since underground
The five feet two of her and four feet around.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 13 - Larrikin Luke

Luke Gale, the larrikin lad, dwelt in Larrikin Lane,
A low street, a by-street, right at the edge of the town;
King of the boys and hobbledehoys - a vulgar youth, and vain,
Winning from all respectable folk a very respectable frown.
But, oh, to see him on Saturday nights, dolled in his nobbiest duds,
Doing the weekly Saturday rounds; impudent, out for larks
Eyeing the girls at the Saturday shops
Coming for candy and acidic drops,
While Luke and his henchmen leaned on posts, passing inane remarks.

Larrikin Luke knew how to dress; short, black-braided coat,
Big, black, felt hat, low and broad of brim;
Shirt, white and collarless quite, narrow tie at the throat
Neatly drawn thro' a quandong ring; vest low-cut and trim.
But, pride of his wardrobe, badge of his clan, flapping about his feet,
Black pants - wonderful pants, by a snake-skin belt girt low,
Belled at the bottoms and tight on the thighs;
A curly fringe combed down to his eyes;
Thimble heels to his shiny shoes, laced right down to the toe.

When General Booth sent soldiers hence banging the 'Salvo' drum,
Larrikin Luke and his rowdy push hatched more larrikin plots;
And the 'Starvation Army' marched, to the joy of the township's scum,
Down the streets as they wildly beat on old tins and pots.
And the grave town elders shook their heads hearing the ribald songs
As the badgered brothers of 'Blood and Fire' meekly knelt to pray;
'Larrikin Luke is doomed,' they said;
'Nothing but gaol for him ahead.'
Now Luke and his lads have long passed on, but Booth's men came to stay.

Larrikin Luke, when I saw him last, was a sober man and grey,
Boss of a thriving business now, moved to a different town;
Married and made and settled down; marking the young folk's way,
As any respectable citizen would, with a very respectable frown.
A serious man, Luke Gale, esquire, with a grown-up family now,
A family man, and a solid man, as every townsman grants,
Chiding the wayward young, forsooth!
But I see him still in his own wild youth,
With his thimble heels, and his broad-brimmed hat, and those queer bell-

bottomed pants.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 15 - Mrs Felix Donnett

Mrs Felix Donnett was a lady of renown,
For ten years her husband was mayor of the town;
For ten years she queened it as our local social light;
And 'everything she did, my dear,' was very, very right.
But the mayoral pomp sat lightly on old Felix, sly but sprightly,
And about his civic earnestness shrewd townspeople had their 'doots;'
But not of Mrs Donnett, with the bugles on her bonnet,
And her dolman, and her bustle, and elastic-sided boots.

Oh, a very proper lady with a very proper mind
Was she, like Queen Victoria, and exceedingly refined.
For the good Queen was her model, tho' her ideals were confused;
Still, she and Queen Victoria were not easily amused,
For she lacked all sense of humor; but she had a nose for rumour
Spicy rumour; and a dragon 'mid the other female 'plutes'
Loomed Mrs Felix Donnett, with bugles on her bonnet,
Her dignity, her dolman, and her Aunt Jemima boots.

And woe betide the romping maid whose ways she counted lax.
One roguish glance, one titter, brought 'the dragon' on her tracks.
'Her? Fast, mai deah? A minx, mai deah! If you but knew it all!
And Ai pity her poor mothah; but, of course, Ai could not call.'
Then the dingle-dangles trembled 'mid the matrons there assembled
As head were tossed and lips compressed. 'And men, of course, are brutes!'
Hissed Mrs Felix Donnett, with the bugles on her bonnet,
And her beadings, and her bustle, and her Aunt Jemima boots.

When I am moved to tolerance in this 'unmoral age'
I take the family album out and turn each yellowed page;
And straightaway I am chastened, and my moral tone comes back,
As I browse 'mid whiskered dandies and meek matrons garbed in black,
With their fol-de-rois and flounces. Then, from out the page there pounces
Mother Grundy; and my turpitude is blasted to the roots
By the glare of Mrs Donnett, and the bugles on her bonnet,
And her dolman, and her bustle, and her Aunt Jemima boots.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 16 - Mr Tank

'Twice one are two; twice two are four.'

I can still hear it floating thro' the old school door:

Those childish voices falling, rising in rhythmic chant,
In a room where heat is prevalent and ventilation scant.

'Twice nine are eight-teen.' And, presiding o'er the scene,
Like a demon in a 'panto,' blackvised and racked with pain,
Urging on the chorus faster, towers Mr Tank, the master,
With his mutton-chop whiskers and his cane
His cruel, thrice-accursed rattan cane.

Some incurable affliction soured his spirit, it was said;
For, above his brow, an ever-present plaster decked his head.

'Twice one are two; twice two are four -'

And suddenly the master disappeared behind the door.

For 'twas said, too, his affection had instilled a predilection
For too-frequent nips of liquor on the sly now and again.

And they boded fell disaster for gaunt Mr Tank, our master,
With his mutton-chop whiskers and his cane
His ever-swinging, torture-bringing cane.

He 'kept us in' one afternoon till summer dusk came down,
While, as the elder scholars knew, he liquored in the town,
And a dozen big boys rushed him as he swayed in at the door,
And they poured ink on his whiskers as he grovelled on the floor.
And we small kiddies stood about, mouths agape, eyes popping out,
To see our dreaded teacher branded with this shameful stain.
For no idol could loom vaster than grim Mr Tank, the master,
With his mutton-chop whiskers and his cane.
But they broke to bits his terrifying cane.

'Twice one are two, twice two are four'

The chant arose next morning, while, across the ink-stained floor,

Mr Tank, ashamed but savage, glowered at the trembling class . . .

But my thoughts of him grow gentle as the mellowing seasons pass.

Now, when hard-won knowledge fails me, straight an olden dread assails me,

And, a phantom cane, descending sharply stirs my wits again,

And I bless stern Tank, the master, with his strip of sticking-plaster,

And his mutton-chop whiskers, and his cane

Most especially, his wisdom-waking cane.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 18

Johnny Nock, the auctioneer, golden-bearded, ever gay,
Spread about him great good cheer in his prosperous heyday;
Familiar sight on district roads - his buckboard and his pacing roans,
As men, perched high on harvest lands, waved whips and called in cheery tones;
For not a man had ill to speak of open-handed Johnny then,
Since, with its fortune at the peak, the old town valued spending men.
And Johnny spent, come shine, come rain; and earned and spent and carried on
With his prophetic trade-refrain of 'Going - Going - Going - Gone!'

Johnny Nock, the auctioneer, at his more important sales
Always stood the crowd free beer, serving it from bright tin pails. And, as the
pannikins passed round, few were too churlish not to quaff,
While Johnny, from his vantage ground, tossed banter back, and laugh for laugh
At some broad jest, then paused to praise this 'splendid beast,' these 'fine fat
sheep';
Then, as the bids began to rise, vowed dolefully they went too cheap.
And sudden optimists would grant that as a rustic wit he shone,
This wag, with his familiar chant of 'Going - Going - Going - Gone!'

So Johnny Nock, the auctioneer, spent and prospered, spent again,
Till 'Progress' brought the railroad here, and out across the Mallee puzzled men
knew vague unease as prices, too, began to fall;
They talked about economies, and failed to understand it all.
Yet Johnny Nock, now past his prime, smiled on, and scorned ill-omened tales,
And drew commissions for a time from dismal, beerless mortgage sales.
Then, most men realised, at last, the old town's star no longer shone.
The glory of the reckless past was, 'Going - Going - Going - Gone!'

Old Johnny Nock, the auctioneer, his golden beard now clipped and grey,
In his wheeled-chair dragged out the drear and clouded sunset of his day.
His house, his buckboard, all were sold, his latest pair of prancing roans;
But Johnny, grown infirm and old, greeted all men in jovial tones.
He wheeled himself about the town, still patron of the racing club
For old times' sake; he wore no frown, and found much business at the pub.
Then, one still night, in accents clear he cried, 'Who bids, gents? Carry on!'
And Johnny Nock, the auctioneer was 'Going - Going - Going - Gone!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 21 - Mr Woolin-Wister

Mr Woolin-Wister was assistant at the store,
He had an air of breeding, and the kind of clothes he wore
Were very, very natty and exceedingly correct;
For every single day he was habitually decked
In the very latest fashion; and he had a roving eye
That wakened many a smile demure and many a gentle sigh.
For, whenever he sought to 'twit' them, then the ladies straight began:
'Now, Mr Woolin-Wister! Oo, you are a naughty man!'

He wore a wide straw-decker with a pretty colored band;
His pants - the shepherd plaid ones - were the tightest in the land,
He wore a braided coat, with vest - in summer-time a sash -
And a set of heavy sideboards and a very large moustache;
His hair combed on his forehead in a very genteel 'slick,'
He made just the perfect masher with his silver-headed stick,
And thro' the street, when he walked out, the female titters ran:
'There is Mr Woolin-Wister. Oo, he is a saucy man!'

His linen is immaculate. His broad stiff-bosomed shirt
Upheld a three-inch collar; and he was a fearful flirt.
For he flirted with the matrons and he flirted with the maids;
At conversation lollies he was boldest of the blades;
For the things he used to pass them at a soiree or a dance
Caused many a maiden blush to glow and many a downward glance;
Yet many a maiden giggled, as she peeped behind her fan:
'Fie, Mr Woolin-Wister! Oo, you are a forward man!'

When last I saw the old town I went into the store,
And there was Mr Woolin-Wister - still a bachelor.
His pate was bald, his eye was dull, his grey moustache was clipped,
And his general demeanour seemed considerably hipped.
Then a lady (rather elderly) came tripping in the shop,
And Mr Woolin-Wister let all other matters drop.
Then she gushed and then she giggled as the persiflage began:
'Now, Mr Woolin-Wister! Oo, you are an awful man!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 22 - The Baker

Our baker, Mr Brackenby, toiler in the night,
Was a lean, tall, glum man whose face was very white;
A brooding man 'twas said of him, and mannerisms odd;
For a grunt of recognition and a rather surly nod
Were all he granted any who came strolling by his shop
In the cool of summer even, when a man might wish to stop
For a bit of neighbor's gossip. But our baker chose to mope
Like one who nursed grave illness or deep grief beyond all hope.

His chirping little 'missus' had the old town's sympathy;
For she loved to hold a customer and let her tongue run free
On stay bits of tittle-tattle; and we said, 'Poor thing,
With a dumb man for a husband, well, she has to have her fling.'
For silent Mr Brackenby, he never seemed to speak
To wife or child or anyone from week to dreary week.
There he sat upon his doorstep, and he stared and stared ahead
Like a being sore afflicted. But he baked good bread.

Yet once a year, on Show Day, some urge removed his gag,
And gloomy Mr Brackenby went out upon a 'jag.'
He visited the taverns from the morn till deepest night
Getting gradually garrulous and gradually 'tight.'
He laughed, he sang, he spent, to talked to any who would hear:
A merry man for just one day and night in all the year.
He sang of 'Champagne Charlie' and 'Where Did You Get That Hat?'
'Belle Mahone,' 'Tarpaulin Jacket,' and a score of songs like that.

Thro' the night he roared and revelled till the daylight broke the spell;
Then our baker, Mr Brackenby, crept back into his shell.
Stale the bread we got that morning; but, for twelve months after that,
In the loaves that came at dawning folk found nought to grumble at.
For he shunned the noisy taverns in the cool of summer eves,
And he squatted on his doorstep in the pose of one who grieves,
With his hand cupped in his white palm, he just stared and stared ahead
Like a man remorse had ravaged. But he baked good bread.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 23 - Little Miss Mix

In a rather tiny building at the bottom of the street,
With a green door and a window small and very neat,
With its shock of beads and button-cards, cottons, bones and braid,
Miss Mix, the village dressmaker, plied a modest trade.
The front shop, with its counter, was a miniature affair,
And trivial the business that was conducted there.
But the back room - the workroom - 'Hours from Nine to Six' -
Was a vestal shrine whose priestess was little Miss Mix.

Tho' man had never gazed within, the sanctum held, 'twas known,
A wealth of female mysteries, for female eyes alone:
Dress-dummies, skirt-stands, a host of fashion fads,
Hip improvers, buckram shapes, curious bustle-pads.
But Mr Mole, who owned a store, and sold things ready-made,
Was oft-times strangely bitter over Miss Mix and her trade.
'A tittle-tattle factory!' said he. 'A gossip-shop!
With its babbling cotton-biters. Why, the thing had ought to stop.'

And many another male declared that Mr Mole was right -=
Chiefly husbands - for the charges of Miss Mix were never light.
And, tho' they talked in that back room of fashion, style and cost,
Many characters were shattered, many reputations lost
As scraps of spiteful sibilants came drifting thro' that door:
'A hussy dear!' ... 'Such goings on!' ... 'And I heard something more.' ...
And many an unsuspecting wench was hounded to her doom
In mousey little Miss Mix's little back room.

When last I saw the old town, nigh twenty years ago,
Its street was little altered, its tempo still was slow;
But where the wee dressmaker's shop in old days used to stand
A 'modern' shop-front glittered, very 'arty,' very grand.
Now Miss Mix was known as Sarah in the days when I was young,
And her trade was 'Plain Dressmaking'; but now a shingle swung
All done in fancy wrought-iron, with twirls and scrolls and tricks:
'Costumiere. Parisian Modes. Direction: Sara Miques.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 25 - Black Peter Myloh

A man was Peter Myloh, strong-browed and black of face,
Australian Aboriginal, son of a dark doomed race.
And even I, an urchin then, read grief in his soft eye
Deep grief, that came with knowledge for a people who must die,
For he was 'educated.' But he came of no meek race
Whining, 'Gibbit tickpen', mister,' with a shamed averted face.
And he was proud, quick with a blow for some fool's sneering slight,
And how I grinned and hugged myself. For, lordy! Could he fight!

Old Connors took him as a boy from some wild Murray tribe
And thought to educate him as a scholar and a scribe,
First at school, and then at college. 'Twas a venture ill begun,
For Connors soon grew tired of it; and left him on the run,
A sort of favoured hanger-on, whom every breed forsook,
To be the butt of shearers there, less than the Chinese cook.
And after he'd half-killed a man, and seemed hell-bound for doom,
'Twas my father gave him sanctu'ry as handyman and groom.

Black Myloh loved my father; but the service of a slave
Was nought beside the hero-worship I, a stripling, gave
This lithe, dark-skinned Ulysses with the low, soft school-bred voice
And proudly then I would have changed my colour, had I choice.
For we were mates as men were mates on some forgotten day
Ere 'progress' came with all its care, and life was mostly play.
He taught me then the wise bush-lore learned centuries ago
By a simple, carefree people versed in arts no 'white' may know.

I learned how souls 'go walkabout', of dreams that are no dreams;
We ranged the plains, the scrub-clad hills, we fished the gum-lined streams,
And much I gained that served me well when from that home I ran,
And chose to act the prodigal, and learned to be a man...
And then, the white-scurge took him. Well do I mind my grief -
Fierce, childish grief, the questionings, the shaking of belief...
But that was very long ago; yet, even now, much truth
I winnow from Black Myloh's lore, the real friend of my youth.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 26 - Dr. Andy Deveraux

Some saw in him a Scottish wreck; some said that he was mad;
A few proclaimed his genius, but all agreed 'twas sad
That Doctor Andy Deveraux had let things slide so far.
'A mighty clever cove,' they said, 'but weak, and - there you are.'
For down at Paddy Clancy's bar you find him night or day,
A silent and sardonic man, who went his bitter way.
'Last night,' some housewife would exclaim, 'I thought I'd seen a ghost;
'Twas that awful Doctor Deveraux, going home by post.'

'Going home by post,' they said. A sorry township jest;
Long since had Clancy tackled him, and had to give him best.
'Tis under this 'Blackfeller's Act' I'll put yeh! Not a sup!'
But the bitter tongue had lashed him till he gladly gave it up.
So Deveraux would drink alone, brooding, till wits grew dense,
Then sought his own home, late at night, along the three-wire fence;
From post to post, in staggering spurts, he made his shameful way.
'Doc's going home by post,' men sneered. 'Broke out again today.'

None knew his story in the town nor, clearly, whence he came;
Nor yet what foul thing rode him - what sorrow or what shame -
To cause a once fine, brilliant mind (as his degrees inferred),
Its urge to brief forgetfulness. And Deveraux spoke no word.
Long since, kind Doctor Littlejohn had sought to play the friend,
To meet a wall of fierce reserve, and get snubbed in the end.
So age and drink took Deveraux, and he sank down and down,
To be a thing for men's contempt, the butt of half the town.

Some say it was a drunken freak; some say a hero's act,
An epic of self-sacrifice. Yet there remains the fact
That there's a tale in that old town men tell until today,
And I have gained thro' hearsay, for I'd been long away.
The details are a little vague - a garbled tale and wild,
Of how the drunken Deveraux died to save a stricken child.
And whether by the truth or by tradition 'twas devised,
I only know that there today he has been canonised.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 28 - Lah-Di-Dah Lane

In the old town traditions - as greybeards will explain
One epic tale immortalises Lah-di-dah Lane,
Clerk to a local wheat-buyer in the railway yard.
Some deemed him just a 'masher,' but a few said 'knowing card'
With his waxed moustache, his monocle, his grey 'hard-hitter' hat,
His braided coat of black 'Berlin,' his lavender cravat,
His buttoned boots and finger-ring and thin Malacca cane
Oh, a sight on pleasant Sundays was our Lah-di-dah Lane.

His manners were meticulous, his smile so softly sweet
That he soon became the butt of every urchin in our street.
But he took their banter calmly, and his brow wore ne'er a frown
Till the bully, Turk Trevanion, caused a scandal in the town.
A loud-mouthed blusterer was Turk, a crude, sardonic lout
Who made a set at Lah-di-dah, but failed to draw him out
Till he used, in ladies' hearing, words both blasphemous and vain:
Then, 'I'll meet you on the wiver flat,' said Lah-di-dah Lane.

Discreetly on that Sabbath day the word was passed about,
Till half the town came to the flat to see poor Lane pass out;
And a few expressed their pity; but the most of them were there
To watch in masculine contempt as, with most tender care
He laid aside his monocle, his grey 'hard-hitter' hat,
His braided coat, his collar and his lavender cravat;
And on the pile he neatly laid his thin Malacca cane.
'Now then, I'll thottle you, you thwine!' lisped Lah-di-dah lane.

Of that Homeric battle townsmen talk with bated breath;
For Lah-di-dah in action proved a streak of sudden death.
His straight lefts and upper-cuts revealed amazing form,
Till Turk, a battered, bleeding wreck, went down before the storm.
Then Lane resumed his monocle, his grey 'hard-hitter' hat,
His collar and his braided coat, his lavender cravat,
And under Turk's incriminated nose wagged his Malacca cane:
'Take that, you bwutal bwawler!' murmured Lah-di-dah Lane.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 29 - Miss Trapp, The Music Teacher

'One-and-two-and-three-and-four
You're playing it by ear, boy! Eyes upon the score!
Miss Trapp, the music teacher, very prim and staid,
English and respectable, the town's old maid,
Sitting in her 'front room,' elderly and stern,
While a grubby urchin struggles with the notes he'll never learn.
'One-and-two-and-one-and-two
You're playing it at random! This will nevah, nevah do!'

No one knew her history or why she settled down
To 'Singing and Pianoforte' in our old town;
With her soft voice and grey dress, the folk called her 'The Dove;'
And the story somehow got about that she'd been 'crossed in love.'
And so, her fancied tragedy clothed her in vague romance
'So well-connected, too, my dear. You'd see that that a glance'
With her 'One-and-two-and - Oh, you stupid child!'
And the rap upon the knuckles was both lady-like and mild.

She sang at local concerts in a cultured voice and thin,
And the back seats applauded her with many a covert grin:
'Her voice is gettin' rusty; but the ole girl does her best.'
But the front seats said, 'Beautiful! How training stands the test!'
Yet all combined, in kindness with varied tact displayed,
To make the path no thornier for our old maid,
Whose spinsterhood was quite an institution in the town,
With her 'One-and-two-and ...' And then she let us down.

For years she'd dwelt among us - our one 'lady,' prim and pure.
In her neat dove-grey dress, and manner most demure,
A regular museum piece, who knew just what was 'done.'
And then an English 'toff' came up to say to Connor's run.
Rich, it was said, and elderly; and, to the town's dismay,
He took and married our old-maid and hastened her away,
With her 'One-and-two-and ...' Of culture now bereft,
The town's 'tone' departed when our music teacher left.

Old Town Types No. 4 - Our Mr. Trim

Mr Trim, commercial traveller, is in town again,
'Our Mr Trim,' you know, debonair and neat;
Landed here this morning on the ten-thirty train;
Can't you hear him laughing there, half down the street?
A bland man, a breezy man, a man to take the eye;
With his trolly load of sample tins, his big leather bags.
Men say he's popular; ladies say, 'Oo, my!'
John George Augustus Trim, traveller in bags.

Mr Trim, the traveller, oh, very well-dressed,
Very much the lah-de-dah; handsome, too, at that;
Flowing, braided frock-coat (material the best)
Pantaloons of shepherd's plaid, tall shiny hat;
Curly set of 'sideboards,' big silk moustache,
Diamond on finger and a rolling eye of brown.
'Oo, such a one!' the ladies say. 'Such a shameless mash,'
And hearts are all a-flutter when our Mr Trim's in town.

Mr Trim, the traveller, drinking with the boys,
'Heard the latest yarn, lads? Got it at the club.'
'He's such a card, that Mr trim! Listen to that noise!
Such a fav-rite with the fellers,' says the lady at the pub.
Mr Trim, with customers, 'putting out a line,'
Feeding them with flattery, indulging every whim.
'Oh, better say two dozen. Shall I book it for you? Fine . . .'
A useful fellow,' says The Firm - 'Our Mr Trim.'

Mr Trim, the traveller, married rather well
Squatter's daughter, up the north - heaps and heaps of cash.
Put it in a wholesale house, so the gossips tell;
Stuck it for a dozen years, and then went smash.
Mr Trim is knocking round somewhere still they say,
Frock coat and shepherd's plaids drooping, like his hope;
Slightly down-at-heel and bald, cuffs inclined to fray
John George Augustus Trim, traveller in soap.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 5 - Mr Mead The Printer

'Mr Mead, the printer' - so the townsfolk called him;
But never in his presence since his reign began;
Such a plain, plebeian title would most surely have appalled him
Felix Mead, Esquire, the literary man.
Down the street each morning to the office of The Banner
Crazy little tin shed - gravely he'd proceed;
Most sedate his measured gait, dignified his manner.
And all the town was very proud of F. T. Mead.

'Have you met our Mr Mead, sir? A bookman and a scholar.'
A grave man, a deep man, rarely known to laugh.
Toiling at the week's news, ever in the collar,
With his little printer's devil, single member of 'the staff.'
Toiling at the type-case, toiling at the leader;
Clothing leading citizens with fleeting, local fame:
'Got to hold the balance, sir; can't be a special pleader.
Tact, sir, tact is the secret of the game.'

He censured Mr Gladstone, and in no uncertain manner;
Vainly might the Russian Czar, the Turkish Sultan plead;
Vainly might the nations crave the mercy of The Banner
If they once aroused the anger of our F. T. Mead.
But the local feuds and furies must be handled circumspectly
The local advertiser must be treated with respect:
Tho' he warned the German Emperor and sneered at him directly,
'It's tact, sir, tact that no pressman may neglect.'

The little Banner 'went to bed' every Wednesday morning.
To be scattered thro' the district with news of all the 'Hub.'
Every Wednesday afternoon found Mr Mead adorning
The little back parlour of the little back pub:
Mr Mead a mite relaxed, but still austere of manner,
With a pot of beer before him and, mayhap, a galley proof.
While lesser folk discussed the news in this week's Banner,
Our local Solon sat and soaked, lonely and aloof.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 6 - Flash Phil

Still I've the picture of him - Flash Phil Galloway;
In a shining dog-cart driving down the road;
Spanking ponies dashing by,
Running tandem, stepping high;
Silver-plated harness where the sunlight glowed.
Everybody waved to him - Kind Phil Galloway
Bright eye, curling hair, big blond moustache.
No man, in those feckless days,
Thought to curb his reckless ways:
'Right man for the district, sir; tho' just a trifle rash.'

Flash Phil Galloway owned a station property
Left him by his father, back in sixty-nine;
Owned a stretch of sheepland, too,
Left him by his Uncle Lou;
Owned his mother's big estate along the Ballantyne
Three tidy fortunes: and Phil upon a race day
Standing for a luncheon - frills and fancy grub.
'Champagne and caviar,
Every toff a big cigar,
All the tucker packed in ice! Oysters in a tub!'

Flash Phil Galloway, loaded down with mortgages,
Deep in mining ventures 'to make another rise.'
Debonair and reckless still
Generous - the same old Phil,
While kindly bankers were ready with supplies.
Bluff Phil Galloway chatting with the manager:
'Where do I sign this one? Read it? Haw, what rot!'
The banker, as he folds the deed:
'And how much, this time, will you need?'
Laughs Flash Phil Galloway, 'Gad! How much have you got?'

Old Phil Galloway, grey haired and garrulous,
Stopping old acquaintances along the city ways,
Hanging round the leading pub
Lounging by the Squatters' Club
Half-crowns changing hands 'for sake of olden days'
But I keep my picture of him - Flash Phil Galloway

In a shining dog-cart - I can see him still:
Spanking ponies dashing by,
Running tandem, stepping high;
Silver plated harness - 'Hey! Happy days, Phil!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 7

Well I remember him - Big Jack Herrington;
Big Jack, the lumper, tanned and honest-eyed,
The clean, straight limbs of him,
The strength in those limbs of him
Strength that was the end of him, and once had been his pride:
Big Jack Herrington, toiling up the stack,
Hefting up the wheat sacks on his mighty back.

One year, two years he labored when the wheat came;
Three years, four years, in the grimy heat,
Toiling up the planks there
The crazy, narrow planks there.
Folk said, 'A wonder! Why, there's nothing got him beat!'
Never had he faltered beneath a heavy bag
Big, Jack, the lumper, never known to sag.

For five years, for big pay he labored there.
'Ten bob a day!' they said. 'Jack's the boy to score.'
And then came the end of him
A false step, and the end of him;
And Big Jack, the lumper, he toiled no more.
Twisted now and broken - his body and his pride,
Big Jack lingered on, a cripple till he died.

Old Jack Herrington, sitting in the bar-room,
Hoping for a kind friend, waiting for a 'shout.'
Men said, 'Remember him?'
Course I remember him.
Best about the stock yard till his strength gave out.
Booze never beat him till that tumble turned him queer....
Hey! Old Jack, there! Have another beer?'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No. 9 - Long John, The Snob

Long John McDougal, the wax-end and leather man,
Solon of the main street, full of curious lore,
Keen-eyed and frugal, politician, weather man,
Pegging there, or stitching by his shop front door;
Keen-eyed and frugal, Long John McDougal
Talked as he toiled there, or harked to others' woes,
With his tousled old grey head and steel-rimmed spectacles,
His old steel spectacles perched on the end of his nose.

Long John the leather man: boots, bridles any a thing
Fashioned out of leather, could his wise hands mend.
'Cease your foolish blether, man! For I have cobbled many a thing
Cobbled it and cured it wi' me strong wax-end.
Cease your foolish blether, man. 'Tis Long John, the leather man
Has shod the feet of half the town, an' no complaints from those.'
And his old head would waggle and his steel-rimmed spectacles
His smeared old spectacles perched on the end of his nose.

Long John, the cobbler, sets aside his sowing owl,
Sets aside his apron and gives his hands a rub,
And trots off for his nobbler, just as he has been going all
These long years for his whisky at the Railway pub.
Long John, the cobbler, calling for his nobbler:
One I'll tak', or two I'll tak', but I'm content wi' those.'
And he gazes e'er so wisely thro' his steel-rimmed spectacles
His bent old spectacles perched on the tip of his nose.

Long John McDougal sat to have a crack there,
Just within his shop door the day I left the town,
Keen-eyed and frugal. And if I ever went back there
I know I'd find him fadeless, his wise law laying down
Kind-eyed and frugal, Long John McDougal,
Spouting weather prophecies, downing fiscal foes,
Peering, with his head back, thro' grime-dimmed spectacles
His old steel spectacles perched on the tip of his nose.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No.1 - The Old Town

Fierce on the wheat-sown Mallee plain
The ruthless summer suns burned down,
And dust-storms, heralding the rain,
Swept thro' the street and on again
While tradesfolk cursed in the old white town.
Of sand and line-stone stoutly built,
She'd lived to prosper and to wilt,
Because, as all wiseacres knew,
'They went and brought the railway thro'.'

Deep-voiced, bewhiskered townsfolk these,
Remnant of pioneering days,
Full of high tales and memories
Of wild, rough work and wilder sprees,
When coach and teamster went their ways;
When men pushed out to newer land
And cash came easy to the hand
And went: The golden days men knew
'Before that put that railway thro'.'

Yet even in those days of stress -
Or seeming stress - the old town knew
Nothing of what or wretchedness;
For wealth was there and work to bless
All men who sought them work to do.
To me, a child in those far years,
Now as a time-dimmed dream appears
The olden life that once I knew
After the railway wandered thro'.

Like myths in some long-fabled tale -
Figures and scenes to conjure with
They seem. Yet 'spite the deepening veil,
Their memories grow never stales;
Big George, the lumper; Toll, the smith;
Long John, the snob - long have they slept
While suns burned down and dustorm swept
Across the Mallee plains they knew
Before men brought the railway thro'.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No.11

As first I remember him: A red man, and tall,
Great Toll, the blacksmith, filled my childish eye.
At its first crisp, clamorous stroke,
Every morning I awoke
To the ringing of his anvil as the years lagged by.
And, when the season came for them, he made us iron hoops
And iron hooks to trundle them: for children were his joy,
And then down the village street we raced with joyous whoops;
For little things contented us when I was a boy.

A glad giant toiling in his little tin shop
The great swelling arms he had, the great rugged head
There he loomed beside the forge
Calling to his striker, George,
'Smite it, laddie! Smite it while the iron glows red!'
So simply joyous in his strength, he made of life a song;
A straight man, a proper man, on no swift fortune bent,
He went about his heavy tasks humming the whole day long,
Accepting, simply as it came, his great gift of content.

The boasting tales his townsmen told he feigned were half untrue,
And blushed to find his feats of strength had won him wide renown;
Of how, long since, he flung his sledge
Fron Grogan's to the river's edge,
And bore two bags of wheat a-back the whole length of the town;
Of how he raised a mighty beam to save a child from fire
When Simpson's store was gutted in the blaze of 'eighty-six.
'They talk,' said he; 'and tales will grow. But, Lord, 'tain't my desire
For to figure as a hero thro' a brace of silly tricks.'

As last I remember him: A grey man and spare,
Sitting in his sons' garage, now from toil withdrawn,
Calling with a mighty roar,
Startling in a man so hoar,
'Smite it, laddie! Smite it! Lord, the young 'uns lack the brawn!'
But, as the cool of even comes to oust the day-long heat,
He is mindful of 'the missus.' 'Tis the rheumatiz,' he owns.
Then, shoulders back, grey head erect, he toddles down the street
Old Toll, the ex-smith, a brave old bag of bones.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No.15 - Mrs Felix Donnett

Mrs Felix Donnett was a lady of renown,
For ten years her husband was mayor of the town;
For ten years she queened it as our local social light;
And 'everything she did, my dear,' was very, very right.
But the mayoral pomp sat lightly on old Felix, sly but sprightly,
And about his civic earnestness shrewd townspeople had their 'doots;'
But not of Mrs Donnett, with the bugles on her bonnet,
And her dolman, and her bustle, and elastic-sided boots.

Oh, a very proper lady with a very proper mind
Was she, like Queen Victoria, and exceedingly refined.
For the good Queen was her model, tho' her ideals were confused;
Still, she and Queen Victoria were not easily amused,
For she lacked all sense of humor; but she had a nose for rumor -
Spicy rumor; and a dragon 'mid the other female 'plutes'
Loomed Mrs Felix Donnett, with bugles on her bonnet,
Her dignity, her dolman, and her Aunt Jemima boots.

And woe betide the romping maid whose ways she counted lax.
One roguish glance, one titter, brought 'the dragon' on her tracks.
'Her? Fast, mai deah? A minx, mai deah! If you but knew it all!
And Ai pity her poor mothah; but, of course, Ai could not call.'
Then the dingle-dangles trembled 'mid the matrons there assembled
As head were tossed and lips compressed. 'And men, of course, are brutes!'
Hissed Mrs Felix Donnett, with the bugles on her bonnet,
And her beadings, and her bustle, and her Aunt Jemima boots.

When I am moved to tolerance in this 'unmoral age'
I take the family album out and turn each yellowed page;
And straightaway I am chastened, and my moral tone comes back,
As I browse 'mid whiskered dandies and meek matrons garbed in black,
With their fol-de-rois and flounces. Then, from out the page there pounces
Mother Grundy; and my turpitude is blasted to the roots
By the glare of Mrs Donnett, and the bugles on her bonnet,
And her dolman, and her bustle, and her Aunt Jemima boots.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No.17- Mr Bodge The Banker

Mr Bodge, the banker, was a power in the land;
His city bank had granted him an autocratic hand;
For our town was most remote from commerce centres then,
And only Mr Bodge could know who were our solid men.
So Mr Bodge within his bank reigned with a pride immense,
And rich men and poor men, they paid him deference;
For who could know when droughts would come to jeopardise some plan?
And one word from Mr Bodge might save or sink a man.

He shone among the 'silvertails,' a leading social light,
Well dressed, well groomed and painfully polite.
He entertained the Governor, when he was in our town,
Magistrates and M.P.'s and others of renown.
In full beards and top hats, with such a fancy spread
That the fat cook at Flynn's pub went nearly off her head
Cold collations, caviare, foods till then unknown,
And all were sure that Mr Bodge had money of his own.

He beamed on Peter Connor when he came into the bank,
For Connor was our squatter and a man of social rank.
He beamed on all the 'silvertails' of his exclusive set;
He frowned on cocky farmers who were over-long in debt.
'My bank considers character,' he'd sternly say to those.
'If you can't pay the fifty pounds, I fear we must foreclose.'
And, tho' small men called him a snob, most of the town agreed
That Mr Bodge, tho' hard at times, was very just indeed.

He once went on extended leave, and all the town's elect
Gave him a champagne send-off. 'Twas the least one might expect.
But when he overstayed his leave there was a mighty din,
The bank sent its inspectors up and called its money in
Or tried to. But old Connor failed, and Collins at the store,
The chemist and the auctioneer and half a dozen more.
And men long talked with bated breath of that depression dire
When Mr Bodge, the banker, left the old town in the mire.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No.2 - Red Matt

He gleaned all the gossip and he gathered all the news,
Mad Matt, the carrier, delivering the grub;
He knew the trooper's tattle and he knew the parson's views,
The gossip at the station-yard, the gossip at the pub.
That high-pitched voice of his, the loudest voice in town,
That shrewd blue eye of his, with humor all a-gleam -
Old Red Matt, with his cabbage-tree hat,
His trolley, and his two-horse team.

Driving down the main street a-clatter with his load,
The great red beard of him blowing out behind:
'Hear about that accident's mornin' up the road?
Hear about the gold rush at Joe Scott's find?
Warmish sort o' day we got; thirsty weather this.
Got a bag o' spuds for you - Dang! Fergot the cream!'
Says old Red Matt with his cabbage-tree hat,
And his trolley, and his two-horse team.

Mad Matt, the carrier, standing at the bar:
'Well here's a go, boys. Got to get along
Seven pints I've had today and still to travel far.
Drink fast and drive fast, yeh can't go wrong.
Fill 'em up again, boss, ans hove it on the slate.
Half-a-ton aboard today - just tipped the beam,'
Says old red Matt with the cabbage-tree hat,
And his trolley, and his two-horse team.

Sudden were his wild ways, sudden, too, his end.
Jumped to grab a bolting team with kiddie sin the trap;
And they picked up Mad Matt, everybody's friend,
Silent now and broken; and they said, 'Brave chap.
Wild an' all,' they said of him, 'always was a white man.'
And they laid him, with a blessing, where his old mates dream,
Saying, 'So long, Matt, with your cabbage-tree hat,
And your trolley, and your two-horse team.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Old Town Types No27 - Sergeant Mat McGillicuddy

King of all the old town, gaoler, censor, too,
Bane of heavy sinners doing things they shouldn't do,
Terror of the cattle-duffers in the northern scrubs,
Keeping watch on criminals, cautioning the pubs
On those brief hours, in old days, when laws forbade their beer,
Looming forth on court-days, a Nemesis severe
Of a martinet and master in the art of keeping peace
Was Matthew Mark McGillicuddy, Sergeant of Police.

How the gleaming metal jingled, how the polished leather shone
When Sergeant Mat. McGillicuddy put his war-paint on:
Skin-tight corded riding breeches, spur and soldier-strap,
Cartridge case, revolver, and a smart, peaked cap,
A black 'imperial' that wagged beneath his stiff moustache
Authority personified - he cut a heavy dash
With his boots and buttons shining and his coat without a crease
Matthew Mark McGillicuddy, Sergeant of Police.

On race-days and show-days, when strangers sought the town,
The Sergeant was a stern man, and terrible his frown.
But he had scant use on off-days for his little goal of tin,
Save when, to keep the town's repute, he ran some roysterer in;
To come the 'morning after' with a foaming pot of beer:
'Tis agin the regulations; but I want no corpses here.
You perishing with heat an' thirst to but a spot of grease.
An' me firewood there needs splittin',' said the Sergeant of Police.

Then they made him an inspector in the city one sad day;
But he had a glorious 'send off' before he went away
One night of wild carousal that gave scandal for a week,
But the man sent to replace him was a truckler and a sneak,
A plague to petty sinners, a peeping Tom in pubs;
But a jest among the cattle-duffers in the northern scrubs.
So we missed the human touch that lurked beneath the bluster

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Omeo

Up and down the roads they go
Vale to hill, and hill to vale
Leading on to Omeo
Over many an olden trail
Dainty lady of the hills,
Rosy-cheeked amid her snows;
Beauty that her landscape fills
Tips the peak and downward spills,
Down to where old Tambo flows.

As Tambo winds, so winds the road;
Cascades sparkly by the way
Where o'er granite, waters flowed
Since some pre-historic day.
Limestone glints and marble gleams,
Beautiful and many-hued,
Bared by ever flowing streams
To recapture long-lost dreams
Of an age-old solitude.

Six grey horses drew the coach.
Climbing up and clattering down,
To the picturesque approach
Of this quaint, old-fashioned town.
While the driver yarned apace,
Six grey horses, coats a gleam,
Straining steady at the trace,
Drew up at the stopping place
The Blue Duck Inn where anglers dream.

Dainty lady of the hills.
Rosy-cheeked amid her snows,
Peace her quiet hamlet fills
As full well the angler knows.
Peace and quiet pride inform
All her moods as seasons go.
Summer sun nor winter storm
Naught may change that welcome warm
Of the Lady Omeo.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

On The Road To Jericho

On the road to Jericho
Mark the stricken one,
Moaning in his agony,
Prone beneath the sun.
Prone beneath the blazing sun,
Naked and alone,
Bleeding from a score of wounds,
Stricken to the bone.
Now his tossing arms lie still;
Now his moans grow faint.
Is there none to succor him
Publican or saint?
Publican or Pharisee
Are none passing by
On the road to Jericho
Is he left to die?

On the road to Jericho
Hurry, hurry, priest!
'Twere a sin wert thou away
From the saintly feast.
Haste thee, Levite, tarry not.
At the Temple waits
Holy work for thee to do;
Haste thee to the gates.
God will guard the stricken one.
Leave it all to Him.
(Now the blood dries on his wounds.
Now his eyes grow dim.)
Yet - ah tell it! Save the shame -
Save the name of Man!
On the road to Jericho
One Samaritan!

On the road to Jericho -
'Voices call 'Make way!
See, the Bishop's carriage comes;
He's in haste to-day.
He's in haste to tend a Prince.

Let the good man through,
He is lordly; he is rich . . .
Not like me or you.
He'll 'consider' your appeal.
He's no time to waste!
O, despised Samaritan,
Haste thee hither, haste!
Priest and Levite pass along,
Bishops go their ways,
On the road to Jericho
As in olden days.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

On With The Dance!

Hi, Cockalorum! But - Misery me!
What is the aftermath going to be?
With joy at its zenith and sorrow its least,
I am the skeleton come to the feast.
Now the centenary swells over all,
I am the writing aglow on the wall:
Eat, drink and make merry. Eat, drink and make merry.
Hip, hip. Cockahoop! And alack-a-day derry!
I am the spoil-sport a-gnawing his nails,
Boding disaster when merriment fails.
Dance, little lady; oh, dance while you may,
Shout ye, good gentlemen. Merry's the day!
Sorrow is looming.
Hear the far booming.
The ghouls and the ghosts are a-groaning and glooming.
Today for the dancing, the love and the laughter,
But what of the morning after? Aye!
Happy-go-lucky! But - Misery me.
What is the aftermath going to be?

Away with the skeleton! Deep in his grave
Ram him and cram him and make him behave.
We are the merry men, born of the sun;
And this second century, fitly begun
Shall never mark back to follies of eld -
To ills and to errors past centuries held
This is our century, shining and splendid,
When spectres are banished and ill dreams are ended.
Never false fear, as of old, shall bedim it.
There isn't an ending, there isn't a limit
To joy in our gifts that are rained from above.
There isn't a finish to friendship and love -
Love of good laughter, good friends and good living.
There isn't an end to the gain from free giving.
A fig for the pessimist, moaning mumchance!
There isn't an aftermath. On with the dance!

One Dull Man

Why did you play your spade in there? (said she).
I can't think why you don't take care (said she).
You fuss and fiddle with every card
As tho' you found the game too hard
You hung on to your trumps until
They caught you napping. Really, Will,
You think and hesitate so long;
Then in the end you play it wrong.
Why, you can't even call your hand.
You men! I cannot understand.
You are so stupid, dull and dense.
The game requires just common-sense.
But Bridge for you holds little gain:
Yet you're supposed to have a brain (said she).

Tired? You? I hope I am no cat (said she)
But I must say I do like that (said she)
What about me? You go to town,
And gossip there with Smith and Brown.
And go to lunch and have a drink,
Yet in the evening you can't think.
What about me? Your life's the best.
Why should you crave for so much rest?
Ask any doctor. He will say
A business man should always play.
You should play more. You know you should.
A change of occupation's good.
Yet, when I ask you to go out,
You say you're tired and moon about.
What about me? Do I complain?
Why, it's a wonder I keep sane
With all the dull monotony
That this existence holds for me.
You'll tell me that I'm lazy soon.
Why, I played all the afternoon! (said she).

Did you, my dear? I didn't know (said he).
Well, I suppose I must be slow (said he).
Yes, slow and dull. Again you're right -

You always are . . .Heigh, ho! . . . Good night (said he).

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

One Happy Man

Today I met a happy man
Greeting the glad new year.
About his face the sunbeams ran
And danced, as straightaway he began
To laugh with right good cheer.
His garb was mean, tho' neat and clean;
No scarf, no hat had he.
He seemed indeed to be in need
And touched by poverty.

'Good friend,' said I, 'why do you laugh
And chortle in the sun,
When we've a bitter cut to quaff.
With profits down to less than half
And gloom for every one?
Know you that these are troublous days,
And life a stern affair,
And all must tread uncertain ways,
Haunted by grim despair?'

The merry rogue looked up at me,
And grinned from ear to ear.
'Why should I not be glad?' said he,
'And strive to greet right merrily
The birth of this glad year?'
'Because,' said I - and frowned again
'Of losses grave and great
That you and I and other men
Have had to bear of late.

'Think well,' I said; 'the times are grave,
And we may lose yet more.
We must give thought on how to save . . .'
He lifted up his head and gave
A long, loud, merry roar.
'I'd like,' said he, when he had pause,
'To share your gloomy views.
But I don't care a whit, because
I've not a thing to lose!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

One Hundred Years

Now, Batman, Prophet Batman, a hundred years ago,
He looked upon this land and found it good.
'Tis the place to build a village,' bold Batman said, and so
They straight began - or so I've understood
To fling rude huts together by the swamp and by the stream,
To make beginning here and then for Batman's daring dream.

But Batman, Prophet Batman, was quite a modest cove;
His vision sought no far and fabled goals.
A village he could picture here; but no vast treasure trove
A mighty city of a million souls
A miracle arising by the swamp and by the stream
In the hundred years that followed on one pioneering dream.

Now I, far lesser prophet, stand here to view the scene
Tall spire, proud dome athwart a sunny sky,
This far-flung city basking by many a garden green
Yet hopelessly I fail to prophesy.
While earth holds threat and promise both, and high hope walks with dread,
Then who may claim the vision of one hundred years ahead?

Shall yet a greater miracle arise beside the stream,
When wiser plans of wiser men prevail
Some shining City of Content beyond man's boldest dream?
Or must a world's mad frenzy end the tale,
And, in a hundred years from now, another village rise
To shield indomitable man 'neath ruin-fretted skies?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Our Black Brudder

O, fellow Australians, listen, attend:
We must cease our contemptuous swearing
And cursing and sneering at Bull's colored friend,
For our attitude's too overbearing.
It is perfectly right we should keep ourselves white
But contempt is a national blunder.
Be as nice as you can to the camel-train man,
And speak like a friend to Ram Chunder.

When a spindle-legged heathen comes round to the door
With the bundle of commerce, disturbin'
The peace of your home, he'd be hurt if you swore
Or attempted to knock off his turban.
When the smiling Ah Wong, from the isle of Hongkong,
A loud smell and some cabbages hawking,
Makes eyes at your missus, 'tis certainly wrong,
To indulge in discourteous talking.

For, mark you, the hawker and camel-train lot,
Also he of the early 'spling callot,'
Are our own fellow subjects, although they do not,
Like ourselves, own the boon of the ballot.
For somehow or other old England, our mother,
Has got a mysterious notion
Of blocking their voting, although she is doting
Upon our dear friends o'er the ocean.

And watch how the Britisher does it himself
When he's forced to abide with the nigger.
Is he rude in his way and contemptuous? Nay,
His is quite a benevolent figure.
He loves Abdul Khan as a brother and man;
And he quickly by conscience is smitten
If on Khan by some chance he should cast a rude glance
He's a kind and considerate Briton.

The bonds of the Empire are somehow involved
In this business. So be not neglectful.
Though Bull says it's right we should keep ourselves white,
He insists on our being respectful.
And if you should find your gorge rise, bear in mind
We must, keep our rude sentiments under.
Be as nice as you can to the camel-train man,
And act like a son to Ram Chunder.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Our Cow

Down by the slipralls stands our cow
Chewing, chewing, chewing,
She does not care what folks out there
In the great, big world are doing.
She sees the small cloud-shadows pass
And green grass shining under.
If she does think, what does she think
About it all, I wonder?

She sees the swallows skimming by
Above the sweet young clover,
The light reeds swaying in the wind
And tall trees bending over.
Far down the track she hears the crack
of bullock-whips, and raving
Of angry men where, in the sun,
Her fellow-beasts are slaving.

Girls, we are told, can scratch and scold,
And boys will fight and wrangle,
And big, grown men, just now and then,
Fret o'er some fingle-fangle,
Vexing the earth with grief or mirth,
Longing, rejoicing, rueing -
But by the slipralls stands our cow,
Chewing.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Our Rampant Coat-Of-Arms

The Lion and the Unicorn
Of England's Coat-of-Arms
Seldom make bold, so we are told,
To ravage English farms.
In fact, 'tis said by travellers
Who lately have been there,
That lions hardly ever roam
About the dales and dells at Home,
And unicorns are rare.

But in this topsy-turvy land
Where often - inter alia
Strange forms of bird, in ways absurd,
Are grafted to mammalia.
And beasts have bills to fit the goose,
Our crazy Coat-of-Arms breaks loose
To roam at night and play the deuce
'Mid farmers in Australia.

The Lion and the Unicorn
Stay put and emblematic;
But kangaroos bluntly refuse
To function, staid and static.
And emus stray to ruin farms,
Raising excursions and alarms;
Which proves such things, on Coats-of-Arms
Are plainly too erratic.

Far better chain them to the shield
Like unicorns in Britain.
Else, by what chance may we 'advance'
As in the motto written?
If not, and they get out of hand,
Before the nations we must stand
Ever a topsy-turvy land
By its own emblem smitten.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Our Street

In our street, the main street
Running thro' the town,
You see a lot of busy folk
Going up and down:

Bag men and basket men,
Men with loads of hay,
Buying things and selling things
And carting things away.

The butcher is a funny man,
He calls me Dandy Dick;
The baker is a cross man,
I think he's often sick;

The fruiterer's a nice man,
He gives me apples, too;
The grocer says, "Good morning, boy,
What can I do for you?"

Of all the men in our street
I like the cobbler best,
Tapping, tapping at his last
Without a minute's rest;

Talking all the time he taps,
Driving in the nails,
Smiling with his old grey eyes -
(Hush) ... telling fairy tales.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Our Town Awakes

Six o'clock. From the railway yard
The engine toots; careering hard,
A milk-cart rattles by and stops;
A magpie calls from the gum-tree tops;
The pub 'boots', sweeping out the bar,
Waves to the early service-car,
While the town's chief toper waits outside,
Woe-begone and bleary-eyed;
Two cows go lowing down the way;
A rooster crows. It's another day.

Eight o'clock. The tradesmen come
Shop-boys whistling, masters glum,
To stand at doors and stretch and yawn;
Fronts are swept and blinds are drawn;
The washerwoman, Mrs Dubbs,
Slip-slops off to her taps and tubs,
Washing clothes for other folk;
The cheery barber cracks a joke,
But the day's first client fails to laugh -
Fresh from a tiff from his better half.

Nine o'clock. Precise and neat,
Miss Miggs comes mincing down the street,
The town's dressmaker, pert and prim,
Sly eyes, from under her hat's brim,
Gathering gossip by the way:
The same old goings-on today -
That grocer off for his morning nip;
The chemist, too, that married rip,
Flirting again with the girl next door.
Miss Miggs gleans twenty tales to store.

Ten o'clock. The town grows brisk;
Down the main street motors whisk;
Jinkers, carts and farmers' drays
Stop at shops and go their ways;
In soleman talk with the town surveyor
Comes Mr Mullinger, our mayor,

Pausing at doors for a friendly chat;
He bows, he smiles, he lifts his hat...
Now a brisker rush and a sudden din:
'That's her!' And the city train comes in.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Out West

'I've seen so much uv dirt an' grime
I'm mad to 'ave things clean.
I've seen so much uv death,' 'e said
'So many cobbers lyin' dead
You won't know wot I mean;
But, lad, I've 'ad so much uv strife
I want things straightened in my life.

'I've seen so much uv 'ate,' 'e said
'Mad 'ate an' silly rage
I'm yearnin' for clear thoughts,' said 'e.
'Kindness an' love seem good to me.
I want a new, white page
To start all over, clean an' good,
An' live me life as reel men should.'

We're sittin' talkin' by the fence,
The sun's jist going' down,
Paintin' the sky all gold an' pink.
Said 'e, 'When it's like that, I think -'
An' then 'e stops to frown.
Said 'e, 'I think, when it's jist so,
Uv... God or somethin': I dunno.

'I ain't seen much uv God,' said 'e;
'Not here nor Over There;
But, partly wot I've seen an' read,
An' partly wot the padre said,
It gits me when I stare
Out West when it's like that is now.
There must be somethin' else - some'ow.

'I've thought a lot,' said Digger Smith
'Out There I thought a lot.
I thought uv death, an' all the rest,
An' uv me mates, good mates gone West;
An' it ain't much I've got;
But things get movin' in me 'ead
When I look over there,' 'e said.

'E's got me beat, 'as little Smith.
I knoo 'im years ago:
I knoo 'im as a reel tough boy
'Oo roughed it up with 'oly joy;
But now, well, I dunno.
An' when I ask Mar Flood she sighs
An' sez 'e's got the Anzac eyes.

She sez 'e's got them soldier's eyes,
That makes 'er own eyes wet.
An' we must give 'im wholesome food
An' lead 'is thoughts to somethin' good
An' never let 'im fret.
But 'e ain't frettin', seems to me;
More - puzzled, fur as I can see.

The clouds above the hills was tore
Apart, until some'ow,
It seemed like some big shinin' gate.
Said 'e, 'Why, lad, I tell yeh straight,
I feel like startin' now,
An' walking on, an' on, an' thro',
Dead game an' - ain't it so to you?

'I've seen enough uv pain,' 'e said,
'An' cursin', killin' 'ordes.
I ain't the man to smooze with God
To get to 'Eaven on the nod,
Or 'owl 'ymns for rewards.
But this believin'? Why - Oh, 'Struth!
This never 'it me in me youth.

'They talk uv love 'twixt men,' said 'e.
'That sounds dead crook to you.
But lately I 'ave come to see.'...
'Old on,' I said; 'it seems to me
There's love uv women too.
An' you?' 'E turns away 'is 'ead.
'I'm only 'alf a man,' 'e said.

'I've seen so much uv death,' said 'e,

'Me mind is in a whirl.
I've 'ad so many thoughts uv late.'...
Said I, 'Now tell me, tell me straight,
Own up; ain't there a girl?'
Said 'e, 'I've done the best I can.
Wot does she want with 'arf a man?'

It weren't no use. 'E wouldn't talk
Uv nothin' but that sky.
Said 'e, 'Now, dinkum, talking square,
When you git gazin' over there
Don't you 'arf want to cry?
I wouldn't be surprised to see
An angel comin' out,' said 'e.

'Gone West!' said Digger Smith. 'Ah, lad,
I've seen them goin' West,
An' often wonder, when I look,
If they 'ave 'ad it dealt 'em crook,
Or if they've got the rest
They earned twice over by the spell
They spent down in that dinkum 'Ell.'

The gold was creepin' up, the sun
Was 'arf be'ind the range.
It don't seem strange a man should cry
To see that glory in the sky
To me it don't seem strange.
'Digger!' said 'e. 'Look at it now!
There must be somethin' else - some 'ow.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Over The Fence

'Taint my idea uv argument to call a man a fool,
An' I ain't lookin' round for bricks to 'eave at ole man Poole;
But when 'e gets disputin' 'e's inclined to lose 'is 'ead.
It ain't so much 'is choice uv words as 'ow the words is said.

'E's sich a coot for takin' sides, as I sez to Doreen.
Sez she, "Ow can 'e, by 'imself?" Wotever that may mean.
My wife sez little things sometimes that nearly git me riled.
I knoo she meant more than she said be that soft way she smiled.

Today, when I was 'arrowin', Poole come down to the fence
To get the loan uv my long spade; an' uses that pretence
To 'ave a bit uv friendly talk, an' one word leads to more,
As is the way with ole man Poole, as I've remarked before.

The spade reminds 'im 'ow 'e done some diggin' in 'is day,
An' diggin' brings the talk to earth, an' earth leads on to clay,
Then clay quite natural reminds a thinkin' bloke uv bricks,
An' mortar brings up mud, an' then, uv course it's politics.

Now Poole sticks be 'is Party, an' I don't deny 'is right;
But when he starts abusin' mine 'e's lookin' for a fight.
So I delivers good 'ome truths about 'is crowd, then Poole
Wags 'is ole beard across the fence an' tells me I'm a fool.

Now that's the dizzy limit; so I lays aside the reins,
An' starts to prove 'e's storin' mud where most blokes keeps their brains.
'E decorates 'is answers, an' we're goin' it ding-dong,
When this returned bloke, Digger Smith, comes sauntering along.
Poole's gripped the fence as though 'e means to tear the rails in two,
An' eyes my waggin' finger like 'e wants to 'ave a chew.
Then Digger Smith 'e grins at Poole, an' then 'e looks at me,
An' sez, quite soft an' friendly-like, 'Winnin' the war?' sez 'e.

Now, Poole deserves it, an' I'm pleased the lad give 'im that jolt.
'E goes fair mad in argument when once 'e gets a holt.
'Yeh make me sad,' sez Digger Smith; 'the both uv you,' sez 'e.
'The both uv us! Gawstruth!' sez I. 'You ain't includin' me?'

'Well, it takes two to make a row,' sez little Digger Smith.
'A bloke can't argue 'less 'e 'as a bloke to argue with.
I've come 'ome from a dinkum scap to find this land uv light
Is chasin' its own tail around an' callin' it a fight.

'We've seen a thing or two, us blokes 'oo've fought on many fronts;
An' we've 'ad time to think a bit between the fightin' stunts,
We've seen big things, an' thought big things, an' all the silly fuss,
That used to get us rattled once, seems very small to us.

'An' when a bloke's fought for a land an' gets laid on the shelf
It pains 'im to come 'ome and find it scrappin' with itself;
An' scrappin' all for nothin', or for things that look so small
To us, 'oo've been in bigger things, they don't seem reel at all.

'P'r'aps we 'ave some skite knocked out, an' p'r'aps we see more clear,
But seems to us there's plenty cleanin' up to do round 'ere.
We've learnt a little thing or two, an' we 'ave unlearnt 'eaps,
An' silly partisans, with us, is counted out for keeps.

'This takin' sides jist for the sake uv takin' sides - Aw, 'Struth!
I used to do them things one time, back in me foolish youth.
Out There, when I remembered things, I've kicked meself reel good.
In football days I barracked once red 'ot for Collin'wood.

'I didn't want to see a game, nor see no justice done.
It never mattered wot occurred as long as my side won.
The other side was narks an' cows an' rotters to a man;
But mine was all reel bonzer chaps. I was a partisan.

'It might sound like swelled-'ead,' sez Smith. 'But show me, if you can.'...
'Old 'ard,' sez Poole. 'Jist tell me this: wot is a partisan?'
Then Digger Smith starts to ixplain; Poole interrupts straight out;
An' I wades in to give my views, an' 'as to nearly shout.

We battles on for one good hour. My team sleeps where it stands;
An' Poole 'as tossed the spade away to talk with both 'is 'ands.
An' Smith 'as dropped the maul 'e 'ad. Then I looks round to see
Doreen quite close. She smiles at us. 'Winnin' the war?' sez she.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Paw'

Haw!

Ai've just obteened a pension for mai Paw.
And you should hev seen the people that were theah.
Re-ally, it was surpraising!
Maind, Ai am not criticaising,
But it was embarrassing, Ai do decleah.
Ai met the Snobson-Smythes and Toady-Browns, and many moah
Belonging to ouah set; and wondahed what they came theah foah.

And, of course, Ai didn't say a word of Paw.
Ai rather think they've nevah heard of Paw.
But Ai thought it well to mention
That Ai came to get the pension
For an aged person who had worked for Maw.
The Snobson-Smythes said, 'Fancy! That is just why we came dahn.'
But Ai've heard they hev a mothah hidden somewheah out of tahn.

Haw!

Ai do deserve some gratitude from Paw.
To think what Ai've gone thro' foah him to-day!
Mixing with the lowah classes-
And Ai never saw such masses
Of disreputable creatuahs, Ai must say.
Imposters, Ai've no doubt, if most of them were but unmasked.
And then, the most humiliating questions Ai was asked!

Yes, he forced me to admit it was foah Paw.
Asked me, brutally, if it was foah mai Paw.
Some low-bred official fellow,
Who conversed in quaita a bellow,
And he patronised me laike a high Bashaw.
And his questions, rudely personal, Ai hardly could enduah.
The Government should teach its people mannaahs, Ai am suah!

Haw!

Ai'm glad we've got the pension foah Pooah Paw.
His maintenance has been - O, such a strain.
Ouah establishment's extensive
And exceedingly expensive,

As mai husband has remawked taime and again.
It's quaita a miracle how Ai contrive to dress at all.
He cut me dahn to twenty guineas for last Mayoral Ball!

And it's such a boah to hev to think of Paw
To hev a secret skeleton laike Paw.
Paw, you know, was once a diggah,
And he cuts no social figgah.
And his mannahts! O, they touch us on the raw.
Of course, we're very fond of him, and all thet sort of thing;
But we couldn't hev him - could we? - when theah's naice folk visiting.

Haw!
It's cost us pawnds and pawnds to care foah Paw.
And then, it is so hard to keep him dawk.
Why, no later then last Mond'y,
Ai was out with Lady Grundy,
When we ran raight into him outside the Pawk.
Goodness knows! Ai managed, somehow, to elude him with a nod,
And Ai said he was a tradesman; but she must hev thought it odd.

You can't picture the ubiquity of Paw,
And he's really very obstinate, is Paw.
Why, he held to the contention
That this most convenient pension
Was a thing he hadn't any raight to draw!
He said we'd kept him eighteen months, and ought to keep him yet.
But mai husband soon convinced him that he couldn't count on thet.

Haw!
He was a pioneah, you know, mai Paw.
But of mai early laife Ai never tell.
Paw worked, as Ai hev stated;
And he had us educated;
And, later on, Ai married rather well.
And then, you know, deah Paw became - er - well, embarrassing.
For he is so unconventional and - all thet sort of thing.

But the Government has taken ovah Paw.
We are happy now we've aisolated Paw.
And a bettah era's dawning,
For mai husband said this mawning

Thet the money saved would buy a motah-caw.
Paw was so good to us when we were young, that, you'll allow,
It's really taime the Government did something foah him now.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Perpetual Motion

What (said the poet) should we care
For all this mad world's phantasies,
For rumours rife upon the air
Of terrors looming overseas?
If so, the soul were plagued away
With far-fetched grieving, what of mirth?
For somewhere sorrow broods all day;
Yet laughter, too, inhabits earth.

For the sun shines and the grass grows,
And the ferns nod above the stream
That down this placid valley flows;
Then let us rest a while, and dream.
For the grass grows as the sun shines,
And the stream flows and sings a song
To chide the sad heart that repines
Ah, summer, summer, linger long!

What (I gave answer) badgers me
Are not the tragedies of earth.
Despite your gay philosophy
Of seeking joy and claiming mirth
For boon companions as you go,
Oft times these very joys oppress
And suns that shine and streams that flow
May be a source of weariness.

For the grass grows and the sun gleams
To sear the grass and, where they flow,
I must bring water from the streams
To make the blinking grass to grow.
And the sun gleams and the grass grows -
Indeed I know it well enough;
For as it springs where water flows
I've got to cut the blasted stuff.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Pilot Cove

'Young friend,' 'e sez . . . Young friend! Well, spare me days!
Yeh'd think I wus 'is own white 'eaded boy
The queer ole finger, wiv 'is gentle ways.
'Young friend,' 'e sez, 'I wish't yeh bofe great joy.'
The langwidge that them parson blokes imploy
Fair tickles me. The way 'e bleats an' brays!
'Young friend,' 'e sez.

'Young friend,' 'e sez . . . Yes, my Doreen an' me
We're gettin' hitched, all straight an' on the square.
Fer when I torks about the registry
O 'oly wars! yeh should 'a' seen 'er stare;
'The registry?' she sez, 'I wouldn't dare!
I know a clergyman we'll go an' see . . .
'Young friend,' 'e sez.

'Young friend,' 'e sez. An' then 'e chats me straight;
An' spouts o' death, an' 'ell, an' mortal sins.
'You reckernize this step you contemplate
Is grave?' 'e sez. An' I jist stan's an' grins;
Fer when I chips, Doreen she kicks me shins.
'Yes, very 'oly is the married state,
Young friend,' 'e sez.

'Young friend,' 'e sez. An' then 'e mags a lot
Of jooty an' the spitichuil life,
To which I didn't tumble worth a jot.
'I'm sure,' 'e sez, 'as you will 'ave a wife
'Oo'll 'ave a noble infl'ince on yer life.
'Oo is 'er gardjin?' I sez, "Er ole pot'
'Young friend!' 'e sez.

'Young friend,' 'e sez. 'Oh fix yet thorts on 'igh!
Orl marridges is registered up there!
An' you must cleave unto 'er till yeh die,
An' cherish 'er wiv love an' tender care.
E'en in the days when she's no longer fair
She's still yet wife,' 'e sez. 'Ribuck,' sez I.
'Young friend!' 'e sez.

'Young friend,' 'e sez - I sez, 'Now, listen 'ere:
This isn't one o' them impetchus leaps.
There ain't no tart a 'undreth part so dear
As 'er. She 'as me 'eart and' soul fer keeps!
An' then Doreen, she turns away an' weeps;
But 'e jist smiles. 'Yer deep in love, 'tis clear
Young friend,' 'e sez.

'Young friend,' 'e sez - an tears wus in 'is eyes
'Strive 'ard. Fer many, many years I've lived.
An' I kin but recall wiv tears an' sighs
The lives of some I've seen in marridge gived.'
'My Gawd!' I sez. 'I'll strive as no bloke strivved!
Fer don't I know I've copped a bonzer prize?'
'Young friend,' 'e sez.

'Young friend,' 'e sez. An' in 'is gentle way,
'E pats the shoulder of my dear Doreen.
'I've solem'ized grand weddin's in me day,
But 'ere's the sweetest little maid I've seen.
She's fit fer any man, to be 'is queen;
An' you're more forchinit than you kin say,
Young friend,' 'e sez.

'Young friend,' 'e sez . . . A queer ole pilot bloke,
Wiv silver 'air. The gentle way 'e dealt
Wiv 'er, the soft an' kindly way 'e spoke
To my Doreen, 'ud make a starcher melt.
I tell yer, square an' all, I sorter felt
A kiddish kind o' feelin' like I'd choke . . .
'Young friend,' 'e sez.

'Young friend,' 'e sez, 'you two on Choosday week,
Is to be joined in very 'oly bonds.
To break them vows I 'opes yeh'll never seek;
Fer I could curse them 'usbands 'oo absconds!'
'I'll love 'er till I snuff it,' I responds.
'Ah, that's the way I likes to 'ear yeh speak,
Young friend,' 'e sez.

'Young friend,' 'e sez - and then me 'and 'e grips

'I wish't yeh luck, you an' yer lady fair.
Sweet maid.' An' sof'ly wiv 'is finger-tips,
'E takes and' strokes me cliner's shinin' 'air.
An' when I seen 'er standin' blushin' there,
I turns an' kisses 'er, fair on the lips.
'Young friend!' 'e sez.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Playtime

Brothers!

(I address myself to that chosen few - which includes you,
My dear reader - who

Are men of understanding, bright intellect and horse-sense, and to no others).

Brothers!

There comes one little period in the day

When each of us may say,

'Away!

Away with care and thoughts of toil and stress and pain!

And, as we journey home in car or tram or train,

Let us leave office worries far behind,

Banish domestic troubles from the mind,

And just go gay.

Say,

Once a day,

For just a few brief minutes let us play.

Let us be joyous, and, with quip and quirk,

Forget the drudgery of daily work,

And, from this daily column

Banish the somnolent, the sad, the solemn.

Let us foregather, brothers, and discuss

Eliminating all the fume and fuss

The vagaries of our uncertain weather,

Let us commune together

Upon the steadfastness of politicians,

The fate of nations, and the strange conditions

Imposed on us in this, our daily life . . .

Mayhap, indeed, the wife

Waits home to greet our coming with a tale

Of household woes to turn a strong man pale;

Mayhap, forsooth, our business affairs

Have loaded us all day with heavy cares.

Leave all behind.

Shed, for a while, all trouble from the mind.

Let us

Discuss

The hot sock

And the short frock:

Of men and modes and manners let us talk,

Giving dull care a cunning miss in baulk.
We WILL be gay!
Just once a day!
We shall consider strikes in merry mood
And even joke about the price of food,
And all that sort of thing.
So it may bring
Joy to our hearts and to our worn minds ease.
I shall do all the talking, if you please,
And if, perchance, you cry, 'How bright!
How clever!'
Why, then, of course - However,
The thread of my discourse is somewhat broken,
But, brothers, I have spoken!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Poets

Each poet that I know (he said)
Has something funny in his head,
Some wandering growth or queer disease
That gives to him strange unease.
If such a thing he hasn't got,
What makes him write his silly rot?
All poets' brains, so I have found,
Go, like the music, round and round.

Why they are suffered e'er to tread
This sane man's earth seems strange (he said).
I've never met a poet yet,
A rhymster I have never met
Who could talk sense like any man -
Like I, or even you, say, can.
They make me sick! The time seems ripe
To clean them up and all their tripe.

And yet (he stopped and felt his head)
I met a poet once (he said)
Who, when I said he made me sick
Hit me a punch like a mule's kick.
That only goes to prove again
The theory that I maintain:
A man who can't gauge that crazy bunch;
No poet ought to pack a punch.

Of all the poetry I've read
I've never yet seen one (he said)
That couldn't be, far as it goes,
Much better written out in prose.
It's what we eat, I often think;
Or, yet more likely, what they drink.
Aw, poets! All the tribe, by heck,
Give me a swift pain in the neck.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Politics For Tots: Lesson 2~ "The Party"

Now, children, in this Lesson Two,
Briefly we'll make some mention
Of party, just in case that you
Some day, with the intention
Of furthering ambitions grand,
May seek to serve your native land.

You join a Party, first of all
This move is most essential.
Your Private Views you must recall,
They're quite unsequential;
For if you'd be a Party Man
You must cleave to the Party Plan.

Either you must be Black or White;
Browns, Drabs and Greys don't matter.
If you choose White, White's always right,
If Black, then with the latter
Rests all Wisdom in the Land.
You've got to Barrack for your Brand.

But, children, there's a chance you may
With Obstinate Persistence
Incline to Fawn, or Cream or Grey,
Then you can't Make the Distance.
You'll keep your Soul; but I'm afraid
You'll have to learn some Nicer Trade.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Polly Dibbs

Mrs Dibbs - Polly Dibbs,
Standing at a tub,
Washing other people's clothes -
Rub-Rub-Rub.
Poor, old, skinny arms
White with soapy foam -
At night she takes her shabby hat
And goes off home.

Mrs Dibbs - Polly Dibbs -
Is not very rich.
She goes abroad all day to scrub,
And home at night to stitch.
She wears her shabby hat awry,
Perched on a silly comb;
And people laugh at Polly Dibbs
As she goes home.

Mrs Dibbs - Mother Dibbs -
Growing very old,
Says, "it's a hard world!"
And sniffs and drats the cold.
She says it is a cruel world,
A weary world to roam.
But God will smile on Polly Dibbs
When she goes Home.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Possum

Jist 'ere it gripped me, on a sudden, like a red-'ot knife.
I wus diggin' in the garden, talkin' pleasant to me wife,
When it got me good an' solid, an' I fetches out a yell,
An' curses soft down in me neck, an' breathes 'ard fer a spell.
Then, when I tries to straighten up, it stabs me ten times worse.
I thinks per'aps I'm dyin', an' chokes back a reel 'ot curse.

'I've worked too fast,' I tells Doreen. 'Me backbone's runnin' 'ot.
I'm sick! I've got-0o, 'oly wars! I dunno wot I've got!
Jist 'ere - Don't touch! - jist round back 'ere, a blazin' little pain.
Is clawin' up me spinal cord an' slidin' down again.'
'You come inside,' she sez. 'Per'aps it's stoopin' in the sun.
Does it 'urt much?' I sez, 'Oh, no; I'm 'avin' lots o' fun.'

Then, cooin' to me, woman-like, she pilots me inside.
It stabs me every step I takes; I thort I could 'a' died.
'There now,' she sez. 'Men can't stand pain, it's alwus understood.'
'Stand pain?' I owls. Then, Jumpin' Jakes! It gits me reely good!
So I gets to bed in sections, fer it give me beans to bend,
An' shuts me eyes, an' groans again, an' jist waits fer the end.

'Now, you lie still,' she orders me, 'until I think wot's best.
Per'aps 'ot bran, or poultices. You jist lie still, an' rest,'
Rest? 'Oly Gosh! I clinched me teeth, an' clawed the bloomin' bunk;
Fer a red-'ot poker jabbed me ev'ry time I much as wunk.
I couldn't corf, I couldn't move, I couldn't git me breath.
'Look after Bill,' I tells Doreen. 'I feels that... this is... death.'

'Death, fiddlesticks,' she laughs at me. 'You jist turn over now.'
I 'owls, 'Ere! Don't you touch me, or there'll be a blazin' row!
I want to die jist as I am.' She sez, 'Now, Bill, 'ave sense.
This 'as to go on while it's 'ot.' I groans, 'I've no defence.'
An' so she 'as 'er way wiv me. An', tho' I'm suff'rin' bad,
I couldn't 'elp but noticin' the gentle touch she 'ad.

That ev'nin', when the doctor come, sez 'e, 'Ah! 'Urtin' much?
Where is the trouble?' I sez, 'Where you ain't allowed to touch!'
'E mauls an' prods me while I 'owls to beat the bloomin' band.
Gawbli'me! I'd 'a' cracked 'im if I'd strength to lift me 'and.

'Discribe yer symtims now,' sez 'e. I fills meself wiv wind,
An' slung 'im out a catalog while 'e jist stood an' grinned.

'Ar, bar!' 'e sez. 'Sciatiker! Oh, we'll soon 'ave yeh well.'
'Sciatiker?' sez I. 'Yer sure yeh don't mean Jumpin' 'EII?
It ain't no privit devil wiv a little jagged knife?'
'Tut, rut,' 'e grins. 'You'll soon be right. I leaves yeh to yer wife.'
I looks at 'er, she smiles at me, an' when I seen that smile:
'Aw, poultices!' I groans. An' she enjoys it all the while!

But I'm marri'd to a woman; an', I gives yeh my straight tip,
It makes a man feel glad uv it when sickness gits a grip.
'Er looks is full uv tenderness, 'er ways is full uv love,
An' 'er touch is like a blessin' as she gently bends above.
'Er speech is firm, but motherin'; 'er manners strict, but mild:
Yer 'er 'usban', an' 'er patient, an' 'er little orphin child.

When yer marri'd to a woman an' yer feelin' well an' right;
When yer frame is full uv ginger an' yer mouth is full uv skite,
Then yeh tork about the 'missus' in an 'orf'and sort uv way;
She's 'andy in the 'ouse if she don't 'ave too much to say.
But when Ole Man Sciatiker, 'e does yeh up reel neat,
Then she's yer own reel mate, she is, an' all yer 'ands an' feet.

An' so Doreen, she nurses me while I lie there an' grouch;
Fer I'm snarky when I tumble that it ain't me dyin' couch.
I barks at 'er, an' snarls at 'er, an' orders 'er about,
An' nearly wears the feet orf 'er wiv trottin' in an' out.
An' while Ole Man Sciatiker, 'e 'as me in 'is sway
Doreen, she jist gives in to me - an' alwus gits 'er way.

Three solid days I 'as uv it, an' then the pain lets out.
I'm feelin' fit fer graft again, an' wants to git about.
It's then she lets me see 'er 'and, an' orders, 'You stay there
Until yeh gits yer 'ealth an' strength to sit up in a chair.'
'But there's that stove-wood,' I begins. Sez she, 'Now, don't you fret.
I'm very sparin' wiv it, an' there's tons an' tons there yet.'

Tell yeh straight; I got to like it. It's a crook thing to confess,
But to 'ave 'er fussin' round me give me chunks uv 'appiness.
So I gits out in the garden wiv an arm-chair an' a rug,

An' I comes the floppin' invaleed, an' makes meself reel snug.
I droops me eyes an' 'angs me 'ands, an' looks dead crook an' ill;
An' wriggles ev'ry time she sez, 'Wot would yeh like now, Bill?'

An' then, one day, I 'ears the axe down there be'ind the 'ouse;
An' I sees meself a loafer, an' me conscience starts to rouse.
I 'eaves me frame out uv the chair, an' wanders down the yard.
She's beltin' at a knotty log, an' beltin' good an' 'ard.
I grabs the axe. 'Give up,' I sez. 'I ain't no shattered wreck.
This 'ere's my job.' An' then, Gawstruth! I gits it in the neck!

'Am I yer wife?' she asks me straight. 'Why can't yeh trust me, Bill?
Am I not fit to see to things when you are weak an' ill?'
I tries to say I'm possumin', an' reely well an' strong;
But ev'ry time I starts to tork she's got me in the wrong.
'Yeh can't deceive me, Bill,' she sez. 'Yer 'ealth is fur frum good.
Yeh jist can't trust yer wife to chop a little bit uv wood!

'Yeh got to come out in the cold,' she sez, 'wivout yer wraps.
An' now I'll 'ave yeh on me 'ands fer days wiv a relapse!'
'I been pretending,' I iexplains. She sez, 'Am I yer wife?
Yet sooner than yeh'd trust to me yeh go an' risk yer life.'
Well, I'm marri'd to a woman, an' - it might seem sort uv meek
goes back into bed again... an' 'ates it... fer a week!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Preface: Old Gosh Rhyme

Let him who is minded to meet with a Glug
Pluck three hardy hairs from a rabbit-skin rug;
Blow one to the South, and one to the West,
Then burn another and swallow the rest.
And who shall explain 'tis the talk of a fool,
He's a Glug! He's a Glug of the old Gosh school!
And he'll climb a tree, if the East wind blows,
In a casual way, just to show he knows . . .
Now, tickle his toes!
Oh, tickle his toes!
And don't blame me if you come to blows.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Quantum Sufficit

'I only said this German plan
Had points,' remarked the small, meek man.
'I merely said an extra wife
Might add variety to life.
Strange how a woman will resent
A hypothetical argument.
I didn't mean my reference
As personal, in any sense,
But she - aw, why talk, anyhow?
Look at me now!

'This eye. These bumps, here, on my head.
This battered face. I only said
The Germans seemed to be a race
Who had sane views of woman's place.
Who knew her value. As I spoke
I smiled, to show it was a joke,
A merry quip. Have they no sense
Of humor? Are they all as dense
As she? Will none of them allow -
Look at me now!

'I only said that in the end
This German movement might extend
To other lands. I mean to say,
I never meant it in the way
She took the words. It isn't fair!
Jam on my clothes! Egg in my hair!
(Who'd think that she could aim so straight?)
Those Teuton fools are tempting fate
To dream of more than one strong frau.
Look at me now!

'At breakfast time it all began,
Like that,' explained the small, meek man.
'Look at me now! These Nazis might
Perceive a portent in my plight -
My humor scorned; egg in my hair -
If they could see her standing there,

A vengeful fury, angry-eyed,
Ere they would wish her multiplied
They'd think again, however tough.
One is enough.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Rabbits

'Ar! Gimme fights wiv foeman I kin see,
To upper-cut an' wallop on the jor.
Life in a burrer ain't no good to me.
'Struth! This ain't war!
Gimme a ding-dong go fer 'arf a round,
An' you kin 'ave this crawlin' underground.

'Gimme a ragin', 'owlin', tearin', scrap,
Wiv room to swing me left, an' feel it land.
This 'idin', sneakin' racket makes a chap
Feel secon'-'and.
Stuck in me dug-out 'ere, down in a 'ole,
I'm feelin' like I've growed a rabbit's soul.'

Ole Ginger's left the 'orspital, it seems;
'E's back at Anzac, cursin' at the game;
Fer this 'ere ain't the fightin' uv 'is dreams;
It's too dead tame.
'E's got the oopizootics reely bad,
An' 'idin' in a burrer makes 'im mad.

'E sort o' takes it personal, yeh see.
'E used to 'awk 'em fer a crust, did Mick.
Now, makin' 'im play rabbits seems to be
A narsty trick.
To shove 'im like a bunny down a 'ole
It looks like chuckin' orf, an' sours 'is soul.

'Fair doos,' 'e sez, 'I joined the bloomin' ranks
To git away frum rabbits: thinks I'm done
Wiv them Australian pests, an' 'ere's their thanks:
They makes me one!
An' 'ere I'm squattin', scared to shift about;
Jist waitin' fer me little tail to sprout.

'Ar, strike me up a wattle! but it's tough!
But 'ere's the dizzy limit, fer a cert
To live this bunny's life is bad enough,
But 'ere's reel dirt:

Some tart at 'ome 'as sent, wiv lovin' care,
A coat uv rabbit-skins fer me to wear!

'That's done it! Now I'm nibblin' at the food,
An' if a dawg shows up I'll start to squeal;
I s'pose I orter melt wiv gratichude:
'Tain't 'ow I feel.
She might 'a' fixed a note on wiv a pin:
'Please, Mister Rabbit, yeh fergot yer skin!'

'I sees me finish!... War? Why, this ain't war!
It's ferritin'! An' I'm the bloomin' game.
Me skin alone is worth the 'untin' for
That tart's to blame!
Before we're done, I've got a silly scare,
Some trappin' Turk will catch me in snare.

'E'll skin me, wiv the others 'c 'as there,
An' shove us on a truck, an' bung us 'round
Constantinople at a bob a pair
Orl fresh an' sound!
'Eads down, 'eels up, 'e'll 'awk us in a row
Around the 'arems, 'owlin 'Rabee-oh!'

'But, dead in earnest, it's a job I 'ate.
We've got to do it, an' it's gittin' done;
But this soul-dopin' game uv sit-an'-wait,
It ain't no fun.
There's times I wish, if we weren't short uv men,
That I wus back in 'orspital again.

'Ar, 'orspital! There is the place to git.
If I thort Paradise wus 'arf so snug
I'd shove me 'ead above the parapit
An' stop a slug;
But one thing blocks me playin' sich a joke;
I want another scrap before I croak.

'I want it bad. I want to git right out
An' plug some josser in the briskit-'ard.
I want to 'owl an' chuck me arms about,
An' jab, an' guard.

An' swing, an' upper-cut, an' crool some pitch,
Or git passed out meself - I don't care w'ich.

'There's some blokes 'ere they've tumbled to a stunt
Fer gittin' 'eni the spell that they deserves.
They chews some cordite when life at the front
Gits on their nerves.
It sends yer tempracher clean out uv sight,
An', if yeh strike a simple doc, yer right.

'I tries it once. Me soul 'ad got the sinks,
Me thorts annoyed me, an' I 'ad the joes,
I feels like no one loves me, so I thinks,
Well, Mick, 'ere goes!
I breaks a cartridge open, chews a bit,
Reports I'm sick, an' throws a fancy fit.

'Me lovin' sargint spreads the gloomy noos,
I gits paraded; but, aw, 'Struth! me luck!
It weren't no baby doc I interviews,
But some ole buck
Wiv gimblet eyes. 'Put out yer tongue!' 'e 'owls.
Then takes me temp, an' stares at me, an' growls.

"Well, well,' 'e sez. 'Wot is yer trouble, lad?'
I grabs me tummy 'ard, an' sez I'm ill.
'You are,' sez 'e. 'Yeh got corditis, bad.
Yeh need a pill.
Before yeh go to sleep,' 'e sez, 'to-night,

Swaller the bullet, son, an' you'll be right.'

"Ow's that fer rotten luck? But orl the same,
I ain't complainin' when I thinks it out.
I seen it weren't no way to play the game,
This pullin' out.
We're orl uv us in this to see it thro',
An' bli'me, wot we've got to do, we'll do.

'But 'oles an' burrers! Strike! An' this is war!
This is the bonzer scrappin' uv me dreams!
A willin' go is wot I bargained for,

But 'ere it seems
I've died, someway, an' bin condemned to be
Me own Wile Rabbee fer eternity.

'But 'orspital! I tell yeh, square an' all,
If I could meet the murderin' ole Turk
'Oo's bullet sent me there to loaf an' sprawl,
An' dodge me work,
Lord! I'd shake 'an's wiv 'im, an' thank 'im well
Fer givin' me a reel ole bonzer spell.

"E might 'a' tnade it jist a wee bit worse.
I'd stand a lot uv that before I'd scream.
The grub wus jist the thing; an', say, me nurse I
She wus a dream!
I used to treat them tony tarts wiv mirth;
But now I know why they wus put on earth.

'It treated me reel mean, that wound uv mine;
It 'ealed too quick, considerin' me state.
An' 'ere I am, back in the firin' line
Gamblin' wiv Fate.
It's like two-up: I'm 'eadin' 'em this trip;
But Iookin', day be day, to pass the kip.

'You tell Doreen, yer wife, 'ow I am chock
Full to the neck wiv thanks fer things she sends.
Each time I shoves me foot inside a sock
I bless sich friends.
I'm bustin' wiv glad thorts fer things she did;
So tell 'er I serloots 'er, an' the kid.

'Make 'im a soljer, chum, when 'c gits old.
Teach 'im the tale uv wot the Anzacs did.
Teach 'im 'e's got a land to love an' hold.
Gawd bless the kid!
But I'm in 'opes when 'is turn comes around
They'll chuck this style uv rootin' underground.

'We're up agin it, mate; we know that well.
There ain't a man among us wouldn't lob
Over the parapit an' charge like 'ell

To end the job.
But this is war; an' discipline - well, lad,
We sez we 'ates it; but we ain't too bad.

'Glory an' gallant scraps is wot I dreamed,
Ragin' around an' smashin' foeman flat;
But war, like other thngs, ain't wot it seems.
So 'stid uv that,
I'm sittin; in me dug-out scrawlin' this,
An' thankin' Gawd when shells go by - an' miss.

'I'm sittin' in me dug-out day be day -
It narks us; but Australia's got a name
Fer doin' little jobs like blokes 'oo play
A clean straight game.
Wiv luck I might see scrappin' 'fore I'm done,
Or go where Craig 'as gone, an' miss the fun.

'But if I dodge, an' keep out uv the rain,
An' don't toss in me alley 'fore we wins;
An' if I lobs back 'ome an' meets the Jane
'Oo sent the skins
These bunnies' overcoats I lives inside -
I'll squeal at 'er, an' run away an' 'ide.

'But, torkin' straight, the Janes 'as done their bit.
I'd like to 'ug the lot, orl on me pat!
They warms us well, the things they've sewed an' knit:
An' more than that
I'd like to tell them dear Australian tarts
The spirit uv it warms Australian 'earts.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Red Robin

Hi, it's a funny world! This mornin' when I woke
I saw red robin on the fence, an' heard the words he spoke.
Red robin, he's a perky chap, an' this was his refrain:
'Dear, it's a pity that poor Jenny is so plain.'

To talk like that about his wife! It had me scandalized.
I'd heard him singin' so before, but never recognised
The meaning of his chatter, or that he could be so vain:
'Dear, it's a pity that poor Jenny is so plain.'

I don't know how, I don't know why, but this reminded me
I was promised to the widow for this Sunday night to tea.
I'd promised her for weeks an' weeks, until she pinned me down.
I recollects this is the day, an' gets up with a frown.

I was thinkin' of the widow while I gets me clobber on -
Like a feller will start thinkin' of the times that's past an' gone.
An', while my thoughts is runnin' so, that bird chips in again:
'Dear, it's a pity that poor Jenny is so plain.'

Now, the widow's name is Jenny, an' it strikes me sort of queer
That my thoughts should be upon her when that robin's song I hear.
She ain't so homely neither; but she never could compare
With a certain bonzer vision with the sunlight in her hair.

When I wander down that evenin', she come smilin' to the gate,
An' her look is calculatin', as she scolds because I'm late.
She takes my hat an' sits me down an' heaves a little sigh.
But I get a queer sensation from that glimmer in her eye.

She starts to talk about the mill, an' then about the strike,
An' then she digs Ben Murray up an' treats him nasty-like;
She treats him crool an' cattish, as them soft, sweet women can.
But I ups an' tells her plainly that I think Ben is a man.

First round to me. But she comes back, an' says Ben is a cad
Who's made a laughin'-stock of her, an' treated her reel bad.
I twig she's out for sympathy; so counters that, an' says
That Ben's a broken-hearted man about the mill these days.

The second round to me on points; an' I was havin' hopes.
(I might have known that widows were familiar with the ropes.)
'But he'd never make a husband!' says the widow, with a sigh.
An' again I gets a warnin' from that glimmer in her eye.

I says I ain't no judge of that; an' treats it with a laugh.
But she keeps the talk on 'usbands for a minute an' a half.
I can't do much but spar a bit, an' keep her out of range;
So the third round is the widow's; an' the fight takes on a change.

I'm longin' for a breather, for I've done my nerve a lot,
When suddenly she starts on 'Love,' an' makes the pace reel hot.
In half a jiff she has me on the ropes, an' breathin' hard,
With not a fight inside me - I can only duck an' guard.

She uppercuts me with a sigh, an' jabs me with a glance.
(When a widow is the fighter, has a single bloke a chance?)
Her short-arm blows are amorous, most lovin' is her lunge;
Until it's just a touch an' go I don't throw up the sponge.

I use my head-piece here a bit to wriggle from the fix;
For the widow is a winner 'less I fluke a win by tricks.
An' I lets a reel mean notion (that I don't seek to excuse),
when I interrupts her rudely with, 'But have you heard the news?'

Now, to a woman, that's a lead dead certain of a score,
An' a question that the keenest is unable to ignore.
An' good old Curiosity comes in to second me,
As I saw her struggle hopeless, an' 'What news is that?' says she.

An' here I spins a lovely yarn, a gloomy hard-luck tale
Of how I've done my money in, an' I'm about to fail,
How my house an' land is mortgaged, how I've muddled my affairs
Through foolin' round with racin' bets and rotten minin' shares.

I saw the fight was easy mine the minute I begun;
An', after half a dozen words, the time-keep counted 'One.'
An' when I finish that sad tale there ain't the slightest doubt
I am winner of the contest, an' the widow's down an' out.

But not for long. Although she's lost, the widow is dead game:

'I'm sorry, Mister Jim,' says she, 'for both your loss an' shame.
All things is changed between us now, of course; the past is dead.
An' what you were about to say you please will leave unsaid.'

.

I was thinkin' in the evenin' over how I had escaped,
An' how the widow took it all - the way she stared an' gaped.
She looked her plainest at that time; but that don't matter now;
For, plain or fair, I know of one who's fairer, anyhow.

I tells meself that beauty ain't a thing to count with man,
An' I would never choose a wife on that unthinkin' plan.
No robin was awake, I swear; but still I heard that strain;
'Dear, it's a pity that poor Jenny is so plain.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Redivivus

To-day I took old rhymes that I had written.
And read them through, each one unto the end:
When with a swift nostalgia was I smitten,
As with sad memories of some old friend
Some happy, wayward man I used to know
Long since. Alas! (And, by the way, heigh-ho!)

All his, it seemed, these sudden, cheerful spasms
Of humor poured from an untroubled mind,
These old ambitions, old enthusiasms,
When all the world seemed true, and men most kind:
When roseate skies were never tinged with grey.
Ah woe! (And, so to speak, alack-a-day!)

All his these views so unsophisticated.
These thoughts so innocent and yet so wise.
Such minds as mine have never contemplated
A world so free of guile, so free of lies,
A world of woe and wickedness so free,
Of misery! (And, as it were, ah me!)

Not mine this intricate, yet careless weaving
Of joyous rhymes? Not mine this happy twist?
Surely not mine? 'Tis far beyond believing!
Such songs come from some youthful optimist
Who gaily danced along life's primrose way,
And yet - (Well, once again, alack-a-day!)

Yet they are mine, these merry, lilting phrases.
Never again shall I pen such sweet lays!
Never again shall I...But why the blazes
Shouldn't I? (Odds fish! and spare me days!)
Why shouldn't I? The time is surely ripe
For verses far surpassing this old tripe!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Renascence

World war had come - and gone. It seemed the end.
Spent, broken, by the last despair oppressed,
Unfitted to attack or yet defend,
The nations' panting remnants skulked to rest
A listless, brutish rest, where no hope gleamed,
Where earth's last glory had been thrown away
With all the splendid dreams man ever dreamed;
And his proud world a stricken shambles lay.

Grief only stayed. Great cities in the dust
Littered the path of ruin absolute,
Where sapient man, in that last mad bloodlust;
Surrendered all his birthright to the Brute;
And now the Brute triumphant claimed an earth
Where love or life or death mattered no more;
And faith and friendship, every shred of worth,
Dishonored utterly, were trampled o'er.

With a field where, lately, countless dead
Had lain till deeper, kindlier rest they found,
I saw a man who walked with bended head
And eyes that ever searched the shell-torn ground.
Times would he pause and, lifting up anon
Some metal fragment, weigh it in his hand,
Cast it aside, and wearily pass on,
Searching and ever searching that red land.

'Strange man,' I said, 'what are you seeking here
Where tortured soil grins upward to the skies?
Mayhap some relic of a comrade dear?'
He raised his head. And I beheld his eyes -
Indomitable eyes!... 'What search you for?'
I urged again, 'where futile heroes died
And hope lies buried deep for evermore?'...
'For steel, to shape a ploughshare,' he replied.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Riding Song

Flippity-flop! Flippity-flop!
Here comes the butcher to bring us a chop
Cantering, cantering down the wide street
On his little bay mare with the funny white feet;
Cantering, cantering out to the farm,
Stripes on his apron and basket on arm.
Run to the window and tell him to stop
Flippity-flop! Flippity-flop!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Roamin' Free

The miser sits beside his hoard,
The lover tarries by his bride,
And he who neither may afford
Is free to roam the whole world wide.
Ye prate of cares, of plans amiss;
With voices grave and faces long;
While I - I ask of life but this
To drink, to kiss, to troll a song

And rove a-roamin', roamin' free
A-ringin' in the changes.
Why linger here to waste a tear
When joy awaits o'er the ranges?
Why tarry there to nurse a care
When golden days are over?
For far and wide, where men abide,
There's welcome for the rover.

Who seeks to earn a life of ease:
For honor, wealth, and fame exist;
Then growing old and having these,
To sit and think of what he's miss'd?
I live for love of life alone;
You live in wait for fortune's smile
Quote proverbs at a rolling stone,
And gather moss and trouble while

I rove a-rollin', rollin' free
A-ringin' in the changes.
If there's no moss this side for me
There's heaps across the ranges.
So have your say and slave away,
And set a store by small things.
You may be lord of a hard-earned hoard,
But I'm the lord of all things.

Am I a constant lover? Nay:
Love bounded cloy, and bright eyes fade;
And he who loves and rides away

Rides on to meet a fairer maid.
'Tis sure, I'd find, if wed to Nell
'Twas Jess or Lil I loved the best.
My faith, I love them all too well
To choose but one and lose the rest.

And I live a-lovin', lovin' free
A-ringin' in the changes.
'Tis kiss me Nell, and now farewell,
Jess waits across the ranges.
And this, I boast, the rover's toast
You'll find the whole world over
'From names refrain, and tankards drain
To the lass that loves a rover.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Rose

'Ah, wot's the use?' she sez. 'Lea' me alone!
Why can't I go to 'ell in my own way?
I never arst you 'ere to mag an' moan.
Nor yet,' she sez, 'to pray.
I'll take wot's comin', an' whine no excuse.
So wot's the use?

'Me life's me own!' she sez. 'You got a nerve
You two - to interfere in my affairs.
Git out an' give advise where it may serve:
Stay 'ome an' bleat yer pray'rs.
Did I come pleadin' for yer pity? No!
Well, why not go?'

Pride! Dilly pride an' down-an'-out despair:
When them two meet there's somethin' got to break.
I got that way, to see 'er sittin' there,
I felt like I could take
That 'arf-starved frame uv 'er's by might an' main,
An' shake 'er sane.

That's 'ow it is when me an' parson roam
Down to the paradise wot Spadgers knows,
To find the 'ovel that she calls 'er 'ome,
An' 'ave a word with Rose.
Imgagin' 'igh-strung cliners in dispute
Ain't my long suit.

'Huh! Rescue work!' she sneers. 'Er eyes is bright;
'Er voice is 'ard. 'I'm a deservin' case.
Me? Fancy! Don't I look a pretty sight
To come to savin' grace?
Pity the sinner - Aw, don't come that trick!
It makes me sick!'

'Isterical she was, or nearly so:
Too little grub, an' too much time to fret
Ingrowin' grouch sich as few women know,
Or want to know - an' yet,

When I glance at the parson, there I see
Raw misery.

I've knowed ole Snowy since the days uv old;
Yet never 'ad I got so close to see
A world-wise man 'oo's 'cart is all pure gold
An' 'uman charity.
For, all that girl was suff'rln', well I knoo,
'E suffered too.

'My child,' 'e sez, 'I don't come 'ere to preach.
You're a good girl; an' when -' 'Oo sez I ain't?
'Oo sez I ain't?' 'Er voice is near a screech.
'I'm no hymn-singin' saint;
But you're a bit too previous givin' me
This third degree.'

An' then she starts to laugh. I'd 'ate to see
A woman laugh or look like that again.
She's in the dinkum 'igh-strikes now; to me
That's showin' pretty plain.
She's like a torchered thing - 'arf crazy - wild
'Take thort, my child.

'Take thort,' the parson sez. 'I only ask
Before you risk all for a life uv crime
You'll 'esitate. Is that too 'ard to task?
May there not come a time -'
'Time? Yes,' I chips. 'You'll git that fer yer pains.
Ar, brush yer brains!'

The parson sighs. 'This man,' 'E sez, 'this Wegg
'Oo dazzles you with tork uv gains frum sin
Is 'e dependable? Think well, I beg -'
'Beg nothin',' I chips in.
'To beg decoy ducks ain't the proper tack.
She wants a smack!'

The parson groans. 'I've offered you,' 'e starts.
'Offer 'er nothin'! Can't you pick 'er like?
No dinkum 'elp is any good to tarts
'Oo'd fall fer sich as Spike.

She's short uv grit to battle on 'er own,
An' stand alone.'

That done it. If I'd let the parson gone
An' come the mild an' gentle, sure enough,
She'd 'ad the willies. When the dames take on,
The game's to treat 'em rough.
That's wot I've 'card. It woke Rose up, all right,
An' full uv fight.

'Alone?' she sez. 'I've stood alone, Gawd knows!
Alone an' honest, battlin' on the square.
An' now - Oh, damn your charity! I've chose!
I'm down; an' I don't care.
I'm fer the easy life an' pretty clo'es.
That's that!' sez Rose.

The cause looks blue. Wot more was to be said?
An' then, all on me own, I weaves right there
The bright idear wot after bowed me 'ead
In sorrer an' despair.
I didn't ort to be let out alone.
That much I own.

'Ah, well,' I sez, resigned, 'if that's the life,
It's no use sayin' wot I come to say.
Which was,' I sez, 'a message frum me wife
Arstin' you 'ome to stay.'
'Your wife?' I nods. 'If you 'ad cared to come.'
She seems struck dumb.

'Your wife?' she sez. 'Wot does she know uv me?'
Then pride an' 'er suspicions makes 'er flare:
'Is this more pretty schemes fer charity?
Why should she arst me there?'
'Why? Well, you ort to know,' I answer, quick.
'Account uv Mick.'

Down on 'er folded arms 'er 'ead went, flop.
At larst our 'oly cause is won, I know.
She sobbed until I thort she'd never stop:
It 'urt to see 'er so;

Yet I felt glad the way I'd worked me nob
An' let 'er sob,

'That's tore it,' I remarks be'ind me 'and.
The parson nods. 'E's smilin' now all gay.
Ten minutes later, an' the 'ole thing's planned
Fer Rose's 'oliday.
We put the acid on, an' scold an' tease
Till she agrees.

Once we're outside the parson takes me 'and.
'Without your 'elp, your wit, we would 'ave failed.'
'Aw, easy work,' I answer, feelin' grand,
Like some ole knight, tin-mailed.
Then, sudden, like a load uv punchered tyres,
Me pride ixpires.

'Young friend,' 'e starts..... 'No, not too young; but old
Old with the cares,' I sez, 'uv fambly life.
This might 'ave been dead right when knights was bold;
But wot about me wife?
She don't know nothin'! I 'ave done me dash
Through actin' rash.'

'A trifle!' sez 'is rev'rince. 'Tut!' sez 'e.
'I'll promise you fair sailin' with Doreen.'
'Tain't that so much,' I sez, 'wot troubles me.'
'Trouble? Wot you mean?'
I grins at 'im. 'Me conscience,' I reply.
'I've tole a lie!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Sanctuary Scorned [1936]

Oh, is there not one place on earth
Where man's goodwill has gone from birth
Thro' adolescence, with its rage,
Into a kindly, mellow age
A tolerant maturity
Mayhap some tropic coral isle
Where even man no more is vile.
If such a place be anywhere,
Ah, take me there! Ah, take me there!
And let me know security.

Is there no haven, heaven-bent,
Where economic argument
Falls flat; where war and talk of
Are with forgotten things of yore
Anachronistic oddities
Where mankind's mental food is peace,
And bliss and brotherhood increase.
If such a place be anywhere,
Ah, take me there! Ah, take me there!
And feed me such commodities.

Where phonograph or wireless blare
Is never on the ambient air,
And calm night follows placid day
As silent seasons steal away
Tuned to a sweet tranquillity,
Where never, 'mid the traffie's roar
Red Death claims yet one victim more
If such a place be anywhere,
Ah, take me there! Ah, take me there!
I go with meek docility.

Where tender sky to placid sea
Bends down in perfect harmony;
Where mute nymphs, in a smiling bandy
Come, as I loll on silvery sand,
And, bent upon adoring me,
Pass soothing fingers thro' my hair

Were such a land, and were I there,
I should arise, and yawn, and say,
'Take me away! Take me away!
This deadly dump is boring me!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Sari Bair

So, they've struck their streak o' trouble, an' they got it in the neck,
An' there's more than one ole pal o' mine 'as 'anded in 'is check;
But Ginger still takes nourishment; 'e's well, but breathin' 'ard.
An' so 'e sends the strength uv it scrawled on a chunk uv card.

'On the day we 'it the transport there wus cheerin' on the pier,
An' the girls wus wavin' hankies as they dropped a partin' tear,
An' we felt like little 'eroes as we watched the crowd recede,
Fer we sailed to prove Australia, an' our boastin' uv the breed.

'There wus Trent, ex~toff, uv England; there wus Green, ex-pug, uv 'Loo;
There wus me, an' Craig uv Queensland, wiv 'is 'ulkin' six-foot-two:
An' little Smith uv Collin'wood, 'oo 'owled a rag-time air.
On the day we left the Leeuwin, bound nor'-west for Gawd-knows-where.

'On the day we come to Cairo wiv its niggers an' its din,
To fill our eyes wiv desert sand, our souls wiv Eastern sin,
There wus cursin' an' complainin'; we wus 'ungerin' fer fight -
Little imertation soljers full uv vanity an' skite.

'Then they worked us - Gawd! they worked us, till we knoo wot drillin' meant;
Till men begun to feel like men, an' wasters to repent,
Till we grew to 'ate all Egyp', an' its desert, an' its stinks:
On the days we drilled at Mena in the shadder uv the Sphinx.

'Then Green uv Sydney swore an oath they meant to 'old us tight,
A crowd uv flarnin' ornaments wivout a chance to fight;
But little Smith uv Collin'wood, he whistled 'im a toon,
An' sez, 'Aw, take a pull. lad, there'll be whips o' stoushin' soom.'

'Then the waitin', weary waitin', while we itched to meet the foe!
But we'd done wiv fancy skitin' an' the comic op'ra show.
We wus soljers - finished soljers, an' we felt it in our veins
On the day we trod the desert on ole Egyp's sandy plains.

'An' Trent 'e said it wus a bore, an' all uv us wus blue,
An' Craig, the giant, never joked the way 'e used to do.
But little Smith uv Collin'wood 'e 'ummed a little song,
An' said, 'You leave it to the 'eads. O now we sha'n't be long!'

'Then Sari Bair, O Sari Bair, 'twus you wot seen it done,
The day the transports rode yer bay beneath a smilin' sun.
We boasted much, an' toasted much; but where yer tide line creeps,
'Twus you, me dainty Sari Bair, that seen us play fer keeps.

'We wus full uv savage skitin' while they kep' us on the shelf -
(Now I tell yeh, square an' 'onest, I wus doubtin' us meself):
But we proved it, good an' plenty, that our lads can do an' dare,
On the day we walloped Abdul o'er the sands o' Sari Bair.

'Luck wus out wiv Green uv Sydney, where 'e stood at my right 'and,
Fer they plunked 'im on the transport 'fore 'e got a chance to land.
Then I saw 'em kill a feller wot I knoo in Camberwell,
Somethin' sort o' went inside me - an' the rest wus bloody 'ell.

'Thro' the smoke I seen 'im strivin', Craig uv Queensland, tall an' strong,
Like an 'arvester at 'ay-time singin', swingin' to the song.
An' little Smith uv Collin'wood, 'e 'owled a fightin' tune,
On the day we chased Mahomet over Sari's sandy dune.

'An' Sari Bair, O Sari Bair, you seen 'ow it wus done,
The transports dancin' in yer bay beneath the bonzer sun;
An' speckled o'er yer gleamin' shore the little 'uddled 'eaps
That showed at last the Southern breed could play the game fer keeps.

'We found 'im, Craig uv Queensland, stark, 'is 'and still on 'is gun.
We found too many more besides, when that fierce scrap wus done.
An' little Smith uv Collin'wood, he crooned a mournful air,
The night we planted 'em beneath the sands uv Sari Bair.

'On the day we took the transport there wus cheerin' on the pier,
An' we wus little chiner gawds; an' now we're sittin' 'ere,
Wiv the taste uv blood an' battle on the lips uv ev'ry man
An' ev'ry man jist 'opin' fer to end as we began.

'Fer Green is gone, an' Craig is gone, an' Gawd! 'ow many more!
Who sleep the sleep at Sari Bair beside that sunny shore!
An' little Smith uv Collin'wood, a bandage 'round 'is 'ead,
He 'ums a savage song an' vows quick vengeance fer the dead.

'But Sari Bair, me Sari Bair, the secrets that you 'old

Will shake the 'earts uv Southern men when all the tale is told;
An' when they git the strength uv it, there'll never be the need
To call too loud fer fightin' men among the Southern breed.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Sawin' Wood

I wondered wot was doin'. First I seen
Ole Missus Flood wave signals to Doreen.
I'm in the paddick slashin' down some ferns;
She's comin' up the road; an' if she turns
An 'andspring I won't be su'prised a bit,
The way she's caperin', an' goin' it.

She yells out some remark when she gets near,
Which I don't catch, I'm too fur off to 'ear.
An' then Doreen comes prancin' to our door,
An' Missus Flood she sprints, an' yells some more;
My wife runs to the gate an' waves 'er arms...
But I lays low; I'm used to these alarms.

A married bloke, in time, 'e learns a bit;
An' 'e ain't over keen to throw a fit
Each time the women calls the fire-reel out.
It's jist a trifle 'e'll know all about
When things get normal. That's a point I learn;
So I saws wood, an' keeps on cutting fern.

At least, I cut a few. I got to give
Reel fac's, an' own I was inquisitive;
An' these 'ere fireworks gets me fair perplexed.
I watch the 'ouse to see wot 'appens next;
But nothin's doin'. They jist goes in,
An' leaves me wonderin' wot's caused the din.

I stands it for a full 'arf-hour or more;
Then gets dead sick uv starin' at the door.
I goes down to the 'ouse an' 'unts about
To find some 'baccer, which I 'ave no doubt
Is in me trousers pocket all the while.
When I goes in, the talk stops, an' they smile.

I sez I've lost me smoke, an' search a bit,
An' ask Doreen wot 'as become uv it,
An' turns the mantelshelf all upside-down,
An' looks inside the teapot, with a frown;

Then gives it up, an' owns I'd like a drink;
When Missus Flood sez, 'Bill, wot do you think?'

Now, ain't that like a woman? Spare me days,
I'll never get resigned to all their ways.
When they 'as news to tell they smile, an' wink,
An' bottle it, an' ask yeh wot yeh think.
It's jist a silly game uv theirs, an' so,
I gives the countersign: 'Wot? I dunno.'

'Then guess,' she sez. Well, I'm a patient bloke,
So I sits down an' starts to cut a smoke.
(To play this game yeh've got to persevere.)
'Couldn't,' I sez, 'if I guessed for a year';
Then lights me pipe, an' waits for 'er to speak.
At last she says, 'Jim's comin' back next week!'

'Go on,' sez I; an' puffs away awhile
Quite unconcerned. But for to see 'er smile
Was jist a treat: 'er eyes was shinin' bright,
An' she grow'd ten years younger in a night.
Jist 'ere, Doreen she sez to me, 'Good Lor,
Wot do yeh want two plugs uv 'baccer for?'

I takes me pipe out uv me mouth an' stares,
An' stammers, 'Must 'ave found a piece - somewheres.'
But, by the way she smiles - so extra sweet
I know she twigs me game, an' I am beat.
'Fancy,' she sez. 'Yeh're absent-minded, dear.
Sure there was nothin' else yeh wanted 'ere?'

'Nothin',' I sez, an' feels a first-prize fool;
An' goes outside, an' grabs the nearest tool.
It was the crosscut; so I works like mad
To keep me self-respeck from goin' bad.
'This game,' I tells meself, 'will do yeh good.
You ain't proficient, yet, at sawin' wood.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Sling It!

Blimey! Ain't it gittin' tough?
Life gits 'arder day by day.
First a bloke ain't got enough
Words for wot 'e wants to say;
Then some nark; with nix to do,
Cuts vocab'laries in two.

'Ow can coots ixpress their souls?
Many a noble song is sung
By crook lips; an' music rolls
Off full many a slangy tongue.
Many a word o' wisdom's spoke
By some reel dead leery bloke.

Still in all, I gotter own,
If pure lingo we would teach,
Young kids' minds 'ad best be sown
With some dinkum slabs of speech.
Shove this matter in each book:
'Sling the slang; it's all dead crook.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Son Of A Fool

Gyved and chained in his father's home,
He toiled 'neath a conqueror's rule;
Bowed to the earth in the land of his birth;
The Slave who was Son of a Fool.

Poor remnant he of a conquered race,
Long shorn of its power and pride,
No reverence shone in his sullen face
When they told how that race had died.
But the meed that he gave to his father's name
Was a down-drooped head and a flush of shame.

Burned in his brain was the pitiful tale
Of a sabre too late unsheathed;
Deep in his heart lay the poisoned dart
Of the shame that his sire bequeathed:
The searing shame of a laggard life,
Of an arm too weak in the hour of strife.

Oh, the Fool had reigned full many a year
In the Land of the Bounteous Gifts,
Dreaming and drifting, with never a fear,
As a doomed fool pleasantly drifts;
And he ate his fill of the gifts she gave
The Fool who was sire of a hopeless Slave.

Through years of plenty and years of peace
he lolled in the pleasing shade,
Marking his flocks and his herds increase,
Watching his waxing trade;
And he smiled when he heard of the old world's wars,
With never a care for his own rich stores.

Year by year as his harvest grew,
He gleaned with a lightsome heart;
His barns he filled, and he sowed and tilled,
Trading in port and mart.
Proud of his prowess in psort and trade
Was the Fool, who scoffed at an alien raid.

Little he recked of the gathering cloud
That boded a swift disgrace.
Was he not seed of a manly breed,
Proud son of a warlike race?
And he told of the deeds that his sires had done
While he wielded a bat in the place of a gun.

Small were his fears in the rich fat years,
Loud was his laugh of scorn
When they whispered low of a watching foe,
Greedy for gold and corn;
A foe grown jealous of trade an pow'r,
Marking the teasure, and waiting the hour.

'Twas a cheerful Fool, but a Fool foredoomed
Gazed out on a clear spring morn;
And his eye ranged wide o'er the countryside,
With its treasures, its kine and corn.
And, 'Mine, all mine!' said the prosperous Fool.
'And it never shall pass to an alien rule!'

And, e'en when the smoke of the raiders' ships
Trailed out o'er the northern skies,
His laugh was loud: "'Tis a summer cloud,'
Said the Fool in his Paradise.
And, to guard his honor, he gave a gun
To the feeble hands of his younger son.

Oh, a startled Fool, and a Fool in haste
Awoke on a later day,
When they sped the word that a foe laid waste
His ports by the smiling bay,
And his voice was shrill as he bade his sons
Haste out to the sound of the booming guns.

He was brave, they tell, as a fool is brave,
With an oath 'tween his hard-clenched teeth,
When he found the sword that he fain would wave
Held fast in its rusty sheath;
When he learned that the hand, so skilled in play,
Was the hand of a child that fatal day.

And scarce had he raised his rallying cry,
Scarce had he called one note,
When he died, as ever a foo must die,
With his war-song still in his throat.
And an open ditch was the hasty grave
Of the Fool who fathered a hopeless Slave.

They point the moral, they tell the tale,
And the old world wags its head:
'If a Fool hath treasure, and Might prevail,
Then the Fool must die,' 'tis said.
And the end of it all is a broken gun
And the heritage gleaned by a hapless son.

Gyved and chained in his father's home,
He toiled 'neath a conqueror's rule;
While they flung in his face the taunt of his race:
A Slave and the Son of a Fool.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Song Of Insane Gardener

Oh, I dance upon the lawn in the cold, white dawn,
And I gloat upon the corpses of a countless million slain;
Where the frost about my feet spreads its winter winding sheet
There I chuckle and I chortle as I chant my mad refrain;
'Lime and sulphur, Paris green, arsenate of lead,
Benzole couldn't kill 'em; but they're dead, dead, dead.'

Men have said I went insane when the Summer brought its bane:
Beetle, bug, and butterfly, weevil, wog and worm,
And a thousand million thrips with my garden came to grips
Plus a plague of things that fly and creep and crawl and squirm.
Lime and sulphur, Paris green, arsenate of lead,
They sneered at 'em, and leered at 'em, and gaily gorged ahead.

They fell upon my fancy phlox, hyacinths and hollyhocks;
Amaryllis, antirrhinum, lupin, lily, all were lost.
All my garden's vanished glory now remained a sorry story,
While, dismayed, I sprayed and sprayed and reckoned not the cost.
Lime and sulphur, Paris green, arsenate of lead -
Vain were these till nights afreeze dire destruction spread.

Lifeless lie the pupa cases, larvae leave no least lone traces.
Apphis eggs (if there be any) are a pest now haply past.
With a mad song in my throat, in the dawn I dance, I gloat;
For my eveil days have ended, and revenge is here at last.
Vain the Paris green, the sulphur; vain the arsenate of lead;
Fourteen frosty nights have finsihed all the olden dread.

So I dance upon the lawn in the cold, white dawn,
And I chortle o'er cadavers of a countless million slain.
Men may moan and deem it sad, vowing that I am as mad
As a hatter. what's it matter? Join my maniac's refrain:
'Lime and sulphur, Paris green, arsenate of lead,
Benzole couldn't kill 'em; but they're dead, dead, dead.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Song Of Snobs

When Leonardo was a lad there was a certain set
Who snubbed him most outrageously - in fact, they snub him yet
He wasn't in the fashion, so he wasn't in the fold;
Before his death he was too new, and now he grows too old.
Because his art was new to them the snobs of Florence laughed;
And now, because he isn't new, the moderns scorn his craft.
'Da Vinci? Don't be crude, my dear! Call him an artist? Pshaw!
Why that old anachronism, so they say, knew how to draw!'

They have wandered thro' the ages, mouthing cliches as they go.
At first nights, and private views, 'mid the people 'one should know.'
But the artist goes on laughing as thro' every age he's laughed
At snobs who patronise the 'Arts,' but boggle at the craft.

When Shakespeare sought draw the crowds and please the taste of town
And watched box office takings with a worn and worried frown,
Kit Marlowe knew, Ben Jonson knew what stuff was in the lad;
But the dilettanti voted him quite definitely bad.
The fellow simply stole his plots, they said with lofty sneers,
And served them up most vulgarly to tickle groundling's ears.
'Will Shakespeare? That cheap showman!
Why the man's quite gauche, my dear!
I prefer them cultivated like dear Bacon and de Vere. '

So reputations surge and sink as lifts and ebbs the tide,
Now wallowing within the trough, now on the crest they ride.
But the snobs are ever with us, snobs of art, of place, of pelf.
And reading this, I rather think I might be one myself.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Spike Wegg

Me photer's in the papers! 'Oly wars!
A 'ero, I've been called in big, black type.
I 'ad idears the time was close on ripe
Fer some applorse
To come my way, on top uv all me bumps.
Now it's come sudden, an' it's come in lumps.

I've given interviews, an' 'ad me dile
Bang on the front page torkin' to a 'tec'.
Limelight? I'm swimmin' in it to the neck!
Me sunny smile
Beams on the crowd. Misun'erstandin's past;
An' I 'ave come into me own, at last.

But all the spot-light ain't alone fer me;
'Arf, I am glad to say, is made to shine
Upon that firm an' trusted friend uv mine,
Ole Wally Free
A man, I've alwiz said, 'oo'd make 'is mark...
But, case you 'ave n't 'eard the story, 'ark:

Spike Wegg - Yes, 'im. I thort, the same as you,
That 'e was dished an' done fer in the Lane.
I don't ixpeck to cross 'is tracks again;
An' never knoo
That 'e 'ad swore to git me one uv those
Fine days, an' make 'is alley good with Rose.

Spike 'ad been aimin' 'igh in 'is profesh.
Bank robberies, an' sich, was 'is noo lurk;
An' one big job 'ad set the cops to work
To plan a fresh
Campaign agin this crook. They want 'im more
Than ever they 'ave wanted 'im before.

They yearn fer 'im, reel passionit, they do.
Press an' perlice both 'ankers fer 'im sore.
'Where is Spike Wegg?' the daily 'eadlines roar.
But no one knoo.

Or them that did 'ad fancies to be dumb.
The oysters uv the underworld was mum.

It was the big sensation uv the day.
Near 'arf the Force was nosin' fer the bloke
Wot done the deed; but Spike was well in smoke,
An' like to stay.
Shots 'ad been fired; an' one poor coot was plugged.
An' now the crowd arsts, 'Why ain't no one jugged?'

That's 'ow the land lies when, one day, I go
Down to the orchid paddick, where I see
A strange cove playin' spy be'ind a tree.
I seem to know
The shape uv that there sneakin', slinkin' frame,
An' walk across to git on to 'is game.

It was red-'ot! I grunt, an' break away
To 'old 'im orf. I'm battlin' fer me life
All-in, a cert; fer 'e's still got the knife.
An', by the way
'E looks, I know it's either 'im or me
'As an appointment at the cemet'ry.

I've often wondered 'ow a feller feels
When 'e is due to wave the world good-bye.
They say 'is past life flicks before 'is eye
Like movie reels.
My past life never troubled me a heap.
All that I want to do is go to sleep.

I'm gittin' weak; I'm coughin', chokey like;
Me legs is wobbly, an' I'm orful ill.
But I 'ave got some fight left in me still.
I look at Spike;
An' there I see the dirty look wot shows
'E's got me where 'e wants me - an' 'e knows.

I think that's where I fell. Nex' thing I see
Is Spike Wegg down, an' fair on top uv 'im
Some one that's breathin' ard an' fightin' grim.
It's Wally Free!

It's good old Wally! 'E 'as got Spike pinned,
Both 'ands, an' kneelin' 'eavy on 'is wind.

So fur so good. But I ain't outed yet.
On 'ands an' knees I crawls to reach 'em, slow.
(Spike's got the knife, an' Wally dare n't let go)
Then, as I get
Close up, I 'ear Rose screamin', then me wife.
I'm faint. I twist Spike's arm - an' grab the knife.

That's all. At least, as far as I'm concerned,
I took no further interest in the show.
The things wot 'appened subsekint I know
Frum wot I learned
When I come-to, tucked in me little bed,
Me chest on fire, an' cold packs on me 'ead.

I 'ear they tied Spike up with 'arness straps
An' bits uv 'ay-band, till the John 'Ops come;
An' watched 'im workin' out a mental sum
Free an' some chaps
Uv 'ow much time 'e'd git fer this last plot
An' other jobs. The answer was, a lot.

Then that nex' day! an' after, fer a week!
Yeh'd think I owned the winner uv a Cup.
Pressmen, perlice, the parson, all rush up;
An' I've to speak
Me piece, to be took down in black an' white,
In case I chuck a seven overnight.

The papers done us proud. Near every day
Some uv 'em printed photers uv me map
(Looked at some ways, I ain't too crook a chap)
But, anyway
I've 'ad enough. I wish they'd let me be.
I'm sick uv all this cheap publicity.

But sich is fame. Less than a month ago.
The whole thing started with a naggin' tooth.
Now I am famis; an', to tell the truth
Well, I dunno

I'd 'ardly like to bet yeh that I don't
Git arst to act in pitchers - but I won't.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Spots Through The Ages

Romance goes out of everything in these days of ill grace,
And even old John Barleycorn grows 'standardised' apace;
Once henchman of gay gallantry, a kindlier part he played.
Scene: Tavern door. A saucy wench. A merry, ruffling blade.
He stops. She smiles. Arm round her waist. 'Could Eve be more divine?
See, a kiss, my pretty sweetling. Then, I pray, a stoup of wine.'

'Twas in a 'silver' tassie' that Rab Burns pledged his lass
(The current one, 'tis understood). But days grows drab, alas.
Scene: London pub. Tiles. Glittering glass: and there, behind the bar,
A brass-haired goddess, proud, aloof from this meek gutter child.
'A pot o' four-'arf, thank yeh, miss. An' please to dror it ild.'

The scene shifts to Australia, 'where a man can raise a thirst.'
(See Kipling). From 'long-sleevers' now they drained the stuff acurst.
Back of beyond, by Clancy's run they've a had a six months' drought.
Scene: Old bush shanty. Summer. Flies. Six shearers 'cutting out.'
A shirt-sleeved, whiskered barman. Says Bill: 'By gum, it's 'ot!
Breast up, blokes. Name yer gargle. Rybuck, boss; mine's a pot.'

But mass-production now debunks old John, for olden sins;
They've 'synthesised' him, 'standardised' him, soldered him in tins.
Grog goes no more with gallantry, nor wine with poesy.
Scene: Chain store-grocer's. Pickles, clothes-pegs, jam, tinned salmon, tea.
Smug grocer (strict abstainer). enter cove in working duds.
He slings a sprat across the joint: 'Hoy! Gissa tinna suds!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Spring Delirium

Gold days give way to sudden rain,
But what, I ask, of that?
For I am my own man again,
And gloom comes sprawling flat.
Let grouchers grieve and nurse the hump
Because bleak winds still shout;
But I don't care a tupp'ny dump;
From zero - whoop! - my spirits jump:
The daffodils are out.

Hail bloom of golden promise! Hail!
These trumpets sing of hope.
To mock grim Winter's weakening flail
And shame the misanthrope.
All hail! And hail again, for luck.
Hence, cold and clammy doubt!
Come, Spring! Come, honey-bee and suck;
Into this heady nectar tuck!
The daffodils are out!

Spring for the young? Ah, foolish claim.
Spring burgeons for the old,
To touch old hearts again with flame
And oust the creeping cold.
So, as each golden cup now spills
Its gladness all about,
I, freed again of age's ills,
Grow dilly with the daffodils.
The daffodils are out!

Yet, am I old? Who said I'm old?
Ah, Spring's sweet alchemy!
Gaze now upon me and behold
A recharged battery.
I waggle my rheumatic knees
And, as the years I flout,

Hot blood incontinently flees
Along my hardening arteries
The daffodils are out!

Birds call; the buds grow fat; I sing
A daft, delicious lay.
Prim primulas are carpeting
My somewhat wobbly way.
Oh, vernal verve! September's spree!
I laugh! I sing! I shout!
With dragonfly and drunken bee
I go right off my rocker. Gee!
The wotsernames are out!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Stone The Crows'

'Why stone the crows!' 'e sez. 'I like 'er style,
But alwiz, some'ow, women 'ave appeared
Set fer to 'old me orf a 'arf a mile.
I dunno wot's agin me: p'raps me beard.
But, some'ow, when I speak 'em soft they run.
I ain't no ladies' man,' sez Danny Dunn.

'I like 'er style,' 'e sez. 'Wot's 'er name? Rose.
The neatest filly that I ever see.
She'd run in double splendid. But I s'pose,
She'd never 'arness with the likes uv me.
Wot age you tell me? Risin' twenty-nine?
Well, stone the flamin' crows! She'd do me fine.

'I wonder can she milk? Don't look that kind.
But even if she don't I would n't care
Not much. Stone all the crows! I'd 'arf a mind
To 'ave a shave an' 'ang me 'at up there.
But I ain't got the knack uv it, yeh know,
Or I'd been spliced this twenty year ago.'

Ole Danny Dunn 'as been to pay 'is call
An' tell us 'e'll be settlin' down 'ere soon.
'E lobbed in on us sudden, ziff an' all,
An' ain't done nothin' all the afternoon
But lap up tea an' stare pop-eyed at Rose,
'E ain't said nothin' much but 'Stone the crows!'

Now, as I sees 'im orf, down by the gate,
'E's chirpin' love-songs like a nestin' thrush.
Rose 'as 'im by the w'iskers, sure as fate;
Fer Spring 'as sent 'im soft all uv a rush.
'E's got the beans; an' so she's fixed fer life,
If Danny's game to arst 'er fer 'is wife.

An' so me scheme works out all on its own.
I grabbed the notion that day in the train,
When Danny tole me that 'e lived alone.
I reckoned, then, I'd 'ave to use me brain;

But 'ere 'e is, stonin' the crows a treat,
An' keen to sling is pile at Rose's feet.

I'll show 'em! Them 'oo thinks I got no brains
Will crash when Rose is Mrs. Danny Dunn.
Doreen don't need to go to too much pains
To show me that she thinks I've nex' to none,
When I take on a job I don't let go
Until I've fixed it, all sirgarneo.

'Listen,' sez Danny. 'Do yeh think a man
'As any chance? I know I don't dress neat.'
'Sling it!' I sez. 'Don't be a also-ran.
Go in bald-'eaded! Rush 'er orf 'er feet!
They don't know wot they want: women ain't got
No minds, till some strong man shows wot is wot.

'I'll 'elp,' I tells 'im, 'if you play the game.
Don't give 'er time to think. Take 'er be storm.
Many's the lover's bowed 'is 'ead in shame
Becoz 'e was afraid to woo too warm.
Be masterful! Show 'er 'oo's boss! 'Ave grit!
That's wot I done, an' come 'ome on the bit.

'Look at me now. I got a wife wot 'eeds
My lightest wish. Uv course, I ain't unkind;
But I'm boss uv the show, becoz she needs
A man to lean upon, an' guide 'er mind.'
'By gum!' sez Danny; 'but that must be fine.
That's 'ow I'd like to 'ave a wife uv mine.'

I tells 'im there's a dance on Fridee night;
'E must be there, tricked out in nobby clo'es
An' all spruced up. I'll see it fixed up right
So 'e can make the goin' good with Rose.
'I don't dance much,' 'e sez. 'But p'raps me luck's
Changed round; an' stone the crows! I'll chance the ducks!'

So far, ribuck. I'm no back number yet;
Although they treats me as brainless yob.
I may be slow to start; but, don't ferget,
I still got some idears back uv me nob.

An' once I've got Rose wed an' fixed fer life
I might su'prise respeck out uv me wife.

I might, but - Listen. Can you tell me this:
Why am I takin' all these speshul pains,
An' worried lest me plans will go amiss?
Why am I so dead set to use me brains?
Dunno; no more than you; fer, spare me days!
A man's a puzzle to 'imself, some ways.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Suburbia

O man with a Position, prithee tell,
How is't you mould your sal'ried life so well;
Holding in lofty scorn that lowly mob
Of 'Blokes' who earn mere 'wages' at a 'job'.

Knights of Suburbia, whose only care
Is to be counted 'mid the 'naicest' there,
Teach me how I, some day, may learn to be
Clothed in drab Respectability.

I cannot muster due respect for those
Who wear the very nicest kind of clothes;
Nor does the Upper House sufficiently
Impress the dull, 'right-thinking' part o' me.

Fain would I garb my meekness in a coat
Whose very blackness struck a pious note,
And crease my pants, and aye, with tender care,
Arrange becomingly my plebian hair.

A 'Something in the City' would I be,
With due respect for men of Propputy.
Or sooth, if such ambition be too rash,
I'd, as a godlike grocer, groce for cash.

Ah, lead me to some suburb grey and calm!
My very soul craves for a potted palm
In my front porch. Nay, but it were sublime
To stalk the stealthy slug o' summer-time.

Then would I take some proper girl to wife,
And know the joys of a 'well-ordered' life,
Beget suburban daughters who would be
Models of drawing-room propriety.

Ah me, that drawing-room! - my lady's pride.
With products of Chow-labor side by side.
An upright grand by Bubblestein and Bohrs,
And framed enlargements of our ancestors.

Our arms - a 'what not' rampant on a ground
Of pious drab. There would we sit around
While Bertha thumped the keys o' balmy eves,
And caterpillars chewed the fuschia leaves.

There would we offer incense, highly toned,
And worship, nightly, FURNITURE enthroned.
There would we - nay, I may not even hope,
Whose only wash-hand bowl is plugged with soap.

With yellow soap, to caulk a leak obscene
Whose writing-table once held kerosene.
What does he wot of over-mantels, he
Who keeps tobacco where he should keep tea?

Knight of Suburbia, your daily round,
Treading to morning trains the same old ground,
Is not for me; though I would gladly be
A champion at passing cakes and tea.

O, that the stars had willed it were my fate
To be immoderately moderate;
To sit at eve, 'mid fans and photo, frames,
And play at sundry senseless parlor games;

Then, having bathed my soul in revelry,
Put out the cat, and turned the front door key,
Away to rest, by one dim taper's gleam,
To court the vague, unnecessary dream.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Summer Sanctuary

Not upon the crowded beaches
Where the sun beats fierce and hot;
Not upon the river reaches
In a shady silvan spot;
But in some deep mountain valley,
'Mid the sassafras and fern,
Here's the place where I would dally
When the suns of Summer burn.

Here the sifted sunlight dappling
Carpets with translucent green,
Flecks and flirts on fern and sapling,
Where the cold stream peeps between.
'Here,' you muse, 'since time's beginning,
Foot of man has never known;
Mine the joy first to be winning
All this beauty for my own.'

'Here,' you muse, 'is safe seclusion
Known alone to bee and bird,
From the rude unsought intrusion
Of the common human herd.' . . .
Then a lipstick grossly gleaming,
And a half-smoked fag you see;
And you waken from your dreaming
As a shrill voice yells 'Coo-ee!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Swingin' Douglas

There's a breeze about the mountains, it is singin' in the trees
A song to mock the little men who chose to live at ease,
Or play at toil or pleasure where their fellows crowd and push;
But put my good axe in my hand and leave me in the bush
And it's: Hey, boy!
Hi, boy!
Heave it in the wood!
Oh, the green bush is around us, and the smell of it is good,
The great bush is before us, and a giant's task to do,
And hearty men and hefty men alone may see it thro'.
So it's: Ho, boys!
Hey, boys!
Swing it with a will!
For the saws are howlin' hungry for logs down at the mill.

The hope for man is honest work, an' out-o'doors his place,
The good brown earth beneath him an' the clean breeze in his face;
The work for man is with his hands, his muscles strong as steel,
When health an' strength within him make him feel as he should feel.
Oh it's: Hey, boys
Shake her up!
Twenty logs to get!
The tail-rope's fouled a saplin' an' the boss is in a sweat.
He's swearin' like a trooper, for they're falling grubby wood;
The boy has broke the whistle-string, which isn't for his good.
But it's: Hey, boys!
Slog along!
Watch her when she goes!
An' ringin' down the gully runs the echo of the blows.

High above us, on the hill-top, where the tall trees rake the sky,
The cockatoos are creaking and the crimson parrots cry.
From below us, where the sawdust by the mill is gleamin' brown,
Comes the dronin' of the twin-saws while the boys are breakin' down.
An' it's: Ho, boys!
Let her go!
Watch her, how she sways!

An' the loggin' truck goes lurchin' down the crazy wooden ways,
With the driver at the brake-rope - Oh, that truckie has a nerve!
An' he howls a merry 'Hoop-la!' as she swings around a curve.
Then it's: Hey, boys!
Plug ahead!
Feed the greedy mill!
We have fed her logs in dozens, but she's shriekin' for 'em still.

When you test the strength that's in you, oh, it's good to be alive
In the green bush, the clean bush, an' with your fellows strive...
There's Simon, of the sniggin' gang, in trouble with his log.
An' he slews her with a cant-hook as she wallows in a bog.
But it's: Hey, boys!
Steady, boys!
Haul away the slack!
An' the shackled giant's snakin' down the deeply-furrowed track.
Now the boss he swears to heaven that the timber's all bewitched,
An' Simon toils like seven men to get the tackle hitched.
An' it's: Ho, boys!
Right away!
Slew her at the nose!
An' the old winch coughs an' clatters every time the whistle blows.

The crowded world may call at times, but here I'd rather be,
With the strong men, the brown men, who work along with me;
With the good tan on their faces an' the clear look in their eyes
That come to men who ply their trade beneath the open skies:
The rough men,
The straight men,
With coarse words on the tongue.
An' hearts that work can never break an' minds that must kepe young.
Oh, it's swingin', swingin' Douglas with a strength you glory in,
Where willin' hands are honoured hands, an shirkin' is the sin -
An' it's: Hi, boys!
Clear, boys!
More to feed the mill!
An' the great tree whistles downward to a crash that shakes the hill.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Sym, Son Of Joy

Now Joi, the rebel, he had a son
In far, far Gosh where the tall trees wave.
Said Joi: 'In Gosh there shall yet be one
To scorn this life of a self-made slave;
To spurn the law of the Knight, Sir Stodge,
And end the rule of the great King Splosh;
Who shall warn the Glugs of their crafty dodge,
And at last bring peace, sweet peace, to Gosh.'

Said he: 'Whenever the kind sun showers
His golden treasure on grateful flowers,
With upturned faces and hearts bowed low,
The Glugs shall know what the wild things know.'
Said he: 'Wherever the broad fields smile,
They shall walk with clean minds, free of guile;
They shall scoff aloud at the call of Greed,
And turn to their labours and never heed.'

So Joi had a son, and his name was Sym;
And his eyes were wide as the eyes of Truth;
And there came to the wondering mind of him
Long thoughts of the riddle that vexes youth.
And, 'Father,' he said, 'in the mart's loud din
Is there aught of pleasure? Do some find joy?'
But his father tilted the beardless chin,
And looked in the eyes of the questing boy.

Said he: 'Whenever the fields are green,
Lie still, where the wild rose fashions a screen,
While the brown thrush calls to his love-wise mate,
And know what they profit who trade with Hate.'
Said he: 'Whenever the great skies spread,
In the beckoning vastness overhead,
A tent for the blue wren building a nest,
Then, down in the heart of you, learn what's best.'

And there came to Sym as he walked afield
Deep thoughts of the world and the folk of Gosh.
He saw the idols to which they kneeled;

He marked them cringe to the name of Splosli.
Is it meet,' he asked, 'that a soul should crawl
To a purple robe or a gilded chair?'
But his father walked to the garden's wall
And stooped to a rose-bush flowering there.

Said he: 'Whenever a bursting bloom
Looks up to the sun, may a soul find room
For a measure of awe at the wondrous birth
Of one more treasure to this glad earth.'
Said he: 'Whenever a dewdropp clings
To a gossamer thread, and glitters and swings,
Deep in humility bow your head
To a thing for a blundering mortal's dread.'

And there came to Sym in his later youth,
With the first clear glance in the face of guile,
Thirst for knowledge and thoughts of truth,
Of gilded baubles, and things worth while.
And he said, 'There is much that a Glug should know;
But his mind is clouded, his years are few.'
Then joi, the father, he answered low
As his thoughts ran back to the youth he knew.

Said he: 'Whenever the West wind stirs,
And birds in feathers and beasts in furs
Steal out to dance in the glade, lie still:
Let your heart teach you what it will.'
Said he: 'Whenever the moonlight creeps
Thro' inlaced boughs, a'nd a shy star peeps
Adown from its crib in the cradling sky,
Know of their folly who fear to die.'

New interest came to the mind of Sym,
As 'midst his fellows he lived and toiled.
But the ways of the Glug folk puzzled him;
For some won honour, while some were foiled;
Yet all were filled with a vague unrest
As they climbed their trees in an endless search.
But joi, the father, he mocked their quest,
When he marked a Glug on his hard-won perch.

Said he: 'Whenever these tales are heard
Of the Feasible Dog or the Guffer Bird,
Then laugh and laugh till the fat tears roll
To the roots of the joy-bush deep in your soul.
When you see them squat on the tree-tops high,
Scanning for ever that heedless sky,
Lie flat on your back on the good, green earth
And roar till the great vault echoes your mirth.'

As he walked in the city, to Sym there came
Sounds envenomed with fear and hate,
Shouts of anger and words of shame,
As Glug blamed Glug for his woeful state.
This blame?' said Sym, 'Is it mortal's right
To blame his fellow for aught he be?'
But the father said, 'Do we blame the night
When darkness gathers and none can see?'

Said he: 'Whenever there springs from earth
A plant all crooked and marred at birth,
Shall we, unlearned in the Gardener's scheme,
Blame plant or earth for the faults that seem?'
Said he: 'Whenever your wondering eyes
Look out on the glory of earth and skies,
Shall you, 'mid the blessing of fields a-bloom,
Fling blame at the blind man, prisoned in gloom?'

So Joi had a son, and his name was Sym;
Far from the ken of the great King Splosh.
And small was the Glugs' regard of him,
Mooning along in the streets of Gosh.
But many a creature by field and ford
Shared in the schooling of that strange boy,
Dreaming and planning to gather and hoard
Knowledge of all things precious to Joi.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Tea Talk

'Excuse me if I sit on you,' the cup said to the saucer.
'I fear I've been here all the afternoon.'
'Spare excuses,' said the saucer; 'you have sat on me before, sir.'
'Oh, I'll stir him up directly,' said the spoon.
'Stop your clatter! Stop your clatter!' cried the bread-and-butter platter
'Tittle-tattle!' sneered the tea-pot, with a shrug;
'Now, the most important question is my chronic indigestion.'
'Ah, you've taken too much tannin,' jeered the jug.
'Hey, hey, hey!' sang the silver-plated tray,
'It's time you had your faces washed. I've come to clear away!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Termarter Sorce

It wasn't kid stakes. I 'ad no crook lurk
To act deceivin', or to treat 'er mean.
I'm old enough to know them games don't work
Not with Doreen.
Besides, deceit ain't in me bag uv tricks.
I got a few; but there is some that sticks.

Sticks in me gizzard. Some blokes sees no wrong
In workin' points, an' thinks it bonzer sport
To trifle with a wife's belief, so long
As they ain't cort.
But, when yeh play the game on dead straight lines,
It 'urts to be accused uv base designs.

It starts this mornin'. I wake with a tooth
That's squirmin' like a basketful uv snakes.
Per'aps I groan a bit, to tell the truth;
An' then she wakes,
An' arsts me wot I'm makin' faces for.
I glare at 'er, an' nurse me achin' jor.

That was no very 'appy mornin' song.
I ain't excusin' my end uv the joke;
But, after that, things seem to go all wrong.
She never spoke
One narsty word; but, while the chops she serves,
'Er shrieks uv silence fair got on me nerves.

She might 'ave arst wot ailed me. Spare me days I
She seen that I was crook. She seen me face
Swelled like a poisoned pup's. She only says,
'Please to say grace.'
I mumbles ... Then, in tones that wakes brute force,
She twitters, 'Will yeh take termarter sorce?'

I could n't eat no breakfast. Just the sight
Uv sweet things give me tooth a new, worse ache.
Sez she: 'You seem to lost yer apetite.
'Ave some seed cake.'

Seed cake! Gawstruth! I'm there in agerny,
An' she, 'oo swore to love, sits mockin' me.

At last, when our small son gits orf to school,
I goes an' sits down sulkin' on a couch.
'Ave you a toothache, Bill?' sez she, quite cool,
'Or jist plain grouch?
Yer face looks funny. P'raps yer gittin' fat.'
I glare at 'er an' answer, 'Huh!' . . like that.

That one word, 'Huh,' said in a certain way,
'Eart-felt an' with intention-it can well
Make the beginnin's uv a perfick day
A perfick 'ell.
So I sez 'Huh! an' then done my ole trick
(A low-down lurk) uv gittin' orf-stage quick.

It was a slap-up day. The wattle's gold
'Ad jist began to peep among the green;
An' dafferdils, commencin' to unfold,
They make the scene
A pitcher that - 'Struth! 'Ow that tooth did ache!
An', cravin' symperthy, I git - seed cake!

It was a bonzer day! The thrush's song
Rose like a nymn. A touch uv queer remorse
Gits me fer 'arf-a-mo', then goes all wrong.
Ter-marter sorce!
Women don't understand, it's all too plain.
Termarter sorce, she sez, an' me in pain!

I dunno 'ow the mornin' muddled through.
That naggin' tooth was gittin' reel red-'ot.
I 'ad a 'arf a dozen things to do,
An' slummed the lot.
Then, jist before I goes fer mornin' tea,
I start another row with Wally Free.

I tells 'im if that fence ain't mended - now
I'll summons 'im. But 'e jist stands an' grins.
'E's always grinnin'. Silly lookin' cow I
An' fer two pins

I'd go acrost an' give 'is eye a poke.
'E's far too 'appy - fer a single bloke.

While I am boilin' 'ot, Doreen conies out
To call me fer me mornin' cup o' tea.
I turn an' answer with a savage shout.
'Dear me!' sez she.
'You seem to be put out this mornin', Bill.
'E'll mend the fence, all right. I'm sure 'e will.'

'Aw! It ain't that,' I sez Then I let go,
When once we git inside, an' ease me mind
By tellin' 'er some things she ought to know.
I seemed to find
A lot uv things that 'elped to make me sore;
An' they remind me uv a 'ole lot more.

I tells 'er that no wife, 'oo was n't blind,
Would treat 'er 'usban' like a block uv wood.
I sez I could n't understand 'er mind
Blowed if I could!
I tells 'er that no woman with a brain
An' 'eart would smile to see a man in pain.

I sez some wives - some sorts uv wives, uv course,
If you was lyin' dead, no more to wake,
Would arst yeh if yeh liked termarter sorse,
Or else seed cake.
I sez I don't look for no fond caress,
But symperthy, an' un'erstandin'? Yes!

I sez, sarcastic, that I 'ave no doubt
Some wives might think termarters an' seed cake
Was 'andy sorts uv things to 'ave about
To stop toothache.
But wot I liked in wives, once in a while,
Was commin-sense. (An' 'ere, I seen 'er smile).

An' then I sez: 'Gorbli' me! Ain't I worked
Me fingers to the bone, an' toiled an' slaved?
Some fellers, if their wives 'ad smiled an' sn-drked
An' so be'aved'

(She pours the tea, an' 'ands acrost my cup)
'Would lose their tempers, yes, an' smash things up!'

I sez - Oh, other things in that same strain.
I ain't got any fancy to recall.
(That tooth jist 'ad me jumpin' mad with pain)
But through it all,
With them fool speeches bubblin' in me throat,
I saw meself a bleatin', babblin' goat.

I gulps me tea; already 'arf ashamed
Uv more than 'arf I'd said. But is me wife
All 'umble, like a woman 'oo's been blamed?
Not on yer life!
She answers me as if she was me mar.
'There, there,' she sez. 'Wot a big kid you are!'

I gulps more tea; an' tells 'er, anyway,
Me toothache ain't a thing to joke about;
An' I will 'ave to go to town to-day
An' 'ave it out.
At that, she looks at me with 'er calm eyes
Searchin' me through an' through 'fore she replies.

Then, 'Bill,' sez she, 'tell me the honest truth:
Does your tooth ache, or is this an excuse?
Why, yesterd'y you 'ad no achin' tooth
Aw, wot's the use!
'Excuse! Wot for?' I yells. But she sez, 'Oh,
If it's that bad I s'pose you'll 'aye to go.'

'Excuse!' I sez. 'I know wot's in yer mind.
Yeh think I can't read wonien's thoughts, I s'pose.
Yeh think that I planned this so I could find
Wot's 'appened Rose.
Yeh think I've come the double, lied an' schemed
About a thing I never even dreamed!

'Yeh think -' 'There, there!' she sez to me again,
Soothin' an' soft, still like a patient mar.
'It's plain you'll never understand, you men,
Wot women are,

Their thorts, their feelin's, 'ow they fear an' doubt.
Why, Bill, it's only you I think about.'

I knoo. Somewhere inside me silly nob
I knoo wot thort it is she won't explain.
She feared, if I got with the old, crook mob
In Spadgers Lane
That I might miss the step. I've never queered
The pitch in eight long years; an' yet she feared.

'I'll promise you - ' I starts. But she sez, 'Don't!
Don't promise wot you might regret some day.
I trust you, Bill; an' well I know you won't
Choose the wrong way.
Women are silly sometimes. Let's ferget
All that was said Is that tooth achin' yet?'

I gives it up! ... It's fairly got me beat,
The twists an' turin' uv a wonian's mind.
Nex' thing, she's smilin' up at me so sweet,
So soft an' kind
That I - with things still in me mind to tell -
I melts - jist like I always do. Ah, well!

It was a snodger day! . . . The apple trees
Was white with bloom. All things seemed good to me
(Except that tooth). Then by the fence I sees
Poor Wally Free,
Pretendin' to be happy with 'is plough.
Poor lonely coot! I pity 'im, some'ow.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Age Of Reason

Whene'er I read some savage tale
Of punishment devised
By tyrants in an olden day,
When serfs were victimised,
I reverently tell myself:
'Thank God, we're civilised!'

Thank God, those idols, grimmer far
Than gods of wood or stone,
Unthinking Hate and brute Revenge,
With all the seeds they've sown,
Are cast to earth, and Reason sits
With Mercy on the throne.

Calm Reason sits upon the throne
And fashions righteous laws,
And in our blessed Age of Light
It ever bids us pause
And, ere we plan the remedy,
Unearth the Primal Cause.

It seeks not, in a brutish rage,
To flog the witless fool;
The rack, the pillory are gone,
The witches' ducking stool;
And Reason builds no gallows for
Heredity's poor tool.

'Reform lies not in punishment!'
So saith the modern sage.
'No remedy for evil holds
Blind Hate or Savage Rage.
The whipping-post, the darkened cell
Are of a darkre age.'

So Reason saith; so Mercy saith;
And, having said, withdraw.
(O brothers in this Noble Age
That there should be a flaw!)

And to the vacant throne there steps
The thing men call the Law.

The Law devised by kings long-dead
And superstitious priests,
Whose code considered but revenge,
With bloody rites and feasts
The ancient Law, bequeathed by men
Scarce risen from the beasts.

But e'en before such kings and priests
Infested our poor earth,
Long ages ere some bleeding wretch
Excited their loud mirth,
A thing, half man, with crooked brain,
It chanced, was given birth.

And lo! this thing begat him sons,
And their sons sons again.
And on and on, till sturdier
And cleaner grew the strain.
Till in the breed, for many an age,
The taint had dormant lain.

For countless ages it, mayhap,
The fatal taint had missed,
Till, in our day, a babe was born
With some strange mental twist.
A thing for all men's sympathy
A foredoomed atavist.

And that he sinned against our code
And harmed a fellow-man
(Lord knows what Nature is about
To work on such a plan!)
Lo, he is seized on by the Law
And placed beneath the ban!

And what has reason now to say,
Chief of our modern gods?
And Mercy? 'Keep the man apart,
But harm not such poor clods?'

'Nay,' saith the Law, 'we'll truss him up
And scourge his back with rods!'

And so they take the last poor son
Of all that tainted host,
And try to exorcise the taint
There at the whipping-post.
This is the Age of Reason, friends!
It is our proudest boast.

And what of those great men on high
Who said this thing should be?
What of the Law's high officers
Who voiced the brute decree?
Shall such ones not become the mark
For scornful obloquy?

Nay, gentle brothers, blame them not
Blame is the whip of fools
For here again we mark in them
Heredity's poor tools,
The eld rings with their sires' demand,
Calling for ducking stools.

And so, when all is said and done,
We end where we began.
We must leave Nature to proceed
With her age-honored plan.
E'en I who speak may be the son
Of some strange-fashioned man.

Because he had a twisted form
A man of old was slain;
They flog him in our Age of Light
For his poor twisted brain;
And, 'spite my words, the chances are
They'll do the same again.

Still, when I read some savage tale
Of punishment devised
By tyrants of an olden day,

When serfs were victimised,
I feel it in my heart to say
'Thank God, we're civilised.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Alcoholic Albatross

Brothers, what are we to think
When we muse upon strong drink?
Is it bad or is it good?
Is it poison or is it food?

Albatrosses, so say some,
Find great benefit in rum,
And, in gratitude for nips,
Bring fair winds to troubled ships.

Others say the cocktail shaker
Is a noted trouble maker;
And declare that men stir up
Woe in every claret-cup.

But, so far as I'm concerned,
I may say I've never learned
Whether alcohol, in place,
Benefits the human race.

Take your choice. If you should think
Drink is good, why, have a drink;
But, if you are at a loss,
Give it to some albatross.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Also-Ran

I know I'm dull. I know I got a brain
That's only fit fer fertilizin' 'air.
I don't arst for bokays: I ain't that vain;
But fair is fair.
An' when yeh think yer somethin' uv a man,
It 'urts to find yerself a also-ran.

'Urts like one thing. To git sent to the pack
When you 'ave 'ad idears you're ace an' king
An' all the pitcher cards down to the jack
Is like to sting
Yer vanity. I thort I was some use,
An' now I'm valyid as a 'umble dooce.

Don't mind my sulks. I s'pose I 'as swelled 'ead;
But gittin' snouted ain't wot I expeck.
Aw, they can 'ave it on their own! I'm full
Up to the neck!
Never no more! I chuck good works right 'ere. . .
But lets start frum the start an' git it clear.

I own I used me nut. Fer marriage brings
Experience to stop yeh actin' rash.
I've missed the step before through rushin' things,
An' come a crash.
I planned it out all careful frum the start;
Me taticks was a reel fine work uv art.

Me problem's this: The noos 'as to be broke
Concernin' Rose. Doreen 'as to he told.
The 'ow an' when that bit uv noos is spoke
I've learnt uv old.
I'm shrood. I wait. I watch me chance to act.
The trick's to know the time an' place exact.

You blokes unmarrid ain't got no idear
Uv 'ow successful 'usbands works their 'eads.
It's like a feller strugglin' to keep clear
A thousand threads.

Once let 'em tangle, an' you take the blame.
You're up to putty; an' yeh've lost the game.

I picks a nice, calm, cozy, peaceful night.
The supper things is washed; the kid's in bed
(I 'elped to wipe the plates) the fire burns bright;
An' then I led
The tork around to tales uv Ginger Mick,
Cunnin' an' crafty like, an' not too quick.

'Funny,' I sez, 'that we should mention Mick.
In town I met that girl - (Wot's 'er name? Rose)
By accident. Poor thing looks orful sick. . . .
Well, I suppose
She 'as 'er worries. . . . Lost 'er job, yeh know.'
Doreen don't take much int'rest. She sez, 'Oh?'

'Yes,' I goes on; 'a bit uv country air
Is wot she needs. She's very sick - an' low.
She seemed - well - sort uv - 'opeless with.... despair.'
Doreen sez, 'Oh?'
It's 'eavy goin'; but I sticks it, grim.
Poor Mick!' I sez. 'I often think uv 'im.

'Poor Mick!' I sez. (Well, any'ow, I mean
Them words) 'If you 'ad seen that girl, my dear,
You'd arst 'er up to stay.' 'Why,' sez Doreen,
'She's comin' 'ere
On Choosday next.' (I jist choke back a shout)
'That's why I got the spare room tidied out.'

'She's wot?' . . . I can't say more. 'Well,' sez me wife,
'Seein' you arst 'er, why all this su'prise?'
Seein' you 'ad a fight, an' risked yer life,
An' got black eyes,
An' played the 'ero, as the parson says,
You ort to know. I've knowed,' she sez, 'fer days.'

Snowy! To think that parson cove would go
An' let me down to flounder in the mud,
An' scheme, an' lie, an' work the game reel low,
To come a thud!

'Yeh mean to say,' I arsts, mad as can be,
'Yeh've fixed all this without consultin' me?

'Yeh mean to say I 'ave n't got the right
To know wot's goin' on in my own 'ouse?
Yeh mean to say - 'There, Bill,' she sez, 'keep quite.
Why should you rouse?
You told me nothin'. Parson wrote to me;
An' we fixed things without yer 'elp,' sez she.

Women! She sits an' tells me this dead cold!
To think I've worked an' worried till I'm tired,
An' squeezed me brain a treat, jist to be told
i ain't required!
'You was too modest, Bill, to let me 'ear
About that fight,' she sez. 'Now, were n't you, dear?'

Modest? Aw, well. I s'pose I am - a bit.
A feller can't go skitin' all 'is days.
But, spite uv 'er nice way uv takin' it,
An' all 'er praise
An' that, I got to own I'm feelin' 'urt
Fer to git treated like a bit uv dirt.

Nex' mornin' I ain't feelin' none too good:
That snub still 'urt. I potter round about;
Then go across to where 'e's choppin' wood
To 'ave it out
With Wally Free about 'is thievin' cow.
But that pie-faced galoot won't 'ave a row.

I'll 'ave the lor on 'im, I tells 'im straight.
Me fence 'er out? 'E's got to fence 'er in!
The lor sez that. But all the lors I state
Jist gits a grin.
That's all. 'E grins a sight too much, that bloke.
Clean through the piece, I seem to be the joke.

I know I'm dull. I know me brain's jist meant
To nourish 'air-roots. But I 'ave me pride.
An' when I toils an' frets, an' then gits sent
To stand aside,

I know me place: I don't need to be shown.
I'm done! An' they can 'ave it on their own.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Alternative - 1908

If, some day, you should find me, cold and stark
If you should stumble o'er my lifeless clay
In some still thoroughfare or public park
And sadly say:
'Alack, and had he lived, as like as not
He'd reigned with Bent!' I should not care a jot.

If I should die in some by-way obscure,
And you should come across my silent corse
In its last sleep, my spirit would - be sure
Know no remorse.
'Twere better that I thus had ceased to live
If life with Bent were the alternative.

I say, if I should die, and all alone;
And, dying thus, escape the wiles of Bent;
O'er my remains I'd have you make no moan,
Nor yet lament.
But let relief be mingled with your woe;
And murmur o'er my clay, "Twere better so.'

Nay, if you came, as in my bier I lay,
And said, 'Who knows? If this had not occurred'
I should arise in my grave-clothes and say,
'Don't be absurd!'
And, being safely out of Tommy's reach,
I'd probably get out and make a speech.

I'd tell you, 'Better have a monument
Above my head and, confined, lie at rest
Than live in some Cabinet with Bent
Upon my chest.'
And, having said all that was to be said,
I should continue being very dead.

The Alternative - 1927

Betty Yack, of Mittyack, charming was and young;
But Betty Yack of Mittyack, had a bitter tongue.
And she married her one Otto who henceforth seemed doomed for life,
To submit to the upbraiding of his bonny, bitter wife.

Betty Yack of Mittyack, joined, while still quite charming,
That association having aims for better farming.
'So far, so good, my bitter Bet,' remarked her husband, Otto.
'If you join associations you must then adopt the motto.'

Betty read the articles and pondered quite a while,
Then nodded to her husband with a soft but gentle smile.
And the happy little couple are at last released from strife.
For Betty Yack, of Mittyack, stays dumb for all her life.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Anonymous Altruist

A mysterious cove in the Customs
The boss, so to speak, of the Ban
I have blamed a good deal;
But I wronged him, I feel,
Since I've come to imagine the man.
When he censored some book that I wanted
I sneered at him once, I'll allow;
But, since I've given heed
To the life he must lead,
He has all my sympathy now.

This mysterious cove at the Customs
Is clearly a martyr; that's sure.
On his shoulders he takes
Loads of sin for our sakes,
And he suffers to keep us all pure.
For he reads all the hot stuff imported
And never once threatens to strike,
Tho' he loathes it, no doubt.
Ah, my pity goes out
To him. Think what his mind must be like!

This anonymous cove at the Customs,
This storehouse for horrible stuff,
Is as venal, I'll bet,
As the rest of us, yet,
Does he whine that his job is too tough?
No. He keeps his identity secret,
His knowledge safe under his hat;
And he lurks all alone,
Unsuspected, unknown,
Such as the hangmen and heroes like that.

This incredible cove at the Customs,
His duties are drastic and grim;
For, if human he be,
What is poison to me
Must be equally poison to him.
Yet, undaunted he seizes and scoffs it,

And perhaps throws a fit on the floor,
Doped with all the impure
Of the world's literature.
But he manfully comes up for more.

This untouchable cove at the Customs,
He sneaks to his work in the dawn
And, in some secret lair
Reads the spicy bits there,
With his soul, as it were, all in pawn.
Pity, then, this official absorber
Of rank Rabelaisian lore
Who wallows in sin
To protect us, his kin.
Could an altruist ever do more?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Ant Explorer

Once a little sugar ant made up his mind to roam-
To fare away far away, far away from home.
He had eaten all his breakfast, and he had his ma's consent
To see what he should chance to see and here's the way he went
Up and down a fern frond, round and round a stone,
Down a gloomy gully where he loathed to be alone,
Up a mighty mountain range, seven inches high,
Through the fearful forest grass that nearly hid the sky,
Out along a bracken bridge, bending in the moss,
Till he reached a dreadful desert that was feet and feet across.
'Twas a dry, deserted desert, and a trackless land to tread,
He wished that he was home again and tucked-up tight in bed.
His little legs were wobbly, his strength was nearly spent,
And so he turned around again and here's the way he went-
Back away from desert lands feet and feet across,
Back along the bracken bridge bending in the moss,
Through the fearful forest grass shutting out the sky,
Up a mighty mountain range seven inches high,
Down a gloomy gully, where he loathed to be alone,
Up and down a fern frond and round and round a stone.
A dreary ant, a weary ant, resolved no more to roam,
He staggered up the garden path and popped back home.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Anti-Socialist

'Tis morn.
An individualistic cock
Proclaims the fact.
The dissipated cat sneaks home forlorn.
'Tis time to get up and act!
'Tis eight o'clock!
The stern and stalwart anti-Socialist,
Freeborn
And independent citizen, whose fist
Is raised against all Socialistic schemes,
Wakes from the land o' dreams;
(Nightmares of Sosh)
Gets up, and has a wash
In water from the Socialistic main;
Empties it down the Socialistic drain,
And, giving his moustache the proper twist,
He then
Breakfasts upon an egg,
Laid by some anti-Socialistic
Hen;
And, as he chews,
Endeavours to peruse
The news
In some wise publication, printing views
That no right-thinking man could grumble at;
And, having scoffed the egg,
His hat
He reaches from its peg;
Perambulates the Socialistic path
But that
Annoys him just as little as the bath.
Tho' both essentially are Sosh's works,
He never shirks
Their use;
But much abuse
Of Socialistic ideas, without excuse,
Flavors his conversation in the train
The Socialistic train.
But, here again,

He is not heard to murmur or complain
Against the train.
At length the hour
Of ten
Strikes the Socialistic tower;
And then
He gains
His office and enquires
For letters and for wires.
Nor e'en complains
They reach him thro' a Socialistic post.
There are a host
Of letters - quite a pile
Some from his friends
(Ah! See him smile),
Cursing the Labor party's aims and ends.
Here is a note
Bidding him be content and of good cheer,
For, in the House last night, the Fusion vote
Defeated Labor on the Telephone
Discussion. Wherefore charges won't be near
As dear
As he has cause to fear.
And that reminds him. He rings on the 'phone,
And tells a friend
At t'other end
That Socialism's better left alone.
Says it emphatically thro' the 'phone
The Socialistic 'phone
That instrument
The Government is running at a loss
Of very much per cent.
He knows that it is so.
But is he cross?
No!
He's quite content...
So, through the day
He goes his anti-Socialistic way.
Round and about
The town,
Wearing the Socialistic pavement out;
Riding in Socialistic trams

And damning damns
When Socialism's mentioned - with a frown...
As night comes down,
He scorns the Socialistic atmosphere
Of a plain pub
And beer,
And seeks his club.
While here
He drinks
And tells his fellow members what he thinks
About the 'Labah pawty' and its claims
And visionary aims.
They languidly remark 'Hear, hear.'...
Then out once more
And, in a Socialistic tram and train,
On to suburbia, and home again
To his own door.
Then to his bed;
Laying his wise and proper-thinking head
In downy pillow-deep.
He is about to dropp
To sleep
When - 'Flop... Flop...
Flop' ...
What's that?
The cat,
Chasing an individualistic rat?
Nay, 'tis the footfall of the midnight cop,
Echoing through
The stilly night,
Telling that I and you
Are guarded in our right;
He guards the persons and the propertee
Of you and me.
He's a Socialistic institution too
The man in blue.
No wonder WILLIAM SIKES
Dislikes
The whole blue Socialistic crew....
I wish he'd keep
Still, that cop,
I want to go to sleep...

Why does he keep
Flop, flop, flop!
With his big feet
Along the street?
Why can't he stop?...
His Socialistic feet....
Why don't he change his beat?...
Of all the rows I ever heard
Upon my word!
When you stop to think of it
A bit,
This Socialistic business is absurd!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Apologist

Dear friends, I'm Deakin....
No; no mistake,
You're wide awake.
It's ALF that's speakin'...
I wish to make
A few remarks about - Eh? What,
O, no; I'm not
The least bit changed.
It's been arranged -
You understand?
Between these gentlemen and me.
We fused, you see,
For the - er - welfare of the land....
Come, gentlemen! I do insist
I am the same!
I'm DEAKIN, the Protectionist.
And I declare I'm not to blame.
There never has been any change in me.
It's all arranged.... We fused, you see.
No harm to fuse.
And I am certain you'll excuse
Us all, when once you fairly grasp the fact
That this arrangement is a patriot's act.
'Twas neither somersault nor slip;
'Twas statesmanship....
Yes, yes. Joe Cook
And others took
A pledge.
As I allege,
Henceforth to vote Protection to a man....
Well, yes; they ran
Freetrade - some years ago;
But they won't advocate it now. Oh, no!...
I say again I've not changed in the least.
I leave that all to them.
Their love for the - er - tariff has increased.
Ahem!....
What? Wobblers? Nay!
Ah, do not blame them, pray!

These gentlemen are neither false nor weak;
But my good friends.
And they will make amends.
A light has broken on them, so to speak.
They're all - er - fiscal converts as it were....
Now, my dear sir!
If you will interject
Time and again,
How can the audience expect
Me to explain?...
I tell you I've NOT changed!
It's ALL ARRANGED!
Why, ever since I've been in politics
I've always advocated the - um - er ...
What nonsense! Sir!!
Tricks!
ME!!!
I challenge you to prove my policy
Has ever been... Well, yes,
Yes, I confess
I used to call them names. But, don't you see,
That is a thing of ancient history....
I tell you it has now all been arranged!
And I've not changed!...
O, well, well, I admit
I did abuse them - just a little bit.
'The wreckage of all parties' - That was it.
'Black Labor party' - yes, and 'Tories,' too.
I said that; true.
But can't you see? I ask you, please, to try.
They've changed, not I.
They've had a wash;
They've all been made
Whiter than snow (I'm sure you understand):
And henceforth Anti-Sosh,
And not Freetrade,
Will be their party brand.
But, to return to my....Eh? Who's that speakin'?
I tell you I am Deakin!
Who dares to say I'm not?
I am the same brave, whole-souled patriot!
Iam! I AM!

if you will interject... O, d--!....
Er - gentlemen...I'd have you understand
We are a band
Of staunch Protectionists. If it appears
A trifle strange
That, after all these years,
These gentlemen should change,
I ask you, gentlemen, to please excuse
The Fuse.
You comprehend? I wave my magic wand,
And they respond
By bowing meekly to my fiscal creed.
Nay, nay! No Greed
For Office caused this unaccustomed sight.
'Twas...Country-love and - er - a Sudden Light.
These friends of mine have all come into line,
And, after this, their fiscal faith is mine -
That is...I mean to say
That mine is theirs until the Judgement Day.
I trust, good people, I have made it plain....
No, no; my friends will never change again....
I tell you, with my hand upon my heart,
They would no more trick me than, for my part, I'd ever do
So false an act, or think of tricking...you.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Artist And The Alderman

'Give us gardens!' said the artist,
'Blatant brick and soulless stone,
Never built a noble city.
Man lives not by bread alone,
Beauty brings, for our enrichment,
Smiling lawn and spreading tree.'
'Bricks and mortar,' said the alderman,
'Bring in more £.s.d.'

As acid and alkali,
Water and fire,
The good and the evil,
Discension inspire;
As the cat and the dog,
And the axe and the tree,
So artists and aldermen
Never agree.

Said the artist: 'Give us gardens!
So to save the civic soul,
Draw aesthetic men about you
Ere base ideals take control.
Let artistic minds advise you,
Lest you pay a shameful price.'
'And who,' inquired the alderman,
'Needs any such advice?'

As the cop and the crook,
As the fool and the sage,
As light and the darkness,
Hot youth and old age
As the lamb and the lion,
The ant and the bee,
So artists and aldermen,
Never agree.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Austral-Aise

Fellers of Australier,
Blokes an' coves an' coots,
Shift yer --- carcasses,
Move yer --- boots.
Gird yer --- loins up,
Get yer --- gun,
Set the --- enemy
An' watch the blighters run.

CHORUS:

Get a --- move on,
Have some --- sense.
Learn the --- art of
Self de- --- -fence.

Have some --- brains be-
Neath yer --- lids.
An' swing a --- sabre
Fer the missus an' the kids.
Chuck supportin' --- posts,
An' strikin' --- lights,
Support a ---- fam'ly an'
Strike fer yer --- rights.

CHORUS:

Get a --- move on, etc.

Joy is --- fleetin',
Life is --- short.
Wot's the use uv wastin' it
All on --- sport?
Hitch yer --- tip-dray
To a --- star.
Let yer --- watchword be
"Australi- --- -ar!"

CHORUS:

Get a --- move on, etc.

'Ow's the --- nation
Goin' to ixpand
'Lest us --- blokes an' coves
Lend a --- 'and?
'Eave yer --- apathy
Down a --- chasm;
'Ump yer --- burden with
Enthusi- --- -asm.

CHORUS:

Get a --- move on, etc.

W'en old mother Britain
Calls yer native land
Take a --- rifle
In yer --- 'and
Keep yer --- upper lip
Stiff as stiff kin be,
An' speed a --- bullet for
Post- --- -ity.

CHORUS:

Get a --- move on, etc.

W'en the --- bugle
Sounds "Ad- --- -vance"
Don't be like a flock er sheep
In a --- trance
Biff the --- Kaiser
Where it don't agree
Spifler- --- -cate him
To Eternity.

CHORUS:

Get a --- move on, etc.

Fellers of Australier,
Cobbers, chaps an' mates,
Hear the --- German
Kickin' at the gates!
Blow the --- bugle,
Beat the --- drum,

Upper-cut an' out the cow
To kingdom- --- -come!

CHORUS:

Get a --- move on,
Have some --- sense.
Learn the --- art of
Self de- --- -fence.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Automatic Umpire

Now, Plugger Palook was a man in a thousand
(Said Horace the Howler) not one of yer fools.
But his barrackers vowed that he wasn't allowed
Full scope for his talents account o' the rools.
For Plugger Palook was a footballer. Get me?
An' one of the old-school. A wonder! A wow!
He was no lily-handed gazook to be branded
No sort of weaklin'. Not Plugger; no how.

Not much of a kicker - not so you would notice
His handball an' passin' left much to desire;
A dub at high-markin', his business was narkin'
An' knocking out umpires wot rose up his ire.
He'd done in a dozen first half of the season,
But the depth of officials you never can tell.
Now, a shortage they're fearin'; so, Plugger, not hearin',
They goes an puts in a serlenium cell!

The dawgs! Plugger starts in the very first quarter
An' gets a bit rough'ouse in makin' things hot
When the cells says, 'Now, Plugger! You ain't playin' ruggar
Let up on them larrups.' An' Plugger says, WOT!!'
'Twas the first time in years than an umpire had cheeked him;
So Plugger lets out a sockdollager crack.
There's a flash an' a sizzle; then he does a mizzle
And lands out-o'-bounds on the broad of his back.

Well I'll say he was game, tho' a good bit bewildered,
For he comes back again when he finds he is whole.
Then he tries for to tackle, but soars with a crackle,
Up, clean thro' the posts; an' the crowd it roars, 'Goal!'...
An' the heads calls that football! (said Horace the Howler)
Deep pity for him in me proud heart it wells.
A champion world-beater! A reel umpire eater!
Done in an' disgraced by serlenium cells!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Axeman

High on the hills, where the tall trees grow,
There lives an axeman that I know.
From his little hut by a ferny creek,
Day after day, week after week,
He goes each morn with his shining axe,
Trudging along by the forest tracks;
And he chops and he chops till the daylight goes
High on the hills, where the blue-gum grows.

(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)

There's a log to move and a branch to lop.
Now to the felling! His sharp axe bites
Into a tree on the forest heights,
And scarce for a breath does the axeman stop-
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)

Bell-birds watch him; and in the fern
Wallabies listen awhile, and turn
Back through the bracken, and off they hop.
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)

Patient and tireless, blow on blow
The axeman swings as the minutes go;
While the echoes ring from the mountain-top.
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)

Round about him the rabbits play,
Skipping and scampering all the day,
And the sweet young grass by the logs they crop.
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)

Crimson parrots above him climb,
The Axeman

Chattering, chattering all the time,
As down from the branches the twigs they drop.
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)

Steadily, surely, on he goes,
Shaking the tree with his mighty blows:
There's never a pause and there's never a stop.
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)

Out from the bush beyond is heard
The swaggering song of the butcher-bird
Seeking a joint for his butcher's shop.
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)

Deeper and deeper the cut creeps in,
While the parrots shriek with a deafening din,
And the chips fly out with a flip and a flop.
(Chip! Chop! Chip! Chop!)

Yellow robins come flocking round,
Watching the chips as they fall to ground,
Darting to catch the gubs that drop.
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)

The blows come quicker. The axe~biade hums,
Stand well back, there, before she comes!
Hark! How the splinters crack and pop-
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)

Listen! Listen! She's creaking now!
Look, high up, at that trembling bough!
Another second, and down she'll smash,
Shaking the earth with a mighty crash;
Look at her! Look at her! (Chip! Chop!
Chip!Chip!)

Wee - E - E - E - E - E --
FLOP!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Baker

I'd like to be a baker, and come when morning breaks,
Calling out, 'Beeay-ko!' (that's the sound he makes)
Riding in a rattle-cart that jogs and jolts and shakes,
Selling all the sweetest things a baker ever bakes;
Currant-buns and brandy-snaps, pastry all in flakes;
But I wouldn't be a baker if ...
I couldn't eat the cakes.
Would you?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Ballad Of Bill's Breeches

Once on a time, a party by the name of Mr. BULL
Discovered that with many schemes his hands were pretty full.
His cares of family were great. Four fine young sons he'd got;
They were, indeed, of goodly breed, a strong and hefty lot.
But Mr. BULL's domestic cares (as shortly will be seen)
Were not with them, but with his wife, whose name was JINGOPHINE.
A foolish fad this lady had that all the boys were ninnies;
And, though they grew,
As children do,
She dressed them all in pinnies.

Now, while her boys were young, JOHN BULL engaged in business strife
Took little heed of their affairs, and left them to his wife;
And JINGOPHINE, who loved her lord, impressed them, noon and night.
With tales of his magnificence, his wisdom, wealth and might.
But when they talked of growing up, and 'helping pa' some day,
She shook her finger at them in her stern, maternal way.
'Your pa's a great, big man,' she said. 'You never, never, NEVER
Can hope to be
As big as he,
Or half so wise and clever.

Now, JINGOPHINE, like other dames of fussy, frilly kind,
Delighted to have round her folk of weak and narrow mind.
Pet persons were her weakness. also aldermen and those
Who held the very strictest views, and wore the nicest clothes.
They cheered her when she praised her lord, and listened, with a frown.
To tales of BILL; and all agreed he'd have to be 'kept down.'
'He is a naughty child,' they said, 'a most precocious brat.
To think good Mr. BULL should have an offspring such as that!'
But BILL despite the stern rebukes of aldermen and Wowsers,
Defied the crowd.
And shouted loud:
'Shut up! I want my trousers!'

Now, in the course of time, JOHN BULL awakened to the fact

That, in the interests of his sons, 'twas time for him to act.
'My dear,' he said, 'these sons of ours are growing quite immense;
We ought to have a business talk - I'll call a conference.
They're nearly men; and they must learn, each one, to stand alone.
Each with responsibilities, and a household of his own.
They can't always be at our skirts, like great, big, awkward babies.'
'Why, Mr. BULL!
She cried. 'You fool!
Those boys are only babies!'

But at the meeting Mr. BULL spoke plainly to his lads.
'My sons,' said he, 'I don't agree with all your mother's fads.
You can't be always little boys; like other lads, you've grown;
And now 'tis time to face the world, and learn to stand alone.
We still remain one family; and none will fail, I know,
To aid another in distress, against a common foe.
Dear lads, I know, you'll recollect - despite success and riches -
Your father still.'
'Hear. hear!' said BILL
'Hooray! I've got me breeches!'

From out that solemn conference BILL marched in highest glee,
With more mopeef for Mr. BULL, now that his limbs were free.
'The old man, he's an all-right sort, and talks sound, common sense,
It's time we learned to act like men, and chucked this fool-pretence.
We've done with apron-strings at last. But what will Ma say now?
Her Wowsers and her aldermen? LORD, won't there be a row!
They've pecked at me quite long enough; it's up to me to scare 'em.
They'll howl for weeks!
But here's me breeks;
An', spare me days, I'll wear 'em!'

The Wowsers and the aldermen and Mrs. JINGOPHINE
Were seated in the drawing-room when BILL came on the scene.
'He's got 'em on!' a Wowser cried. 'He's disobeyed his ma!
'Help! Murder!' shrieked the aldermen. 'He'll kill his pore, dear vp!
Pell-mell they rushed to Mr. BULL - 'Oh, sir, that dreadful BILL!
He'll murder you! He stole yer pants! He's got 'em on 'im still! Mr. BULL said. 'Is
he?

There, there, good folk,
You've had your joke.
Now, go away; I'm busy.'

But, up and down the land they went, the Wowsers and the rest;
And BILL, besides the trousers, sported now a coat and vest.
'He's dressin' like a man!' they shrieked. 'He's going to resist
His dear, kind pa! Oh, who'll restrain this rank disloyalist?
He won't take sops from 'is fond ma; 'er pore 'art's nearly broke!
He's even gone at scoffed at us; an' treats us as a joke!'
And if you chance to come across those aldermen and Wowsers
You'll find them still
Abusing BILL
Who grins, and wears the trousers.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Banana's Lullaby

When grandma wished to keep her fruit
Her apples she would take
And put them on a bed of straw
At rest, but wide awake;
But newer days have newer modes,
And now, that it may keep,
They give an orange opiates
And sing it off to sleep.

And they're telling bedtime stories to bananas,
And rocking little raspberries to rest.
They will dope an apple silly,
And it wakes in Piccadilly
From a beauty sleep that makes it look its best.

It seems a heartless kind of trick
To play on helpless pears;
To lull them off to slumberland
And soothe their nervous cares,
Only to wake them up again,
Weeks after, on a plate,
On the day of execution
To announce their cruel fate.

But they're telling bedtime stories to bananas,
And putting plums to by-by on a ship,
And they never have a notion
They have been across the ocean,
So they even miss the pleasure of the trip.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Band

Hey, there! Listen awhile! Listen awhile, and come.
Down in the street there are marching feet, and I hear the beat of a drum.
Bim! Boom!! Out of the room! Pick up your hat and fly!
Isn't it grand? The band! The band! The band is marching by!

Oh, the clarinet is the finest yet, and the uniforms are gay.
Tah, rah! We don't go home -
Oom, pah! We won't go home -
Oh, we shan't go home, and we can't go home when the band begins to play.

Oh, see them swinging along, swinging along the street!
Left, right! buttons so bright, jackets and caps so neat.
Ho, the Fire Brigade, or a dress parade of the Soldier-men is grand;
But everyone, for regular fun, wants a Big-Brass-Band.

The slide-trombone is a joy alone, and the drummer! He's a treat!
So, Rackety-rumph! We don't go home -
Boom, Bumph! We won't go home -
Oh, we shan't go home, and we can't go home while the band is in the street.
Tooral-ooral, Oom-pah!
The band is in the street!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Barber

I'd like to be a barber, and learn to shave and clip,
Calling out, 'Next please! and pocketing my tip.'
All day I'd hear my scissors going, 'Snip, Snip, Snip;'
I'd lather people's faces, and their noses I would grip
While I shaved most carefully along the upper lip.
But I wouldn't be a barber if ...
The razor was to slip.
Would you?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Barber's Story

'Mornin',' I sez to 'im,
Gloomy, 'e seemed to be.
Glum an' unsociable. Comes in the shop
'Mornin',' I sez to 'im.
'E don't say anythin'.
'You're next,' I sez; an' 'e sits with a flop.

'Great Cup?' I sez to 'im.
Shakin' the wrappin's out.
'E don't say nuthin'; but jist give a grunt.
'Great win?' I sez to 'im,
Smilin' encouragin'.
'Wonderful way that 'e come to the front.'

'E don't reply to me.
Sits sorta glarin' like.
'Phar Lap,' I sez to 'im. 'Wonder 'orse. Wot?
'Ave a win yestidy?'
Still 'e don't answer me.
'Phar Lap,' I sez, "'e made 'acks of the lot.'

'Champeen,' I sez to 'him.
'Wonderful popiler...
This 'ere Tregiller, 'e never showed up...
Phar Lap,' I sez to 'im,
'Mus' be a wonder 'orse.
But this Tregiller run bad in the Cup.'

'Wot?' 'e come back at me,
Lookin' peculiar
Red in the face, so I thought 'e would choke.
'Cab-horse!' 'e sez to me,
Nasty an' venomous -
Reel disagreeable sort of a bloke.

'Tregiller!' 'e sez to me,
Glarin' reel murderous.
'Tregiller!!' 'e barks at me. 'That 'airy goat!'
Surly, 'e seemed to me

Man couldn't talk to 'im. . . .

"Air-cut?' I sez to 'im.

'No!' 'e sez. 'Throat!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Bar-Room Patriot

Why, 'ow's she goin', Bill, ole sport?
I thort I knoo your dile!
My oath! You look the proper sort!
That khaki soots your style.
I never 'eard you'd joined, yeh know
It makes me feel I want to go.

Must be a year or more, I s'pose,
Since last time we two met!
An' then, to see you in them clothes
Can't realise it yet!
I'm proud to think a friend o' mine
Is off to biff the German swine!

You look slap-up in that rig-out.
We ort to celebrate
I fell it's up to me to shout!
But - can't be done, ole mate!
For I 'ave took a solemn vow
I never shout for soldiers now.

No, Bill; you mustn't take offence;
You'll undertsand, I thnk.
I've come to see there ain't no sense
In buyin' soldiers drink.
I loves me country an' me king;
An' boozin' soldiers ain't the thing.

An' yet it's sich a time ago
Since you an' me 'ave met,
It's sorter 'ard to let you go
Without one little wet.
Say, come in 'ere, an' you can take
A soft'un, jist fer ole time's sake.

Well, Bill - 'ere MIss! Don't you attend
To customers in 'ere?
A lime-an'-soder fer me friend:
And' mine's a long, cool beer.

Ah, Bill, you stick to that soft stuff;
Chuck booze, an' you'll be right enough.

Well, 'ere's a go!...My oath, that's goo!
Bets beer I've 'ad to-day....
Yes, Bill, I 'olds no soldier should
Drink all 'is brains away.
I'm patriotic, that I am;
To fight on beer ain't worth a damn.

Now, Bill, look 'ere, you take my tip
I know that German lot
An', when you meet 'em, let 'er rip.
An' prod 'em in the - wot?
Well, jist one more. Mine's beer thish time.
An' bill, ole frien', you shtick to lime.

'Ere's joy!...Wot was I sayin'? Oh!
Them Germans allush funk
The bay'nit. Take my tip, an' go
Fair for their stummicks - plunk!
Jist stick 'em in the - 'Ere, Miss, 'ere!
Give 'im the soft one! Mine's the beer.

See, Miss, I don't booze sojers now.
They shouldn't drink the stuff!
Me conshuns, Miss, it won't allow
'Right, Bill; don't cut up rough.
I'm proud to let the ole bar 'ear
I wouldn't buy no sojers beer.

I wouldn't buy no cursed drink
Fer any fightin' bloke!
Wot? Torkin' loud? Well, do yeh think
I'm 'shamed o' wot I shpoke?
I stansh on principle, by Gosh!
'Ere, 'ave anurrer lemin squash.

Oh, yesh; I've 'ad a few ter-day.
Thish makes - eighteen er so.
But I don't 'ave to go away
To fight no rotten foe!

Go fer their stummichsk, Bill, ole man!
Jist prod 'em - why, 'ello! 'Ere's Dan!

'Ave one wi' ush, Dan. Yoush a beer?
Yes, mine'sh a - wot-o, Jim!
Lesh innerjooce my cobber 'ere
I'm buyin' squash fer 'im.
'E's sojer....Took a solemn vow:
I don't - (hic) - shoush fer soljersh now.

I jist been tellin' soljer frien'
Them Germans got no - whash?
Orright, Dan: mine's a beer agen.
Me friend 'ere'sh drinkin' squash.
Yeh mustn't buy no beer fer 'im
Unpa'ri - (hic) -. Whash you think, Jim?

It 'urts me feelin's, all er same.
Bill'sh 'listed!....Orful sad!....
Pore bill! That fightin'sh rotten game.
Go fer their stummicksh, lad!
Sharge wisher bay'nit, ev'ry time!
An' take my tip - you shtick ter lime!
'Ere'sh to Aushtraliar, ev'ry time!
I doesh my lirrle bit
Be buyin' only squash 'n' lime
To keep er soljersh fit.
Fine, pa'ri-otic effort. Wot?
'Ere's to er blockesh wash gettin' shot!

Aw, I kin shtan' annurrer, Jim.
Yesh, mine's a long, wet beer.
But don't you buy no beer fer 'im,
'N' get 'im on 'is ear!
I never shoush fer sojersh now.
Unpari-pari - sholum vow!

Wash sayin', Bill? Wash 'at I 'ear?
Yeh don't want me ter shout?
You been teeto'ler fer a year!
Well, 'ash a fair knock-out!
You mean er shay...lemme buy lime,

Wile you....injoyed it all er time!

You mean er shay you thort it ni-esh
To take yer ole pal in?
You lemme make self-sacrifi'esh,
Wile you stan' there an' grin!
Wash? Goin', ie 'e? let 'im go!
Ni'esh sorter bloke ter fighter foe!

I wouldn't shoush fer sojersh now
Not fer a million poun'!
I bought 'im lemon-squash, ther cow,
And then 'e takesh me down!
Go fer the'r stummiscksh? 'Im? No fear!
Down wish er Kaiser! Mine'sh a beer.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Barter Boom

Now, since man became a martyr
To this economic stress,
He has sought relief, in barter,
From financial wretchedness;
So, dispensing with the banker,
If you've aught to trade at all,
Any thing for which you hanker,
From a needle to an anchor,
From a slipway to a spanker,
Is at call.

So, now, what have you to proffer?
Make an offer! Make an offer!
Here's a punting gent prepared to make a deal;
He'll exchange a betting system
(All the winners, never missed 'em),
For a pair of boots - size seven - and a meal.
Here's a trusted politician,
Giving up his great position.
(Voters vacillate so shamefully alas!)
And he'll take a steady billet
Confident that he can fill it
For a pile of Hansards and one nice gold pass.

Here's a motorist who lately,
Slightly sozzled, bent on fun,
Somewhat prone, unfortunately,
To the game of hit and run,
Just involved in a disaster,
Swop one bent car, arted high,
Simplest in the world to master
(Eighty m.p.h., or faster),
For a roll of sticking plaster
And a good, safe alibi.

Now then, what have you to proffer?
Make an offer - any offer!
A poet (licensed) offers here a chance:
Ten Centenary effusions,

Odes, one set of young illusions
For a top-coat and a pair of unpatched pants.
Here's a City Council willing
To accept some concrete filling,
Headache powders, and a quantity of bricks,
For some fancy flags (all nations)
Sundry faded decorations
And a great, big blithering pile of lollysticks.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Battle Of The Wazzir

If ole Pharaoh, King of Eyp', 'ad been gazin' on the scene
'E'd' ave give the A.I.F. a narsty name
When they done their little best to scrub 'is dirty Kingdom clean,
An' to shift 'is ancient 'eap uv sin an' shame.
An' I'm tippin' they'd 'ave phenyled 'im, an' rubbed it in 'is 'ead.
But old Pharaoh, King uv Eyp', 'e is dead.

So yeh don't 'ear much about it; an' it isn't meant yeh should,
Since 'is Kingship wasn't there to go orf pop;
An' this mishunery effort fer to make the 'eathen good
Wus a contract that the fellers 'ad to drop.
There wus other pressin' matters, so they 'ad to chuck the fun,
But the Battle uv the Wazzir took the bun.

Now, Ginger Mick 'e writes to me a long, ixcited note,
An' 'e writes it in a whisper, so to speak;
Fer I guess the Censor's shadder wus across 'im as 'e wrote,
An' 'e 'ad to bottle things that musn't leak.
So I ain't got orl the strength uv it; but sich as Ginger sends
I rejoyce to decent English fer me friends.

It wus part their native carelessness, an' part their native skite;
Fer they kids themselves they know the Devil well,
'Avin' met 'im, kind uv casu'l, on some wild Australian night-
Wine an' women at a secon'-rate 'otel.
But the Devil uv Australia 'e's a little woolly sheep
To the devils wot the desert children keep.

So they mooches round the drink-shop's, an' the Wazzir took their eye,
An' they found old Pharoah's daughters pleasin' Janes;
An' they wouldn't be Australian 'less they give the game a fly . . .
An' Eyp' smiled an' totted up 'is gains.
'E doped their drinks, an' breathed on them 'is aged evil breath . . .
An' more than one woke up to long fer death.

When they wandered frum the newest an' the cleanest land on earth,
An' the filth uv ages met 'em, it wus 'ard.
Fer there may be sin an' sorrer in the country uv their birth;
But the dirt uv cenchuries ain't in the yard.

They wus children, playin' wiv an asp, an' never fearin' it,
An' they took it very sore when they wus bit.

First, they took the tales fer furphies.. when they got around the camp,
Uv a cove done in fer life wiv one night's jag,
But when the yarns grew 'ot an' strong an' bore the 'all-mark stamp
Uv dinkum oil, they waved the danger flag.
An' the shudder that a clean man feels when 'e's su'prized wiv dirt
Gripped orl the camp reel solid; an' it 'urt.

There wus Bill from up the Billabong, 'oo's dearest love wus cow,
An' 'oo lived an' thought an' fought an' acted clean.
'E wus lately frum 'is mother wiv 'er kiss wet on 'is brow;
But they snared 'im in, an' did 'im up reel mean.
Fer young Bill, wus gone a million, an' 'e never guessed the game. . .
For 'e's down in livin' 'ell, an' marked fer sbame.

An' Bill wus only one uv 'em to fall to Eastern sin
Ev'ry comp'ny 'ad a rotten tale to tell,
An' there must be somethin' doin' when the strength uv it sunk in
To a crowd that ain't afraid to clean up 'ell.
They wus game to take a gamble; but this dirt dealt to a mate-
Well, it riled 'em; an' they didn't 'esitate.

'Ave 'yeh seen a crowd uv fellers takin' chances 'on a game,
Crackin' 'ard while they thought it on the square?
'Ave yeh 'eard their owl uv anguish when they tumbled to the same,
'Avin' found they wus the victums uv a snare?
It wus jist that sort uv anger when they fell to Egypt's stunt;
An', remember, they wus trainin' fer the front.

I 'ave notions uv the Wazzir. It's as old as Pharaoh's tomb;
It's as cunnin' as the oldest imp in 'ell;
An' the game it plays uv lurin' blokes, wiv love-songs, to their doom
Wus begun when first a tart 'ad smiles to sell.
An' it stood there thro' the ages; an' it might be standin' still
If it 'adn't bumped a clean cove, name o' Bill.

An' they done it like they done it when a word went to the push
That a nark 'oo'd crooled a pal wus run to ground.
They done it like they done it when the blokes out in the bush
Passed a telegraft that cops wus nosin' round.

There was no one rung a fire-bell, but the tip was passed about;
An' they fixed a night to clean the Wazzir out.

Yes, I've notions uv the Wazzir. It's been pilin' up its dirt
Since it mated wiv the Devil in year One,
An' spawned a brood uv evil things to do a man a 'urt
Since the lurk uv snarin' innercents begun.
But it's sweeter an' it's cleaner since one wild an' woolly night
When the little A.I.F. put up a fight.

Now, it started wiv some 'orseplay. If the 'eads 'ad seen the look,
Dead in earnest, that wus underneath the fun,
They'd 'ave tumbled there wus somethin' that wus more than commin crook,
An' 'ave stopped the game before it 'arf begun.
But the fellers larfed like school-boys, tbo' they orl wus more than narked,
An' they 'ad the 'ouses well an' truly marked.

Frum a little crazy balkiney that clawed agin a wall
A chair come crasbin' down into the street;
Then a woman's frightened screamin' give the sign to bounce the ball,
An' there came a sudden rush uv soljers' feet.
There's a glimpse uv frightened faces as a door caved in an' fell;
An' the Wazzir wus a 'owlin' screamin' 'ell.

Frum a winder 'igh above 'em there's a bloke near seven feet,
Waves a bit uv naked Egyp' in the air.
An' there's squealin' an' there's shriekin' as they chased 'em down the street,
When they dug 'em out like rabbits frum their lair.
Then down into the roadway gaudy 'ouse'old gods comes fast,
An' the Wazzir's Great Spring Cleanin' starts at last.

Frum the winders came pianners an' some giddy duchess pairs;
An' they piled 'em on the roadway in the mire,
An' 'eaped 'em 'igh wiv fal-de-ral's an' pretty parlor chairs,
Which they started in to purify wiv fire.
Then the Redcaps come to argue, but they jist amused the mob;
Fer tbe scavengers wus warmin' to their job.

When the fire-reels come to quell 'em-'struth! they 'ad no bloomin' 'ope;
Fer they cut the 'ose to ribbons in a jiff;
An' they called u'pon tbe drink-shops an' poured out their rotten dope,
While the nigs 'oo didn't run wus frightened stiff.

An' when orb was done an' over, an' they wearied uv the strife,
That old Wazzir'd 'ad the scourin' uv its life.

Now, old Gin er ain't quite candid; 'e don't say where 'e came in;
But 'e mentions that'e don't get no C.B.,
An' 'e's 'ad some pretty practice dodgin' punishment fer sin
Down in Spadger's since 'is early infancy.
So I guess, if they went after 'im, they found 'im snug in bed.
Fer old Ginger 'as a reel tactician's 'ead.

An' 'e sez that when 'e wandered down the Wazzir later on
It wus like a 'ome where 'oliness reposed;
Fer its sinfulness wus 'idden, an' its brazenness wus gone,
An' its doors, wiv proper modesty, wus closed.
If a 'ead looked out a winder, as they passed, it quick drew in;
Fer the Wazzir wus a wowser, scared from sin.

If old Pharaoh, King uv Egyp', 'e 'ad lived to see the day
When they tidied up 'is 'eap uv shame an' sin,
Well, 'e mighter took it narsty, fer our fellers 'ave a way
Uv completin' any job that they begin.
An' they might 'ave left 'is Kingship nursin' gravel-rash in bed. . .
But old Pharaoh, King uv Egyp', 'e is dead.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Battler

'Could you give me a bite to eat?' said he,
As he tarried by my back door.
And I thought of the dull, lean days that be
As I glanced at the clothes he wore:
Patched in places, and worn and old,
Yet cosy enough to fend the cold.
And I caught the glint of his gay blue eye,
Sure sign of his slogan: 'Never say die'.

'Could you spare me a trifle to eat?' said he;
'For it's tough on a man these days.'
Then, somehow or other it seemed to me,
Some trick of his voice, or ways,
Stirred half lost thought. But I let it go,
As he said that his tea was 'pretty low':
And his sugar-bag, too, was 'well-nigh out'.
'Tho' I'd hate', he added, 'to put you about.'

'Could you do with a couple of chops?' said I.
'Some eggs and a ration of bread?'
'Why, mister, that would be comin' it high!
It's a feed for a king!' he said.
So with this, and a trifle of sugar and tea,
Tucked under his arm: 'Thanks, boss', said he.
'It's hard on the roads when yer out of a job . . .
D'yeh think yeh'd be missin' a couple o' bob?'

'One minute!' I bade him, as memory stirred.
'Have I ever seen you before?'
'Seen me?' said he. 'Why, upon my word!
For the half o' my life or more,
I been comin' round nigh every year.
An' I never yet drewed a blank - not 'ere.
An' I'll say this for yeh: you ain't too bad
As a regular customer - best I've 'ad.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Bench And The Blonde In Black

His Honor walked into the shop
For of shopping his Honor was fond.
Did she blush? Did her eyes indicate shy surprise
In that slim little, trim little blonde?
Did his bachelor heart miss a beat?
Did she flash him a smile as she turned?
Did his Honor smile back at this vision in black?
Said his Honor, 'The case is adjourned.'

His Honor walked into his court.
Said the advocate, 'Shop-ladies lack
Much appeal, I submit, when these dark frocks they fit -'
Said his Honor, 'I like 'em in black.
Yes, I like 'em in black when they're blonde.
And I am not concerned with the cost.
It's a question of taste; and I've no time to waste.'
Said his Honor, 'Your action is lost.'

His Honor walked into the church.
'I will,' breathed his Honor, and beamed
On his blonde who, alack, was no longer in black,
For in ivory satin she gleamed.
Said the clergyman, 'Say after me -'
Said his Honor, 'My true wedded wife. . .
Er - at - sickness and health....and - er - all worldly wealth....'
Said his Honor, 'The sentence is life.'

His Honor walked up and walked down,
Sobbed the blonde, 'But you don't seem to care!
Why, my grey, pink and green are not fit to be seen;
And I haven't a rag fit to wear!
And you always did say I looked nice
In black suits? Twenty guineas? What fun!'
Then she smiled, kissed his neck, as he wrote out the cheque.
Sighed his Honor, 'Your suit, dear, is won.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Bleating Of The Sheep

Lo, I listened to the bleating of the sheep
Squatters' sheep
And I sat me down and pondered long and deep.
And a cloud of gloom came o'er me
At the empty leagues before me
Yea, I marked the virgin grass-lands' mighty sweep
Land that called for cultivation;
Cried aloud for population
Land that carried trees and fences, grass and sheep.

O, I listened to their bleating on the plain
Virgin plain
And I spoke to them with epithets profane.
In the valley, on the hill,
Yet were sheep, and more sheep still.
(Which annoyed me very much, I must explain.
For one sheep may be a blessing,
But a million are depressing.)
And I cursed them, but I knew I cursed in vain.

Lo! and then I fell a-dreaming where I sat
Sadly sat
Till I didn't see what I was looking at.
And my dream was most alluring.
Ah ! But, had it been enduring,
What a reckoning it would have been for Fat!
What a blessing for Australia
If my dream - but inter alia,
I'll explain to you what I am driving at.

Lo! (excuse this weird redundancy of 'lo,'
Soulful 'lo';
But I want to be impressive, you must know).
Lo! instead of jumbucks bleating,
I could hear the reaper's beating;
And I saw abundant milk and honey flow.
I espied snug homesteads dotted
O'er the plain. I also spotted
Towns, with factories and workshops, rise and grow.

Ay, at busy line of commerce filled the place
Desert place
And mine eyes beheld a happy populace
Wresting from the land its treasure
Loving work and earning leisure.
Industry and population grew apace.
I could hear the hammers ringing;
Happy housewives blithely singing;
And I read Prosperity in every face.

Then I saw a file of troops go marching past
Bravely past.
Adown the plain I heard the bugle's blast.
I beheld the banners streaming,
And I fancied in my dreaming
That our happy country owned an army vast.
As each patriot marched proudly
By, he cried, exulting loudly,
'Fair Australia is safely ours at last!'

Then a large, red man rode up upon a horse,
(Large roan horse),
And spoke to me in strident tones and coarse.
And his discourse was (diluted)
'Wanderers are prosecuted
On this crimson run. Now get!' I got - of course.
As I've said, the man was bulky,
And he seemed morose and sulky;
And it just occurred to me he might use force.

But, in spite of him, my dream I still may keep
Fondly keep.
And from out it sprouts the wisdom that I reap
For the benefit of all men,
But especially of little men.
(Meaning men whose wealth does not exceed one heap.)
Ay, the lesson is before you
Pray forgive me if I bore you;
But, my brothers, heed the lesson of the sheep!

For, hark ye, hear the bleating of the sheep

Human sheep!
(O, my brothers, but their sheephood makes me weep!)
Mark ye, how they flock togeth
After some old, sly bell-wether
One that Fat finds it convenient to keep;
Watch them how they follow, follow.
See the verbal weeds they swallow,
And the squatter keeps his grass for paying sheep.

O, the squatter has of woolly sheep a lot
Quite a lot;
But they're not the only sort of sheep he's got.
How he profits by their fleeces
And, when price of meat decreases
Human meat - the butcher, Fat, will take the lot.
O, ye farmers and selectors!
Landless voters! Free electors!
Think, my brothers: are ye sheep, or are ye not?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Bloke Wot Gits The Girls

'E passes by, each day, at ten
A bottle-shouldered yid
Wot looks as if 'e pushed a pen
An' drawes a weekly quid;
'E's always with some little lass;
(By cripes, 'e gets some pearls!)
We calls 'im, watchin' of 'em pass,
The bloke wot gits the girls.

An' strewth! it beats me outer sight
'Ow girls can stand 'im - straight!
'E don't go five-feet-two in height
Or eight-stun-two in weight;
'E couldn't swing a pick, - or scrap,
Soft 'ands an' sheeny curls!
'E's just a sorter - well, mishap,
The Bloke wot gits the girls.

But yet each day some bit o' fluff
Trips by, with this 'ere fraud,
A-breathin'-in 'is silly guff
As if 'e was a gawd.
'E shoots 'is cuffs, 'e swings 'is canes,
'Is spiky mo 'e twirls,
'E seems to mesmerise the Janes,
The bloke wot gits the girls!

Well, tarts is tarts - it's 'ow they're built:
I s'pose their gawd is clo'es;
But 'im - the puffed-up piece o' gilt,
I'd like to punch 'is nose!
A-struttin', starin' round about
As if 'is kind was earls!
Cripes! 'Ow I'd like to pass 'im out
The bloke wot gits the girls!

The Blue Kingfisher

Where the little river gleaming
Thro' its shadows green and cool
Broadens to the quiet dreaming
Of a little shady pool;
There an azure jewel burning
O'er the waters you may spy,
Never moving never turning:
'Tis the silent fisher,

Head aloft above the river,
With an apathetic air,
Not the smallest quirk nor quiver
Warns you of my presence there.
Mayhap you will thnk me sleeping -
Dreaming summer days away -
Till you mark a keen eye peeping
Where the tell-tale ripples play.

Now a dive, a sudden darting,
Now a flash of gold and blue,
And the placid waters parting
Let my gleaming body thro'.
Then, long ere the ripples, spreading,
Circle to the pool's green lip
Back to safety I am heading;
And the kill is in my grip.

So I haunt the cool, dark places
By the river, from that hour
When the dawn's bright finger traces
Fairy lights about my bower,
Till the western hilltops redden,
Fade, and vanish I am there,
And the far skies, growing leaden,
Bid me seek my secret lair.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Bolshie Nurse

He was a man of the union clan
And a Labor secre-tary.
He fell unwell and beneath the spell
Of a little nurse named Mary.
Now, Mary was no little lamb,
And the tenets that he taught her
They turned her head and she voted 'red'
When the mad strike fever caught her.

Then he missed his gruel, and he thought it cruel
That he was so neglected
One winter morn; and, all forlorn,
He rang - and was neglected.
And when she came she said, 'My name
Is henceforth Trotsky Mary.
We've downed thermometers, my friend:
You've won, dear secre-tary!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Boobook Owl

Not for any airs and graces
When, to lonely, silent places
Men return in memory,
Come these kindly thoughts of me.
But they hear again my calling
Where the dappled moonlight, falling
Mid the shadows of the gums,
Weaves strange patterns; and there comes,
Blending with the hobble's jingle,
As the faint bush odors mingle
With the smell of wood-fire smoke,
Suddenly my call - 'Mo-poke!'

Now a weary swagman camping
After miles of mountain tramping;
Now, mid spinifex and sand,
A drover of the overland;
Now a timber-getter sitting
In his hut, the firelight flitting
O'er his old face, lost in dreams;
Now the man who punches teams
Where the blacksoil plains go rolling;
Now a fossicker, pot-holing,
Hopeful ever, ever broke
Hears me in the night - 'Mo-poke!'

Never while one bushland lover
Camps beneath the great sky's cover,
And my call comes once again
To the ears of lonely men:
Never while to silent places
Memory of old day traces
Olden pictures in the fire,
And men dream of youth's desire,
Dream again of youth's high daring:
Never while men yet go faring
Forth beyond the ken of folk,
Shall my night call fail - 'Mo-poke!'

The Boon Of Discontent

Once an anthropoidal ape,
Hairy, savage, strange of shape,
On a day that was excessively B.C.,
In a forest damp and dim,
With his tail round a limb,
Hung head downward from a neolithic tree;
And appeared to be lost in gloomy introspection.

In his dull primeval style,
He considered quite a while
A comparatively thoughtful ape was he
Then he drummed upon his chest,
And remarked: 'I give it best!
Strike me lucky! This 'ere game's no good to me!
And I'm full up of the whole damn business!'
To the father of the tribe
He proceeded to describe
How upon a change of living he was bent.
Said the Tory anthropoid:
'Son, such thoughts you should avoid:
They are obviously born of discontent.
And such revolutionary notions would rend the whole social fabric.'
Since the Eocene,
Till this age of biplanes,
Man has ever been
Yearning toward the high planes.
And while the Tory lags behind in by-ways worn and narrow,
'Tis the discontented section that shoves on the old world's barrow.

Once a naked troglodyte,
On a bitter Winter's night,
Sat and shivered in his cave the whole night through!
For his scanty coat of hair
In no manner could compare
With the matted clothes his late forefather grew.
(Meaning the meditative anthropoidal ape I mentioned previously.)
And the troglodyte remarked,
As without a wild dog barked,
And a dinosaur lumbered through the fog,

'I am sick of nakedness,
And I'd like, I must confess,
To be shielded in the clothing of a dog.
And, hang me, if I don't go after one in the morning.'

He was met with scoffs and grins,
When he walked abroad in skins:
And the troglodyte Conservatives cried: 'Shame!
Thus to hide the healthy nude
Is obscene, indecent rude!'
But the malcontent felt warmer, all the same.
And so began the evolution of the split skirt and the hot sock.
Since the Age of Stone,
To these Days of Reason,
Man has keener grown
In and out of season.
'Tis through being discontented that humanity progresses.
If you're satisfied with dog skins you will ne'er have satin dresses.
Once upon a time, a slave
Had an impulse to behave
In a most unprecedented sort of style.
He threw down his tools, and cried
That he wasn't satisfied,
And all slavery was barbarous and vile.
(They probably boiled him in oil; but that's merely incidental.)

Once again, a man who rode
In a coach disliked the mode
Of that locomotion. 'Twas too slow by far.
He was filled with discontent;
So he - or some other - went
And, in course of time, evolved the motor-car.
And, if ever you've had one scare seven devils out of you, you'll know
it for a very great invention.

So, observe, this discontent
To mankind is wisely sent
That he may be urged along to conquer new things,
They who were quite satisfied,
Like the Dinosaurs, died.
While the discontented anthropoids still do things.
And continue to be discontented, of course; but that's all in the game.

Since the age of apes,
To this generation,
Mankind thus escapes
Absolute stagnation.
Here's the only consolation my philosophy is giving:
Discontentment with existence is your sole excuse for living.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Bore

Ah, prithee friend, if thou has ought
Of love and kind regard for me
Tell not you bore the stories droll
That yesternight I told to thee.

Nor tell him stories of thine own,
Nor chestnut of antiquitee;
Nor quip, nor crank, nor anything
If thou has ought of love for me.

For sense of humour hath he none,
No gift for telling tales hath he:
Yet thinks himself within his heart
A wit of wondrous drolleree.

And in the golden summer-time
With ear a-cock he roameth free,
Collecting quibble, quip, and crank;
And anecdotes collecteth he.

Then in the dreary winter nights
He sits him down 'neath my roof tree,
And in a coarse, ungently voice
He tells those stories back to me.

He hath no wit for telling tales,
He laughs where ne'er a point there be;
But sits and murders honest yarns,
And claims them as his propertee.

When he laughs I rock and roar;
Ay, laugh both loud and merrilee;
And, mark thou, friend, my martyrdom
He is a creditor to me.

He is a man of mighty power;
In very fact, a great J.P.;
And I, his debtor, rock and roar,
And vow he'll be the death o' me.

Ay, prithee, friend, if thou hast love
For goodly jests or care for me,
Then tell him not the merry tale
That yesternight I told to thee.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Boys Out There

'Why do they do it? I dunno,'
Sez Digger Smith. 'Yeh got me beat.
Some uv the yarns yeh 'ear is true,
An' some is rather umptydoo,
An' some is - indiscreet.
But them that don't get to the crowd,
Them is the ones would make you proud.'

With Digger Smith an' other blokes
'Oo 'ave returned it's much the same:
They'll talk uv wot they've seen an' done
When they've been out to 'ave their fun;
But no word uv the game.
On fights an' all the tale uv blood
Their talk, as they remark, is dud.

It's so with soldiers, I 'ave 'eard,
All times. The things they 'ave done,
War-mad, with blood before their eyes,
An' their ears wild fightin' cries,
They ever after shun.
P'r'aps they forget; or find it well
Not to recall too much uv 'Eil.

An' when they won't loose up their talk
It's 'ard for us to understand
'Ow all those boys we used to know,
Ole Billo, Jim an' Tom an' Joe,
Done things to beat the band.
We knoo they'd fight; but they've become
'Ead ringers at the fightin' game.

Well, wot I've 'eard from Digger Smith
An' other soldier blokes like 'im
I've put together bit by bit,
An' chewed a long time over it;
An' now I've got a dim
An' 'azy notion in me 'ead
Why they is battlers, born an' bred.

Wot did they know uv war first off,
When they joined up? Wot did I know
When I was tossed out on me neck
As if I was a shattered wreck
The time I tried to go?
Flat feet! Me feet 'as len'th and brea'th
Enough to kick a 'Un to death!

They don't know nothing, bein' reared
Out 'ere where war 'as never spread
'A land by bloodless conquest won,'
As some son uv a writin' gun
Sez in a book I read
They don't know nix but wot they're told
At school; an' that sticks till they're old.

Yeh've got to take the kid at school,
Gettin' 'is 'ist'ry lesson learned
Then tales uv Nelson an' uv Drake,
Uv Wellington an' Fightin' Blake.
'Is little 'eart 'as burned
To get right out an' 'ave a go,
An' sock it into some base foe.

Nothin' but glory fills 'is mind;
The British charge is somethin' grand;
The soldier that 'e reads about
Don't 'ave no time for fear an' doubt;
'E's the 'eroic brand.
So, when the boy gets in the game,
'E jist wades in an' does the same.

Not bein' old 'ands at the stunt,
They simply does as they are told;
But, bein' Aussies - Spare me days!
They never thinks uv other ways,
But does it brave an' bold.
That's 'arf; an' for the other part
Yeh got to go back to the start.

Yeh've got to go right back to Dad,

To Gran'dad and the pioneers,
'Oo packed up all their bag uv tricks
An' come out 'ere in fifty-six,
An' battled thro' the years;
Our Gran'dads; and their women, too,
That 'ad the grit to face the new.

It's that old stock; an', more than that,
It's Bill an' Jim an' ev'ry son
Gettin' three good meat meals a day
An' 'eaps uv chance to go an' play
Out in the bonzer sun.
It's partly that; but, don't forget,
When it's all said, there's something yet.

There's something yet; an' there I'm beat.
Crowds uv these lads I've known, but then,
They 'ave got somethin' from this war,
Somethin' they never 'ad before,
That makes 'em better men.
Better? There's no word I can get
To name it right. There's somethin' yet.

We 'ear a lot about reward;
We praise, an' sling the cheers about;
But there was debts we can't repay
Piled up on us one single day
When that first list come out.
There ain't no way to pay that debt.
Do wot we can - there's somethin' yet.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Bridge Across The Crick

Joseph Jones and Peter Dawking

Strove in an election fight;

And you'd think, to hear them talking,

Each upheld the people's right.

Each declared he stood for Progress and against his country's foes

When he sought their votes at Wombat, where the Muddy River flows.

Peter Dawking, scorning party,

As an Independent ran;

Joseph Jones, loud, blatant, hearty,

Was a solid party man.

But the electors up at Wombat vowed to him alone they'd stick

Who would give his sacred promise for the 'bridge across the crick'.

Bland, unfaithful politicians

Long had said this bridge should be.

Some soared on to high positions,

Some sank to obscurity;

Still the bridge had been denied it by its unrelenting foes -

By the foes of patient Wombat, where the Muddy River flows.

Up at Wombat Peter Dawking

Held a meeting in the hall,

And he'd spent an hour in talking

On the far-flung Empire's Call,

When a local greybeard, rising, smote him with this verbal brick:

'Are or are yeh not in favour of the bridge across the crick?'

Peter just ignored the question,

Proudly patriotic man;

Understand a mean suggestion

Men like Peter never can,

Or that free enlightened voters look on all Great Things as rot,

While a Burning Local Question fires each local patriot.

Joseph Jones, serene and smiling,

Took all Wombat to his heart.

'Ah,' he said, his 'blood was b'iling'

He declared it 'made him smart'

To reflect how they'd been swindled; and he cried in ringing tones
'Gentlemen, your bridge is certain if you cast your votes for Jones!'

Joseph Jones and Peter Dawking
Strove in an election fight,
And, when they had finished talking,
On the great election night
They stood level in the voting, and the hope of friends and foes
Hung upon the box from Wombat, where the Muddy River flows.

Then the Wombat votes were counted;
Jones, two hundred; Dawking, three!
Joseph, proud and smiling, mounted
On a public balcony,
And his friends were shrill with triumph, for that contest, shrewdly run,
In the House gave Jones's Party a majority of one.

Jones's Party - note the sequel
Rules that country of the Free,
And the fight, so nearly equal,
Swayed the whole land's destiny.
And the Big Things of the Nation are delayed till Hope grows sick
Offered up as sacrifices to 'the bridge across the crick'.

Dawking now is sadly fearing
For the crowd's intelligence.
Joseph, skilled in engineering,
Full of pomp and sly pretence,
Still holds out the pleasing promise of that bridge whene'er he goes
Up to Wombat, patient Wombat, where the Muddy River flows.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Broken Sanctuary

I 'ad been bushed in city streets,
Where the bricks and mortar grow.
I 'ad worked me way through the northern towns
'Oo's landmarks I don't know.
There was faces, faces, driftin' past,
But never a one I knoo.
An' I never 'ad felt the need so great
For a reel good mate an' true.

A lonely man in the Outback lands
Is a lonely man, all right.
Yet 'e 'as the sky an' the birds by day
An' 'e 'as the stars by night.
But a lonely man in a crowd o' men
Is the loneliest of all,
An' that's 'ow come I 'ad a few;
An' that's 'ow come my fall.

Fer I sez to meself, 'I'm a stranger 'ere,
An' there ain't a soul I know.'
Then I thinks of a Mate I alwiz 'ad
Where the stunted mulgas grow
The Man 'oo ever 'as been my friend
Through many a black bush night;
An' I thinks, 'If I find His house round 'ere,
He'll give me a doss, all right.'

An' I come to His house as I stumbled on,
An' I found the door ajar;
As it alwiz stands in the Christian lands
Fer blokes that wander far;
So up I crep' to the altar step,
An' I sez . . . 'I'm 'ere again.'
I knew He'd spare what nap was there,
So I lodged with the Mate of Men.

Yes: I found His house, an' I lay me down,
An' I dreamed of a kindly God;
When a big policeman came along

An' banged me into quod.
An' the cell was cold, an' the bed was 'ard;
But I thinks, 'It's all right, Bill.'
So I lay me down an' dreamed again . .
An' my Mate was with me still.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Broken-Teapot

Mum's bit of egg money on the mantelpiece
In the broken teapot in the olden days,
Hardly earned and hoarded there,
Much content afforded there
Long before inspectors came and bureaucratic ways.
But science by the barn-door rules the farmer's lot
And Mum's bit of egg-money dwindles in the pot.

Ever since the first years this was mother's perquisite,
Eggs daily gathered by the old barn door,
From the stable gathered in,
From the shed and fodder bin,
Carted in and traded at the small town store;
Gathered from the wayward hen laying far afield
As the new-cleared acres gave their golden yield.

Long it was a stand-by while the kids were little ones
Mum's broken teapot resting on the shelf
Some print to make a dress for Lil,
Sunday boots for Joe and Bill,
A loan to Dad and, now and then, a trifle for herself:
Growing heavy Christmas time by dint of watchful thrift
To buy a little Christmas cheer and here and there a gift.

But Mum's bit of egg-money grows a thing of history,
And Mum's broken teapot an heirloom now indeed,
Since Science ousts the picturesque;
And Dad has bought an office desk
To puzzle o'er official rules and size and weight and breed.
But Mum is brooding darkly o'er the forbidden egg,
Which, like a furtive gangsteress, she threatens to bootleg.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Bronze-Wing Pigeon

They say I am a shy, wild thing,
That seeks the wild bush glade.
Quick to be gone on whirring wing,
Where strangers would invade;
But well I know what all birds know:
The voice of friend, the tread of foe;
And deem it wise to fear the worst
Till I have knowledge of the first.

Afar my muffled drumming sounds,
Where tangled dogwood grows;
But when you tread my feeding grounds
I am alert for foes.
A flash of iridescent wing,
And I am but a vanished thing.
Gone to be heard and seen no more,
In spite of all your forest lore.

But should you win me in the end
By dint of kindlier lore,
Gladly I take you for a friend,
And to your own house door
I come with confidence complete
To quest my food about your feet.
And, with a gravely gentle air,
Display my shy bronze beauty there.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Bucolics

Ladies and gentlemen: I take this opportunity
To introduce myself and mention that, much as we may deplore the fact, we are
essentially an agricultural community
Altho' in our metropolitan centres, millions may live and toil.
Most of us, directly or indirectly, exist by, thro', on and for the soil;
Our outlook is largely directed upon crops, prices, profits and 'The Main Chance,'
So that we rarely discover time or opportunity to glance
At the fine arts and higher culture of this and older lands, and gather unto
ourselves the satisfaction such contemplation lends
Therefore our guides, philosophers, mentors, leaders, teachers, and friends
Declare that, amongst the toilers of our race,
Such contemplation is utterly out of place.
And (altho' this may seem rather funny)
One cannot definitely enjoy 'culchaw' unless one is - now - possessed of
leisure and money.
To encourage it in the Common People is a vain and profitless thing.
Wherefore, I sing:-

The plough's in the furrow,
The cow's at the bail;
We delve and we burrow,
For nought may avail
Save toil thro' the seasons,
Material joy;
These, these be the reasons
For all our employ.

The mute Mona Lisa,
Praxiteles' art,
Such trifles as these are
Things quite, quite apart.
On, on with life's battle;
Wring sweat from the brow.
What's culture to cattle?
What's art to a cow?

To resume, ladies and gentlemen, the more comprehensible form of discourse I
had temporarily forsaken,
Is it not possible that our mentors, censors et al. may be sadly mistaken?

Or, stay, is it conceivable that they would lock and bar our halls of art and
culture at night
Lest the Common People might,
By some strange chance, absorb so much of the capacity for appreciation that
they would, in time, be able to patronise us?
Nay, even to advise us?
On certain aesthetic matters which - Perish the thought! For who would have
the heart
To vulgarise all Art?
For, consider; how were it possible to feel superior
When none remains any longer who, as one comfortably recognises, is inferior.
And so, for evermore,
Bar, bar and bolt the door
Of our Temple which enshrines works for the edification only of superior
mortals,
Lock, lock and double lock those portals!
Hide from vulgar gaze the treasures that therein lurk -
Except, of course, during those hours when the toilers are at work.
Melbourne, my Melbourne! Never let the souls of thy earthbound people into
the rarer regions take wing!
Wherefore, again, I sing:-

The swine's in his wallow,
Fat porkers are prime;
Then follow, come, follow,
'Tis lamb-tailin' time!
All golden the butter,
There's market for meat;
Tho' Mallee men mutter
Of smut in the wheat.
But 'paintin' and pitcher'?
(Franz Hals, he was Dutch)
Ah, who grows the richer
For gawping at such?
A 'pitcher' by Carot?
A 'statcher' - all 'nood'?
One fills you with sorrow;
The other is 'rood.'
We toil for men's bodies,
Our minds all a-fog.
What's paintin' to poddies?
What's art to a hog?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Builders

Behold, I built a fowlhouse in my yard!
Two months agone the great work was begun,
And ev'ry eventide I labored hard,
What time my daily office grind was done.
'Tis to my industry a monument,
The fowls, my wife and I are well content.

Indeed, I built a fowlhouse. Gods forbid
Although I made it, floor and roof and wall
That I should boast about this thing I did.
I mention it most modestly withal.
Just these two hands, this brain were all I had.
I built it on my own, and I am glad.

And, as I toiled at eve, my wife would come,
The candle, nails and divers tools to hold;
And when I swore because I hit my thumb
She did not hang the contract up to scold,
Nor move a vote of censure, and maintain
The thing should be pulled down and built again.

She is my helpmate, both in name and deed;
Nor does she deem it policy to nag.
And when she saw my wounded finger bleed
She bound it up, most tenderly, with rag.
Thus, for one end, did both of us conspire
To have a fowlhouse was our joint desire.

And, when I went about my work in town,
No secret vision filled my day with dread
That she would pull the whole contraption down
And start a building of her own instead.
I knew, indeed, she would take care to leave
Unharm'd my handiwork of yester-eve.

You'll note - if you're at all intelligent
Our system was simplicity itself:
We wanted something, that was evident,
To wit, a fowlhouse, perches, and a shelf

For nests. I got some timber, tools and nails,
And set to work. This method seldom fails.

And when I'd done, and saw it stand complete,
With triumph was I most absurdly filled.
A tiny thing, enclosing ten square feet,
That any deft suburbanite might build
Yet was my soul with satisfaction seized;
And, on the whole, I think the fowls were pleased.

Now that my hens are well and snugly housed,
And given cosy nests in which to lay,
It seems, their gratitude has been aroused:
Our egg supply increases ev'ry day.
And yet, I vow, when I their house designed
No sordid thought of eggs was in my mind.

Maybe I seem a trifle too inclined
To brag about a very simple feat.
Yet strange ideas crowd into my mind
When I sit down to scan my morning sheet,
And read of other builders who should be
GOLIATHS in comparison with me.

These mighty undertakings, I've no doubt
Vast railway lines that span a continent,
And other matters that I read about
Are apt to cause much wordy argument.
Yet I, who calmly built a house for fowls,
Can feel contempt for these unseemly howls.

For, when they move to build, unholy shouts
Go up to Heaven from opponent throats;
The Ins are ever brawling with the Outs;
And both are scheming sordidly for votes.
They build not as true builders, such as I,
Who build for love, and scorn the trade they ply.

Thank God, my wife and I are well content
In doing things to win a modest name
Without the aid of Party Government
And all the meanness of that paltry Game.

Honest endeavor, and some boards and nails,
Pride in our work - this method seldom fails.

I am so diffident, I hardly care
To give advice to statesmen evident,
And yet, on this occasion, shall I dare
To offer them some small encouragement:
Let them forego their wrangles, curses, howls,
And strive to build a little place for fowls.

'Tis sheer presumption, surely, to compare
Myself with statesmen in high honor decked;
Yet do I feel emboldened to declare
That I am more deserving of respect.
They, by their brawls, a mighty work have marred;
I built an honest fowlhouse in my yard.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Bulldog Breed

'It's dogged as does it.' They've made it a saying,
A motto to hold in that tight little isle
To hold in their fighting and toiling and playing
And stick to the job with a tight little smile.
As fortune seems bleakest they cut out complaining
They cut out the cackle and dig in their toes
As, inch upon inch, the lost ground they're regaining,
And just how they manage it nobody knows.

'It's dogged as does it.' There's something heroic,
Unseen and unsung in this desperate drive;
With mien of the meek and the mind of a stoic,
They win their chief goal when they seem least alive.
The nations behold, yet can scarcely believe it
As Britain wins thro' to a triumph again;
And, wondering, ask how those dullards achieve it
In that darkest hour when all effort seems vain.

'Its dogged as does it.' No pause for regretting,
For sighing or sobbing she seeks in the fray;
But silently, steadily, all else forgetting,
Stays on the job till the clouds clear away.
Then, rubbing its eyes in incredulous wander,
The world scarce believes such a miracle true
As, snatchin' for victory, e'en from a blunder,
The tight little island again muddles thro'.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Bush Fire

Let's have a tiny little bush fire.
It's a cold, cold night tonight.
We are sick of this long session
Of the darkness of depression.
And a fire would make things bright.

Just a teeny, weeny little bushfire;
It's easily controlled.
We can sit around and watch it;
If it spreads we'll simply scotch it.
But we must keep out the cold.

Oh, let's have the smallest little bush fire;
It's a fair thing in this storm.
There are plenty here to fight it,
So just strike a match and light it. . . .
Ah! Now we'll all get warm.

Hey! Watch there! The blooming thing is spreading!
Don't let it catch those trees!
Now that clump of scrub has caught it!
Well who ever would have thought it?
There's a change, too, in the breeze.

It was only just a tiny little bushfire,
But it's leaping, roaring now
And we can't hope to defeat it,
Better grab your traps and beat it
For we must get out somehow.

It was only just a harmless little bushfire
But, gosh! How it did burn!
Now the old homestead is blazing.
Well it's certainly amazing;

But a man must live and learn.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Bush Veteran

Old Pete Parraday, he toddles up the road,
'Dangin' things and 'darn in' things and hefting of his load
For yesterday was pension day, Peter has his goods:
Butcher's meat and groceries and all sorts of foods;
A bit of plug 'tobaker' and a tin of 'jelly Jam,'
'Termatter' sauce and yellow soap, a knuckle-end of ham,
And a little flask of 'special stuff' discreetly tucked away.
'I takes it for me rheumatiz,' says Peter Parraday.

Old Pete Parraday, he lives all on his own.
People say he's getting old and shouldn't be alone.
They talk of institutions where he'd have most kindly care.
'Wot? Me?' says Peter Parraday. 'An' wot would I do there?
Lose me independence, an' be 'umble when they scold,
Eat an' sleep an' dress an' smoke just when an' how I'm told?
Shove ME in an Old Man's 'Ome to rust me life away?
I'd like to see 'em try it on!' says Peter Parraday.

Old Pete Parraday has little time to spare
For a bush hut and a garden are a common source of care.
There's wood to cut and meals to cook - a thousand things to plan
In the little kitchen-garden that 'do fair absorb a man.'
Green peas and radishes, brussels sprouts and beans,
Silver beet and lettuces - all sorts of green.
'Waterin' an' weedin' 'em, the hours they melts away,
An' days ain't halfways long enough,' says Peter Parraday.

Old Peter Parraday, he sits beside his door
To smoke a pipe at day's-end when fussy toil is o'er.
'This world it changes fast like,' says he, 'as time drifts by;
For old days was easy days when I was young an' spry;
An' cash was easy come by, with fortunes flowin' free,
An' many a man growed wealthy wot toed the mark with me.
But me? I seemed to miss the bus. Fair lost me chance, ses they,
Yet that don't seem to grieve me some,' grins Peter Parraday.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Cab Horses' Story

Now, you wouldn't imagine, to look at me,
That I was a racehorse once.
I have done my mile in - let me see
No matter. I was no dunce.
But you'd not believe me if I told
Of gallops I did in days of old.

I was first in - ah, well! What's the good?
It hurts to recall those days
When I drew from men, as a proud horse should,
Nothing but words of praise:
Oh, the waving hats, and the cheering crowd!
How could a horse help being proud?

My owner was just as proud as I;
I was cuddled and petted and praised.
My fame was great and my price was high,
And every year 'twas raised.
Then I strained a sinew in ninety-nine,
And that's when started my swift decline.

I was turned to grass for a year or so;
Then dragged to an auction sale;
And a country sport gave me a go;
But how could I hope but fail?
'A crock,' said he. And I here began
To learn of the ways of cruel man.

A year I spent as a lady's hack
I was growing old and spent
But she said that the riding hurt her back;
So we parted; and I went
For a while - and it nearly broke my heart
Dragging a greasy butcher's cart.

Then my stifle went. And I, proud horse,
Son of the nobly born,
The haughty king of a city course,
Knew even a butcher's scorn!

So down the ladder I quickly ran;
Till I came to be owned by a bottle man.

And my bed was hard and my food was poor,
And my work was harder still
Dragging a cart from door to door
The slave of Bottle-oh Bill.
Till even he, for a few mean bob,
Sold me into this hateful job.

As I dozed and dreamed in the ranks one day,
Thinking of good days past,
I heard a voice that I knew cry, 'Hey!
Say, cabby, is this horse fast?'
And he looked at me in a way I know.
'Twas the man I'd loved in the long ago.

'Twas my dear, old master of ninety-nine,
And I waited, fair surprised.
But ne'er by a look and ne'er by sign
Did he show he recognised.
Then I heard his words ('twas my last hard knock):
'Why don't you pole-axe the poor old crock?'

And he turned aside to a low-bred mare
That was foaled on some cockie's farm,
And he drove away. What do I care?
I can come to no more harm.
In a knacker's yard I am worth at least
Some pence for a hungry lion's feast.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Call

Don't yeh hear them callin, to yeh, callin' to yeh, lad?
Where the skyline's smeared an' grey with cannon smoke,
There's a crowd o' chaps that knew yeh;
Don't yeh hear them callin' to yeh
Mates o' yours with 'oom yeh used to drink an' joke?
An' they trust yeh, lad; they trust yeh for the friendship that yeh had.
Don't yeh bear them callin',
Callin' to yeh, lad?

Can't you see them beck'nin' to yeh, beck'nin' to yeh, boy ?
There's a pal o' yours that fell at Sari Bair;
An' yeh cheered 'im when yeh parted,
An' yeh felt a bit down-'earted;
Now 'e's passed the game to you, to do yer share.
Oh, the job is reel dead earnest, an' a gun is not a toy;
Can't yeh see them beck'nin',
Beck'nin' to yeh, boy?

Don't yeh know they're waitin' for yeh, waltin' for yeh, mate,
Hopin', prayin' that their countrymen are game;
All that brave an' battlin' crowd of
Men that In yer 'eart yer proud of -
Mates o' yours that 'elped to make yer country's name?
Do yeh mean to dodge the trouble till the foe is at the gate?
'Oh, it's weary waltin',
Waitin' for yeh, mate!

Can't yeh see them lookin' at yeh, lookin' at yeh, lad
Women-folk of mates o' yours that fought and fell?
Are yeh grumblin' an' protestin'?
Will yer mateship stand the testin'?
Have yeh read the message that those wide eyes tell?
Have yeh heard grey mothers weepin'? Have yeh seen young wives grow
sad?....
Won't yeh have them prayin',
Prayin' for yeh, lad?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Call Of Stoush

Wot price ole Ginger Mick? 'E's done a break -
Gone to the flamin' war to stoush the foe.
Wus it fer glory, or a woman's sake?
Ar, arst me somethin' easy! I dunno.
'Is Kharki clobber set 'im off a treat,
That's all I know; 'is motive's got me beat.

Ole Mick 'e's trainin' up in Cairo now;
An' all the cops in Spadger's Lane is sad.
They miss 'is music in the midnight row
Wot time the pushes mix it good an' glad.
Fer 'e wus one o' them, you understand,
Wot 'soils the soshul life uv this fair land.'

A peb wus Mick; a leery bloke wus 'e,
Low down, an' given to the brinnin' cup;
The sort o' chap that coves like you an' me
Don't mix wiv, 'cos of our strick bringin's-up.
An' 'e wus sich becos unseein' Fate
Lobbed 'im in life a 'undred years too late.

'E wus a man uv vierlence, wus Mick,
Coarse wiv 'is speech an' in 'is manner low,
Slick wiv 'is 'ands, an' 'andy wiv a brick
When bricks wus needful to defeat a foe.
An' now 'e's gone an' mizzled to the war,
An' some blokes 'as the nerve to arst 'Wot for? '

Wot for? gawstruth! 'E wus no patriot
That sits an' brays advice in days uv strife;
'E never flapped no flags nor sich like rot;
'E never sung 'Gawsave' in all 'is life.
'E wus dispised be them that make sicg noise:
But now - O strike! - 'e's 'one uv our brave boys.'

'E's one uv our brave boys, all right, all right.
'Is early trainin' down in Spadgers Lane
Done 'im no 'arm fer this 'ere orl-in fight:
'Is loss o' culcher is 'is country's gain.

'Im wiv 'is carst-ir'n chiv an' leery ways -
An' swell tarts 'eavin' 'im sweet words o' praise.

Why did 'e go? 'E 'ad a decent job,
'Is tart an' 'im they could 'a' made it right.
Why does a wild bull fight to guard the mob?
Why does a bloomin' bull-ant look fer fight?
Why does a rooster scrap an' flap an' crow?
'E went becos 'e dam well 'ad to go.

'E never spouted no 'igh-soundin' stuff
About stern jooty an' 'is country's call;
But, in 'is way, 'e 'eard it right enough
A-callin' like the shout uv 'On the Ball! '
Wot time the footer brings the clicks great joy,
An' Saints or Carlton roughs it up wiv 'Roy.

The call wot came to cave-men in the days
When rocks wus stylish in the scrappin' line;
The call wot knights 'eard in the minstrel's lays,
That sent 'em in tin soots to Palerstine;
The call wot draws all fighters to the fray
It come to Mick, an' Mick 'e must obey.

The Call uv Stoush! ... It's older than the 'ills.
Lovin' an' fightin' - there's no more to tell
Concernin' men. an' when that feelin' thrills
The blood uv them 'oo's fathers mixed it well,
They 'ave to 'eed it - bein' 'ow they're built -
As traders 'ave to 'eed the clink uv gilt.

An' them whose gilt 'as stuffed 'em stiff wiv pride
An' 'aughty scorn uv blokes like Ginger Mick -
I sez to them, put sich crook thorts aside,
An' don't lay on the patronage too think.
Orl men is brothers when it comes to lash
An' 'aughty scorn an' Culcher does their lash.

War ain't no giddy garden feete - it's war:
A game that calls up love an' 'atred both.
An' them that shudders at the sight o' gore,

An' shrinks to 'ear a drunken soljer's oath,
Must 'ide be'ind the man wot 'eaves the bricks,
An' thank their Gawd for all their Ginger Micks.

Becos 'e never 'ad the chance to find
The glory o' the world by land an' sea,
Becos the beauty 'idin' in 'is mind
Wus not writ plain fer blokes like you an' me,
They calls 'im crook; but in 'im I 'ave found
Wot makes a man a man the world around.

Be'ind that dile uv 'is, as 'ard as sin,
Wus strange, soft thorts that never yet showed out;
An' down in Spadger's Lane, in dirt an' din,
'E dreamed sich dreams as poits sing about.
'E's 'ad 'is visions uv the Bonzer Tart;
An' stoushed some coot to ease 'is swellin' 'eart.

Lovin' an' fightin'... when the tale is told,
That's all there is to it; an' in their way
Them brave an' noble 'ero blokes uv old
Wus Ginger Micks - the crook 'uns uv their day.
Jist let the Call uv Stoush give 'im 'is chance
An' Ginger Mick's the 'ero of Romance.

So Ginger Mick 'e's mizzled to the war;
Joy in 'is 'eart, an' wild dreams in 'is brain;
Gawd 'elp the foe that 'e goes gunnin' for
If tales is true they tell in Spadger's Lane -
Tales that ud fairly freeze the gentle 'earts
Uv them 'oo knits 'is socks - the Culchered Tarts.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Calm

Brothers, have you observed the calm?
Even the leaves of that symbolic palm
That denotes peace, political and otherwise, are scarcely stirred
By the faintest breath of controversy. Not a word
Is heard,
Excepting, here and there, the belated spouting
Of some overcharged politician giving his vocabulary an outing.
Brothers, what does this denote?
Is there no longer any competition for your precious vote?
Nay, have you ever heard that alleged political axiom over which the
wily old campaigners oft make goodly sport:
'The memory of the sap-headed elector is short.'
Do you believe the allegation, brothers, or do you doubt it?
And, anyhow, what are you going to do about it?

Brothers, if ever you hope to know enough to come in out of the wet,
Mark this: They are giving you time to forget!
What of those great National Questions,
Those fine, broad, far-seeing and statesman-like suggestions,
Those urgent matters of life and death,
About which the politicians were so busy talking a while ago that they
had hardly time to draw breath?
Are they dead?
Have they been fatally bashed on the head?
Have they been decently interred attended by those solemn obsequies
usually afforded the remains of respectable and right-thinking
persons who impressed us in this life with their top-hats?
Rats!
What of the settlement of the Northern Territory?
Is this an abandoned story?
What of our sea defence?
Has this question been cast hence
Into the outer darkness and the gloom
Of the tomb?
What of efficient Protection?
Is this now merely a matter for maundering retrospection.

Amongst senile and toothless old parties whose minds ever dwell amongst
the dead and mouldy things of the past?
Oh, Blast, brothers! BLAST!
Blast those rocks of apathy that bind your sense of true citizenship!
Get a fresh grip.
Spring off your tall!
Give your political perspicaciousness a ball,
Revive it with a long, cool, refreshing drink,
And sit down and THINK....

Do you imagine for one moment that old 'Party Government' is asleep?
Do you picture it sunk in slumbers deep?
If you do, brothers, you never made a bigger mistake.
It is very, very wide awake.
That fine, old British institution, Party Government, that was
introduced into this suffering country before the thistle and
previous to the rabbit,
And nursed so assiduously by politicians till our acceptance of it has
become a sinful habit -
This pestiferous System, my brothers, never sleeps;
Watch and ward it keeps.
And while you are mooning, sporting, smoodging, drinking, dreaming,
It is engineering, planning, plotting, scheming.
The Hon. Mr. Black is aiming at the political downfall of the Hon. Mr.
White;
While the Hon. Mr. White is playing for the shoving of the Hon. Mr.
Black and his friends into the darkness and gloom and solitude of
political night.
But both, my brothers, both are toiling with the energy of a 200-h.p.
triple cylinder motor,
With the object of eventually and effectively sprinkling a little salt
upon the tail of that dull but desirable bird, the free and independent
voter.
Brothers, do ye feel like taking tickets on yourselves? Do ye feel
flattered and exalted?
For, behold, ye are to be numbered among the salted!
And, while these plots and plans are brewing,
What, my brothers, are ye doing?
Whilst the wily politician is chewing
The cud of sinful reflection, with his eye upon your votes,

Are you acting otherwise than after the manner and fashion of unreflective goats?

While you, brother, are canoodling with a soft and fluffy person, in a Magyarblouse, upon the silvery beach,
Striving to convince her that you think she is a perfect peach;
And while you, brother, are vainly endeavoring at the races,
To watch the impossible nags you back run into places;
And while you, brother, are sinking the long 'un, and the gin-squash, and the soder-with-dash.

And recklessly doing in your cash;
Sly old Party Government and its minions
Are busy manufacturing your political opinions.
Yes, you, the intelligent electors, fine fellows of quite unusual brain and brawn,
Are each of you regarded merely as a puppet, a pawn
In the Game.
Shame!

Attention, and I shall tell you exactly what old Party Government is doing at this precise moment, if you wish.

He is busily engaged in the manufacture of fish.

Fish, brothers, herrings, red herrings which it is his intention to draw across the track

Of great National Issues, because he is too tired to deal with them, and work gives him a pain in the back.

And in full cry, like a foolish and deluded pack

Of unintelligent beagles, you will chase wildly after the remains of that unpleasant, defunct and odorous fish.

And you will think you are doing it because it is your own free wish.

You will open your mouths and howl, and go and record your votes at the polls,

And fondly imagine that you are expressing the earnest convictions of your inmost and invincible souls.

I fear me, my brothers, that the tart, and the prad, and the long beer, and the midnight cray that bringeth early indigestion

Have far more attraction for you than any great National Question.

Go to!

There is no fun and small profit in attempting to act Diogenes to such as

Brothers, I bid ye a sad farewell.

So many poor, misguided people, who grabbed their opinions ready-made at the last moment, have gone before us that there is, nowadays, some difficulty in keeping the lid on Hell.

Brothers, with that innate dignity that is characteristic, I retire
To contemplate further insults, which I shall deliver as occasion may
require.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Candid Candidate

Alfred Ebenezer Jackson was a very earnest man,
Who aspired to be a statesman, and he consequently ran
At a general election as the Candid Candidate,
Sworn to tell the truth ungarbled, leaving all the rest to Fate.

Jackson had a firm conviction that the average M.P.
Was not perfectly straightforward as a member ought to be.
'They disguise their actual motives,' Jackson said, 'and so they fail.
I shall leave no false suspicion that I'm sitting on a rail.'

'Fellow men,' quoth Ebenezer, in his first campaign address.
'My desire to gain election is most eager, I confess:
True, some patriotic ardor fills me with its holy fire;
But to get a safe and steady billet is my main desire.

'Now, to put the matter plainly, I've no wish to twist or hedge,
And I'm quite prepared to stand to all the things that I allege.
I aspire to serve Australia in the Big Affairs of State:
To that aim all local interests gladly I'll subordinate.

'I shall give no hasty promise for the sake of votes from you.
Roads and bridges you shall have them when they are your right and due;
But wre this whole country's interest clashes with your local lot,
Then my vote is for Australia and the rest can go to pot!

'I'll not stoop to curry favor for the sake of your back yard,
While the Big Things of the nation call for labor long and hard;
For I'm not of those hard grafters whose chief work is turning coats,
With their thoughts on next election, and their eyes upon your votes.

'Party ties shall never hold me when I hear Australia call,
Through my service to the nation do I seek to stand or fall.
And to talk election piffle in the House, if I be sent

There to work, I'll deem an insult to the folk I represent.

'I shall scheme to drag no railway through the back yard of this State;
Nor on any handy dust-heap in this dashed electorate
Shall I vote to plant a city, while the fact is evident
That abtter site is waiting elsewhere on the continent.

'I am solid for Protection: but my creed I won't abuse
By mean tricks to shift the duty from commodities you use:
Nor shall I denounce with loathing Socialists' experiments
While I howl for State assistance for my own constituents.

'Now, my worthy friends, you know me, and just what I mean to do.
As plain people of Australia I am ev'ry time for you,
With my eyes upon the future and this great land's destiny,
I shall not to 'local interests' sacrifice prosterity.'

Alfred Ebenezer Jackson raised a wild, derisive shout
From 'intelligent electors.' 'Mad!' they said, 'without a doubt.'
And because they knew he meant it - ev'ry work he spoke or wrote
Alfred Ebenezer Jackson did not get a single vote!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Capital Site

'I hear them speak of a Fed'ral site
Where shall arise a city bright
Mother, where is this bonzer spot?
Shall we not seek it and build our cot?
Is it in some mild and temp'rate zone
Where the native of drought is never known?'
'Not theah, not theah, me che-ild.'

'Is it where the mighty ranges rise
And point their white tops to the skies
Where mountain torrents hurry down
Past thriving farm and peaceful town
Where our great city may be planned,
A credit to our native land?'
'Not on yer life, me che-ild.'

'Is it where the noble rivers flow,
And fruit and corn abundant grow;
Where wide and verdant grasslands sweep,
And pleasant orchards, fruited deep,
Reach out for miles across the plains,
Smiling to sun and grateful rains?'
'You bet it ain't, me che-ild.'

'Is it far away, in the Empty North,
Where the camel trains pro back and forth;
Some unprotected, distant spot
Where the populace congesteth not;
Fair to our foeman's envious eye,
Which 'twould be ivise to occupy?'
'Right off the track, me che-ild.'

'Is it in that land where grows the spud,
And the patient dairy cow her cud
Doth ruminat, while high green maize,

And oats, and rape delight her days;
Where pumpkins, large as great barn doors,
Astonish country edi-tors?'
'That ain't the place, me che-ild.'

'Is it where the squatters squat their sheep,
And large and easy incomes reap;
That fertile land. unpeopled still,
Where none may delve, or grow, or till;
Those large, unoccupied estates
Where sheep-lords reign and dodge their rates?'
'Clean out of it, me che-ild.'

'Then, mother, where the devil is
This splendid city to be riz?
Is it where the giant forest trees
Sway in the soft and balmy breeze;
Where laughing brooklets twist and turn
Through gullies decked with tender fern?'
'Aw, give it up, me che-ild.'

'Where the cocky prays, me gentle lad,
In vain for rain, and the seasons bad
Come regularly once a year,
And the outlook's permanently drear;
Where the Cotter cots - but mostly not;
Right, in the coastland's driest spot;
'It is theah, it is theah, me che-ild.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Castaway

I met a lonely Labor man,
Forlorn and pessimistic:
Who'd not yet fallen 'neath the ban
Of leagues antagonistic.
With an expression greatly peeved,
His listless eye beheld me.
'Comrade,' said I. 'Why are you grieved?'
A most prodigious sigh he heaved,
And said: 'They've not expelled me!'

Said he, 'Why should I be passed by
And left alone to suffer.
Ignored, unless it be that I
Am counted as a duffer?
That they should, with especial pains,
Exclude me from expulsion,
When Labor's blowing out its brains,
And worthier men cast off the chains,
I view with marked revulsion.

'Amongst the legion of the left,
Shorn of the last, lorn vestige
Of fame, of all my pals bereft,
What hope have I of prestige?
I watch them going one by one,
The men who Labor's work have done,
While I'm left out of all the fun!
Why am I so ill-fated?'

'Cheer up!' said I. 'For some day hence,
If you work diligently,
You may speak words of common sense,
Designed or accident'ly.
Then out you'll go unpon your neck,
Unkless I'm much mistaken.
Else, you'll remain, at ill-luck's beck,

A sailor clinging to a wreck,
By all the crew forsaken.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Censor

The Censor sits behind his desk,
And smiles a censored smile;
His great, blue pencil hovers o'er
Some masterpiece awhile,
Then swoops - oh, child of whose poor ravished brain?
Coldly another innocent is slain!
The Censor is a murderer.
None knows his secret lair,
Nor all the dark and awful deeds
He does in ambush there.
No eye has seen his charnel-house - it's floor
With literary corpses littered o'er.

The Censor is a crocodile.
Beneath that slimy flood,
The Waters of Oblivion,
He seeks his livelihood.
His gloating eye marks children of my pen;
He draws them under from the sight of men.

The Censor is a nibbling mouse.
The fair cheese of my mind
He rifles till there's nothing left
But atmosphere and rind.
That fair, round cheese, formed lovingly by me,
From milk of thought and curds of poesy.

The Censor is an elephant.
With large, ungainly feet
He dances on the glad, green fields
I sowed in toil and heat,
Till all the fairest flow'rs of thought are slain,
And only unaesthetic weeds remain.

The Censor is the Fiend of Storms.
Upon the Inky Sea,
In fear, my poor, frail craft I launch;
Then, with unholy glee,
He makes the winds tear howling through the shrouds,

And sends fork'd death and shipwreck from the clouds.
The Censor is a sorceror.
Above rare fruits that grow
Upon the tree of genius
His hand waves to and fro.
Hey, Presto! And their lusciousness is slain -
Apples of Sodom, Dead Sea Fruit remain.

The Censor is a hooded snake
That lurks within the grass,
And rears to sink his poison-fangs
In heedless babes that pass
Dear Children of my brain; wee, tender things,
That sink and swoon and perish when he stings.
And still he is a gentleman;
This much I will admit.
In 'Correspondence Columns' he
Seeks not to air his wit;
On shrinking backs he lays no caustic stripe,
Nor stoops to call our Masterpieces 'tripe'!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Chase Of Ages

Light of my lives! Is the time not yet?
Lo, I've brooded on a star
Through many a year, with the hope held dear
That, in some future far,
I would know the joy of a love returned.
Are my lives lived vainly, all?
Since that cosmic morn when life, now-born,
First moved on this mundane ball?

Yea, I mind it yet, when first we met
On a tertiary rock,
Flow the graceful charm of your rudiments
Imparted love's first shock.
But I was a mere organic cell
In that early eocene,
While you were a prim, primordial germ,
And the mother of protogene.

So I loved and died, and the ages sped
Till the time of my second birth;
When I took my place in the cosmic race,
And again came down to earth.
Once more we met. Ah, love, not yet!
You were far above my state!
For how could I raise my mollusc gaze
To a virtuous vertebrate?

Again we died, and again we slept,
And again we came to be
I as an anthropoidal ape,
And you as a chimpanzee.
You as a charming chimpanzee,
With a high, patrician air;
And I watched you waltz from tree to tree
As I slunk in my lowly lair.

And yet again, in an age or so,
We met, and I mind the sob
I sobbed when I found that I was what?

And you were a thingumbob.
You had sold your tail for a kind of soul,
You had grown two thumbs beside;
And I knew again that my love was vain,
So I went to the woods and died.

As a humble homunculus, later on,
I crept to your cave at night,
And howled long, love-lorn howls in vain
To my lady troglodyte.
And I grew insane at your cold disdain,
And my howlings filled the place,
Till your father sought me out one night,
And - again I yearned in space.

Then, light of my lives! Is the time not yet?
say, in what distant life
In what dim age that is still to come
May I win and call you wife?
Still high above! My love, my love!
Nay, how can I raise my eyes
To you, my star of the eocene,
My e'er elusive prize?

Lo, Time speeds on, and the suns grow cold,
And the earth infirm and hoar,
And, ages past, we are here at last
Ay, both on the earth once more.
But, alas, dear heart, as far apart
As e'er in this cosmic whirl;
For I'm but a lowly writer-man
And you are a tea-room girl.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Children Of The Sun

The Children of the Sun are out,
About the hills and beaches
The stolid burghers halo and stout,
The tailored sheik, the city lout,
And plain blokes with their peaches,
And dinkum coves alert and brown;
While over all the sun shines down.

The Children of the Sun are prone
To sunlight, play and pleasure;
And sober-minded mentors groan
And shake their beads and gravely moan
O'er all this love of leisure.
This lust for sport and sun they say
Will surely bring its reckoning day.

The Children of the Sun heed not,
But laugh and gather vigor,
Where summer days shine gold and hot,
They bask in many a sylvan spot
To meet a new year's rigor.
And who shall say they are not wise?
Strength languishes when pleasure dies.

The Children of the Sun but know
That while the sun is shining
And glad life beckons they must go;
For souls too long akin to woe
Lost all thro' much repining.
Rejuvenation bids them hence,
Then who shall cry 'Improvvidence'?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Circus

Hey, there! Hoop-la! the circus is in town!
Have you seen the elephant? Have you seen the clown?
Have you seen the dappled horse gallop round the ring?
Have you seen the acrobats on the dizzy swing?
Have you seen the tumbling men tumble up and down?
Hoop-la! Hoop-la! the circus is in town!

Hey, there! Hoop-la! Here's the circus troupe!
Here's the educated, dog jumping through the hoop.
See the lady Blondin with the parasol and fan,
The lad upon the ladder and the india-rubber man.
See the joyful juggler and the boy who loops the loop.
Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey! Here's the circus troupe!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Clerk

The unsoiled hand, the sleek, black coat,
The senile, ledger-haunted hours,
The knowledge that my freeman's vote
Is humbly cast to please 'the powers,'
A futile spite against the mass,
A small, weak hate of Labor's side,
These privileges of Our Class
I cherish with a puny pride.

The sycophancy of the snob,
The day-long cringe, the life-long fear
That I may lose a steady job
That 'job genteel' I hold so dear
These be the splendid attributes
Of one who yearns to emulate
His master; and all work-soiled brutes
Regards with mean, reflected hate.

Not mine the arrogance of wealth,
No pride in honest labor mine;
But while I still hold life and health
My pet ambition is to shine
A small, pale star that faintly glows
In Fat's impressive firmament,
The while I earn mere food and clothes,
And help the boss to cent. per cent.

Ambition? E'en my timid soul
Dreams of a day when I shall rule;
When I may heckle and control
The trembling slaves of desk and stool;
When I shall be of Fat myself
Who now but dangles at his skirt.
A magnate! Armed with pow'r and pelf.
Meet recompense for eating dirt.

I mark the lowly toiler rage.
'Resist!' he cries. 'Resist! Unite!'
The while I sue for patronage -

A deferential parasite.
Then to my aid comes Pride of Class,
I take my stand beside the Boss.
I earn his praise! Although, alas,
His gain, mayhap, will be my loss.

For who would risk a master's ire
That deity who rules my life,
That god who may, in vengeance dire,
Snatch happiness from 'child' and wife?
'Rights!' shout the horny-handed. 'Rights!'
The dolts defy the pow'rs that be.
While I watch through the restless nights
And tremble for my salary.

Oh. what rash madness moves these clods?
E'en my own fellow serfs, alas,
Speak treason 'gainst the money-gods
And turn black traitors to Our Class.
Our Class! That genteel, cultured band,
Well-dressed, respectable, elite
The servile mind, the soft white hand
Patrician class of Collins~street!

Cohorts of Collins-street, arise!
O legions, wake in Finders-land!
Let each pale hero recognise
His class, and fight with might and mian.
Fight for the master sturdily!
What though his profit be our loss?
And let our watchword ever be,
Or Class! OUR BILLET, and OUR BOSS!

The sleek, black coat, the unsoiled hand,
The proud assertion of the worm.
Behold the Class! Oh, noble band!
Mild, desk-worn yoemen of 'The Firm.'
With swagger of the over-dressed.
With meekness of the underpaid,
They flout the plaint of the oppressed,
And stare at Liberty, afraid.

The Corpse That Won'T Lie Still

Aye, call it murder is ye will!
'Tis not the crime I fear.
If his cold curse would but lie still
And silent in its bier,
Then would I be indeed content,
And count it folly to repent.

With these two hands I've slain the knave;
I've watched the red blood drop;
I've rammed him tight into his grave,
And piled the clods atop,
And tramped them down exultingly....
Now back he comes to grin at me.

Once have I slain him in his bed,
Twice by the midnight blaze;
Thrice have I looked upon him dead
All in these seven days.
Yet here, this night, I've seen him stand
And pluck the pen from out my hand.

Nay, never spook nor sprite is he,
But solid flesh and blood,
Who schemes with deep malignity
To stint my livelihood.
And he had vowed a vow my name
Shall never grace the scroll of fame.

My name he bears, my garb he wears,
My pipes he idly smokes;
And, friend-like, he but rarely cares
To praise my sorry jokes.
He spends my money lavishly
With ne'er a thrifty thought for me.

And when my ready cash is gone
He runs me into debt.
Stern duty he will harp upon
When I would fain forget.
But when, through toil, I would be free
He soothes me with rank sophistry.

Whene'er with resolutions stern
I sit me down to work,
And mighty thoughts within me burn,
Then forth comes he to lurk
Here at my elbow, where he clings
And whispers of forbidden things.

So when I woo some lofty theme
Of deep religious tone,
He lures me on to idly dream,
As we sit there alone.
Of girls I have and have not kissed,
Of favors won and chances missed.

He whispers of that tempting book
I have no time to read;
'One peep,' he pleads: 'one hasty look!
Where is the harm, indeed?'
And when I speak of work, and sigh,
'Twill do to-morrow!' is his cry.

And oft - too well I know how oft
Beneath his subtle spell
I fall, and dream of living soft
Who know - aye, none so well
That living soft is but for him
Who earns his ease with labor grim.

Dreams, dreams, and ever idle dreams!

His glowing art I hate!
Yet pleasant for the hour it seems,
His soothing opiate.
And, though I slay him, this I dread:
He oftener alive than dead.

Oh, I have to be so very sure,
No later than last night,
That I had pinned the knave secure,
And I was free to write
Those mighty masterpieces which
To pen my fingers ever itch.

But, with his slouch and lazy leer,
Lo, came back he to-day:
With wheedling lips against mine ear
He tempted me to play
At tennis all the afternoon.
Work and resolve forgot so soon!

Yet, spite his faults, he is, I swear,
A merry knave withal;
And when I have the time to spare
That's seldom, if at all
I'd roam with him 'mid fields and flow'rs
If he'd be still in business hours.

Each morn I bash him on the head
And hide him out of sight.
Full, sure, indeed, that he is dead;
But back he comes each night,
And on the lotus buds we feed
When bread and butter is my need.

Though many ways his death I've planned
And slain him, as I've said,
He takes a lot of killing and

He'll never stay long dead.
And, though, each day i cause his death,
I know he'll live while I have breath.

But let me vow the vow again
The vow I know by heart
And, here and now, with hasty pen,
Stab to some vital part.
And, mocked by his departing laugh,
Rewrite his oft-writ epitaph.

'Here lies the man I should not be
By all stern rules of life.
The man who's plagued and hampered me
All through this mundane strife.
A lazy, loafing knave was he....
But, sooth, he was fine company.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Cosinic Curve

Callithumpus Kevin Kerr was a young astronomer,
Rich and handsome, eligible, sound and single,
Somewhat absent as to mind, and peculiarly inclined
To allow his love quest and his work to mingle.
'Jupiter,' said he, 'and Mars, all fixed and unfixed stars
And their orbits mid the circular have tarried;
There is nothing straight nor square in the heavens anywhere
Which reminds me, I should think of getting married.'

Clementina Mumphin-Moore was a modern girl who wore
Slinky frocks, and her slimming concentrated.
Thus, her health was far from good; but Matilda Mabel Wood
Was circular in shape - cats said 'inflated.'
Both these girls, the thick and thin, were most interested in
Callithumpus Kevin Kerr, who so auterely
Walked with face turned to the sky; each one rolled a roguish eye
'With view above,' for each one loved him dearly.

Callithumpus Kerr one day went a-mumbling on his way,
And both maids watched him as he conned his table:
'Jupiter, the Moon and Mars, all the fixed and unfixed stars
Are circular in shape - why, hello, Mabel!'
Clementina, oh, so slim, was invisible to him.
But he gazed at Mabel as he thought of Saturn.
Then he said, quite suddenly, 'Mabel! Will you marry me?
For an astronomer you're just the pattern.'

Thro' a crevice in the floor Clementina Mumphin-Moore
Slipped; and no one ever heard of her thereafter.
Mabel wed her clever Kerr, and their home, so friends aver,
Is a place of curves and meals and happy laughter.
Girls! Be warned in time; because certain universal laws
Rule creation, and you may not monkey with 'em.
Mold yourselves upon old mars and the fixed and unfixed stars,
For slim and slinky girls 'ain't got no rhythm.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Creed Of Old George Jones

A little of fretting, a little of getting,
A little of slaving and saving, may be;
A little of spending, a little of lending
And giving up living be easy and free:
But a man gathers, and all a man owns
Goes out at the finish (said old George Jones)
Like a spark in the dark, and the sum of his trying,
A name and a memory drifting and dying.

A little of blund'ring, a little of wond'ring,
A little of scheming and dreaming when young;
A little of grieving; a little believing,
In secret, strange things that come slow to the tongue;
For every man is a being apart,
And none may look deep in his fellow-man's heart
Scholars and strangers, chance met in life's college;
But tolerance grows with the sum of our knowledge.

And I, who have tarried o'er long with the living,
Have come to a creed that gives hope of content;
In getting and spending is grief; but in giving
Is all that this riddle of life ever meant.
For life is a riddle; an, tho' I grow old,
Still fit as a fiddle, to one creed I hold:
'Tis getting moves man while to life he is cleaving;
But giving looms large when it comes to his leaving.

A little of sorrow, of plans for tomorrow,
A little of helping the weak and the fool;
A little of laughter, and all that comes after
Is one lesson learned in life's arduous school,
For all a man gathers, and all a man owns
But ends in a heartache (said old George Jones),
Like a spark in the dark comes an end to his living,
And all that live after, the sum of his giving.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Criminal War

I am shocked beyond words!
(Said the statesman. 'Tis crime
That the clamoring herds
Should seek war at this time.
For a criminal war is sheer folly
Subversive to ideals sublime.

There are wars that are nice;
There are wars that are not.
And 'tis seeking with vice
That the nations should plot
World war when my land is unready.
I refuse to consider such rot.

My philosophy's clear;
My morality, too;
Tho' my rivals may sneer
At the things that I do.
If at present, for me, war's illegal
It must be illegal for you!

We are human, I trust;
And to decency wed.
Let's have war, if we must;
But at present I dread
What crimes may come out of the carnage,
If blood be illegally shed.

In the past, all along
We have cleaved to our creed:
We shall fight when we're strong
When we're not we still plead
Our revulsion to acts homicidal
Induced by man's envy and greed.

Keep the sword in its sheath;
Seek sweet peace for a time,
Till, all armed to the teeth,
Our meek voices may climb
To sue for the blessings of Heaven

On butchery, purged of all crime.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Crisis

Be-wigged and gowned, the Speaker frowned,
And his frown was ill to see.

'Oddsfish!' he spake, 'Do I mistake?
Stands 'And' where 'Or' should be?
Be such the case, this land's disgrace
Shall shame our House no more.
Gadzooks, and by my halidame!
Call members hence, so our fair name
Be purged and shriven of ill-fame
And 'And' give place to 'Or'!

From divers nooks, with guilty looks,
The mumbling members came;
With wimpering wails they gnawed their nails
And slunk in snivelling shame;
From party rooms, as from dank tombs,
From crypt and corridor.
The Speaker boomed, with beetling brow:
Yours was the sin! And, here and now,
I bid ye kneel and make the vow
To change yon 'And' to 'Or'!

They bore the Mace from its resting place
In the dungeon 'neath the stairs;
Silk-breeched, but game, the Speaker came
And set the carven chairs.
Then the great Black Rod, at the Speaker's nod,
Waved o'er them as they swore
By this and that, by book and bell,
That one and all, what e'er befell
Would take the vow, and keep it well;
To change the 'And' to 'Or'.

Now in his place, with chastened face,
The Premier rose and spoke.
They harked to him in silence grim
While tears they strove to choke.
With trembling hand he seized that 'And'
And cast it thro' the door.

And now, amid subdued applause,
The brave upholder of our laws,
Square in it's place withn the clause
Enthroned the rightful 'Or'.

Sighs of relief replaced their grief
As members breathed short prayers.
They bore the Mace to its resting place
In the dungeon 'neath the stairs.
Honor to these, our bold M.P.'s!
All patriots to the core!
With bated breath the tale unfold
To your son's sons when you grow old.
Their fame uphold ... The cost, all told,
Was twelve pounds, eight and four!

And we poor hacks who yield the tax
Should we not be content
With these whose task was to unmask
That word malevolent?
Alas, who knows what weary woes
Might have best us sore
Had not that adamant band
Upheld the honor of their land
By plucking out the craft 'And,'
And substituting 'Or?'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Crusaders

'Peter the 'Ermit was a 'oly bloke,'
The parson sez, 'wot chivvied coves to war.'
'Too right,' I chips. 'I've 'eard that yarn before.'
'Brave knights sprung straight to arms where'er 'e spoke.'
'Sure thing,' sez I. 'It muster been no joke
Tinnin' yer frame in them dead days uv yore
Before yeh starts to tap a foeman's gore.'

'Peter the 'Ermit was a man inspired,'
The parson sez. We're moochin' up the Lane,
Snoopin' around for news we might obtain
Uv this Spike Wegg, the man 'oo I am 'ired
To snatch by 'ook or crook, jist as required
By circs, frum out the sev'ril sins wot stain
'Is wicked soul. I 'ope me meanin's plain.

'Peter the 'Ermit,' sez the parson, 'saw
No 'arm in vi'lince when the cause was just.
While 'e deplored, no doubt, the fightin' lust,
'E preached-' 'Old on,' I sez. 'Ere comes the Law:
'Ere's Brannigan, the cop. Pos'pone the jaw
Till we confer. I got idears 'e must
Keep track uv Spike; if 'e toils fer 'is crust.'

'Spike Wegg?' growls Brannigan. 'I know that bloke;
An' 'e's the one sweet soul I long to see.
That shrinkin' vi'lit 'ates publicity
Jist now,' sez Brannigan. 'Spike Wegg's in smoke.
Oh, jist concerns a cove 'e tried to croak.
'E's snug in some joint round about, maybe.
If you should meet, remember 'im to me.'

The cop passed on. 'Peter the 'Ermit was
A ri'chus man,' the parson sez, 'wot knoo -'
'Old 'ard!' I begs. 'Jist for a hour or two
I wouldn't go an' nurse sich thorts, becoz
Too much soul-ferritin' might put the moz
On this 'ere expedition. I'll 'elp you
To search our conscience when the job is through.

'I know yer doubts,' I sez, 'an' 'ow you 'ate
The thorts uv stoush, an' 'old 'ard blows in dread.
But Pete the 'Ermit's been a long time dead.
'E'll keep. But we are in the 'ands uv Fate,
An' 'oly spruikers uv a ancient date
Don't 'elp. I quite agrees with all you've said
But-' 'Say no more,' 'e answers. 'Lead ahead.'

'But, all the same,' 'e sez, 'I want no fight.'
'Right 'ere, be'ind this 'oardin',' I replies,
'A two-up school's in session. If we spies
About a bit, there is a chance we might
Git news -' Jist then the spotter comes to light.
I word 'im gentle, with some 'asty lies:
I'm seekin' Spike. See? Can 'e put me wise?

'Spike Wegg?' (At first 'e only twigs meself)
'E's gone-' ('E spots the parson standin' by)
A cold, 'ard glimmer comes in 'is fish eye:
'Ere! Wot's the game?' 'e yelps. 'Are you a shelf?'
'Ave sense!' I larfs. 'I got a bit uv pelf,
An' thort I'd like to take a little fly -'
'Buzz orfl' 'e orders. So we done a guy.

'Blank number one,' I sez. The parson sighed.
'Joshuer fought, an' never seemed to shrink -'
'Now, look,' I tells 'im. 'Honest. Don't you think
Them Bible blokes 'oo've 'ad their day an' died
Is best fergot until we're 'ome an' dried?
Now, up the street 'ere, is a little sink
Uv sin that does a traffic in strong drink.'

'Sly grog?' 'e arsts. But I sez, ''Ush! This place
Is kep' by Mother Weems, 'oo's sof', blue eye
An' snow-white 'air would make yeh 'shamed an' shy
To brand 'er name with any sich disgrace.
'Er kind, sweet smile, 'er innercint ole face.
Beams like a blessin'. Still, we'll 'ave a try
To word the dear ole dame, an' pump 'er dry.

'Is nibs stands in the shadders while I knock.

Mother unlocks the door, an' smiles, an' peers
Into me face. She wears 'er three score years
Reel sweet, in lacy cap an' neat black frock.
Then: 'Bill,' she cries. 'You've give me quite a shock!
Why, dearie, I ain't seen you for long years.
Come in.' 'Er kind ole eyes seem close to tears.

'Dearie, come in,' she chirps. But I pretend
I'm on reel urgent biz; I got to 'aste
'Jist for ole times,' she pleads. 'One little taste.'
'I can't,' I sez. 'I'm lookin' for a friend,
Spike Wegg, for 'oo I've certin news no end
Important; an' I got no time to waste.'
'Wot? Spike?' she sez. 'I 'ear 'e's bein' chased.

'E's bein' chased,' she sez, 'by D's, I've 'eard.'
'Too true,' I owns. 'E's got no time to lose.'
'Well, maybe, if you was to try Ah Foo's
The privit room -' Then, as 'is rev'rince stirred,
She seen 'is choker. 'Oo the 'ell's this bird?
Is this a frame?' she shrieks... Without adoos,
We slap the pavemint with four 'asty shoes.

But, as along the sloppy lane we race,
'Er 'or words tumble after in a flood:
'You pimps! You dirty swine! I'll 'ave yer blood!'
"Eavings!" the parson gasps. 'With that sweet face!'
'Er words,' I answer, 'do seem outer place.'
'Vile words, that I 'ave scarce 'arf understud.'
Sez Snowy, shoshin' in a pool uv mud.

We reach Ah Foo's. 'Now, 'ere,' I sez, 'is where
You stop outside. Twice you 'ave put me queer
It's a lone 'and I mean to play in 'ere.
You 'ang around an' breathe the 'olesome air.'
'Young friend,' 'e sez, 'I go with you in there.
I've led you into this. Why should I fear
The danger? 'Tis me jooty to be near.'

Snowy's a game un! I lob in the shop,
The parson paddin' after on the floor.
Ah Foo looks up. 'Not there!' 'e squeaks. 'Wha' for?'

But we sail past the Chow without a stop,
Straight for the little crib up near the top
That I knoo well in sinful days uv yore...
I turn the knob; an' sling aside the door.

Beside a table, fearin' 'arm from none,
Spike an' another bloke is teet-ah-teet.
Quick on the knock, Spike Wegg jumps to 'is feet
An' jerks a 'and be'ind 'im for 'is gun.
I rush 'im, grab a chair up as I run,
An' swing it with a aim that ain't too neat.
Spike ducks aside; an', with a bump, we meet.

An' then we mix it. Strife an' merry 'ell
Breaks loose a treat, an' things git movin' fast.
An', as a Chinese jar goes crashin' past,
'Igh o'er the din I 'ears the parson's yell:
'Hit! Hit 'im 'ard young friend. Chastise 'im well!
'Hit 'im!' . . . The 'oly war is in full blast;
An' Pete the 'Ermit's come to light at last.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Dance

'Heirlums,' 'e sez. 'I've 'ad the trousiz pressed.
Me father married in 'em, that 'e did.
See this 'ere fancy vest?
See this 'ere lid?
Me gran'dad brought that frum 'is native land
In forty-two-an' then 'twas second-'and.'

Clobber? Oh, 'el! Pants uv wild shepherd's plaid,
A coat that might 'ave knocked the cliners flat
When father was a lad,
A tall, pot 'at
That caught the mange back in the diggin's days,
A fancy vest that called fer loud 'oorays.

But loud 'oorays don't 'arf ixpress my rage
When Danny comes upholstered fer the jig.
I've seen it on the stage,
Rat comic rig;
But never at a country dance before
'Ave I seen sich crook duds as Danny wore.

'You want to crool my scheme,' I sez, 'with rags
Like that? This ain't no fancy dress affair.
Wot sort uv tile an' bags
Is them to wear?
But 'e don't tumble;)e's as pleased as pie.
'By gum,' 'e sez, 'this ort to catch 'er eye.'

'You posin' fer a comic film, or wot?'
I arsts 'im -' with noorotic togs like those!
Jazz clobber! Ain't you got
No decent clo'es?'
But 'e's too tickled with 'imself to 'eed.
'This orter catch 'er eye,' 'e sez, 'this tweed.'

It caught 'er eye, all right, an' many more.
They starts to come before the daylight fades;
An', fer a hour before
The crowd parades,

Ole Danny 'eld the centre uv the stage,
While I stood orf an' chewed me silent rage.

That's 'ow it alwiz is: I try to show
'Ow I can use me bean in deep-laid lurks;
An' then some fool must go
An' bust the works.
'Ere, I 'ave planned a coop in slap-up-style,
An' Danny spikes me guns with gran'pa's tile.

Rose never seemed so free frum ugly dreams,
Not since she came, as that night at the dance;
But my matchmakin' schemes
Makes no advance;
Fer every time I gits a chance to score,
Doreen butts in, an' crools me pitch once more.

Reel thortless, women is. She ort to seen
I 'ad intents - in spite uv Danny's clo'es
An' that 'e was reel keen.
Concernin' Rose.
Not 'er. She larfs, an' chatters with the push,
As if rich 'usbands grew on every bush.

Once, f'rinstance, I gits busy when I seen
Rose sittin' out; an' brings Dan on the run.
'Why, mercy!' sez Doreen.
'Ere's Mister Dunn
Perlite enough to arst me fer a dance.
'E knows us marrid ones don't git much chance.'

An' there she grabs 'im, fair out uv me 'ands!
An' lets young Wally Free git off with Rose;
While like a fool I stands,
Kickin' me toes
An' cursin' all the fool things women do.
I'd think 'twas done apurpis, less I knoo.

That's 'ow it was all night. I schemed a treat,
Workin' shrood points, an' sweatin' blood, almost;
But every time I'm beat
Right on the post.

All me matchnakin's bust - the task uv days
Through Danny's duds an' my wife's tackless ways.

Nice chaperong she is! While Free an' Rose
Dance 'arf the night Doreen jist sits an' beams.
When I seen that, up goes
My 'opes an' schemes.
But all that Danny sez is, 'Stone the crows!
Yeh'd think I'd took 'er eye, with them good clo'es.'

When we git 'ome that night I shows me spleen
By 'intin' Rose will be left on the shelf.
An' then I see Doreen
Smile to 'erself.
'I would n't be su'prised,' she sez, 'to see
Rose marrid, some fine day, to Wally Free.'

To Wally Free! Yeh could 'ave knocked me flat
With 'arf a brick. I seen it in a flash.
A grinnin' coot like that!
Without no cash!
Besides, a man 'oo'd keep a thievin' cow
Like 'is, won't make no 'usband any'ow.

I'm sick uv everything. It ain't no joke.
I've tried to do good works; an' now I've found
When you git 'elpin' folk
They jist turn round
An' bite the 'and that feeds 'em, so to speak.
An' yet they sez the strong should 'elp the weak.

Wot rot! ... I wisht I 'ad some reel ixcuse
To push some face in, jist to ease me mind.
Spike Wegg, 'e 'ad 'is use
'Im an' 'is kind.
If I could give me ole left-'ook one swing,
I might feel kinder like to everything.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Dark Horse

Do you know this mysterious, serious Watt
Who sits at the game with the cards in his sleeve;
Watching and waiting
While we're calculating
The tricks and the honors? It's hard to believe
That any man use to a gamble political
COULD be so slow. And we're apt to get critical.

Why this annoying and cloying restraint?
Can't he declare when he counts up his hand?
Some say he's mutable; others inscrutable,
Counting a slam, either little or grand.
Still, he should recognise players are waiting there
While he is holding his cards, hesitating there.

Even disasterful, masterful Hughes
Pauses to think as he looks o'er his cards.
'Can he be 'cute?' he says.
'Or just a mute?' he says.
(Oh, don't this rhyming come hard on the bards?)
Still, if the 'aces' are all held by Billy, then
Watt won't declare. But the question is! Will 'e then?

E'en analytical, critical Bruce
Dares to declare he has more than his 'doots'
Though he's a Treasurer
And a shrewd measurer
Of all the chances of various 'soots' ...
So the game stands. And there's no declaration, sirs.
All's in the Game. But the STAKE is the nation, sirs!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Dawn Dance

What do you think I saw to-day when I arose at dawn?
Blue Wrens and Yellow-tails dancing on the lawn!
Bobbing here, and bowing there, gossiping away,
And how I wished that you were there to see the merry play!

But you were snug abed, my boy, blankets to your chin,
Nor dreamed of dancing birds without or sunbeams dancing in.
Grey Thrush, he piped the tune for them. I peeped out through the glass
Between the window curtains, and I saw them on the grass -

Merry little fairy folk, dancing up and down,
Blue bonnet, yellow skirt, cloaks of grey and brown,
Underneath the wattle-tree, silver in the dawn,
Blue Wrens and Yellow-tails dancing on the lawn.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Day Of Unrest

There ain't enough of strikes an' things,
There ain't enough of strife,
There ain't enough dislikes an' things
In this 'ere modern life:
'Ow can we 'ope to 'ave unrest
When blokes don't know that they're oppressed?

On Sundees they enjoy theirselves,
An' rush from trams an' trains
When they could best employ theirselves
Be strikin' off their chains:
'Ow can we bid their chains begone
When blokes don't know they got 'em on?

Give us a chance to speak with 'em,
An' tell 'em 'ow they're cursed.
Give us an hour a week with them
So they can know the worst.
'Ow can the crowd know they are slaves
Unless the agitator raves?

The people's too contented, like,
Too much inclined to smile;
An' views should be presented like
To make 'em scowl a while.
Let's 'ave a day of real unrest
Just once a week for the oppressed.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Deadly Dummy

'It's the dummy wot done it,' said Bleary Bill.
'As a child I was out o' luck.
A kid in me pram, that's wot I am
When they gimme the thing to suck.
An' I took to it good, for I like the taste;
With never a thought of a life laid waste.

Then I took to nippin' upon the sly,
Or avin' a suck with a friend,
Tho' a neighbourin' kid warned me, 'e did,
It would get me, sure, in the end.
An' git me it did, as you see today.
In a most insidius an' 'orrible way.

I know as me 'abits is not the best.
An' I know as the beer's a curse;
But don't blame me, for me choice weren't free,
An' the blame of it's all on nurse.
So, please, yer Honor, don't make it 'ot,
An' I'll swear off dummies right on the spot.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Debate

He was a Glug of simple charm;
He wished no living creature harm.
His kindly smile like sunlight fell
On all about, and wished them well.
Yet, 'spite the cheerful soul of Sym,
The great Sir Stodge detested him.

The stern Sir Stodge and all his Swanks -
Proud Glugs of divers grades and ranks,
With learning and attainments great
Had never learned to conquer hate.
And, failing in their A. B. C.,
Were whipt by Master Destiny.

'Twas thus that Gosh's famous schools
Turned out great hordes of learned fools:
Turned out the ship without a sail,
Turned out the kite with leaden tail,
Turned out the mind that could not soar
Because of foolish weights it bore.

Because there'd been no father Joi
To guide the quick mind of a boy
Away from thoughts of hate and blame,
Wisdom in these was but a name.
But 'mid the Glugs they count him wise
Who walks with cunning in his eyes.

His task well done, his three rhymes writ,
Sym rose at morn, and packed his kit.
'At last!' he cried. 'Off and away
To meet again the spendthrift Day,
As he comes climbing in the East,
To bless with largesse man and beast.

'Again the fields where wild things run!
And trees, all spreading to the sun,
Run not, because, of all things blest,
Their chosen place contents them best.

O come, my little prick-eared dog!' . . .
But, 'Halt!' exclaimed his Nibs of Quog.

'Nay,' said the Mayor. 'Not so fast!
The day climbs high, but sinks at last.
And trees, all spreading to the sun,
Are slain because they cannot run.
The great Sir Stodge, filled full of hate,
Has challenged you to hold debate.

'On Monday, in the Market Square,
He and his Swanks will all be there,
Sharp to the tick at half-past two,
To knock the stuffing out of you.
And if your stuffing so be spread,
Then is the Cause of Quog stone dead.

'In this debate I'd have you find,
With all the cunning of your mind,
Sure victory for Quog's great Cause,
And swift defeat for Stodge's laws.'
'But cunning I have none,' quoth Sym.
The Mayor slowly winked at him.

'Ah!' cried his Worship. 'Sly; so sly!'
(Again he drooped his dexter eye)
'I've read you thro'; I've marked you well.
You're cunning as an imp from Hell . . .
Nay, keep your temper; for I can
Withal admire a clever man.

'Who rhymes with such a subtle art
May never claim a simple part.
I'll make of you a Glug of rank,
With something handy in the bank,
And fixed opinions, which, you know,
With fixed deposits always go.

'I'll give you anything you crave:
A great, high headstone to your grave,
A salary, a scarlet coat,
A handsome wife, a house, a vote,

A title, or a humbled foe.'
But Sym said, 'No,' and ever, 'No.'

'Then,' shouted Quog, 'your aid I claim
For Gosh, and in your country's name
I bid you fight the Cause of Quog,
Or be for ever named a dog!
The Cause of Quog, the weal of Gosh
Are one! Amen. Down with King Splosh!'

Sym looked his Worship in the eye,
As solemnly he made reply:
'If 'tis to serve my native land,
On Monday I shall be at hand.
But what am I 'mid such great men?'
His Worship winked his eye again . . .

'Twas Monday in the Market Square;
Sir Stodge and all his Swanks were there.
And almost every Glug in Gosh
Had bolted lunch and had a wash
And cleaned his boots, and sallied out
To gloat upon Sir Stodge's rout.

And certain sly and knowing Glugs,
With sundry nudges, winks and shrugs,
Passed round the hint that up on high,
Behind some window near the sky,
Where he could see yet not be seen,
King Splosh was present with his Queen.

'Glugs,' said the chairman. 'Glugs of Gosh;
By order of our good King Splosh,
The Tinker and Sir Stodge shall meet,
And here, without unseemly heat,
Debate the question of the day,
Which is - However, let me say -

'I do not wish to waste your time.
So, first shall speak this man of rhyme;
And, when Sir Stodge has voiced his view,
The Glugs shall judge between the two.

This verdict from the folk of Gosh
Will be accepted by King Splosh.'

As when, like teasing vagabonds,
The sly winds buffet sullen ponds,
The face of Stodge grew dark with rage,
When Sym stepped forth upon the stage.
But all the Glugs, with one accord,
A chorus of approval roared.

Said Sym: 'Kind friends, and fellow Glugs;
My trade is mending pots and mugs.
I tinker kettles, and I rhyme
To please myself and pass the time,
Just as my fancy wandereth.'
(*'He's minel' quoth Stodge, below his breath.*)

Said Sym: 'Why I am here to-day
I know not; tho' I've heard them say
That strife and hatred play some part
In this great meeting at the Mart.
Nay, brothers, why should hatred lodge . . .
'That's ultra vires!' thundered Stodge.

"Tis ultra vires!" cried the Knight.
'Besides, it isn't half polite.
And e'en the dullest Glug should know,
'Tis not pro bono publico.
Nay, Glugs, this fellow is no class.
Remember! Vincit veritas!'

With sidelong looks and sheepish grins,
Like men found out in secret sins,
Glug gazed at Glug in nervous dread;
Till one with claims to learning said,
'Sir Stodge is talking Greek, you know.
He may be bad, but never low.'

Then those who had no word of Greek
Felt lifted up to hear him speak.
'Ah, learning, learning,' others said.
'Tis fine to have a clever head.'

And here and there a nervous cheer
Was heard, and someone growled, 'Hear, hear.'

'Kind friends,' said Sym . . . But, at a glance,
The 'cute Sir Stodge had seen his chance.
'Quid nunci' he cried. 'O noble Glugs,
This fellow takes you all for mugs.
I ask him, where's his quid pro quo?
I ask again, quo warranto?

'Shall this man filch our wits from us
With his furor poeticus?
Nay!' cried Sir Stodge. 'You must agree,
If you will hark a while to me
And at the Glugs' collective head
He flung strange language, ages dead.

With mystic phrases from the Law,
With many an old and rusty saw,
With well-worn mottoes, which he took
Haphazard from the copy-book,
For half an hour the learned Knight
Belaboured them with all his might.

And, as they wakened from their daze,
Their murmurs grew to shouts of praise.
Glugs who'd reviled him overnight
All in a moment saw the light.
'O learned man! O seer!' cried they. . . .
And education won the day.

Then, quickly to Sir Stodge's side
There bounded, in a single stride,
His Nibs of Quog; and flinging wide
His arms, 'O victory!' he cried.
'I'm with Sir Stodge, O Glugs of Gosh!
And we have won! Long live King Splosh!'

Then pointing angrily at Sym,
Cried Quog, 'This is the end of him!
For months I've marked his crafty dodge,
To bring dishonour to Sir Stodge.

I've lured him here, the traitrous dog,
And shamed him!' quoth his Nibs of Quog.

Hoots for the Tinker tore the air,
As Sym went, wisely, elsewhere.
Cheers for Sir Stodge were long and loud;
And, as amid his Swanks he bowed,
To mark his thanks and honest pride,
His Nibs of Quog bowed by his side.

The Thursday after that, at three,
The King invited Quog to tea.
Quoth Quog, 'It was a task to bilk . . .
(I thank you; sugar, please, and milk) . . .
To bilk this Tinker and his pranks.
A scurvy rogue! . . . (Ah, two lumps, thanks.)

'A scurvy rogue!' continued Quog.
'Twas easy to outwit the dog.
Altho', perhaps, I risked my life
I've heard he's handy with a knife.
Ah, well, 'twas for my country's sake . . .
(Thanks; just one slice of currant cake.)'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Defence

Not guilty, yer Honers! I talks to yer straight!
An' I calls it a pretty crook game
An' an 'og of a thing, if the coppers should bring
Such dishonor as this on me name
On me name that 'as stood fer up'oldin' the good!
It's enough to make any bloke weep!
An' the goods as they says I received - spare me days!
Don't I tell yer I bought 'em dirt cheap!

Yes, I bought 'em dirt cheap; an' I says to the Bench,
As a man 'oo acts honest an' square,
That me solid defence is poun's, shillin's an' pence,
An' I arsts yer to deal with me fair.
Fer it's more than a joke when a square-livin' bloke
Is 'ad up fer committin' a crime;
Fer the JOHN, 'ere, 'e swears to the goods, an' declares
As I knoo they was pinched at the time.

But, gentlemen, listen, I bought 'em dirt cheap!
As the bloke 'ere, who sold 'em kin swear.
But they say 'e was crook, an' the goods that 'e took
Wasn't got, so to speak, on the square.
Well, per'aps that's all true, an' they ses that I knoo
They was pinched when I made 'im the bid.
It 'ud be a fair sin fer to miss that chuck in;
So I arsts: Wot's the odds if I did?

'Ere's the Cop ses I'm charged with receivin' the goods,
As I bloomin' well knoo to be stole;
But then that isn't stealin' meself, an' I feel
As I orn't to be in this 'ole.
Fer I never stole things in me life, an' I brings
Twenty witnesses 'ere fer to say
That in all er me days I 'ave allus earned praise
Fer up'oldin' the straight, honest way.

Yus, I allus 'ave preached that to steal wus a sin,
An' I never pinched things in me life;
An' I brings up me kids as strict honesty bids,
An' I gotter respectable wife.
I am known in our street as a man 'ard to beat
At comdemnin' all thievin' an' crime;
An' there's clergymen 'ere as is ready to clear
Up me character every time.

So, yer Honers, I arsts to be cleared o' the charge;
An' I think yet should say, at the time,
Me respectable name is quite free frum all blame
In connection with thievin' an' crime.
Fer me great repitation's at stake, in a way;
It's a thing as I'm anxious ter keep;
Fer I never been once in the - Wot's that?
SIX MUNCE!
But, yer Honers, I got them things cheap!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Demon Milk

'Yer honor, please!' the prisoner said,
'It isn't wot you think.
To look on wine when it is red
Or alco'olic drink
Is not among me little ways.
I been teetotal all me days.

It ain't the wine, it ain't the beer,
It ain't the gin-an'-two
That bows me 'ead in sorrer 'ere.
'Tain't no fermented brew
That druv me on to sin an' strife.
Hark: 'Ere's the story of me life.

When I was just a little kid
I was a model child.
Wot I was tole to do I did,
Reel innercint an' mild.
But, bein' wise, an' unlike some,
At one year old I 'owled for rum.

Me nurse, wot was a strict t.t.
Aimed my young soul to bilk,
An' every day she flooded me
Wiv quarts an' quarts of milk.
Oh, 'ow the stuff coursed thro' each vein
An' set on fire me tiny brain.

At five, as well may be believed,
I was a little tough;
For by that then I 'ad conceived
A cravin' for the stuff.
I swiped it from each neighbor's door,
An' roamed the district seekin' more.

The cravin', sir, it got me down,
When I grew to a man;
I raided dairies thro' the town,
Pinched bottle, billy-can,

An' never could resist no'ow
The fascination of a cow.

It ain't the rum, it ain't the beer
Oh, 'ow I wish it was!
That brings me ignominy 'ere.
'Ave pity, sir, becos
It was the demon milk, I vows,
That made me pinch that 'erd of cows.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Dictator

Avaunt! What news is this I hear
Of portent grim and sinister?
Is he, whose words insult mine ear,
A mere, upstart Prime Minister?

Odds fish! These fellows hitherto
Wore no demeanor critical;
But, cap in hand, have sought my view
On all affairs political.

'Sdeath! Has the caitiff not the sense
To be polite and affable
Like others, whose meek diffidence,
At times, was even laughable?

Aha! I made them sore afraid!
They gave my schemes the preference,
And murmured: 'Thank you, Mister Wade,'
With low and seemly deference.

Then, I had but to raise my hand,
And ev'ry Fed'ral min-i-on
Sprang hastily to my command,
And bowed to my opin-i-on.

'Twas I that granted them the site
To build their pesky capital;
For, if approached with mien polite.
I'm not a fearsome chap at all.

'Twasq I dictated all their laws
And made State Frights substantially
Their shibboleth; I marked the flaws,
What time they schemed financially.

I bade them to the Conference;
They came with meek humility;
And there I filled them with immense
Respect for my ability.

But now, this upstart Fisher man,
Intent on irritating me,
Has dared to moot a Fed'ral plan
Without conciliating me.

Zounds! I have spoken! And I speak
With ominous obscurity.
Let him beware, I say! . . . Next week:
'Tis pregnant with - futurity.

Next week! Be warned! Here, in my sleeve
Are certain things mysterious.
It they be loosened, by my leave. . . .
Aha! It will be serious!

O, I have words of weight and stress
To tickle your auriculars.
Enough! . . . Watch handbills and the press
For further grim particulars.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Dinkum Aussie Block

What have we missed? Now he returns no more
We are left with but our blindness to deplore,
But, concentrating on his spats instead,
Missed all the lure of that impressive head.
Caricaturists, gazing at his feet,
Drew little else, and deemed the sketch complete;
Likewise cartoonists, whose gaunt fingers crept
Unconsciously to limn him as they slept.

And we poor Aussies of the rough hewn 'dile,'
Think to salve our vanity the while,
Who said: 'Though we've a gargoyle for a face,
At least 'tis typical of our strong race'
Where are we now? Where is our last excuse
For owning features so unlike a Bruce?
The Bruce, round whom admiring artists flock
Because he owns the dinkum Aussie block.

He kept his block; and keeping it became
A classic type to spread his country's fame.
While we poor groundlings, with our eyes cast down,
Saw only feet to bolster his renown.
Could we not raise our eyes? And now, bereft
Of pride, we've but this consolation left;
Still humble members we - plain as we are
Of that proud race that claims him avatar.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Disagreeable Musician

'E wouldn't play the flute; the sulky cow.
An', after all the trouble that we took
To try an' cheer, 'is spirits up some'ow,
'E jes' sat there an' slung a glarsy look
To orl the crowd. The diserbligin' coot!
'E wouldn't play the flute.

After we'd done our gilt in on the spread
Fish from the Dago joint, an' bottled beer,
An' froot, an' 'am, an' saverloys an' bread
'E wouldn't eat. Jes' shook 'is silly 'ead.
An' though we begged 'im for some choonful toot,
'E wouldn't play the flute.

I puts it to yeh: Wuz we actin' fair?
Wot more could neighbors do to cheer a bloke?
We knoo they 'e 'ad troubles fer to bear,
An' jes called in to 'ave a friendly joke.
An', though we tempted 'im with 'am an' froot,
'E wouldn't play the flute.

There wuz Flash Liz, an' me, an' Ginger Mick.
An' Mother Gumphy frum the corner store.
An' Bill the Rabbit-o, an' Dirty Dick,
An' Nan the Nark, an' 'arf a dozzing more.
But strike! It seemed the comp'ny didn't soot!
'E wouldn't play the flute.

I want yer dead straight griffen. Wuz we right?
Wuz it unneighborly to look 'im up
An' 'ave a little beano on the quite?....
Fer Grief an' 'im wuz cobbors on that night.
But there 'e sat, like 's if 'e'd taken root,
An' wouldn't play the flute.

We sung a song er two to give 'im 'eart,
'An' jes' to show yeh wot a nark 'e wuz,
'E wouldn't sing. 'E wouldn't take no part.
'E wouldn't eat no matter wot we does.
'E wouldn't drink, 'e wouldn't touch the froot.
Or play 'is flamin' flute.

A blimed wet blankit at our little feast.
Thet's wot 'e wuz. 'E jes sat there an' stared
Straight out afore 'im. Wouldn't take the least
Account o' wot we did. 'E'd never cared
If we wuz rooned wif buyin' fish an' froot.
'E wouldn't play the flute.

Aw, it wuz crook! I swear I never seen
So mean a coot. An' 'e could play a treat
Play like a blinded angel, for 'e'd been
A star pufformer - played afore the Queen!
An', though 'e knoo we knoo of 'is repute,
'E wouldn't play the flute.

We knoo 'e'd been a bonzer in 'is day
Afore 'e struck the slum in Scrooge's Lane.
I've orfen 'eard it said 'e useter play
In some swell orchestrer fer fancy pay.
An' there 'e sat, in 'is ole shabby soot,
An' wouldn't play the flute.

We knoo 'e'd struck tough luck an' drifted down
'Im an' 'is missis - till they come to live
On 'arf o' nothink in our part o' town.
It weren't no fault of ours that they wuz driv
Frum bad to worse, till they wuz destichoot.
'E wouldn't play the flute.

'E wouldn't play. Jes shook 'is silly 'ead.
We done our best to cheer 'im, fer we knoo

'Is wife wuz lyin' in the nex' room, dead.
Died 'cause of sooicide, the neighbors said.
But, spite of all we done, the selfish brute,
'E wouldn't play the flute.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Disillusioned Fuse

Beneath a lamp in Spring-street, on a recent calm spring night,
I came unwittingly upon a most pathetic sight;
A sorry spectacle of woe - a limp, despondent Bloke
Who leaned against a post and sobbed and said his heart was broke!
'I've lorst me trust in 'uman men; I've done me dash ter-day;
Fer my own cobber's done me in, and guv me game away!'

'Nay, nay,' said I, 'cheer up, good Bloke. The prospect may look blue;
But Fate is wont to deal hard knocks to folk like me and you.
Remember, men have fought and won an uphill fight before,
Pray, tell me what's befallen you that you should grieve so sore.
Say, has your wife deserted you, or have you lost your tin?'
But still the Bloke said bitterly: 'Me cobber's done me in!'

'Me moniker's Deakook,' he said, 'but blokes calls me 'The Fuse.'
(Oh, 'struth! I nearly dropped me bundle when I 'eard the noos!)
I gets a job o' work to do - a real soft cop it wus,
With no foreman over me ter see 'ow much I does,
Excep' some coves they calls the Press - a noisy sorter crew
Thet allus nags an' growls at yer no matter watcher do.

'Some wanted this, some wanted that, an' uvers wanted bofe.
Thinks I, 'Between 'em all it's up ter me ter do a loaf.'
So I jus' took ter sittin' round all day an' crackin' jokes,
An' dealin' out a bit o' stoush ter Opposition blokes.
There wus a press cove called the HAGE took ter me frum the first;
But blimey' - (Here the poor Bloke sobbed as though his heart would burst.)

'Yuss, frum the first 'e took ter me, an' we wus goin' fine,
Until I come ter look on 'im as quite a pal o' mine.
Fer when 'e sez, 'You'll 'ave ter graft on this 'ere job, yer know,'
I winks an' murmurs 'Dicken,' an' 'e winks an' sez 'Righto!'
An' when I jus' perten's ter graft 'e cracks 'e doesn't see;
So I jus' grins an' winks at 'im, an' 'e jus' winks at me.

'O, blimey! Them was golding days, wif not a stroke ter do
Excep' ter line up ev'ry week an' dror me bloomin' screw.
O' course, ther's some thet chips at me an' bellers in a rage;
But I jus' grins an' tips the wink ter 'im they calls the HAGE.

An' 'e speaks up quite serious: "Ow kin I work,' sez 'e,
'When these 'ere Opposition blokes are all obstructin' me?'

'My oath, it wus an orlright cop! I thort I'd struck it rich.
'Ow could I know' (again he sobbed) 'thet 'e would crool me pitch?
One day 'e sez, quite sudding like, 'This job must be put thro','
An' I jus' winks an' murmurs, 'Dicken,' like I useter do.
But strike! You could 'ave outed me in one, when, 'fore I knowed,
'E turns around on me and sez, quite narsty, 'You be blowed!'

"You'll 'ave ter get ter work,' 'e sez, 'on this 'ere job, or leave.
Fer w'y,' 'e sez, 'I'm sick o' this 'ere game o' make-believe.
Yer jus' perten' ter work,' 'e sez. 'Yer're loafin' day an' night.
Don't grin an' wink at me,' 'e sez, 'yer blanky hippercryte!
Wot are yer 'ere fer anny way? Wot did we pay yer for?
We wants more solid graft,' 'e sez, 'an' less infernal jore!'

'An' that wus 'im I called me pal - me cobber staunch an' true!
'E turns around on me like that an' gives me graft ter do!
Graft, w'ich was the mean sorter thing I allays 'ad despised.
Oh, 'ow wus I ter know 'e wus a sorter John disguised?
'E let me loaf fer munce and munce, an' sets me workin' now.
An', blimey, Mister, I would work, but, 'struth, I dunno 'ow!

'I dunno 'ow ter do the work; an' spare me, if I did,
I couldn't go ter do it, 'cos me doctor 'as forbid.
'E sez that I'm worn out in ev'ry part excep' me cheek;
An' if I start ter graft I'll go ter pieces in a week.
An' if I lose me job I'll 'ave no tucker, bed or roof.
For w'y? Me cobber's done me in! 'E's gone and told the troof.'

I tried to soothe the stricken Bloke, and still his mournful din;
But yet he murmured brokenly, 'Me cobber's done me in!'
And if you roam in Spring-street when the House adjourns at night,
You'll probably encounter this most pitiable sight.
He leans against his post and sobs, prostrated by the news
The Bloke whose cobber did him in, the disillusioned Fuse.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Dominant Male

Your place is by my side, my dear,
A-holding of my hand
When I am feeling rather queer
And hard to understand;
Not 'mid that fierce forensic crew
Who argue in the courts;
But doing all that you can do
When I am out of sorts.

To me it all seems very clear:
Yours to submit and bow;
Mine to command and domineer.
Your place is by my side, my dear,
A-stroking of my brow,
Consoling me for all my ills
My proud position brings.
The while you find vicarious thrills
Midst all the humbler things.

Your place is by my side, my sweet;
For you, so weak and frail,
Must bear the burden and the heat
Of troubles that assail
The lord and master moaning here;
You may not toil alone,
But ever by my side, my dear,
To soothe me when I moan.

To me it all seems very plain:
While I am strong, I'm free.
But when I feel a little pain
Your place is by my side again
To calm and comfort me.
But if you went out on your own,
And left me in my pride,
What could I do, dear, all alone?
Your place is at my side.

The Dove Has A Word

With a sprig in my beak, I repeatedly seek
For a spot where a poor bird may rest,
While tumultuous man strives in vain for a plan
That may build me a permanent nest.
But I'm sick of this search. All I ask is a perch
In a cope, neither gaudy nor grand;
And they need me, they say in a 'passionate' way;
But as soon as I venture to land
There's a clashing of scabbards; a barking of dogs
And I'm off once again to the ambient fogs.

I'd a job long ago - for old Noah, you know
And I hadn't much trouble with that.
But this mechanised age makes the searching a rage
For a synthetic Mont Ararat.
I have sought me a home o'er Locarno and Rome,
O'er Geneva, week after drear week;
I have hovered and wheeled and while the nations appealed
But as soon as a haven I seek
There's a beating of drums, and a yelling of fear,
And I'm off once again to the calm stratosphere.

And now sounds a cooing, a tentative wooing,
Where Italy's olive groves gleam
And they press a bland oil from the fruits of their soil.
Is it olive they offer? Or, wait - they proffer
That oil named for Pollux's twin
That unguent, whose use 'mid Rome's rashly obtuse,
Helped the Fascist ideal to win?
If 'tis this, I am off to the cradle of stars
For a home with old bluff, unequivocal Mars!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Down-Hill Track

The dawnin' of prosperity
Recalls (said old George Jones)
When I was young, a song we sung,
In none too sober tones,
When easy, breezy days were here,
An' cash was wildly spent.
Small good it done to anyone;
But this is how it went:

'Oh, toil with a will to the summit of the hill.
It's the luggin' an' the tuggin' does the trick,
But be careful of the dropp when you've labored to the top,
An' the fool who makes the pace too quick.
For there's more loads spilled, an' there's more men killed,
Where the road runs to the valley down below;
So, restrain that eager itchin'; sit well back into the britchin'.
Go slow, Sonny-lad, go slow!

I've lived me life (said old George Jones)
An' learned me lesson well:
The pampered flesh clothes no old bones,
As history's headstones tell
The 'Champagne Charlies' of my day,
The short an' merry run
High livin's tucked more men away
Than hard times ever done.

Oh, dig in yer toes where the up'ard track it goes.
It's the strivin' an' the drivin' does the trick.
But take it steady, son, when yer on the down'ard run;
'Tis the fool who makes the pace too quick.
For the most men trips when the down grade dips,
An' there's more stones a'lurkin' for your toe.
Save yer wind an' spare yer muscle for the next long uphill tussle.
Go slow, Sonny-lad, go slow!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Drama

Ah, well, the thing that lived lives on,
And who are we to say it nay?
When Vandal and when Goth had gone,
Long, long beyond great Caesar's day,
The Arts that sought for heights sublime,
Still scaled Olympus, scorning time.

And we who tread this little earth,
Seeking for profit or for fame,
And count one life's poor efforts worth
The meed of all the world's acclaim -
How do we count? What do we bring
To earth's great final reckoning?

Oh, are we not as little boys
Striving to conquer sea and air,
Playing a while with futile toys
To fight the bogey of despair?
While, in the end, invention's lure
Finds us relief - but never cure.

Invention? Men may, late or soon,
Thro' high ambition's urge, aspire,
And, so aspiring, win the boon
Of great and ultimate desire.
But art? Or talkies? Nothing loth,
I'm game to own there's room for both.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Dream And The Cup

Here my fancy finished; so,
Dreaming, I could clearly see
How he galloped. This was no
Spectacle of misery.

There I gazed, upon my pet
Leading ev'ry other horse.

I can see the picture yet.

Later I was at the course.

I can see the picture yet:

Leading ev'ry other horse.

There I gazed upon my pet
Spectacle of misery!

How he galloped! This was no
Dreaming! I could clearly see
Here, my fancy finished - so!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Drought King's Trumpeter

Said old Pete, the Pensioner:

'I met him down the road

Where, twixt the shadders of the gums,

The silver moonlight flowed.

His skin was white like shrivelled grass,

His eyes was eyes o' flame.

He was the Drought King's trumpeter,

An' tooted as he came.

He tooted on a holler bone, of some thing dead o' thirst,

Like dry winds a-moanin' low. Then into song he burst:

'Ho! The Drought King's a-comin, as he came to men afore,

Out of his home within the sun. They're flingin' wide the door.

Then shall Folly flee before him an' Destruction spread behind.

He comes to purify the earth an' chasten humankind. . . .'

I saw the Drought King's trumpeter as plain as I see you.

An' not a dropp inside o' me - save, maybe, one or two.'

Said old Pete, 'I saw him there

Underneath the moon,

He tooted on his holler bone

An' danced a rigadoon.

I took one look into his face

Then fled into the night;

I fell in thro' my old hut door

An' banged an' barred it tight.

But thro' the night I heard him there; the way he keened an' cried,

The callin' of the curlew was sweet melody beside.

'Ho! The Drought King's a-comin' from his home within the sun

To lay his curse upon the earth for sins that men have done.

Grace ye had an' gifts ye had, but gambled 'em away

An' schemed to make a mockery of many a fruitful day. . . .'

I tell yeh, man, 'twas not the wind! I heard him at my door.

An' ne'er a dropp inside o' me - save maybe, three or four.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Drovers

Out across the spinifex, out across the sand,
Out across the saltbush to Never Never land
That's the way the drovers go, jogging down the track -
That's the way the drovers go. But how do they come back?
Back across the saltbush from Never Never land.
Back across the spinifex, back across the sand.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Dusky Wood-Swallow

Surely must you know me,
Friendly and content;
All my actions show me
Freely confident;
With my band of toilers,
When the blue days smile:
Little Jacky Martin
Come to stay a while.

Every town and village
Knows me, every farm.
Mine no wish to pillage,
Mine no will to harm;
Busy in the orchard,
My pest-destroying band:
Little Jacky Martin
Come to lend a hand.

Suddenly appearing
In far forest land
When you've cut a clearing,
Lo, I am at hand,
Wheeling, soaring floating
Where the new fields bask;
Little Jacky Martin
Come to aid the task.

In the chilly weather
See us in the trees,
Huddled up together
Like the swarming bees.
Awing again and toiling
When the chill days end;
Little Jacky Martin
Everybody's friend.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Eastern Shrike-Tit

I am brightly alert and exceedingly pert,
And my livery's easily seen;
With a bright golden breast and a black-and-white crest,
And a back of indefinite green.
A conspicuous bird; and, I give you my word,
I am neither incautious nor shy.
Native wit may be read in the cock of my head
And the glint in my shrewd little eye.

'Ho, knock at the door, knock at the door,'
I shout from the top of a tree.
The Bushland's soprano, but never 'piano':
'Fortissimo' ever for me.
But my repertoire's long; and I've many a song,
When Spring is abroad in the land;
And, whatever my call, 'tis the clearest of all,
And as sweet as the best in the band.

I take life with zest; and, when building my nest,
Then the scientist wakens in me.
I work with a will, with my stout little bill,
And I peel the green bark from a tree.
Then I wait, when that's done, till the heat of the sun
Curls a neat little hook at the end;
So, when woven and bound, there's a home, strong and sound,
On which any wise bird can depend.

Ho, cheery and bright, with a heart ever light,
I sing to the joy of the day;
And my toil, high above, is a labor of love,
For I turn every task into play.
With my confident air, I am here, I am there,
With my proud little head full of lore,
A melodious note ever swelling my throat,
I'm an optimist. 'Knock at the door!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Elusive New Zoo Gnu

They had a new gnu at the Zoo
And nobody knew.
Tho' the keeper, they say, had a clue;
And that's probably true,
Since he knew a new gnu was due,
And well he knew, too,
That the mother would hide it from view,
As a natural gnu
Will do.

For the instinct, innate in the gnu,
Known only to few
Is to hide a new gnu lest it rue
What ill-doers do.
Why should nature, we wonder, imbue
A beast like a gnu
With such caution? This fact, hitherto,
Few knew to be true.
Did you?

But they've found it at last at the Zoo -
Such a shy little gnu,
White of tail and the coat that it grew
Of indefinite hue.
And now, I suppose, a long queue
Will be waiting to view
This nice little new Zoo gnu.
Such sights ever drew
Quite a crew.

But who knew the new gnu at the Zoo
For the first day or two?
Who guessed where 'twas hidden, and who,
As new rumors flew,
Ever thought, ever dreamed ever drew
Some vague hint, or grew
Suspicious? Where was he? Who knew?
Not the crane, not the white cockatoo
Who ejaculates, 'How do you do?'

Not the apes all emblazoned in blue,
Not the owl with his dreary 'Too-woo!'
Nor tapir, nor tiger who slew
His prey 'mid the ginat bamboo
Once, back of Bengal, in Kooloo;
Not elephant, not kangaroo,
None knew; none knew;
Not aman, not a beast in the Zoo
From its hub to its furthrest purlieu . . .
But the new gnu knew.
Too true!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The End Of Joi

They climbed the trees . . . As was told before,
The Glugs climbed trees in the days of yore,
When the oldes tree in the land to-day
Was a tender little seedling - Nay,
This climbing habit was old, so old
That even the cheeses could not have told
When the past Glug people first began
To give their lives to the climbing plan.
And the legend ran
That the art was old as the mind of man.

And even the mountains old and hoar,
And the billows that broke on Gosh's shore
Since the far-off neolithic night,
All knew the Glugs quite well by sight.
And they tell of a perfectly easy way:
For yesterday's Glug is the Glug of to-day.
And they climb the trees when the thunder rolls,
To solemnly salve their shop-worn souls.
For they fear the coals
That threaten to frizzle their shop-worn souls.

They climbed the trees. 'Tis a bootless task
To say so over again, or ask
The cause of it all, or the reason why
They never felt happier up on high.
For Joi asked why; and Joi was a fool,
And never a Glug of the fine old school
With fixed opinions and Sunday clothes,
And the habit of looking beyond its nose,
And treating foes
With the calm contempt of the One Who Knows.

And every spider who heaves a line
And trusts to his luck when the day is fine,
Or reckless swings from an awful height,
He knows the Glugs quite well by sight.
'You can never mistake them,' he will say;
'For they always act in a Gluglike way.

And they climb the trees when the glass points fair,
With circumspection and proper care,
For they fear to tear
The very expensive clothes they wear.'

But Joi was a Glug with a twisted mind
Of the nasty, meditative kind.
He'd meditate on the modes of Gosh,
And dared to muse on the acts of Splosh;
He dared to speak, and, worse than that,
He spoke out loud, and he said it flat.
'Why climb?' said he. 'When you reach the top
There's nowhere to go, and you have to stop,
Unless you drop.
And the higher you are the worse you flop.'

And every cricket that chirps at eve,
And scoffs at the folly of fools who grieve,
And the furtive mice who revel at night,
All know the Glugs quite well by sight.
For, 'Why,' they say, 'in the land of Gosh
There is no one else who will bow to Splosh.
And they climb the trees when the rain pelts down
And feeds the gutters that thread the town;
For they fear to drown,
When floods are frothy and waters brown.'

Said the Glug called Joi, 'This climbing trees
Is a foolish art, and things like these
Cause much distress in the land of Gosh.
Let's stay on the ground and kill King Splosh!'
But Splosh, the king, he smiled a smile,
And beckoned once to his hangman, Guile,
Who climbed a tree when the weather was calm;
And they hanged poor Joi on a Snufflebust Palm;
Then they sang a psalm,
Did those pious Glugs 'neath the Snufflebust Palm.

And every bee that kisses a flow'r,
And every blossom, born for an hour,
And every bird on its gladsome flight,
All know the Glugs quite well by sight.

For they say, 'Tis a simple test we've got:
If you know one Glug, why, you know the lot!
So, they climbed a tree in the bourgeoning Spring,
And they hanged poor Joi with some second-hand string.
'Tis a horrible thing
To be hanged by Glugs with second-hand string.

Then Splosh, the king, rose up and said,
'It's not polite; but he's safer dead.
And there's not much room in the land of Gosh
For a Glug named Joi and a king called Splosh!'
And every Glug flung high his hat,
And cried, 'We're Glugs! and you can't change that!'
So they climbed the trees, since the weather was cold,
While the brazen bell of the city tolled
And tolled, and told
The fate of a Glug who was over-bold.

And every cloud that sails the blue,
And every dancing sunbeam too,
And every sparkling dewdropp bright
All know the Glugs quite well by sight.
'We tell,' say they, 'by a simple test;
For any old Glug is like the rest.
And they climb the trees when there's weather about,
In a general way, as a cure for gout;
Tho' some folks doubt
If the climbing habit is good for gout.'

So Joi was hanged, and his race was run,
And the Glugs were tickled with what they'd done.
And, after that, if a day should come
When a Glug felt extra specially glum,
He'd call his children around his knee,
And tell that tale with a chuckle of glee.
And should a little Glug girl or boy
See naught of a joke in the fate of Joi,
Then he'd employ
Stern measures with such little girl or boy.

But every dawn that paints the sky,
And every splendid noontide high,

All know the Glugs so well, so well.
'Tis an easy matter, and plain to tell.
For, lacking wit, with a candour smug,
A Glug will boast that he is a Glug.
And they climb the trees, if it shines or rains,
To settle the squirming in their brains,
And the darting pains
That are caused by rushing and catching trains

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Eternal Circle

Now, a visitor from somewhere right outside this Mundane Ball
Do not ask me where he came from, for that point's not clear at all;
For he might have been an angel, or he might have come from Mars,
Or from any of the other of the fixed or unfixed stars.
As regards his mental make-up he was much like you or me;
And he toured about the country, just to see what he could see.

Well, this superhuman person was of most inquiring mind,
And 'twas noted, from his questions, he was very far from blind,
And the striking thing about him was his stern, compelling eye,
That demanded Truth ungarbled when he paused for a reply.
And, despite the mental wriggles of the folk he interviewed,
When they placed the Truth before him she was ab-so-lutely nude.

At our Civilised Society he stared in some amaze,
As he muttered his equivalent for 'Gosh!' or 'Spare me days!'
For our cherished modes and customs knocked him sideways, so to speak.
'To solve,' said he, 'this mystery, now whither shall I seek?
For a sane and sound solution I must question those on high,'
Said this extra-mundane being with the stern, compelling eye.

Now, his methods were intelligent - I confess,
For he started with our Politics, religion and the Press.
Thus, he read a morning paper through, intently, ev'ry leaf,
Then hied him out to interview the editor-in-chief:
'They say that Truth lives in a well,' he muttered as he went;
'But her well is not an inkwell, I will lay my last lone cent.'

It chanced he found the editor unguarded and alone
At the office of the paper - 'twas the MORNING MEGAPHONE.
'Now, I take it,' said the visitor, 'you represent the Press,
That great Public Educator?' And the pressman murmured, 'Yes.'
'Yet in yesterday's edition I perceived a glaring lie!
How's this?' He fixed the pressman with his stern, compelling eye.

Then the editor he stammered, and the editor he 'hemmed'
And muttered things like 'Gracious me!' and likewise, 'Well, I'm demned!'
But the lady Truth came tripping, all undressed and unashamed;
'Oh, I own it!' cried the editor. 'But how can I be blamed?'

There's our blighted advertisers and our readers - Spare my grief!
But we've got to please the public!' moaned the editor-in-chief.

'Now to interview a statesman and consider his reply,'
Said this strange Select Committee with the stern, compelling eye.
And the Honorable Member for Mud Flat he chanced to find
In a noble Spring-street building of a most palatial kind.
And the Honorable Member viewed his visitor with awe,
For he surely had the most compelling eye you ever saw.

'Now, then, tell me,' said the visitor; 'you are a man of State,
And you blither on the platform of this Nation grand and great;
Of this noble Land's great destiny I've heard you talking hard,
But, whene'er it comes to voting, it's the 'claims' of your back yard.
Do you represent the Nation, as you often say you do,
Or a hen-roost or a cow-yard, or a parish-pump or two?'

Then the politician stuttered, and the politician stared,
But to voice his patriotic platitudes he felt too scared;
For the lady Truth insisted, and he blurted, 'It's the Votes!
You must blame the dashed electors when you see us turn our coats!
Our constituents control us. You must please remember that.
And we've got to please the public!' whined the Member for Mud Flat.

'Now to look into religion,' said the visitor, 'I'm told
I may get much information from a Wowser-of-the-Fold.'
And he sought him out a Wowser of the very sternest breed:
'Sweet Charity, they tell me, is the keynote of your creed.
And of mercy for the sinner, and of succor for the weak
>From the pulpit, on a Sunday, I have often heard you speak;
Yet Charity is turned to Spite, and Scorn becomes your creed
When they speak of giving bounty to weak Magdalene in need.'

Then the Wowser hesitated, and the Wowser rolled his eyes,
And sought in vain to call to mind some Wowserish replies.
But the lady truth came peeping, and the Wowser cried, 'O, Lor!'
And he hastily drew the blind and softly closed the door.
'She is naked!' gasped the Wowser. 'Oh, where are the hussy's clothes?
If my dear brethren saw me now! Oh, what do you suppose!'

'The Truth!' exclaimed the querist with the stern, compelling eye.
'Tis my flock!' exclaimed the Wowser. 'Oh, I cannot tell a lie!

My flock of virgins sour and chaste, and matrons undeceived,
They would hound me from the pulpit if I said what I believed!
I dot on notoriety! The Truth it must be told.
Oh, I've got to please my public!' moaned the Wowser-of-the-Fold.

'Now, this Public; I must nail it,' said the queer Inquisitor.
"Tis the favor of this mighty god they all seem eager for;
And they always strive to please him, and his sentiments express
In their Parliaments and Pulpits and their organs of the Press.
And I'll get a sure solution if I have the luck to meet -
What is this he's called? - the Man, or Bloque, or Fellow-in-the-Street.'

A Fellow-in-the-Street was found, and typical was he,
An eager hunter of the thing that men call £. s. d.
He wore a strained expression on his features, dull and flat,
Also bifurcated coat-tails, and a little hard round hat.
His talk was mainly platitudes, when it wasn't shop or horse,
And he had some fixed opinions and a bank account, of course.

'Now, then, tell me,' said the visitant, 'What are your private views
On you Politics, Religion and the Sheet that gives you news?
I have heard a lot about you, and a deal I'd like to know
Of why you work, and what you think, and where you hope to go.
I feel assured that I shall find the Truth in your reply.'
And he fixed the foolish Fellow with his stern, compelling eye.

The Fellow hemmed and hawed a bit, the Fellow looked about,
And the lady Truth smiled sweetly while he murmured, as in doubt.
'Well, re-al-ly, my views upon those things I can't express.
You must ask our Politicians and the Parsons and the Press.
But as for me - well, candidly, you've got me off my beat;
For I don't know much about it!' said the Fellow-in-the-Street.

'Tis the Circle!' cried the visitor. 'Tis the same old crazy game
Right through the trackless Milky Way to there from whence I came.
The Earth is round, the Moon is round, and Jupitre and Mars,
Their orbit's all, and Saturn's rings, and countless million stars.
All throughout the constellations I have journeyed, to and fro,
But ev'rything goes round and round no matter where I go.
All the Universe is circles! All one tantalising twirl!
Oh, is there nothing straight or square in all this cosmic whirl?

And with these strange and cryptic words the Being fled afar,
Back to his native hiding-place - his fixed or unfixed star.
Some say his name was 'Reason,' other hold 'twas 'Intellect':
But as for me I have no views to voice in that respect.
His motives seemed mysterious; I know not how nor why;
I only know he had a stern and most compelling eye.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Exception

I dance upon the wash-house roof,
And fill my hair with straws,
And from my fellows keep aloof.
I'll tell you why. because
The glare in every eye I see,
I hear their talk inane;
For, sure as two and two are three,
All, all are mad as mad can be,
And I alone am sane.

Jones says, if we grow too much bread
The people may not eat;
And Smith declares in nervous dread,
More boots mean more bare feet.
Black says the price of gold must jump
Ere men was rich again.
White says the price of gold must slump;
For all the world is off its chump,
And I alone am sane.

I laugh and stand upon my head
Upon the wash-house roof.
If such an act men did not dread,
I'm sure and certain proof
They'd see me right side up. Why not?
The thing's as plain as plain.
But they look grave and gabble rot,
For all the world is off its dot,
And I alone am sane.

I am the great economist;
I stick straws in my locks;
For I've the truth that all have missed
In this world's paradox.
If all mankind would but agree
(Here lies our only hope)
That two and two must equal three,
They'd all grow sane again, like me;
And I'd stop chewing soap.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Exiles

They were a merrie companie,
Who'd dwelt together all these years;
A little mixed in type, maybe;
Yet prone to mingle now as peers,
For old acquaintance sake; and so,
Bewilderment about them swirled
When told, abruptly, they must go,
From these snug shelves, back to the world.

Bill Sikes wept over Little Nell;
Pickwick and Cratchit cried, 'Too bad!'
Tom Pinch and Fagin said farewell;
Uriah Heep was humbly sad,
And Nickleby and Copperfield
Shook hands and said, 'Good-bye, old man!'
And even Daniel Quilp appealed
To gods of fiction 'gainst the ban.

Smike took his leave of Barney Rudge;
Pecksniff pledged Salry one last cup;
Micawber vowed he would not budge,
For something surely must turn up.
And something surely did; for news
Now spreads among the exiled clan
That some old friend, with kindly views,
Proposes to reverse the ban.

Sam Weller kisses Sally Brass;
Alf Jingle hugs old Bumble tight;
Scrooge dances with the Vardon lass,
And all are crazy with delight
Again a merrie companie
Or soon to be so, as before.
And Swiveller sighs, and says 'Thanks be,
Safe from my creditors once more!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Expert

Bill? Oh, him ... Well, he's taken a knock.
Real sad when I spoke to him last;
Sufferin' like from a nasty shock.
Just drivin' a wee bit fast
Round a corner - no chance to halt
Skittles a kid on the road.
An' they're tellin' him now it's all his fault,
'Case he didn't observe the Code.

Code? Wot Code? Why, Bill can drive!
An' they're tellin' him now he was rash.
It's his skill at the wheel kept him alive
And out of many a smash.
And now, this luck. Yes; the youngster died,
But the evidence plainly showed
That Bill was fair on the proper side,
What more could he do with the Code?

Why, I've seen Bill drive on just two wheels,
Miss trees by a coat of paint.
An' now, it's rotten the way he feels
Broke up when they made complaint:
Callin' him careless. Careless? Him?
Why, I've seen him motor a load
At eighty an hour, an' the light all dim.
He didn't learn that from a Code.

But there you are ... One accident more,
One more kid, chancin' to roam,
Knocked stiff in sight of his own house door
One more grief-stricken home
An' poor Bill, eyes still fixed ahead
On that small, still form by the road,
Sayin' over an' over, 'He's dead! He's dead! . . .'
Well - Maybe there is good in a Code.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Expert And The Apricot

The orchardist, with hope aglow,
Sets out a crop of fruit to grow
And sell it wisely where he can,
Like any other business man;
And he strives to make a contract fair and free.
But, 'Fie!' exclaims the Government,
'Have we not experts heaven-sent
Who, by their schemes an shrewd advice,
Will win you twice the market price?'
(And the bloom begins to burgeon on the tree.)

Then, lo, with docket and with file,
The studious experts toy the while.
With rain and sun, the season goes,
The blossom falls, the fruit it grows
As bureaucrats debate and disagree.
They look up section forty-two
And regulation Seven Q
All eagerly upon the scent
Of written rule and precedent.
(And the apricot is hardening on the tree.)

The orchardist toils in the sun;
He prunes and delves; and, one by one
The trees are sprayed with Parls Green,
Or, mayhap, soap or kerosene,
Or some vile mixture dear to chemistry.
Meantime, a sale the experts seek,
Not hurriedly, all in a week,
But in a manner dignified,
As fits such men of knowledge wide.
(And the apricot is ripening on the tree.)

Gravely they ponder this and that,
While buyers wait upon the mat;
And, as the smiling autumn comes,
They chew their pens and suck their thumbs.
And argue over Section Ninety D,
And while the harried orchardist

Grieves for the market that he missed.
They suddenly wake up and say:
'We have agreed at last! Hooray!'
(But the apricot is rotting 'neath the tree.)

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Faith Of Old George Jones

War raged around this troubled world,
When I was but a lad,
And into battle men were hurled,
As some ambition mad
Moved kings on their unstable thrones
To bring the world unease.
Mad days, I'll grant (said old George Jones),
But not as mad as these.

They fought for power, fought for gain,
For land and plunder then;
They fought for ends that they made plain
And understood of men.
But in this strangely restless age,
And this world's changing scene,
Men fight and die while nations rage,
For visions half unseen.

They fight for theories untried,
Ideals, untested creeds,
And seek their ends thro' fratricide,
While hate's rank passion breeds.
On this red soil . . . Must I, a man
Unlettered, pierce the mist,
And bind myself so to some strange plan
Fascist or Socialist?

I am a man. It is enough.
I ply a peaceful trade.
What should I know of this queer stuff
Of which their dreams are made?
Small is the wisdom mankind owns,
But, as his knowledge grows,
It seems to me (said old George Jones),
His hard-won wisdom goes.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Faith Of Old George Jones [2]

Long faces, hangin' lips an' eyes without a smile,
Meegrims an' mulligrubs, mournfulness an' moans,
Faith in the future gone to glory for the while
I've seen it all a score o' times (said old George Jones).
I seen it all a year ago, if you will but recall:
I scoffed at it an' laughed at it while you was sittin' mum,
An' now a little twelve months has gone an' changed it all
Hard times is heavy, but the good times come.

See-saw, up an' down, life's like that,
Tho' memories is short like, an' men don't heed;
But have a bit of grey stuff beneath yer ole brown hat
An' sit a while an' think a bit - that's what men need.
Think a bit of yesterday an' what you used to be
Peerin' in the future with a sick, sad eye.
Well, here's a bit of future, it ain't such misery;
An' there's heaps more a'comin' in the sweet by-an'-by.

Hard times is heavy, but the good times come
See-saw, up an' down, life's like that.
I told you so a-yesterday when you was sittin' mum;
I'm tellin' you again today when times grow fat.
So, what's the use of playin' at the pessimistic trade
Meegrims an' mulligrubs, mournfulness an' moans?
Faith in the future, it has never been betrayed,
I've proved it all a score o' times (said old George Jones).

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Faithless Fantods

Bill Barcoo was a station 'and - 'e was a station 'and,
And grafted all the year like Pharaoh's Jews.
But all 'is pay, I grieve ter say, 'e blewed - you understand
This station 'and
Was drinky in his views;
An' 'e was wont ter lash it up on booze.

Fer Bill 'e wandered once a year - exactly once a year
Ter bust his cheque at Casey's Bush 'Otel;
An' drank the stuff - more than enough - that Casey sed wus beer.
An' it wus queer:
When 'e wus on a spell
'E used to 'old 'is sides an' larf like 'ell.

No doubt yer've 'eard of Casey's beer - of Casey's fightin' beer,
An' Casey's Three Star Blue Gum Brandy too,
The stuff that makes the crimson snakes when you get on yer ear.
Such visions queer
Were known ter quite a few;
That's why they called the shanty 'Casey's Zoo.'

Large purple frogs that sat an' croaked - jes' looked at yer an' croaked,
Goanners, snakes and spiders without end,
An' sich weird sights distrurbed the nights of such poor bushman bloke
As 'as a soak
In Casey's famous blend
In Casey's fierce an' famous Bushman's Friend.

But, once a year, Bill struck the spot - 'e blithely struck the spot,
An' slung across the bar 'is 'ard-earned cheque;
Then started in to bust 'is tin an' make things fairly 'ot
Until 'e got
Fair loaded to the neck;
An' then Bill looked a proper sort er wreck.

Then 'e begun to see the Zoo - ter gaze at Casey's Zoo.
But with the jims and fantods that 'e seen
'E made quite free. 'Fer,why,' sez 'e, 'I never see but two,
An' one is blue,

An' t'other's sort er green.
They're jes' the same 'ere ev'ry time I've been.'

They wus jes' like ole pals to 'im - like lifelong fren's to 'im.
'E looked to meet 'em ev'ry time 'e came
Ses 'e, 'The blue un's christened Sue; she's uppish-like an' prim;
But t'other, Jim,
'E'll answer to 'is name,
An' feed out of yer 'and, 'e is that tame.'

One time when Bill was on the spree - a real ole rorty spree
'E larfed the 'ole blame time till 'e wus thro'.
We wonders wot noo sort 'e'd got, 'e wus so full er glee.
'You oughter see!'
Ses 'e, when 'e come to.
'Why, blowed if my ole Jim ain't courtin' Sue!'

Bill 'ad but one spree after that - just one more after that.
An' sich another sight I'd grieve ter see,
'E cursed, an' swore, an' raved, an' tore 'is 'air an' foamed, an' spat.
It knocked us flat,
Fer generally 'e,
When on a jag, was merry as could be.

An' after that Bill guv up drink - yes, fairly chucked the drink.
But why, ther' wasn't one among us knoo.
'O, struth!' ses Bill, 'I've 'ad me fill, and so 'ud you, I think
O, strike me pink!
They once wus green an' blue;
But now ther's yaller, red an' purple too!'

But one day Bill 'e chats ter me - in conferdence ter me.
'Yer know,' ses 'e, 'that Jim was courtin' Sue.
'Twas quite a joke ter see that bloke; but, spare me days! - if she
Did not agree!
An' they got married too!
Got hitched up quiet, an' I never knoo!

'I never knoo till my next spree - till my next yearly spree,
An' then, fust thing - the flamin' quadrupids!
I learned them two - my Jim and Sue - was spliced, with twenty-three
In familee!

An', spare me days! SUCH KIDS!
I wouldn't 'ave another drink fer quids!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Fall Of Fitzmickle

Mr Fitzmickle, the martinet,
Rules with an iron rod
His house and home; 'neath its red-tiled dome
He struts like a little tin god.
When Popper says stay, the family stay;
When Popper says go, they go;
And early and late, like the trumpet of Fate,
Sounds the fierce Fitzmicklean 'No!'

Mr Fitzmickle, the martinet,
Came on his small son when
There, listening in to the cricketing din,
He sat as the clock struck ten.
'What? Sporting rubbish? At this hour, too!'
Said he: and his brow grew black.
'Things that I wouldn't do my son musn't do.
Bed, sir! And don't answer me back!'

Mr Fitzmickle, the martinet,
His hand on the wireless switch,
Listened a wile, and a ghost of a smile
His stern face seemed to twitch.
'Another man out!' He paused in doubt,
As he noted the latest score.
'Well, I might as well sit and listen a bit;
But a bare half hour, no more.'

Mr Fitzmickle, the martinet,
Just as the clock struck four,
Weary and worn in the cold, bleak morn
Crept by his small son's door.
And out of the stygian darkness there,
Swift to discover his sin,
A small voice cried from the gloom inside:
'Please Popper. Did our side win?'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Faltering Knight

It knocks me can in, this ere game uv life,
A bloke gets born, grows up, looks round fer fun,
Dreams dilly dreams, then wakes to find a wife
An' fambly round 'im - all 'is young days done.
An', gazin' back, sees in 'is youth a man
Scarce reckernised. It fair knocks in me can!

Ther's me. I never seemed to mark no change
As I mooched on through life frum year to year;
An' yet, at times it seems to me dead strange
That me, uv old, is me, 'oo's sittin' 'ere.
Per'aps it ain't. 'E was a crook young coot,
While I'm a sturdy farmer, growin' froot.

But, all the same, 'e wouldn't back an' fill,
An' argue with 'imself, an' 'esitate,
Once 'e 'ad seen the way. 'E'd find the will
To go an' do the thing 'e 'ad to, straight.
That's 'ow I was; an' now-Ar, strike a light!
Life gits so mixed I can't git nothin' right.

But wot's the use? A bloke 'as got to own,
When once 'e 'as responsibility,
Ther's certin games is better left alone
Wot might be done if 'e was only free.
Ther's certin things - Oh, wot's the flamin' good?
A 'usband alwiz gits misun'erstood!

It's no use hintin'. If yeh want it straight,
Me an' me wife ain't seenin' eye to eye:
All ain't been peace an' 'armony uv late,
An' clouds is comin' up in our clear sky.
I ain't to blame, an' yet, no more's Doreen.
It's jist 'ard Fate 'as shoved 'is oar between.

All marrid blokes will understand me well.
I ain't addressin' no remarks to those
'Oo've learnt but 'arf uv life. The things I tell
Is fer the ears uv fellermen that knows:

Them symperthetic 'usbands 'oo 'ave 'eard
The fog-'orn soundin' in the wifely word.

Fer when stern jooty grips a 'usband's 'eart
(That's me) an' eggs 'im on to start a scene
That's like to tear two 'appy lives apart,
In spite uv all 'er carin' (That's Doreen)
Why, there you 'ave a story that would make
A bonzer movie - with a bit uv fake.

But 'ere's the plot. When my pal, Ginger Mick,
Chucked in 'is alley in this war we won,
'E left things tangled; fer 'e went too quick
Fer makin' last requests uv anyone.
'E jist sez to the world, when last 'e spoke,
'Look after Rose!' . . . 'E was a trustful bloke.

Rose lives in Spadgers Lane. She lived, them days,
Fer Mick's returnin'. When 'e never came,
If she lost 'old, an' took to careless ways,
Well, I ain't sayin' she was much to blame.
An' I don't worry, till I 'ear she's took,
Or thinks uv takin' on to ways that's crook.

Although I'm vegetatin' on a farm,
I gets a city whisper now an' then.
An' when I 'ear she's like to come to 'arm
Amongst a push uv naughty spieler men,
I gets the wind up. This is all I see:
Mick was my cobber; so it's up to me.

That's all I see, quite clear, with my two eyes.
But marrid blokes will understand once more,
When I remarks that marrid blokes is wise
'Oo 'ave the sense to take a squint through four.
Four eyes is needed in reviewin' plans -
Their vision's broader than a single man's.

But when them four eyes sees two ways at once
Gets crossed - Ar, well, ther's things in marrid life
For which a hint's enough fer any dunce.
Ther's certin things between a man an' wife

That can't be quite - But take this fer a fack:
Don't start things uv a mornin'. It ain't tack.

That was me first bad break. I should 'ave seen
The supper things washed up, an' 'elped a bit,
An' then 'ave broke it gently to Doreen,
Promiscus, like I jist 'ad thought uv it.
But I done worse. I blurts wot I'd to say
Upon the mornin' uv a washin' day!

There's gumption fer yeh. eight years I been hitched
Eight years uv trainin', an' I fall down flat!
Like some poor, love-sick softy 'oo gets switched
Fer tellin' 'sweetie' 'e don't like 'er 'at,
When she's jist come frum 'avin' rows no end
About it's trimmin' with 'er dearest friend.

I owns me ta'tic's crook. But, all the same,
Ther' weren't no need fer certin things she said.
Wantin' to do good acts don't call fer blame,
Even on tackless 'usban's, eight years wed.
A bloke 'oo jist suggests a 'armless plan
Don't need remindin' 'e's a marrid man.

'Struth! Don't I know it? Can I well ferget
While I still 'ave two 'ealthy ears to 'ark?
Not that she torks an' mags a lot; but yet
Ther's somethin' in 'er choice uv a remark
That gets there, worse than yappin' all day long,
An' makes me pure intentions look dead wrong.

It seems it ain't right fer a marrid bloke
To rescue maids. I starts to answer back;
But got took up before I 'ardly spoke,
An' innercent designs is painted black.
I calls attention to the knights uv old;
But tin knights an' romance iist leaves 'er cold.

I read 'er meanin' plain in 'er cool eye.
Aw, strike! I ain't admirin' Rose!... Wot?... Me!
But when 'er look sez 'Rats!' where's the reply
A man can give, an' keep 'is dignity?

It can't be done. When they git on that lay,
Wise coves adjourns the meet, an' fades away.

That's wot I done. I gits out uv the 'ouse
All dignified. An', jist to show 'er 'ow
Reel unconcerned I am, I starts to rouse
Me neighbour, Wally Free, about 'is cow
Wot's got in to me cabbages, an' et
Close on a row uv 'em. I'll shoot 'er yet!

(A batchelor 'e is, this Wally Free
A soljer bloke that come this way last year
An' took the little farm nex' door to me.)
When I gets mad, 'e grins frum ear to ear,
An' sez, 'Cool orf,' 'e sez. 'It's plain your wool
'As been pulled 'ard this mornin'.' 'E's a fool!

If 'e don't mend that fence . . . Ar, wot's the good?
I lets 'im go, an' sneaks be'ind the shed,
An' sits there broodin' on a pile uv wood...
Ther's certin things she might 'ave left unsaid.
Ther' wasn't nothin' fer to make 'er go
An' dig up chance remarks uv years ago.

Me problem's this: Either I 'urts Doreen,
By doin' things with which she don't agree,
Or lets Rose slide, an' treats me cobber mean
Ole Ginger Mick, 'oo 'ad no friend but me.
I ain't a ringtail; but, by gum, it's tough.
I loves me wife too much to treat 'er rough.

If I was single . . . 'Struth! 'Oo wants to be?
Fool batchelors can larf their silly larf,
An' kid theirselves they got a pull on me.
I'm out uv sorts, that's all; an' more than 'arf
Inclined to give some coot a crack, right now
Fer pref'rince, some insultin' single cow!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Famine And The Feast

THE FAMINE

Cackle and lay, cackle and lay!
How many eggs did you get to-day?
None in the manger, and none in the shed,
None in the box where the chickens are fed,
None in the tussocks and none in the tub,
And only a little one out in the scrub.
Oh, I say! Dumplings to-day.
I fear that the hens must be laying away.

THE FEAST

Cackle and lay, cackle and lay!
How many eggs did you get to-day?
Two in the manger, and four in the shed,
Six in the box where the chickens are fed,
Two in the tussocks and ten in the tub,
And nearly two dozen right out in the scrub.
Hip, hooray! Pudding to-day!
I think that the hens are beginning to lay.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Farmer's Lament

'The backbone of the country and the salt of all the earth'
That was how they styled us when the farmer had his worth.
But what's his valuation now, when times are pretty thin?

Chorus:

Two bob a dozen, an' the garments given in.

Solo:

We made the country's money an' we paid the country's way,
We raised the wealth for cities from the farm thro' many a day;
But what's the price of farmers now the profits disappeared?

Chorus:

Two bob a dozen, an' a bonus on the beard.

Solo:

They'll pay to patch machinery or cure old Dobbin's sprain;
But they cannot spare a stiver when the farmer gets a pain;
For what's the use o' mendin' him when all he's valued at

Chorus:

Is two bob a dozen, if he's nice an' prime an' fat.

Solo:

But the farmer ain't repinin', tho' his price is down an' out.
There's a good time comin' soon without the smallest doubt;
But, till the world wins sanity, he's got to be content

Chorus:

With two bob a dozen, cash with order ten per cent.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Fate Of A Harpist

There is women, yer Worship, of various kinds:
An' some of 'em's fluffy a' foolish,
An' some is sispicious an' mean in their minds,
An' others fair set-like an' mulish.
There is some, as I owns, is real kind - tho' not many,
As maybe yer Worship 'as coped with - if any.

But wot can you do with a woman wot 'arps?
I am arskin' the Bench, as a man an' a male
Wot sticks to 'er subjeck an' cavils an' carps,
Wot won't be put orf it, but 'ammers an' 'arps
Till you rock like a ship in a gale.
I'm a plain, placid man, an' me patience is vast;
But the patience of angels gits wobbly at last.

For she 'arps on me 'abits, she 'arps in me ears,
She 'arps on me cricket an' listenin' in;
She 'arps an' she 'arps, till I'm full of strange fears;
For I knows there's no end once I 'ear 'er begin.
So, am I to be blamed if I rise in me passion
An' seek for to send 'er where 'arpin's the fashion?

For wot can you do with a woman wot 'arps?
I slung 'er bokays while me 'anger was 'ot.
I was full to the teeth of 'er flats an' 'er sharps;
So I slung 'er bokays, while she 'ammers an' 'arps
(An' them flowers was till in the pot.)
Well, I needn't say more; for she's told all the rest.
But I craves yer man' mercy; an' 'opes for the best.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Fool And The Fire

A fool and a bag in a belt of scrub,
Cloudless skies and the still hot days,
And the countryside's in a mad hubbub;
Terror is here and the world's ablaze.
Five thousand sheep went West today,
Bell's home at the crossing and Casey's pub;
And the cause of it all is a world away;
A fool with a bag who passed the scrub.

An oaf with a match in a mile of grass,
Where yesterday the skies shone clear;
But fury leapt where he came to pass;
And now, ten miles away, comes fear.
Men toil and sweat in the reeking smoke
That curling drifts to a sky of brass.
And now black ruin and homeless folk
Are toll to an oaf in a mile of grass.

If the fool be caught can the fool repay?
What is to do but build again,
And hope for the dawn of a better day,
When folly is shorn from the ways of men;
What is to do but hope and pray.
While the scars heal slow in a blackened land,
That the fool shall no more pass this way
With the seeds of terror in his hand.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Fortunes Of Grandison Lee

Now Percival Gregory Grandison-Lee
He came of a fine old stock.
His sire was an eminent K.C.B,
But Percival never appeared to be
A chip off that shrewd old block.
In spite of the strain
He was weak of brain,
Though a jolly good fellow was he.
And, to tell the truth,
In his gilded youth
His manner of living was free.

Now Percival's father, the elder Lee,
Aspired to the House of Lords;
So he earnestly sought for the £ s. d.
Becoming a prominent guinea-pig, he
Was chairman of numerous Boards.
But the game was rash,
And there came a smash,
And he perished of felo-de-se.
And up to his neck,
In the subsequent wreck
Was Percival Grandison-Lee.

So Percy resigned from the King's armee;
He couldn't maintain the style.
And, after a harrowing period, he
Was faced by the spectre of bank-rupt-cee,
His schedule he had to file.
He smiled through court
Like a hardy sport,
But he sorrowed in privacee;
For an easy job
For a hard-up nob
Isn't growing on every tree.

He touched then for tenners so frequentlee
That the friends of Lee, deceased,
A length procession of loans could see,
And they whispered to one of the Ministree
As Percival's plans increased.
Thus they shipped him off
As a gilded toff
On the staff of a high grandee
To earn his bread
As a figurehead
And a Governor's A.D.C.

In that country of democrats o'er the sea
The cream of Society's cream
They worship a feathered and frilled grandee,
And e'er on his gorgeous A.D.C.
The 'nicest' are ready to beam.
His boots were tight,
And his hat was bright,
And his tie was a fantasee;
And the wealthiest girls -
Society's pearls
Just loved his refulgency.

He strolled in the wake of the high grandee
In his glittering uniform;
At frivols and functions and afternoon tea
He lolled with a manner so easy and free
That he took the girls by storm.
And he wooed a maid
Of the sheep brigade,
One of the squatocracee,
With a station Outback
And a house at Toorak,
And they wedded right merrilee.

Now Percival Gregory Grandison-Lee
In his London club doth dwell;
He squats at his ease through a depute

That idle and valueless absentee,
And says that this land is Hell;
But once every year
For the Cup he's here,
As the master of Bungabaree;
Our well-equipped courses
And galloping horses
Are all that appeal to Lee.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Fowl

A noble lesson this should teach,
Dear children unto you.
If other people's goods you reach,
Of rectitude 'twill be a breach,
Or parsons will your virtues preach,
According to the point of view,
Or to the kind of folks you 'do'.

You steal a chicken off a fence
With wrath the pious shake,
Although you say with eloquence
The owner used it ill, and hence
You kindly sought to recompense
The bird for troubles past, and make
It happier, for Heaven's sake.

But if you are a statesman grand,
And ships and armies raise,
To steel some feeble niggers' land,
To make its folks a Christian band,
To take their moral weal in hand
The Empire echoes with your praise,
And churches bless you all your days.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Free-trade Rabbit Pie

Ses Cullen, the cockie, he ses to me:
'Now, I puts it to you in this way:
If a feller....(Woah, Ginger! Come over, yeh cow!)....
If a feller sets out fer to say
Where he happens to stand in this politics game,
And to reason the why and the how,
He has got to have somethink to back up the same,
As the sayin' is....(Woah there, yeh cow!)

Ses Cullen, the cockie, e ses to me:
'Well, I reasons it out fer yeh so:
There's this 'ere Pertection an' this 'ere....(Woah Nell!
Come over there, Ginger! Way! Woah!)....
There's this 'ere Pertection an' this 'ere Free-trade,
Which I never 'ave quite understood,
Till I figures it out be the blunders I made
While I scratched fer me own livelihood.

'When first I took up me selection out 'ere
I was votin' Free-trade pretty strong!
An' to live on the cheap was me centril idear,
An' I couldn't see anythink wrong
With livin' on rabbits, fer rabbits was cheap,
As you'll probably quite understand,
Fer, back in that time we was breedin' a heap
On me own, an' the neighborin' land.

'There wus Sanderson had the next selection to me;
He bred mostly rabbits an' debts;
An' Jones, an' McPherson, an' Sandy McGee
Had heaps of the dear little pets.
So I figgers ut out to meself, an' I owns
That this puttin' up fences is rot;
I'd be wantin' the rabbits of Sandy an' Jones
When I'd et up me own little lot.

'So I cleared off a bit an' I sowed down me grass,
An' I lived upon rabbits an' duff,
Which was cheap, you'll allow, but as months came to pass,
I was just about gettin' enough.
I was pinin' fer change, so I reckoned I'd breed
Some sheep an' a bullock or two;
But them dash Freetrade rabbits kep' eatin' the feed
Just as fast as the bloomin' stuff grew!

'It was here that I gave up me Freetrade fer good;
An' I set about riggin' a fence -
Jest a sort o' low tariff of barbwire an' wood.
(I admits I was long gettin' sense.)
'Now this,' reckons I, 'will keep most of 'em out,
While ut lets just a few of 'em in!'
You will note, all along, I 'ave not the least doubt,
I was keen upon savin' me tin.

'But I'd come to icknowledge that breedin' the pests
Was a false an' mistaken idear:
So I poisons me own, an' I digs out the nests
Till I got me place pretty well clear.
But me chock-an'-log fence was a sight fer sore eyes!
It was far frum Pertection, I owns;
Fer I stil hugged the notion of eatin' cheap pies
That was bred be McPherson an' Jones.

'An' them rabbits was cheap - you might think I was dense,
But I couldn't deny they was cheap.
So still they come in through th egaps in the fence
An' took 'alf o' the grass from me sheep....
The sudden, one mornin', it struck me - fair whack!
An' I seen ut as plain as could be:
Wot about all the grass that them rabbits took back
To McPherson an' Jones an' McGee?

'There was Sanderson's rabbits consuimin' the feed

That belonged to me bullocks an' cheep!
An' here was me helpin' 'em! Thinkin' I'd need
Of a bunny or two in the cheap!....
I was solid Perfection in less than a week.
An' me nettin' was up in quick time;
An' now, you will notice, me bullocks is sleek,
An' me mutton, I tell yeh, is prime.

'So you take ut frum me....(Woah there, Ginger, yeh cow!)....
Ses old Cullen, the cockie ses he:
'I'm a certain an' solid Perfectionist now.
fer I'm sick of the bunny that's free.
'Low Tariff' is lettin' in rabbits to eat
The grass that you want fer yer sheep,
An' doin' in chances of raisin' good meat
In the hope of a pie on the cheap.

'An' if these politicians 'as got any sense -
(An' I've 'eard as there's some with a head) -
They will give over patchin' their chock-an'-log fence,
An' put up new nettin' instead.
Fer I've found that the nettin's the sensible way,
An' I'm happy and properous now.'
Ses Cullen the cockie, he ses to me, 'Hey!
Git on with yeh, Ginger, yeh cow!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Game

'Ho! the sky's as blue as blazes an' the sun is shinin' bright,
An' the dicky birds is singin' over'ead,
An' I'm 'ummin', softly 'ummin', w'ile I'm achin' fer a fight,
An' the chance to fill some blighter full of lead.
An' the big guns they are boomin', an' the shells is screamin' past,
But I'm corperil - lance-corporal, an' found me game at last!

I expects a note from Ginger, fer the time was gettin' ripe,
An I gits one thick wiv merry 'owls uv glee;
Fer they've gone an' made 'im corperil - they've given 'im a stripe,
An' yeh'd think, to see 'is note, it wus V.C.
Fer 'e chortles like a nipper wiv a bran' noo Noah's Ark
Since forchin she 'as smiled on 'im, an' life's, no more a nark.

'Ho! the sky along the 'ill-tops, it is smudged wiv cannon smoke,
An' the shells along the front is comin' fast,
But the 'eads 'ave 'ad the savvy fer to reckernise a bloke,
An' permotion's gettin' common-sense at last.
An' they picked me fer me manners, w'ich wus snouted over 'ome,
But I've learned to be a soljer since I crossed the ragin' foam.

'They 'ave picked me 'cos they trust me; an' it's got me where I live,
An' it's put me on me mettle, square an' all;
I wusn't in the runnin' once when blokes 'ad trust to give,
But over 'ere I answers to the call;
So some shrewd 'ead 'e marked me well, an' when the time was ripe
'E took a chance on Ginger Mick, an' I 'ave snared me stripe.

'I know wot I wus born fer now, an' soljerin's me game,
That's no furphy; but I never guessed it once;
Fer when I 'it things up at 'ome they said I wus to blame,
An' foolish beaks they sent me up fer munce.
But 'ere - well, things is different to wot sich things wus then.
Fer me game is playin' soljers, an' me lurk is 'andlin' men.

'Me game is 'andlin' men, orl right, I seen it in the parst
When I used to 'ead the pushes in the Lane.
An' ev'ry bloke among 'em then done everythin' I arst,
Fer I never failed to make me feelin' plain.

Disturbers uv the peace we wus them days, but now I know
We wus aimin' to be soljers, but we never 'ad a show.

'We never 'ad no discipline, that's wot we wanted bad,
It's discipline that gives the push its might/
But wot a tie we could 'ave give the coppers if we 'ad,
Lord! We'd 'ave capchered Melbourne in an night.
When I think uv thngs that might 'ave been I sometimes sit an' grin,
Fer I might be King uv Footscray if we'd 'ad mor discipline.

'I've got a push to 'andle now wot makes a soljer proud.
Yeh ort to see the boys uv my ole squad:
The willin'est, the cheeriest, don'-care-a-damest crowd,
An' the toughest ever seen outside o' quod.
I reckon that they gimme 'em becos they wus so meek,
But they know me, an' they understan'the lingo that I speak.

'So I'm a little corperil, wiv pretties on me arm,
But yeh'd never guess it fer to see me now,
Fer me valet 'e's been careless an' me trooso's come to 'arm,
An 'me pants want creasin' badly I'll allow.
But to see me squad in action is a cure for sandy blight,
They are shy on table manners, but they've notions 'ow ter fight.

'There's a little picnic promised that 'as long been overdoo,
An' we're waitin' fer the order to advance;
An'me bones is fairly achin' fer to see my boys bung thro',
Fer I know they're dancin' mad to git the chance.
An' there's some'll sure be missin' when we git into the game;
But if they lorst their corperil 'twould be a cryin' shame.

'We can't afford no corperils. But, some'ow, I dunno.
I got a nervis feelin; in me chest,
That this 'ere bit uv fancy work might be me final go
An' I won't be 'ome to dinner wiv the rest.
It's rot; but it keeps comin' back, that lonely kind o' mood
That fills me up wiv mushy thorts that don't do any good.

'When it's gettin' near to evenin' an' the guns is slowin' down
I fergits the playful 'abits uv our foes,
An' finds meself a-thinkin' thorts uv good ole Melbourne town,
An' dreamin' dilly dreams about ole Rose.

O' course I'll see me girl again, an' give a clean, square deal,
When I come smilin' 'ome again... But that ain't 'ow I feel.

'I feel... I dunno 'ow I feel. I feel that things is done.
I seem t've 'it the limit in some way.
Per'aps I'm orf me pannikin wiv sittin' in the sun,
But I jist wrote to Rose the other day;
An' I wrote 'er sort o' mournful 'cos - I dunno 'ow it seems...
Ar, I'm a gay galoot to go an' 'ave these dilly dreams!

'Wot price the bran' noo corperil, wiv sof'nin' uv the 'eart!
If my pet lambs thort me a turtle dove
I'd 'ave to be reel stern wiv 'em, an' make another start
To git 'em where I got 'em jist wiv love...
But don't fergit, if you or your Doreen sees Rose about,
Jist tell 'er that I'm well an' strong, an' sure uv winnin' out.

'Ho! the sky's as blue as blazes, an' the sun is shinin' still,
An' the dicky bird is perchin' on the twig,
An' the guns is pop, pop, poppin' frum the trenches on the 'ill,
An' I'm lookin' bonny in me non-com's rig.
An' when yer writin' me again - don't think I want ter skite
But don't fergit the 'Corperil'; an' mind yeh spells it right.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Genesis Of Gloom [australian Variety]

Once upon a time, in days remote,
A politician bought a vote.
The price he paid is not quite clear,
But probably a pot of beer
Secured his end. But he got in;
So folk excused this venial sin.

Now if the thing had stayed right there,
We might have dodged a load of care.
But pots of beer soon failed to serve
The candidate of dash and nerve;
And, with cold cynicism, came
The urge to organise the Game.

Soon the political machine
Beheld the profit it might glean
Thro' gifts spread thro' electorates
To help the 'Outs' the 'Ins' frustrate;
While shrewd 'Ins', not to be outdone,
Increased the offers two to one.

Later, the craftiest M.P.'s
Perceived that loans from overseas
Might help them hand out cakes and ale
Upon a most colossal scale;
And Parties with each other vied
To spread their largesse far and wide.

Railways were built from here to there
That served no purpose anywhere,
And public works that did not pay
Like mushrooms, sprouted in a day,
With promises were issues fought,
And whole electorates were bought.

Millions and yet more millions flowed
To go the same old easy road. . . .
Till, with a dearth of easy cash
The game was up; and came the crash.
'Tis pitiful; but there you are.
With pots of beer in some back bar
This evil had its genesis

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Germ Chaser

I knew a careful lady once
Who read a book by Dr. Bunce,
A wise authority on wogs
That roam about in dust and fogs;
Indeed, he pointed out, all air,
However pure, held germs somewhere;
They clung to door-knobs, crawled on floors,
Inhabited small change in scores.
In fact, there scarcely was a thing
To which some foul germ did not cling,
Ready to leap and work its will
To some poor luckless human's ill.

The lady closed the book and sighed,
And all content within her died.
This pleasant earth for her became
The haunt of wogs, and life a game
Of hide and seek. She joined the band
Of grim germ-chasers in the land.
She scoured and scrubbed, examined food -
Which, thus far, was all to the good -
But when she strove to disinfect
Her home, 'twas worse than mild neglect;
No hospital smelled half so bad,
And then, I fear, she went quite mad.

Her eye took on a maniac glare;
She saw germs lurking everywhere.
She hung up mottoes such as this:
'Ten thousand germs in every kiss.'
She would not handle coins or take
Another's hand for friendship's sake;
Scarce dared to eat or draw a breath
For fear she might imbibe her death.
She sprayed her husband, heels to head,
With crude carbolic till he fled;
But, since she had means of her own,
She much preferred to live alone.

When going into town one day,
Wrapped up and muzzled in a way
Quite microbe-proof, from foot to crown,
A passing motor knocked her down.
And where she's sleeping soundly now
The germs have got her, anyhow...
The point of this sad tale is here:
Better be dead than live in fear;
Better live like a Stone Age man
Before germ-consciousness began;
Better take chances, seems to me,
Than try to dodge what you can't see.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Gloomy Victorian

Where is this glum Victorian
This man of mien forlorn
Fit but for some historian
To heap with heavy scorn?
I've sought him up an down the street
Thro' labyrinthine ways,
Wherever men and maidens meet;
By road or rail, or on two feet
I've searched for him for days.
I've looked for him where business cares
Weigh down on every rank,
Seeking to catch him unawares
In tears upon the office stairs;
Yet ever drew a blank
I've sought him in the hinterland
On Sunny Saturdays.
He smiled a while and waved his hand
Amid his draughts and drays,
And said, 'Excuse me: I must catch
This bus to see a football match,'
And gaily went his ways.
In palaces and picture shows
Where e'er a soul for solace goes
I've hunted him; and goodness knows
He seemed too gay by half;
And neither consciousness of sin
Nor sorrow kept his gladness in;
For, truth to tell, his silly grin
Fled only for a laugh.

Where is this glum Victorian
Man of the brooding eye?
His story, tho' a hoary 'un
I've failed to verify.
I've sought him on the sandy beach,
Mid shining sheik and perfect peach;
But he was never there.
I've sought him in the gleaming bush
Mid many a merry hiking push,

And moaned in my despair.
I've sought him on the sunlit course
Doing his dough on some slow horse,
And glimpsed a gloomy note.
But swiftly, moved by some queer force,
He grinned, and backed without remorse
Another hairy goat
Then hopeless, haggard and distraught,
I met a ragged man
And pitifully him besought
To tell me where he might be caught,
This glum Victorian.
He looked me up, he looked me down
And, tho' he seemed a sorry clown,
A merry smile replaced his frown
As thus to me he spoke:
'So far, I ain't met such 'tis true,'
Said he; 'but, by the looks of you,
I reckon you're the bloke.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Glug Quest

Follow the river and cross the ford,
Follow again to the wobbly bridge,
Turn to the left at the notice board,
Climbing the cow-track over the ridge;
Tip-toe soft by the little red house,
Hold your breath if they touch the latch,
Creep to the slip-rails, still as a mouse,
Then . . . run like mad for the bracken patch.

Worm your way where the fern fronds tall
Fashion a lace-work over your head,
Hemming you in with a high, green wall;
Then, when the thrush calls once, stop dead.
Ask of the old grey wallaby there
Him prick-eared by the woollybutt tree
How to encounter a Glug, and where
The country of Gosh, famed Gosh may be.

But, if he is scornful, if he is dumb,
Hush! There's another way left. Then come.

On a white, still night, where the dead tree bends
Over the track, like a waiting ghost,
Travel the winding road that wends
Down to the shore on an Eastern coast.
Follow it down where the wake of the moon
Kisses the ripples of silver sand;
Follow it on where the night seas croon
A traveller's tale to the listening land.

Step not jauntily, not too grave,
Till the lip of the languorous sea you greet;
Wait till the wash of the thirteenth wave
Tumbles a jellyfish out at your feet.
Not too hopefully, not forlorn,
Whisper a word of your earnest quest;
Shed not a tear if he turns in scorn
And sneers in your face like a fish possessed.

Hist! Hope on! There is yet a way.
Brooding jellyfish won't be gay.

Wait till the clock in the tower booms three,
And the big bank opposite gnashes its doors,
Then glide with a gait that is carefully free
By the great brick building of seventeen floors;
Haste by the draper who smirks at his door,
Straining to lure you with sinister force,
Turn up the lane by the second-hand store,
And halt by the light bay carrier's horse.

By the carrier's horse with the long, sad face
And the wisdom of years in his mournful eye;
Bow to him thrice with a courtier's grace,
Proffer your query, and pause for reply.
Eagerly ask for a hint of the Glug,
Pause for reply with your hat in your hand;
If he responds with a snort and a shrug
Strive to interpret and understand.

Rare will a carrier's horse condescend.
Yet there's another way. On to the end!

Catch the four-thirty; your ticket in hand,
Punched by the porter who broods in his box;
Journey afar to the sad, soggy land,
Wearing your shot-silk lavender socks.
Wait at the creek by the moss-grown log
Till the blood of a slain day reddens the West.
Hark for the croak of a gentleman frog,
Of a corpulent frog with a white satin vest.

Go as he guides you, over the marsh,
Treading with care on the slithery stones,
Heedless of night winds moaning and harsh
That seize you and freeze you and search for your bones.
On to the edge of a still, dark pool,
Banishing thoughts of your warm wool rug;
Gaze in the depths of it, placid and cool,
And long in your heart for one glimpse of a Glug.

'Krock!' Was he mocking you? 'Krock! Kor-r-rock!'
Well, you bought a return, and it's past ten o'clock.

Choose you a night when the intimate stars
Carelessly prattle of cosmic affairs.
Flat on your back, with your nose pointing Mars,
Search for the star who fled South from the Bears.
Gaze for an hour at that little blue star,
Giving him, cheerfully, wink for his wink;
Shrink to the size of the being you are;
Sneeze if you have to, but softly; then think.

Throw wide the portals and let your thoughts run
Over the earth like a galloping herd.
Bounds to profundity let there be none,
Let there be nothing too madly absurd.
Ponder on pebbles or stock exchange shares,
On the mission of man or the life of a bug,
On planets or billiards, policemen or bears,
Alert all the time for the sight of a Glug.

Meditate deeply on softgoods or sex,
On caraway seeds or the causes of bills,
Biology, art, or mysterious wrecks,
Or the tattered white fleeces of clouds on blue hills.
Muse upon ologies, freckles and fog,
Why hermits live lonely and grapes in a bunch,
On the ways of a child or the mind of a dog,
Or the oyster you bolted last Friday at lunch.

Heard you no sound like a shuddering sigh!
Or the great shout of laughter that swept down the sky?
Saw you no sign on the wide Milky Way?
Then there's naught left to you now but to pray.

Sit you at eve when the Shepherd in Blue
Calls from the West to his clustering sheep.
Then pray for the moods that old mariners woo,
For the thoughts of young mothers who watch their babes sleep.
Pray for the heart of an innocent child,
For the tolerant scorn of a weary old man,
For the petulant grief of a prophet reviled,

For the wisdom you lost when your whiskers began.

Pray for the pleasures that he who was you
Found in the mud of a shower-fed pool,
For the fears that he felt and the joys that he knew
When a little green lizard crept into the school.
Pray as they pray who are maddened by wine:
For distraction from self and a spirit at rest.
Now, deep in the heart of you search for a sign
If there be naught of it, vain is your quest.

Lay down the book, for to follow the tale
Were to trade in false blame, as all mortals who fail.
And may the gods salve you on life's dreary round;
For 'tis whispered: 'Who finds not, 'tis he shall be found !'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Golden Age

Is it the dawn of a Golden Age
And a swift release from pain?
The politicians fight and rage
Where doubt and chaos reign.
But out on the fields, with one accord,
And small concern for bed or board,
Men follow the lure of the Golden Star
Out where the sand and the mulgas are.

Oh, the old dry blower's out again,
And the windlass, pan and pick:
For hope, high hope, has come to men
Where the miners muster thick.
They have made a strike at the seventy mile,
And the urgent fever grows the while;
And luck may come or fortune frown,
But these are men who are ne'er cast down.

A lucky find by the old creek bed,
A shaft in the blue-bush plain,
And a thousand hungry folk are fed.
A reef with a wide, rich vein,
And a nation knows surcease of gloom,
Depression changes to a boom:
And the fever grows as the news goes forth
From Leeuwin to the farthest north.

Is it the dawn of a Golden Age?
Oh, the ways of man are strange;
For the miner's hectic pilgrimage
By hungry plain or range.
Where never a blade of wheat has grown,
Where never a seed has yet been sown,
Shall feed the land if, 'neath this ground,
Gold, and the hope of men be found.

The Golden Whistler

Golden bird whose golden voice,
When the summer days wax long
Cheery optimist from choice
Bids the feathered world rejoice
With full many a varied song
From the tree-tops flinging free
Golden bursts of melody.

Golden notes for golden hours
Where the sunlit waters gleam,
And the fragrant wattle flow'rs
Swoon in scented golden show'rs
To the bosom of the stream,
Singing, swinging, fluting high
None so gay, so glad as I.

Golden in the dawn's first hush
Sounds my matin, loud and long,
With a sweet, spontaneous rush,
Vying with harmonious thrush
For the bushlands Crown of Song
As the golden eye grows dim,
Sounds my joyous vesper hymn.

Golden minstrel, justly framed,
Greeted ere with grateful words
Long ere this my song has shamed
Him who fatuously named
This a land of songless birds
Seek you solace, seek you balm,
Hearken to my golden psalm.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Goldfinch

When dandelions star the fields
Another alien singer, I,
Nursed upon England's flowery wealds,
Seeking no tithe of treasured yields,
dropp sudden from a summer sky
To where the spangled clearing spills
Its gold about your timbered hills.

A mite in splendid motley clad,
I mark the field, I know the hour
When choicest morsels may be had;
When blooms are gay, when days are glad,
And thistledown wafts in a shower
To dance and drift and disappear,
I, who was not, am with you here.

I cling beside the thistle head,
I dance about your cattle's feet,
I revel in the banquet spread
By many a blazing yellow bed,
And feast until I am replete;
Then seek the house roof's topmost tile
To linger yet a little while.

No ingrate I, no niggard churl
Tho' what I take you well may spare
Ere azure skies have grown to pearl,
With many a grace-note, many a skirl,
I pay gold coin for golden fare,
And profer an abundant fee
In long sweet bursts of melody.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Great God Guff

There was once a Simple People - (you, of course, will understand
This is just a little fable of a non-existent land)
There was once a Simple People, and they had a Simple King,
And his name - well, SMITH the First will do as well as anything
And they lived upon an island by a pleasant southern sea,
Which they boastfully referred to as the 'Country of the Free.'
This King SMITH was quite a model. He was kind and he was wise.
But, alas! a higher sovereign he was forced to recognise.

As in ev'ry age and nation, since the tale of man was known,
Superstition here existed as the power behind the throne.
It was vague and unsubstantial but its sway was plain enough,
And 'twas known upon the island, simply, as the Great God GUFF.
They made sacrifices to it, treasure, corn and slaughtered beasts,
Good King SMITH cringed to the idol where upon his throne he sat;
And the People feared it greatly; and the priests grew very fat.

Now, the welfare of the priestcraft did not always coincide
With the welfare of the People, hence the wily priests relied
On the hoary superstition that had stood the test of years;
Thus they led both king and people by their rather ass-like ears;
Crying: 'GUFF was ever with us! GUFF the Great must be obeyed!
GUFF the god must be consulted ere a single law be made!'
And the very simple People with their very simple King
Bowed their heads and said, 'So be it. GUFF be served in ev'rything.'

So the nation muddled somehow on its island by the sea -
Simple superstitious people in their 'Country of the Free.'
And whene'er they yearned for Progress, as things drifted to the worst,
SMITH replied, 'Have patience, people. GUFF must be consulted first.
Other lands and other nations may progress without his aid;
But upon our native island never rule or law is made
Till his priests have pondered o'er it, seeking to divine his will.
So it was with our forefathers, so with us it must be still.'

Came a time when folk grew restive, murmuring amongst themselves,
While the nation's schemes and projects lay neglected on the shelves.
Then arose amid the people one of singular renown -
Since his name the eld refuses, let us call him, simply, BROWN.
BROWN was something of a student, strong on things like common-sense;
He was plain and blunt and forceful; and he hated smug pretence.
And before the priests and people, in a manner rude and gruff,
He arose and put this question, briefly: 'Who and what is GUFF?'

Loud the People shrieked in terror; and the High-Priest threw a fit;
And the king rose from his dias as his eye with anger lit.
'He blasphemeth!' declared the monarch. 'Sieve the sacrilegious brute!
Great God GUFF may not be questioned! He is mighty! absolute!
But BROWN stood his ground and answered, 'Oh, I'm sick of all that stuff!
Give me one clear definition: What's the bloomon' use of GUFF?
He's a silly superstition! and I'll prove to you, King SMITH,
If you'll give me just five minutes, that your idol is a myth.'

Well, to bring a simple story to a sudden, simple end,
BROWN beat down all opposition, and affairs began to mend.
Good King SMITH, with seemly wisdom, on his idol turned his back;
And, without much fuss, the People simply gave old GUFF the sack.
And the priests? Well, some took service with the king, and so reformed;
Some adopted Christian Science; some in vain still raved and stormed;
Others strove to mend their fortunes with an Independent Kirk;
Some became mere weather prophets; some - a paltry few - got work.

So they thrived, the simple People, on their island by the sea;
And their schemes and projects prospered, for the land, at last, was free.
SMITH the First, emancipated, o'er a happy country ruled.
And he smiled when he reflected how the nation had been fooled;
How the simple King and People, by a superstition cursed.
Ever cried in foolish terror: 'GUFF must be consulted first!'
And the last words of that monarch long were treasured in the land . . .
But, of course, it's all a fable, as you'll clearly understand.

Yet - there lives a simple People on an island by the sea,
And a simple Monarch rules them called the King DEMOCRACY.

Rather, does he seek to rule them, but his will is warped and bent
By a childish superstition known as 'Party Government.'
And the idol has its priestcraft that pretends to lead the race;
Though they call them 'Politicians' in this later year of grace.
And whene'er the folk grow restive, as things drift from worse to worst,
Cry the priests, 'Behold the Party! It must be considered first!'

And the simple, simple People bend their heads and murmur, 'Yes,
We respect the claims of Party . . . But who is to mend this Mess!
Schemes go wrong and projects languish, and the Big Things of the State
Lie neglected while this Party bids us wait and ever wait!'
Oh, for some plain, forceful person with a plain, drab name like BROWN,
And a wholesome hate for humbug, and a stern, determined frown,
To arouse the simple People and their king, DEMOCRACY,
Cringing to their fool-god Party on their island by the sea!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Grey Fantail

The bushmen call me 'Cranky Fan,'
Because my strange erratic flight
Seems to uncomprehending man
Sign of a wit not over-bright;
But nimble wit and nimble wing
Uphold me in the trade I ply
Of ever-restless foraging
Excuse me - there's another fly!

A tireless ball of buff and grey;
White-shafted, my important tail
Guides me on my unstable way
When stronger aviators fail;
Now right rise up, now upside down,
Now tumbling crazily from high,
I ape the antics of a clown
Whoop! - and that's another fly!

'Tis thus my daily fare I earn
By nimble trick of wit and wing;
And, when my nestlings so would learn,
A clothes-line is a handy thing.
And that is why we're sitting now,
Tho' not for long, my brood and I,
That they may be instructed how
Whoop! - and that's another fly!

I loop the loop with careless ease,
Now in a tail-spin watch me fall;
Yet, spite these eccentricities
I am the friendliest bird of all.
Upon your shoulder, lordly man,
I pause as I go flitting by.
Spare a kind word for Cranky Fan
Whoop! - and that's another fly!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Grey Goshawk

There is a flutter in the trees,
And now a sudden, dread unease
Stills all the bushland melodies
Amid the gums;
Stills now the song of wren and thrush,
Robin and honeyeater hush.
Now, with a swoop, a whistling rush,
Grey goshawk comes.

I am the threat: the dread king.
Grim Azrael, is on the wing,
And every little living thing
Dares scarce a breath.
And now a parrot, shrill with fear,
Flies dodging there and doubling here
Thro' inlaced limbs, in mad career
From lusting death.

Grey ghost, grey death, I work my will
O'er forest dense, o'er wood hill,
And on some tree-top rend my kill
With reddened beak.
There is no have in the tree,
There is no harbor safe from me;
In many a singing sanctuary
My meat I seek.

Beware! The swift grey ghost is out!
Be still! Grey death lurks near about!
Crouch close! Shrink low! ... But have no doubt
I've marked my kill.
Grim nemesis. I never fail;
Gaint hunger is my spur, my flail.
I feast. And now away I sail
O'er the far hill.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Grievs Of Ancient Gosh

I happened in Gosh on an ancient day,
In the land of Glugs far, far away
Where the skies are green and the grass is pink
And the citizens rarely troubl'd to think.
Each had a vote; they were proud of that;
But they left all else to the Bureaucrat.
Still, of course, such folly never could be
In a civilised land this year A.D.

A junior clerk in Department A
Sent a requisition in one day
For a mousetrap to Department B.
This came to the ears of Department C,
Whose head said, 'Just a moment please.
You control the traps, but we the cheese.'
Then Department D chipped in in a trice
And cried, 'Checkmate! We control the mice.'

Then Departments E, F, G, H, I
Became involved, and the talk ran high,
Till the Livestock Branch got dragged in, too,
And the Vermin Board, and I don't know who
Besides, till the mousetrap matter grew
From a mild dispute 'mid a trifling few
To a Public Question so immense
That a tax was levied to meet expense.

Well, time rolled on, as it ever has rolled
And the junior clerk, now bald and old,
Received a pink form one fine day
Which said, 'One trap, mouse. Passed O.K.'
But he answered, this impatient chap,
Grown peevish, too, 'Keep your blinkin' trap!
For a trap I made from an old jam tin
Long since; and I caught my mouse therein.'

So an issue rose of a different sort,
And they sued the clerk in the State High Court
Which sat so long and talked such bosh

That a fierce Dictator loomed in Gosh;
And he took one long, deep, shuddering breath
And condemned that junior clerk to death
And then, when they sought the man, they found
He had been some twelve years underground.

Such is the tale. But, understand
It happened in Gosh - a backward land
Inhabited then by a race called Glugs,
Free-born, with a vote, but mostly mugs
For, of course, such nonsense never could be
In a modern, model Democracy
Like ours. Things never could happen so.
Absurd!... Or could they? ...Oh, I don't know.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Ground Thrush

I'm a business man; and I can't spare time
For this fluting and fussing and frilling.
The song of my cousin may be sublime,
But I never have found it filling.
So I run and I dig and I dig and I run,
And I'm at it soon as the day's begun,
And I never knock off till the light is done
Over the garden and lawn and tilling.

I'm a business man on my business bent,
And I've never an hour of leisure.
I have little regard for sentiment,
And I fritter no time in pleasure.
But I dig and I run and I run and I dig;
And you never see me at my ease on a twig,
Prinking and posing in holiday rig
Or trilling a tuneful measure.

I'm a business man, and I've much to do;
So the day's work must be speeded.
For time is fleeting and worms are few-
I've never had all I needed.
So I run and I dig and I dig and I run
From sun to shadow, from shadow to sun,
I'm a business man, and the world I shun;
So I live and I die unheeded.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Growth Of Sym

Now Sym was a Glug; and 'tis mentioned so
That the tale reads perfectly plain as we go.
In his veins ran blood of that stupid race
Of docile folk, who inhabit the place
Called Gosh, sad Gosh, where the tall trees sigh
With a strange, significant sort of cry
When the gloaming creeps and the wind is high.

When the deep shades creep and the wind is high
The trees bow low as the gods ride by:
Gods of the gloaming, who ride on the breeze,
Stooping to heaften the birds and the trees.
But each dull Glug sits down by his door,
And mutters, ' 'Tis windy!' and nothing more,
Like the long-dead Glugs in the days of yore.

When Sym was born there was much to-do,
And his parents thought him a joy to view;
But folk not prejudiced saw the Glug,
As his nurse remarked, 'In the cut of his mug.'
For he had their hair, and he had their eyes,
And the Glug expression of pained surprise,
And their predilection for pumpkin pies.

And his parents' claims were a deal denied
By his maiden aunt on his mother's side,
A tall Glug lady of fifty-two
With a slight moustache of an auburn hue.
'Parental blither!' she said quite flat.
'He's an average Glug; and he's red and fat!
And exceedingly fat and red at that!'

But the father, joi, when he gazed on Sym,
Dreamed great and wonderful things for him.
Said he, 'If the mind of a Glug could wake
Then, Oh, what a wonderful Glug he'd make!
We shall teach this laddie to play life's game
With a different mind and a definite aim:
A Glug in appearance, yet not the same.'

But the practical aunt said, 'Fudge! You fool!
We'll pack up his dinner and send him to school.
He shall learn about two-times and parsing and capes,
And how to make money with inches on tapes.
We'll apprentice him then to the drapery trade,
Where, I've heard it reported, large profits are made;
Besides, he can sell us cheap buttons and braid.'

So poor young Sym, he was sent to school,
Where the first thing taught is the Golden Rule.
'Do unto others,' the teacher said . . .
Then suddenly stopped and scratched his head.
'You may look up the rest in a book,' said he.
'At present it doesn't occur to me;
But do it, whatever it happens to be.'

'And now,' said the teacher, 'the day's task brings
Consideration of practical things.
If a man makes a profit of fifteen pounds
On one week's takings from two milk rounds,
How many . . .' And Sym went dreaming away
To the sunlit lands where the field-mice play,
And wrens hold revel the livelong day.

He walked in the welcoming fields alone,
While from far, far away came the pedagogue's drone:
'If a man makes . . . Multiply . . . Abstract nouns . . .
From B take . . . Population of towns . . .
Rods, poles or perches . . . Derived from Greek
Oh, the hawthorn buds came out this week,
And robins are nesting down by the creek.

So Sym was head of his class not once;
And his aunt repeatedly dubbed him 'Dunce.'
But, 'Give him a chance,' said his father, Joi.
'His head is abnormally large for a boy.'
But his aunt said, 'Piffie! It's crammed with bosh!
Why, he don't know the rivers and mountains of Gosh,
Nor the names of the nephews of good King Splosh!'

In Gosh, when a youth gets an obstinate look,

And copies his washing-bill into a book,
And blackens his boot-heels, and frowns at a joke,
'Ah, he's getting sense,' say the elderly folk.
But Sym, he would laugh when he ought to be sad;
Said his aunt, 'Lawk-a-mussy! What's wrong with the lad?
He romps with the puppies, and talks to the ants,
And keeps his loose change in his second-best pants,
And stumbles all over my cauliflower plants!'

'There is wisdom in that,' laughed the father, Joi.
But the aunt said, 'Toity!' and, 'Drat the boy!'
'He shall play,' said the father, 'some noble part.
Who knows but it may be in letters or art?
'Tis a dignified business to make folk think.'
But the aunt cried, 'What! Go messing with ink?
And smear all his fingers, and take to drink?
Paint hussies and cows, and end in the clink?'

So the argument ran; but one bright Spring day
Sym settled it all in his own strange way.
'Tis a tramp,' he announced, 'I've decided to be;
And I start next Monday at twenty to three . . .'
When the aunt recovered she screamed, 'A tramp?
A low-lived, pilfering, idle scamp,
Who steals people's washing, and sleeps in the damp?'

Sharp to the hour Sym was ready and dressed.
'Young birds,' sighed the father, 'must go from the nest.
When the green moss covers those stones you tread,
When the green grass whispers above my head,
Mark well, wherever your path may turn,
They have reached the valley of peace who learn
That wise hearts cherish what fools may spurn.'

So Sym went off; and a year ran by,
And the father said, with a smile-masked sigh,
'It is meet that the young should leave the nest.'
Said the aunt, 'Don't spill that soup on your vest!
Nor mention his name! He's our one disgrace!
And he's probably sneaking around some place
With fuzzy black whiskers all over his face.'

But, under a hedge, by a flowering peach,
A youth with a little blue wren held speech.
With his back to a tree and his feet in the grass,
He watched the thistle-down drift and pass,
And the cloud-puffs, borne on a lazy breeze,
Move by on their errand, above the trees,
Into the vault of the mysteries.

'Now, teach me, little blue wren,' said he.
"Tis you can unravel this riddle for me.
I am 'mazed by the gifts of this kindly earth.
Which of them all has the greatest worth?'
He flirted his tail as he answered then,
He bobbed and he bowed to his coy little hen:
'Why, sunlight and worms!' said the little blue wren.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Hacking Song

Yes, it's tryin', Mrs Gudgeons. Very tryin', as you say.
To 'ave a 'usban' on yer 'an's not only night but day.
An' so I can't go out with you, much as I wisht I could;
For me Jack is in there, gaspin' an' 'e's feelin' none too good.
With 'is "Ack! 'Ack! 'Ack!' Lor! I bangs 'im on the back
An' 'e curses me a treat for my stoopidity.
'It a man,' 'e sez, 'wot's sick!' Oh 'is temper's awful quick,
An' it ain't so much the 'eat as this youmidity.

Oh, I tries to in-ter-est 'im in the topics of the day,
An' I reads 'im from the noos wot Musserlini 'as to say
But 'e sez, 'If Musserlini 'ad me bronkil choobs an' chest,
'E'd 'ave somethink else to think about, an' give 'is was a rest.'
Then it's, "Ack! 'Ack! 'Ack!' till 'is face is nearly black,
But 'e manidges to say, with much acidity,
'Blowin' peaceful blokes to death - 'Then 'e stops fer want a' breath.
An' it ain't so much the 'eat as this youmidity.

Then I reads the weather forecask - all about the low an' 'igh,
An' 'ow they sez most like the change is passin' Melbun by
But 'e ups an' calls 'em liars, an' 'e starts to rave an' curse.
Sez I read that bit a-purpis for to try an' make 'im worse.
Then it's "Ack! 'Ack! 'Ack!' But, if I creeeps to the back,
'E recovers with remarkable rapidity.
An' 'e yells, "Ere! where ya goin'? Don't you leave a man alone!"
An' it ain't so much the 'eat as this youmidity.

Yes; a woman must 'ave patience, Mrs Gudgeons, as you say.
An' I knows without your 'intin', mum, that it's my turn to pay.
So you needn't cast nasturtiums; very gladly would I shout,
But, with a 'usban' like 'e is - well, 'ow can I git out?
Listen: "Ack! 'Ack! 'Ack!' Yeh needn't yell. I'm comin', Jack!
There, Mrs Gudgeons. That's the chief awkwardity:
Day an' night I must stop in; an' I do so miss me gin
Not so much because of 'eat as this youmidity.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Handicap

I think I should suit, for I've knowledge minute
Of all tickets, time-tables, and trains;
All speedings and slowings and comings and goings
Are deeply impressed on my brains.
I know just how long the express to Geelong
Stops outside certain stations; and where
All the footwarmers go when the winter winds blow.
So I think I am qualified there.

I can find you a porter, or see that your daughter
Leaves safely for Sydney. My list
Of refreshment-room fare is exclusive and rare
I can tell you what trains you have missed.
I can find little Willie, or mind little Millie
While Mother, with no time to spare,
Goes to buy her a bun. I can tell you what won
All the races. I'm competent there.

I have knowledge unique of what days in the week
Trains stop at your station - or not.
I can tell ('Sat. excepted') what trains are connected
With which. I am au fait with the lot.
On 'Mon. only' or 'Tues.' I have accurate views.
I can tell you on 'Suns.' when and where
You can gather mushrooms or the gold wattle blooms;
So I feel I am competent there.

And, with all this assortment of facts, my deportment,
Impressive, yet friendly, is right.
At my resonant voice all the ladies rejoice;
And fools flock to me, dribbling delight.
My garments I wear with an air debonair;
But one handicap stands in my way:
Tho' in all else I'm 'It,' those who know me admit
That I look simply awful in grey.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Heart Of The Dove

Say, Bo, this little Yewropean war
It grieves our gloryus nation to the core
The vurry core of its great, strang, red heart,
We're tur-ble sore:
That's what.
We got
A reel sawft heart.

Naw, son! we air not takin' any part.
We figgered that ahl out, right from the start.
The great american nation stan's aside:
She keeps apart
An' jaws,
Becaws
We gat our pride.

But don't yew figger ahn no fancy paly
With Uncle Sam; he's ready for th efray.
An' wance that 'Murkan eagle's screech is heard
Watch out! An', say,
Geewhiz!
He is
Some bird!

He is some eagle, yew kin take my word.
If wance that great, fierce heart of his was sturred
Aw, shucks! that little Yewropean stunt
Would look ab-surd!
If he
Cast free
You'd see some hunt!

When wance that Bird o' Freedom hit the front
Why, Gee! them dinky ings would have to shunt!
Old Yewrope would be right clean off the map!

I put it blunt:
That lot
Would not
Put up a scrap.

Wance we cut loose - Aw, Hully Gee! the gap
In Yewrope's rank 'ud make tyhem howl for pap.
We'd wipe the airth out of the Kasmic Plan
An' on the map
This ball
They'd call
Amur-i-can.

The true Amur'kan, sir, he is a man
Who'd lick this un-i-verse, wance he began;
Say, it's a cinch; becaws we hold the dough
If we should plan
To crunch
The bunch,
None could say so.

Them Kings and Kaisers all would have to go.
He'd do 'em up right praper! Get me, Bo?
He'd eat hull crate-loads of their wan-harse ships!
He'd smash the show,
He'd swat
The lot
Wance come to grips!

Aw, shucks! This great, strang nation, sir, it whips
Creation! Wance the word has pas'd our lips
We'd just reach out, an' take the hull darn world!
We'd get the ships
An' men:
An' then
Things would get whirled!

Yep! Wance that starry banner was unfurled
We'd roast the Kaiser till his whiskers curled!
Say, do you get me? Wance we j'ined the fray
The hull darn world
Would scoot,
Per boot,
Out of our way.

Wance we were roused - what matter, anyway?
We air nat takin' war in ours to-day
Naw, Bo; we got no quar'l, we play the part
Of pained dismay,
To show,
You know,
Our great, sawft, strang, red heart.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Heritage Of Ease

Are we so flabby, and are we so soft?
I have pondered the question long and oft;
And happy-go-lucky we may appear
When the fat and easy days are here,
When it's easy come and it's easy go,
And there's never a long, hard row to hoe.

But exceedingly hard and remarkably tough
Are the terms that fit when the days grow rough,
And Australia faces the jobs ahead
That fall in the seasons of stress and dread.
And the sturdier stuff of the pioneers
Has not all gone with the old, stern years.

And the tasks we faced and the loads we bore,
When the folly of nations brought us war,
Were not too many and not too great
To bend our backs or to halt our gait.
For the same old metal they tried anew,
And then, as ever, the stuff rang true.

But the soft times came; and the seed we sowed
On the days we travelled the easy road,
We must harvest now, as we all repent
Of a flabbiness passed to a Government
And nurtured there, while we rage and rear
To be up and waging the fight once more.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Hidden City

It was the schooner Desperate
That sailed the southern sea,
And the skipper had brought his little daughter
To our centenary.
Blue were her eyes and plucked her brow,
Where she wore a golden curl.
Yet, 'spite her looks, she was somehow
A shrewd, observant girl.

But and spake an old sailor
Who had been that way before
'I pray don't land at yonder port
Lest your girl count it a bore.
Last year the town had a handsome street,
This year no street we see.'
'Why?' asked the skipper. 'Poles,' said the tar.
And a sneering laugh laughed he.

For an alderman had spoken,
Who had known the ropes long since,
And he said, 'Where are them sticks an' rag
We had for that other Prince.
Let's stick 'em up in the street again.'
Said the mayor, 'Don't be a quince.
We'll have some new bright painted ones;
And let the aesthetes wince.'

'Father,' the skipper's daughter cried
'No fair city I see.'
'It is behind them decorations, lass
Them candy sticks you see.'
'But, father, why do they stand there,
All orange smeared and red,
Like garish clowns in a stately street?'
'Search me,' the skipper said.

'Oh, father! What are those nightmare things,
Those gadgets brightly lit?
Let us away on urgent wings,

Or I fear I'll have a fit.'
'Courage, my child,' the skipper said.
Curb your aesthetic sense,
And close your eyes and cover your head,
And I shall bear you hence.

'Come hither, come hither, my little daughter,
And do not tremble so.'
He wrapped her up in his seaman's coat.
'Come,' said he, 'let us go
Out where no poles or pylons are,
And no centenary,
To a scene that no man's hand may mar.'
And he steered for the open sea.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The High Priest

Nay, why do foolish politicians strive
To win a fleeting popularity?
In vain, in vain, they jealously contrive
To turn the doting Public Eye from Me.
What was this land, this nation, destined for?
For Art, Trade, Politics? All out of place.
Behold, I am the Sporting Editor!
I call the race!

Reviewers, leader writers - what are they?
Subs., poets, novelists? Scribes of a sort
Mere puny scribbling creatures of a day;
While I, the people's idol, stand for Sport!
For mark, when inspiration falls on me,
What recks the public of that nameless band?
I ope' my lips, and wisdom, gushing free,
O'erflows the land.

I lift my voice, and, lo! an army wakes
A mighty host, a hundred thousand strong
To spread the message; while the nation quakes
And thunders with the burden of my song:
'Ten lengths from home 'Gray Lad' outstripped 'The Witch,'
And passed the post by just a short neck, first.'
These are the words, the pregnant words, for which
The land's athirst.

They are the children of my brain, mine own!
These mighty words for which the people yearn;
The product of my genius alone!
Would you begrudge the laurels that I earn?
Mark you, yon sturdy native, strong o' limb,
That leans against the lamp-post o'er the way
Approach, and learn of my great fame from him.
Approach and say:

'Awake! Arise! A curse on him who waits!
Behold, young man, thy country needs thy like;
The yellow hordes are panting at our gates.

Arouse, young patriot, go forth and strike!
Awake, and cast they reeking 'fag' away!
Arise, and take the white man's burden up!
'I'll lay you ten to one, in 'quids," he'll say:
'Wot's won the Cup?'

Behold, the High Priest of the people's creed!
Proclaim his genius! The bays! The bays!
Come, crown the Sporting Editor - indeed,
He is familiar with bays - with grays.
'Ten lengths from home!' How exquisite! How chaste!
'Gray Lad' outstripped 'The Witch'!' What style! What grace!
Come, beauty, twine a laurel wreath. Nay, haste!
He calls the race!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Hoary Precedent

Mr. Pericles, M.P.,
In four-sixty-nine B.C.,
Outed Cimon at a general election;
Premier Cimon, thuswise ex-ed,
Was quite naturally vexed,
And he made an angry speech in this connection;
He remarked, in peroration, as he grabbed his coat and hat,
'You're a Socialist, you rotter! You'd no precedent for that!'
Mr. Pericles is dead
Thoroughly, I've heard it said
And his words and acts may now be safely quoted
By our statesmen eminent,
Who on mouldy precedent
(If it's old enough and dead enough) have doted.
For precedent, I'd have you note, is most peculiar stuff;
It's absolutely useless if it isn't dead enough.

In my youth I ever held
Grave respect for all the eld,
And I found in history a strong attraction.
So, whene'er a scheme I planned,
Eagerly the tomes I scanned
That I might find precedent for ev'ry action.
Yet, despite my zealous labour, and the piles of books I read,
In the things that truly mattered I seemed not to forge ahead.

As I nursed my bulging brow,
Said I, 'This is wrong somehow.
Precedent, as we all know, is something holy
Something we should not neglect
To regard with great respect,
And I feel I'm safe in following it solely.
But had we done it from the start - I grasp, at least, this much
We would still be munching apples that we didn't oughter touch.

'Well, this problem is immense!'
In my experience
I reflected. 'How have we progressed, I wonder?'

Then the obvious reply
Hit me squarely in the eye:
It is by ignoring precedent, by thunder!
'Tis men who fix the precedents that lead the nations on
And not the folk who pin their faith to leaders dead and gone.

Mr. Pericles, M.P.,
You're the sort of man for me
(Though I understand you are a Dago alien):
'Spite your moral character,
O'er the Styx I greet you, sir,
You're the sort we need to-day in things Australian.
For we're moved to ask the question of our statesmen now and then:
'Does this job of fixing precedents belong to ancient men?'

Mr. Pericles, deceased,
'Spite his deadness, has increased
My respect for all the world's originators.
If we must have precedents,
My ideal he represents,
For I'm done with copyists and imitators.
And, after this, my reference is Pericles, M.P.,
He acted without precedent; that's precedent for me.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Holy Constitution

Read ye here the song as sung
By a chief named, briefly, Ung.
In the days when arguments were manly axes:
'O my people, this my Law
Is without defect or flaw,
And it governs ways and means and rates and taxes.
To amend it were unwise;
And if any tribesman tries,
He will meet with swift unerring retribution.
'Tis omnipotent, infallible, as all may recognise;
In short, it is out Noble Constitution.'

When this Neolithic man
Gave the world his early plan
Of tribal laws to bind his nascent nation,
He opined, with fine conceit,
That his System was complete,
And the acme of all human legislation.
'For all time this Law shall stand!'
He decreed with manner grand
And a splendid disregard for evolution;
And the Tory crowd that followed, bore this tenet in its hand:
'You must never touch the Sacred Constitution.'

So the Party then in power,
To improve the shining hour,
Contracted quite a pleasing little habit:
Safely guarded in their 'right,'
If they fancied aught in sight,
Being 'constitutionally safe,' they'd grab it.
And they told the rank and file,
With a patronising smile,
When the People talked of 'wrongs' and 'persecution,'
'It is very, very sad, and, no doubt, your case is bad;
But we cannot tamper with the Constitution.'

But meat-winners of the day
(Rabid Socialists were they)
By slow degrees arrived at this conclusion:

That the hide-bound Tory joss
Totalled mainly bluff and dross,
And its 'sacredness' was wholly an illusion.
Then with yells and growlings vile,
In their quaint primeval style
They planned a prehistoric revolution;
And with bits of tertiary rock they wrecked the Tories' smile
And, incidentally, the Constitution.

All this happened, as you know,
Quite a long, long time ago;
And the world has since known Greece and Rome and Sparta,
Medes and Persians and such fools
Who were bound by cast-iron rules
Which reminds us of Old England's Magna Charta.
There's no doubt when England pressed
Hard to have her wrongs redressed,
And 'persuaded' John to sign the resolution,
That hard-shell old Tory King thought it quite a shocking thing
To meddle with the Holy constitution.

So on, ever since King John,
As the world moves surely on,
And the People cry for reformation drastic,
You can hear right down the line
E'er the same old Tory whine
Protesting, 'It is most iconoclastic!'
'Tis the same old Tory way,
Same old 'everlasting nay.'
'Tis the same reactionary elocution.
But, who stood for 'Progress' yesterday is 'Retrograde' today;
And we've got to meddle with the Constitution.

While the Fatman waxes fat,
He's content to stop at that;
He will bless the Constitution and defend it;
But whene'er it needs repair.
'Tis the man who works his share
That uprises, patriotic, to amend it.
Oh, it's not the slightest use
When your 'right' becomes 'abuse'.
'Tis the law of legislative evolution

That every Great Reform is won, 'spite arguments abuse
By altering the blessed Constitution.

Gentle Tory, prithee hark
Back to Ung of ages dark,
And defend his blessed code with sandstone axes.
Mayhap in that murky bourne
You'll escape a fate forlorn,
Full of New Protection and Progressive Taxes.
And you won't be sorely missed,
If you fall beneath some fist,
For young Progress shouts for men of execution.
And, as regards reform and such, WE'LL DO JUST AS WE LIST,
For it's Ours, this High and Holy Constitution.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Homeward Track

Once a year we lumber southward with the clip from Yarradee;
Spell the bullocks in the township while we run our yearly spree.
What's a bullocky to live for? Days of toil are hard and long;
And you'd not begrudge him yearly one short week of wine and song.
While it lasts he asks no better. When it's over 'Yoke 'em up,'
And we'll make another promise for to shun the brimming cup.
When we've done our little cheque in, and the township's at our back;
Then we start to think of mending - out along the Homeward Track.

For there comes a time of reck'ning when we're trudging by the team;
Back again to work an' worry; kind of waking from a dream;
We begin to see the folly of a week of wicked fun,
Bought with months of weary slaving, punching bullocks on the run.
But our views are somewhat tempered when we've done a twelve months'
drouth;
And our thoughts ain't so religious when the team is heading south.
When the pleasure is before us, work and worry at our back,
We forget the grim reformers out along the Homeward Track.

What's the odds? It's got to happen. What we've done we'll do again;
And we know it while we make 'em, resolutions are in vain.
Life's a weary track to travel, mostly full of ruts and stumps:
Them that spends their days in drudging have to take their joy in lumps.
Yoke 'em up an' get a move on! Gayest times must have an end,
There's a weary track to travel when we've nothing left to spend.
If there's still a bob we'll wet it, and a last glad joke we'll crack,
Time enough for vain regretting when we're on the Homeward Track.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Hulk

Now, 'ere's my tip
Fer the Fusion ship,
An' I tells it straight an' square.
I'm a rare old tar
As nigh an' far
You'll not meet ev'rywhere.
I've seen 'er sail
In many a gale,
But she's done 'er final trip;
So I 'itches me breeches, an' a simple tale I pitches
O' this good ole Fusion ship.
'Twas Alf an' Joe,
Long years ago,
They built 'er any 'ow.
Twas a strange ole skiff
With 'er keel skew-wiff,
An' a double-ended bow.
Yus, a nose each end,
An' a grecian bend
Amidships, quaint an' queer.
When I seen 'er take the water, 'Ho!' ses I, 'she is a snorter!'
An' I gives a 'earty cheer.

An' sail she did.
But I'll lay ten quid
No ship, befor enor since,
Done 'ark 'er tricks;
'Er darned ole fix
'Ud make longshoremen wince.
She'd bob and bow,
The blamed old scow,
Like a wet an' foolish 'en;
An' 'er subsekint behav'er an' the effects fer to save 'er
Was a treat fer sialor-men.

An' Alf 'e was
'Er skipper, 'cos
No other could be got

To sail that craft!
An' fore an' aft
They was a rare ole lot.
So queer a crew
I never knew
An' Joe, 'e was fust mate.
An' to 'ear 'im scold and rate 'er, when 'e tried to navigate 'er -
Well, I tell yeh, it was great!

Fer some they said
To point 'er 'ead
Fer nor'-nor'-east by east,
Fer Tory Bay,
An' some said 'Nay,'
An' the langwidge never eased.
An' some they pressed
To sail doo west,
Fer the ole Freetection port.
An' the way she waltzed an' wobbled, while they 'owled an' fought an' squabbled.
Ho, I never seen sich sport!

An' poor ole Joe!
'Is watch below
Was mostly short an' sweet;
Fer 'e never knew
Wot time that crew
Might up an' change 'er beat.
But Alf, the boss,
'E took 'is doss,
An' 'e let 'er sail or stop;
Fer in days when seas was finer 'e was skipper of a liner,
An' 'e sorter felt the drop.

Now, she dropped at last
'Er anchor fast
In the 'arbor of Recess.
'Er sheets is tore,
An' 'er plates is wore,
An' she'll sail no more, I guess.
Alf got the pip
On 'er final trip,
An' there's some as said 'e swore

'E was sickened of 'er capers; so 'e 'anded in 'id papers,
An' she'll put to sea no more.
But it's 'ip, 'ip, 'ip!
fer the Fusion ship,
Fer the navigatin' 'en!
Since 'er cruise begun
She 'as give great fun
To us 'eart sailor-men.
We 'ave cheered an' laughed
An' joked an' chaffed
Since the day she put to sea;
So I takes a pull and 'itches (as our 'abit is) my breeches,
An' I give 'er three times three.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Hundredth Year

Not that I'd quarrel with the way
They celebrates their hundredth year
In town (said old Pete Parraday),
But that don't suit us bush blokes here.
So let bells ring and whistles blare
And fill the town with mighty sound,
Let motor noises tear the air
An' bonfires light the hills around.
When I'm five score I want some say
In things (said old Peter Parraday).

I've lived me life here in the bush
(Said Pete) since I was but a boy;
An' all this city noise an' push
Ain't my idea of showin' joy.
Me ears ain't tooned to sich like noise,
And fire is like to wake our fear.
Them ain't the things that we enjoys
When celebratin' birthdays here;
So, if I live so long, I pray
For peace (said old Peter Parraday).

A hundred year's a long, long spell
To hang about this mad ole earth,
And when man nears his century - well
He don't crave much of noisy mirth -
Not for himself, with life near run
Its length, such comes for others yet;
Not for himself; for he is done,
With all life's hectic fuss an' fret.
So let me have my foolish way
In this (said old Pete Parraday).

I ask but this, an' nothin' more,
When comes my hundredth natal day;
Let me sit here beside my door
And dream (said old Pete Parraday).
While bush birds sing the songs I know,
And bush sounds that I love the best,

Wake memories of the long ago,
Let me sit here a while and rest.
Aye, rest, and sleep and, who shall say?
Sleep sound (said old Pete Parraday).

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Hymn

Lord, Who, from Thy high position,
See'th the humble politician,
Knoweth all his secret schemes,
Readeth all his inmost dreams,
Hearken, Lord, unto our pleading;
Mark Thou how our hearts are bleeding,
Bleeding for our country's woes,
Caused by our unrighteous foes.

Lord, behold Thy chosen pleading!
Lend Thine aid to frame our laws.
Turn Thou not away unheeding,
Lord, assist the
[Labor]
[Lib'ral]
[Tory]
[Freetrade]
[Dead-fish]
cause.

See our enemies around us,
Seeking ever to confound us,
Seeking in their wickedness
E'er to compass our distress.
With the powers of darkness scheming,
And our Sacred Cause blaspheming.
Lord, let not their works abide.
For we know Thou'rt on our side.

We, the saviours of our nation,
Supplicate on bended knee.
Lord, our trust and consolation

Are in
[Deakin]
[Fisher,]
[Jokook,]

[Forrest,]
[Bill Lyne]

and in Thee.

Lo, as righteous men, we've striven;
But our works are rent and riven
Through our foes' iniquities.
Lord, rebuke our enemies.
Let them be ashamed who doubt us
That they speak vain things about us.
Harken, Lord: bind fast their jaws!
That they may not plead their cause.

Lord, give ear unto our wailing!
Hearken to our prayer devout,
That, our policy prevailing,

We may throw
[the Land-tax]
[Defence bills]
[The Dreadnought]
[Dalgety]
[Protection out.

Lord, who knoweth politicians,
All their longings and ambitions,
All the secrets of their souls,
O, assist us at the polls.
When we strive in the elections
Hide our many imperfections;
But let searching light expose
All the errors of our foes.

Lord, we work by Thy direction,
And we know Thou will assist
The Holy Cause, at next election,

Of the

[Anti-Socialist,]
[Anti-Protectionist],
[Lib'ral-Fusionist],
[Labor-socialist],
[Land Monopolist.]

As it was in the beginning

It is now

And ever shall be (until we have Elective Ministries)

Dissension, bickering, and waste of time without end.

A-hmen.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The I'D Like To Be..... Series

The Sailor

I'd like to be a sailor - a sailor bold and bluff -
Calling out, "Ship ahoy!" in manly tones and gruff.
I'd learn to box the compass, and to reef and tack and luff;
I'd sniff and sniff the briny breeze and never get enough.
Perhaps I'd chew tobacco, or an old black pipe I'd puff,
But I wouldn't be a sailor if ...
 The sea was very rough.
 Would you?

The Porter

I'd like to be a porter, and always on the run,
Calling out, "Stand aside!" and asking leave of none.
Shoving trucks on people's toes, and having splendid fun,
Slamming all the carriage doors and locking every one -
And, when they asked to be let in, I'd say, "It can't be done."
But I wouldn't be a porter if ...
 The luggage weighed a ton.
 Would you?

The Pieman

I'd like to be a Pieman, and ring a little bell,
Calling out, "Hot pies! Hot pies to sell!"
Apple-pies and Meat-pies, Cherry-pies as well,
Lots and lots and lots of pies - more than you can tell.
Big, rich Pork-pies! Oh, the lovely smell!
But I wouldn't be a Pieman if ...
 I wasn't very well.
 Would you?

The Barber

I'd like to be a barber, and learn to shave and clip,
Calling out, "Next please! and pocketing my tip."
All day I'd hear my scissors going, "Snip, Snip, Snip;"
I'd lather people's faces, and their noses I would grip
While I shaved most carefully along the upper lip.
But I wouldn't be a barber if ...
 The razor was to slip.
 Would you?

The Teacher

I'd like to be a teacher, and have a clever brain,
Calling out, "Attention, please!" and "Must I speak in vain?"
I'd be quite strict with boys and girls whose minds I had to train,
And all the books and maps and things I'd carefully explain;
I'd make them learn the dates of kings, and all the capes of Spain;
But I wouldn't be a teacher if ...
 I couldn't use the cane.
 Would you?

The Postman

I'd like to be a postman, and walk along the street,
Calling out, "Good Morning, Sir," to gentlemen I meet,
Ringing every door-bell all along my beat,
In my cap and uniform so very nice and neat.
Perhaps I'd have a parasol in case of rain or heat;
But I wouldn't be a postman if ...
 The walking hurt my feet.
 Would you?

The Baker

I'd like to be a baker, and come when morning breaks,
Calling out, "Beeay-ko!" (that's the sound he makes) -
Riding in a rattle-cart that jogs and jolts and shakes,
Selling all the sweetest things a baker ever bakes;
Currant-buns and brandy-snaps, pastry all in flakes;
But I wouldn't be a baker if ...
 I couldn't eat the cakes.
 Would you?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Idle Son

Young Benjamin left school this year
And stepped right in a job;
And he starts in hope of a life career,
Like his eldest brother, Bob.
But Sam, the lad who came between,
Born in the fateful year 'thirteen,
Still vainly seeks a place;
And the mark of his fate, too plainly seen,
Dawns in his listless face.

For Sam was born in a black year,
In the year of the world's black rage
To rob his youth of childish mirth;
And another curse was on the earth
In the year he came of age.
War and depression, this grim twain,
Have clouded life for a bright young brain.

Life smiles for Benjamin and Bob,
Each lucky in his age;
But the count of years falls ill to rob
Same of his heritage:
Too old for a youth's apprenticeship,
Untrained, too young for a man's firm grip,
Tho' a man in stature grown,
He lives to see his chances slip,
Thro' no fault of his own.

For Sam was born in a black year,
In a black year came from school.
But we who know past years of ease
Hold stern responsibilities
Ere his youthful ardours cool.
Ours is the duty, ours the task
To yield what youth has right to ask.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Idolators

The veil was rent, and mundane Time merged in Eternity;
And I beheld the End of Things. I heard the Last Decree
Pronounced on all the World that Is, and Was, and Is to Be.

Rank upon rank before the Throne the Nations were arrayed,
And every man since Time began by his own act was weighed;
Till, to the Right, the diffident Elected stood dismayed.

For here the lowly Lazarus, and all his kind and ken
Repentant knave and serf and slave and humble beggar-men
In wonder looked from Damned to Throne, then on the Damned again.

Gaunt, trowsled creatures of the streets still trembled, half in fear;
Weak women who had 'sinned' for love, and common folk were here,
Facing the Lost, yet doubting still that the Decree was clear.

For on the Left amid the Damned, a thousand million strong,
There stood a band of 'righteous' folk - a very 'genteel' throng;
All much surprised and scandalised, and scenting 'something wrong.'

Here reigned Respectability 'mid virgins sour and chaste;
Prim, haughty dames, whose worldly aims had been in perfect taste,
Shorn of their pride, stood side by side with sweaters leaden-faced.

Strict folk, who ne'er had sinned without due reck'ning of the cost,
Sniffed disapproval and declared the function was a frost,
And vowed the angel-ushers erred in marking them as Lost.

Strange men there were of ev'ry age since Man did first increase,
From Adam on to Babylon, from Persia to Greece,
From Greece and Rome, to England, on till Time was bidden cease.

Courtiers were there, and prince and peer - ay, even brewere-knights -
Preachers and parsons, Pharisees, Gentiles and Israelites,
Pharaohs and Caesars, Emperors and smug suburbanites.

Yea, every canting hypocrite since early Eocene,
In skin and silk and suit of mail and broadcloth stood serene,
Full sure his plight would be set right when the 'mistake' was seen.

And, as they gazed, shocked and amazed, upon the chosen side
On folk ill-clad in rags that had half-clothed them when they died
Lord God, they're not respectable! Nay, have a care!' they cried.

Then stepped there forth, consumed with wrath, an unctuous alderman;
And, standing out before the Throne, he pompously began
(In life he built a church, and many 'charities' he ran)

'Most High, the Heavenly Court, and Friends I do not wish to blame
Where blame is not deserved; but I protest it is a shame
That such a state of things exists; and I regret I came.

'I - I, a pillar of the Church, a famed philanthropist,
Who, on a Sabbath went to chapel thrice, and never missed;
I, rich, respectable, am down on the 'Rejected' list.

'It is absurd, upon my word, when even Royalty
Is bid make way for yon array of rags and misery!
Ay, even vice, to my surprise, in their soiled ranks I see!

"Tis past a jest; and I protest it is an insult when
That common, motley crew of low, ill-bred, unlettered men
Is set on high, while such as I are herded in this pen!

And, as he closed, the huddled rows of Damned caught up the cry ;
From many million 'genteel' throats a shout went to the sky:
'Lord God, they're not respectable! Beware, beware, Most High!'

Close on their shout The Voice rang out, and took them like a flood;
Till king and khan and alderman and prince of royal blood,
And chief and lord and preacher cowered and trembled where they stood.

'Ye knew my life, ye knew my Law, ye mocked with hollow praise;
Ye knelt to me in blasphemy once in the Seven Days;
Then raised an idol in my place and went your idol's ways.

'To this ye turned; for this ye spurned the Man of Galilee;
And in your hearts ye sacrificed to other gods than me;
Nor ceased to crawl to it ye call 'Respectability.'

'And when its Law was not my Law, say, whither did ye lean?

Did ye heed my Word or seek to aid my humble folk and mean?
Ye prayed unto a myth and scorned the lowly Nazarene.

'E'en as ye judged my People here, so are ye judged and weighed;
But the humble mates of Christ the Carpenter today are paid.
My folk they be; I know not ye. Go, call your god to aid.'

And lo, adown the shining stairs, each with a flaming sword,
Avenging hosts of angels came - yet howled the stricken horde,
'Lord God, they're not respectable! Be warned in time, O Lord!'

Then yawned agape and greedily a horrid, fiery cleft,
And prince and king and alderman, of pomp and pride bereft,
Went, pressed like herded cattle, till no trace of gloom was left.

Yet, as they fell, the gates of Hell gave back a cry that came
Now far and faint, a doleful plaint - all muffled through the flame,
'Lord God, they're not respectable! O, King of Kings, for shame!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Impervious Iceberg

I saw him stand, a Polar man,
Cold anger in his frigid eye,
Facing it wild, unruly clan
Who poised their fiery shafts on high.

Strangely, his very coldness fed
The angry flame 'gainst such as he;
For in his wintry face they read
Antarctic immobility.

The niveous hauteur of that face
Bespoke the brumal inner man;
And, in its chill hyemal grace,
His pose was quite Siberian.

His haughty and hibernal gaze
Seemed like twin icicles to strike.
The whole man was, in many ways,
Peculiarly cucumber-like.

His algid and unruffled brow
Gleamed frostily, and, as he eyed
His raging foes, he seemed, I vow,
Gelidity personified.

His Greenland bosom bulged with pride:
A manly bosom 'twas withal
And, as he breathed, with glacial glide
I watched his waistcoat rise and fall.

I marked the Arctic arrogance
With which he faced his foemen bold.
Bleak was his mien; clay-cold his glance.
Some vowed his very feet were cold.

I saw his savage foemen poise
Their fiery javelins on high.
(They made a fearful lot of noise.)
'Slay! Slay the Iceberg!' was the cry.

And then, as by a single hand
Propelled, I saw the keen shafts fly,
And on that manly bosom land.
'This is his funeral,' thought I.

Nay, by my halidaine! What's this?
Upon his breast the hot shafts beat,
But with a fierce and baffled hiss
dropp all innocuous at his feet.

Unscathed he stood, the Man of Ice.
Each shaft, with torrid anger fired,
Just spluttered feebly once or twice,
Then ignominiously expired.

One look he gave them, that was all
It made his shiv'ring foemen feel
That wintry blasts swept through the hall
Then turned on his hyemal heel.

One word he spake, one icy word
No man among them stood exempt
It froze each listener who hear
With hyperborean contempt.

It froze them with its brumal blast;
Like avalanches there it rang.
Then through the door he calmly passed,
And banged it with a snow-clad bang.

So, frigidly, he won the day.
And, when the blizzard blast was o'er,
Lo, nought remained to mark the fray
But shafts, deceased, upon the floor.

And, as I passed into the night,
I heard one baffled foe aver:
'Tis sheer futility to fight
An iceberg with a Lucifer!

The Incurable

The bad boy of Europe,
He stands in dire disgrace,
Crying too loud his innocence
While guilt grins from his face.
The gangster and the racketeer
Earth's honest folk disown,
And the bad boy of Europe
He walks his way alone.

In cynical dishonour
The world is not yet lost,
As the dull boy of Europe
Discovers to his cost.
Something is let to decency,
And something of fair play,
As the shameless boy of Europe
Learns, to his vague dismay.

Tho' nations yet be governed
By chiefs too worldly-wise,
There runs an unclean pathway
From which men turn their eyes.
Defined by laws unwritten,
There yet remains The Code;
But the bad boy of Europe
Treads the forbidden road.

Never, 'mid Christian nations,
Shall might be counted right;
And murder stays foul murder
Ever in just men's sight.
The wide world shall disown them
Who own that guilt-stained crew
Whose acts belie their mouthings;
Whose mouthings ring untrue.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Incubus

Who wants a nice white elephant,
Quite fit in wind and limb?
An ornament for any gent
Who can find use for him.
It won't pay us to kill the cuss;
But we can't afford his keep.
Who wants a nice white elephant?
We'll sell or lease him cheap.

Who wants a nice white elephant?
He'd make a lovely pet.
In rich, fat days we loved his way,
But in these times of fret
He's sort of grown too big for us
To fondle, groom and feed.
Who wants a fine white elephant
Of most exclusive breed?

Who wants a nice white elephant?
Of noble lineage he.
His breed is by State Jealousy
Out of Prosperity.
The rich years thro' he grew and grew,
And, ah, we loved him so.
But we can't afford his bed and board,
And we'd like to let him go.

Who'll buy a nice white elephant?
No decent bid refused.
We love him yet, altho' our pet
Has often been abused.
But come on, gents, walk up, walk up.
Our funds, alas, are scant.
Altho' we once were sold a pup
Who'll buy an elephant?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Indian Myna

Gimme the town an' its clamour an' clutter;
I ain't very fond of the bush;
For my cobbles are coves of the gardens and gutter-
A tough metropolitan push.
I ain't never too keen on the countryfield life;
It's the hustle an' bustle for me an' me wife.

So I swagger an' strut an' I cuss an' I swagger;
I'm wise to the city's hard way.
A bit of a bloke an' a bit of a bragger;
I've always got plenty to say.
Learned thro' knockin' about since my people came out
From the land at the back of Bombay.

When out in the bush I am never a ranger;
There never ain't nothin' to see.
Besides, them bush birds got no time for a stranger;
So town an' the traffic for me.
I sleep in the gardens an' loaf in the street,
An' sling off all day at the fellers I meet.

An' I swagger an' scold an' strut an' I swagger,
An' pick up me fun where I can,
Or tell off me wife, who's a bit of a nagger,
Or scrap with the sparrers for scan.
A bonzer at bluffin', I give you my word,
For, between you an' me, I'm a pretty tough bird.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Insect

From Camowéal to Windywoe, from Windywoe to Thirstyville,
We'll drag the line around the map, along the plain, and up the hill;
Scross the desert, to the swamp, across the swamp and up the rise.
'Our ' Sacred Rights must be preserved, 'our' claims you'll have to recognise.

One night, while others were abed,
With weary eyes and aching head,
I pored for hours and hours upon a map,
Till dots and lines began to swim.
'Suggested routes' grew blurred and dim,
And then, I think, I must have had a nap.

But, with a start, it seemed to me,
I sat bolt upright suddenly,
And gazed, with staring eyes, before me straight;
For there, upon my inkwell's brim,
With aspect most grotesque and grim,
I thought a large, fat, hairy spider sat.

'Good fellow, you behold in me
An insect of repute,' said he.
'I'm that State Insect, so much talked about.
I've frequently been mentioned in
Such papers as THE BULLETIN;
So you have heard of me before, no doubt.

'You've recently,' pursued the brute,
'Been pondering upon the route
Of our Transcontinental Railway Line.
I do not know what views you hold;
But, if it be not deemed too bold,
I'll just acquaint you with a few of mine.'

Then, suddenly, the creature dropped
Heels over head, and downward flopped

Into the pot, and floundered in the ink.
I calmly thought, 'He'll drown, no doubt';
But presently he struggled out
And sat, once more, all dripping, on the brink.

'Ere I proceed to illustrate
The views of each protesting State
Thus did the beast address me from the pot
'Please understand I represent
All phases of State discontent;
In me is concentrated all the lot!'

Then quickly from the pot he crawled,
And, ere I could prevent it, sprawled
Upon the map. I cursed at him in vain.
And as he went, and left behind
Long, inky smears, all crossed and lined,
He chanted this preposterous refrain:

'From Drouthyhurst to Dottytown, from Dottytown to Thirstyville.
We'll drag the line around the map, and o'er the plain, and up the hill;
With here a twist, and there a turn and over here a wide detour.
Our claims you have to recognise; our prejudices must endure.
From Boodle's run to Foodle's pub our Sacred Rights you must preserve
From Foodle's pub to Doodle's dam, the int'rests of the State to serve;
Insanely crawling through the map, and in and out, and to and fro,
If you'd propitiate the States, this is the way the line will go.'

I seized a pen, in angry haste,
And, with a curse, the creature chased
From off the map, then looked, and cursed some more.
But 'round the corner of the pot
The spider peered and said, 'What rot!
I don't see what you've got to curse me for!

'I will explain, if you'll permit,'
It said ; but in an angry fit
I banged the map and yelled; 'Upon my word!

You've crossed and lined it back and forth,
But one straight line from south to north
Does not appear! Your system is absurd!

'Suppose,' I said, 'invaders came;
Here, in the north. How, in the name
Of thunder, could we quickly move our troops?
How could we rush our army forth
Into the unprotected North
With all your crazy twists and turns and loops!'

'Good fellow, I have yet to learn
That it is any State's concern
To meddle with Defence,' he made reply.
'That is the Commonwealth's lookout;
They'll get 'em there. I have no doubt;
But, as for us, we've other fish to fry.
'Yet if you really want to know
Which way the troops will have to go,
Once more I shall be happy to explain.'
And, as I planned his sudden death,
The creature drew a long, deep breath
And sang again this maddening refrain:

'From Drouthyhurst to Dottytown, from Dottytown to Thirstyville.
We'll drag the army 'round the map, and o'er the plain, and up the hill;
With over here a wide detour, and here a twist, and there a turn;
And if they never meet the foe it isn't any state's concern.
We'll drag 'em miles and weary miles, from Foodle's pub to Boodle's run;
The while the foeman gains the North, without the firing of a gun.
From Boodle's run to Doodle's dam, o'er kink and curl and loop and curve.
Our int'rests you must recognise, our Sacred Rights you must observe.'
Again, all haste I made to grab
A pen; this time resolved to stab
The loathly insect in some vital spot;
But, though with murd'rous aim I hit,
'Twas wasting energy, for it
Eluded me and dodged around the pot.

'Aha! You're not the first of men

To try to slay me with a pen,'
It sneered. 'They try in vain; I still survive.
And now I go to make a league
And weave a web of State intrigue
That will enmesh you all, if I'm alive.'

Then, with another wicked sneer,
The creature seemed to disappear.
I searched in vain; the thing had vanished quite.
And though I laugh, and talk, and think,
And go to church. and take to drink,
I can't shake off the horrors of that night.

For still that ruined map I've got,
All sullied o'er with smear and blot,
The sight of which calls forth a frenzied scream.
And, since that night, I've counsel sought
Of learned men who surely ought
To know, but all declare it was a dream.

Yet, when the views of PHILP or WADE,
Within the Tory press displayed,
Assault mine eyes, I seem to see quite plain
That ugly spider, fat and squat,
Perched insolently on the pot;
I seem to hear again the weird refrain:-

'From Drouthyhurst to Dottytown, from Dottytown to Thirstyville,
We'll drag the line around the map, and o'er the plain, and up the hill;
With here a kink, and there a curve, and here a needless, wide detour.
Our claims you have to recognise; our sacred int'rests must endure.
For Boodle has a bit of land, and Foodle has much influence.
And Doodles cattle must be trucked, whatever happens to Defence.
So down it goes by Snoodle's road, from Snoodle's road to Noodle's Well.
Aus-tral-i-an defence be blowed! Austral-i-a may go to Hell!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Interloper

The Honourable TORYPHAT addressed the meeting: 'Hem!
(Prolonged applause.) Ah - Mistah Chairman, gentlemen. To stem
The tide of Socialism - rabid Socialism, sir
Which threatens to engulf us, hez - ah - always been - um - er
Hez always been ouah object in the past, and Ai may say,
We hev succeeded, somewhat, in - er - standing in the way.
We hev been firm, sir, in the past, and fought without - ah - feah
Foah the Empiah and the - ah - the uppah classes, sir. (Heah. heah.)

In ouah endeavahs to - um - ah - promote the public good
It hez always been - that is to say - been - ah - been understood.
Bai the people - bai the - um - ha - people, sir, of this - er - land
That we and the Empiah, so to speak, are hand in hand.
The British - er - authorities, at all times, hev been glad
To listen - ah - to any - er - suggestions that we had.
We hev been the Empiah's mouthplece, in - ah - this benighted land,
And hitherto the Empiah was the - aw - best card in ouah hand.

The word 'Imperial' is, Ai maintain, sir, ouahs bai raight;
It hez been ouah battle-cry in the - ah - forefront of the faight.
And, hitherto, the pahs at Home weah quick to recognise
Ouah undoubted raight to use it in refuting Labah lies.
At Empiah celebrations we hev been the leading ones
In saluting the - aw - flag, sir, and distributing - ah - buns.
And all raight-thinking persons who - ah - who support ouah cause
Will agree that we alone - er - stand for 'Empiah.'.. (Loud applause.)

But now what do we faind, sir? Mistah Chairman, Ai'm dismayed!
It would seem that ouah - ah - trust in the - ah - pahs has been betrayed.
For they hev - aw - confided, with regard to woah and loans,
In this common Labah person named - ah - named - ah - FISAH. (Groans.)
They've actu'ly consulted him and - aw - and made a fuss;
They've told him - er - State secrets, sir, which they withhold from us !
Things that concern ouah Empiah, sir! Ai - (splutter) - Ai PROTEST!
They hev no raight to trust this PEARCE and FISHAH and the rest!

Who is he? Ai repeat, sir - ah - who is this fellow? (Jeers.)
He's gone to see the crowning of ouah gracious Soveriegn. (Cheers.)
But why, sir? Mistah Chairman, Ai repeat the question - Why?
He's gine in the ecapacity of - er - a Labah spy!
He's gone to worm out secrets, sir - State secrets, which he seeks
To use against ouah party, sir, when he returns. (Loud shrieks.)
He hopes to use his knowledge to upset our cherished schemes.
And oust us from ouah office as Empiah's champions! (Screams.)

And, Ai repeat, who is he sir - this meddling FISHAH? (Hoots.)
A minah, sir! (Intense digust.) Not fit to black ouah boots!
A common minah! And foah him the pahs have passed us by!
But Ai defy the pahs, sir! Ai repeat it, Ai defy
The pahs at Home! (Commotion.) Sir! Ai'll not stand such disgrace!
This man will not usurp ouah raights, and drag us from ouah place!
Ai'll lead a revolution, sir! Blood, sir! Ai'll rend to bits,
THE SILKEN BONDS OF EMPIAH, SIR! (Sensation.) DEM IT!!! (Fits.)

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Intro

'Er name's Doreen...Well spare me bloomin' days!
You could er knocked me down wiv 'arf a brick!
Yes, me, that kids meself I know their ways,
An' 'as a name for smooGIN' in our click!
I just lines up an' tips the saucy wink.
But strike! The way she piled on dawg! Yer'd think
A bloke was givin' back-chat to the Queen....
'Er name's Doreen.

I seen 'er in the markit first uv all,
Inspectin' brums at Steeny Isaacs' stall.
I backs me barrer in—the same ole way
An' sez, 'Wot O! It's been a bonzer day.
'Ow is it fer a walk?'...Oh, 'oly wars!
The sorter look she gimme! Jest becors
I tried to chat 'er, like you'd make a start
Wiv ANY tart.

An' I kin take me oaf I wus perlite.
An' never said no word that wasn't right,
An' never tried to maul 'er, or to do
A thing yeh might call crook. Ter tell yeh true,
I didn't seem to 'ave the nerve—wiv 'er.
I felt as if I couldn't go that fur,
An' start to sling off chiack like I used...
Not INTRAJUICED!

Nex' time I sighted 'er in Little Bourke,
Where she was in a job. I found'er lurk
Wus pastin' labels in a pickle joint,
A game that—any'ow, that ain't the point.
Once more I tried ter chat 'er in the street,
But, bli'me! Did she turn me down a treat!
The way she tossed 'er 'cad an' swished 'er skirt!
Oh, it wus dirt!

A squarer tom, I swear, I never seen,
In all me natchril, than this 'ere Doreen.
It wer'n't no guyver neither; fer I knoo

That any other bloke 'ad Buckley's 'oo
Tried fer to pick 'er up. Yes, she was square.
She jist sailed by an' lef' me standin' there
Like any mug. Thinks I, 'I'm out er luck,'
An' done a duck

Well, I dunno. It's that way wiv a bloke.
If she'd ha' breasted up ter me an' spoke,
I'd thort 'er jist a commin bit er fluff,
An' then fergot about 'er, like enough.
It's jest like this. The tarts that's 'ard ter get
Makes you all 'ot to chase 'em, an' to let
The cove called Cupid get an 'ammer-lock;
An' lose yer block.

I know a bloke 'oo knows a bloke 'oo toils
In that same pickle found-ery. ('E boils
The cabbitch storks or somethink.) Anyway,
I gives me pal the orfis fer to say
'E 'as a sister in the trade 'oo's been
Out uv a job, an' wants ter meet Doreen;
Then we kin get an intro, if we've luck.
'E sez, 'Ribuck.'

O' course we worked the oricle; you bet!
But, 'struth, I ain't recovered frum it yet!
'Twas on a Saturdee, in Colluns Street,
An'—quite by accident, o' course—we meet.
Me pal 'e trots 'er up an' does the toff
'E allus wus a bloke fer showin' off.
'This 'ere's Doreen,' 'e sez. 'This 'ere's the Kid.'
I dips me lid.

'This 'ere's Doreen,' 'e sez. I sez 'Good day.'
An', bli'me, I 'ad nothin' more ter say!
I couldn't speak a word, or meet 'er eye.
Clean done me block! I never been so shy.
Not since I was a tiny little cub,
An' run the rabbit to the corner pub
Wot time the Summer days wus dry an' 'ot
Fer me ole pot.

Me! that 'as barracked tarts, an' torked an' larft,
An' chucked orf at 'em like a phonergraft!
Gorstrooth! I seemed to lose me pow'r o' speech.
But, 'er! Oh, strike me pink! She is a peach!
The sweetest in the barrer! Spare me days,
I carn't describe that cliner's winnin' ways.
The way she torks! 'Er lips! 'Er eyes! 'Er hair!...
Oh, gimme air!

I dunno 'ow I done it in the end.
I reckerlect I arst ter be 'er friend;
An' tried ter play at 'andies in the park,
A thing she wouldn't sight. Aw, it's a nark!
I gotter swear when I think wot a mug
I must 'a' seemed to 'er. But still I 'ug
That promise that she give me fer the beach.
The bonzer peach!

Now, as the poit sez, the days drag by
On ledding feet. I wish't they'd do a guy.
I dunno'ow I 'ad the nerve ter speak,
An' make that meet wiv 'er fer Sundee week!
But strike! It's funny wot a bloke'll do
When 'e's all out...She's gorn, when I come-to.
I'm yappin' to me cobber uv me mash....
I've done me dash!

'Er name's Doreen....An' me-that thort I knoo
The ways uv tarts, an' all that smoogin' game!
An' so I ort; fer ain't I known a few?
Yet some'ow...I dunno. It ain't the same.
I carn't tell WOT it is; but, all I know,
I've dropped me bundle—an' I'm glad it's so.
Fer when I come ter think uv wot I been....
'Er name's Doreen.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Intro

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An' never said no word that wasn't right,
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It's jest like this. The tarts that's 'ard ter get
Makes you all 'ot to chase 'em, an' to let
The cove called Cupid get a 'ammer-lock;
An' lose yer block.

I know a bloke 'oo knows a bloke 'oo toils
In that same pickle found-ery. ('E boils
The cabbitch storks or somethink.) Anyway,
I gives me pal the orfis fer to say
'E 'as a sister in the trade 'oo's been
Out uv a job, an' wants ter meet Doreen;
Then we kin get an into, if we've luck.
'E sez, 'Ribuck.'

O' course we worked the oricle; you bet!
But, 'struth, I ain't recovered frum it yet!
'Twas on a Saturdee, in Colluns Street,
An' - quite by accident, o' course -- we meet.
Me pal 'e trots 'er up an' does the toff --
'E allus wus a bloke fer showin' off.
'This ere's Doreen,' 'e sez. 'This 'ere's the Kid.'
I dips me lid.

'This 'ere's Doreen,' 'e sez. I sez 'Good day.'
An' bli'me, I 'ad nothin' more ter say!
I couldn't speak a word, or meet 'er eye.
Clean done me block! I never been so shy,
Not since I was a tiny little cub,
An' run the rabbit to the corner pub --
Wot time the Summer days wus dry and 'ot --
Fer me ole pot.

Me! that 'as barracked tarts, an' torked an' larft,
An' chucked orf at 'em like a phonergraft!
Gorstrooth! I seemed to lose me pow'r o' speech.
But 'er! Oh, strike me pink! She is a peach!
The sweetest in the barrer! Spare me days,
I carn't describe that cliner's winnin' ways.
The way she torks! 'Er lips! 'Er eyes! 'Er hair! ...
Oh, gimme air!

I dunno 'ow I done it in the end.
I reckerlect I arst ter be 'er friend;
An' tried to play at 'andies in the park,
A thing she wouldn't sight. Aw, it's a nark!
I gotter swear when I think wot a mug
I must 'a' seemed to 'er. But still I 'ug
That promise she give me fer the beach.
The bonzer peach!

Now, as the poit sez, the days drag by
On ledding feet. I wish't they'd do a guy.
I dunno 'ow I 'ad the nerve ter speak,
An' make that meet wiv 'er fer Sundee week!
But strike! It's funny wot a bloke'll do
When 'e's all out ... She's gorn, when I come-to.
I'm yappin' to me cobber uv me mash....
I've done me dash!

'Er name's Doreen....An' me -- that thort I knoo
The ways uv tarts, an' all that smoogin' game!
An' so I ort; fer ain't I known a few?
Yet some'ow ... I dunno. It ain't the same.
I carn't tell wot it is; but all I know,
I've dropped me bundle -- an' I'm glad it's so.
Fer when I come ter think uv wot I been....
'Er name's Doreen.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Invalid

The pale young man he comes to me,
An' chats me good an' fair;
'The langwidge that you use,' ses he,
'Pollutes the good, clean air.
Why don't yeh chuck sich silly rot,
An' line-up with the Clean Lip lot?'

But, square 'n' all, I got no use
For them poor, shrinkin' guys,
Who, at the sound of coves' abuse,
Turn pale, an' rolls their eyes.
To use the fancy swears I hear
Comes natural as sinking beer.

Beef an' blood-gravy's fightin' food,
Not milk; but, all the same,
I come to see there ain't no good
In this crook-landwidge game.
An' so a little vow I made,
An' joined their swell Clean Lip Brigade.

'Twas 'ard! But sternly I pursoo'd
Me course; an' wore a frown
Thro' swallerin' me speech unchewed,
An' chokin' curse-words down.
Oh, dear! It was a dreadful stunt!
Then, gracious me, I hit the Front!

A feller in the firin' line,
Tied up with sich a gag,
Who has to curse by look an' sign,
He fair gets out the rag.
An' so, I ses, each time I shoots,
'I'll teach you, you - you - you - you broots!'

I don't care wot the goodies say,
It's cruel fightin' dumb!
To curse a bit, once in a way,
Relieves yer feelin's some.
I kills four men in fair, clean fight,
An' seven extra out er spite.

An' then there come the bay'nit charge.
The blokes to left an' right
They all was cursin' fine and large,
But I keep mum, an' fight.
I plunks a square-'ead in the wind
'Annoying fellow; there!' I grinned.

With that a great, big 'ulking chap,
Comes at me with a sword
(The thing I need in that scrap
Was just one little word).
'Haw! You - you person,' I begun;
But while I talks, he gets in one.

Far in the chest I gets that swipe,
An' crumbles in a heap.
An' starts to think the time is ripe
To 'ave a long, deep sleep.
'You are intensely rude,' I said
An' so they leaves there for dead.

They invaleeds me 'ome, although
The wound gives me no cares.
The cause of my complaint, know,
Was bottlin' up me swears
Congestion of me 'Damn' denied:
It made me feel all swelled inside.

The pale young man he comes to me.

'Ah, friend,' he says, 'how now?
Your lips are clean, I'm pleased to see,
An' you 'ave kep' your vow!
'Me lips is bonzer,' I replied.
'But, 'struth, me throat is scarified!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Joy Ride

Ah Gawd! It makes me sick to think
Of what I 'eard an' seen;
Poor 'Arry like a wet rag flung
Across the wrecked machine;
An' Rose, 'er far all chiner-white
Against the gory green.

Now 'Arry Cox 'e drives a car
For Doctor Percy Gray.
Ses 'e to me: 'On Sund'y nex'
The Doc. will be away.
'Ow is it for a little trip
To Fernville for the day?

'I know two bonzer girls,' 'e ses;
'Fair 'otties, both, they are.
There's Rose who serves behind the joint
In Mudge's privit bar,
An' Lena Crump who jerks the pump
Down at the Southern Star.'

Now, who'd refuse a Sund'y trip
With girls an' all give in?
The car was there an' oil to spare.
To rat would be a sin!
An' who'd refuse a dropp o' booze
When pals is flush o' tin?

Wot all the courts an' papers say
Can't add to my distress....
Rose, with the blood upon 'er face
An' on 'er crumpled dress!
An' that poor champ who got the bump
Ah, Gawd! 'E was a mess!

The girls 'ad stout at ten mile out,
An' we was drinkin' beer.
I swear they lies like 'ell who ses
That we was on our ear!

For, or we was both, I take me oath,
As sober as me here.

Now, Lena was a dashin' piece,
'Igh-spirited an' flash.
'Twas plain enough to me that day
That 'Arry'd done 'is dash.
An' Rose - (Ah! how 'er eyes did stare)
Rose was my speshul mash.

It's easy now fer folks to talk
who might have done the same.
We meant no 'arm to anyone,
An' 'Arry knew 'is game.
'Twas like a flash, the skid - the crash.
An' we was not to blame.

I wisht I could shut out that sight;
fergit that awful row!
Poor Rose! 'Er face all chiner-white,
Like I can see it now;
An' 'Arry like a heap o' clothes
Jist chucked there any'ow.

They ses we painted Fernville red;
They ses that we was gay;
But wot come after dull's me mind
To wot them liars say.
We never dreamed of death an' 'ell
When we set out that day.

'Twas ev'nin' when we turned for 'ome:
The moon shone full that night:
An' for a mile or more ahead
The road lay gleamin' white:
An' Rose sat close aside o' me.
'Er face turned to the light.

Wot if we sung a song or two?
Wot it they 'eard us shout?
Is song an' laughter things to curse
An' make a fuss about?

'Go faster! faster!' Lena screams.
An' 'Arry let 'er out.

I'd give me soul jist to ferget.
Lord! how 'er eyes did stare!
'Er kisses warm upon me lips,
I seen 'er lyin' there.
Blood on 'er face, all chiner-white,
An' on 'er yellor 'air.

I never took no 'eed o' pace
(I've been on twenty trips).
An' Rose was restin' in me arms,
'Er cheek against my lips.
A precious lot I dream of skids,
A lot I thought of slips.

I only know we never thinks
I know we never dreams
Of folk walkin' on that road;
Till, sudden, Lena screams....
An', after that, the sights I saw
I've seen again in dreams.

We never seen the bloke ahead!
'Ow can they call us rash?
I jist seen 'Arry move to shove
'Is arm around 'is mash;
I seen 'er jump to grab the wheel,
Then, Lord!...there came the smash!

Aw, they can blame an' cry their shame!
It ain't for that I care.
I held 'er in my arms an' laughed....
Then seen 'er lying' there,
The moonlight streamin' on 'er face,
An' on 'er yellor 'air.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Kick

First I tried a Dry Martini;
But found not one teeny-weeny
Semblance of a kick in any kind of this.
Then I sampled a Manhattan;
But 'twas much the same with that 'un;
And as impotent I found an Angel's Kiss.

So I drank the menu thro';
Side-car, Bronx and Gin-and-Two.
Such innocuous concoctions left me sad.
And I yearned with eager yearning
For a cocktail, sudden, burning,
That might give a man a jolt and make him glad.

Then a fellow, somewhat seedy,
Down at heel and seeming needy,
said, 'If it's a kick you're seeking, come with me.'
So we went into a garden
That to me seemed partly Arden,
Partly, Eden; and we sat beneath a tree.

Here my friend produced a bottle,
Drew the stopper from its throttle,
And, pouring out a nip, said, 'Drink this, quick!'
No least hesitation followed;
I threw back my head and swallowed.
Oh, boy! Oh, res and furies! What a kick!

Green lightnings and blue blazes!
Fierce stars in fiery hazes!
Pink elephants that flapped about the sky! ...
When I woke, some five hours later,
Feeling queer at the equator,
'Great Scott! How do you make that stuff?' said I.

'First of all,' he proudly stated,
'Take a pint of methylated,
Stir in varnish, an' some 'air oil, just a drop.
Then, if pep should still be lackin',

Add turps, an' a tin of blackin'.
Me own invention, called the Fitzcray Flop.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Kid

My son! . . . Them words, jist like a blessed song,
Is singin' in me 'eart the 'ole day long;
Over an' over; while I'm scared I'll wake
Out of a dream, to find it all a fake.

My son! Two little words, that, yesterdee,
Wus jist two simple, senseless words to me;
An'now—no man, not since the world begun,
Made any better pray'r than that.... My son!

My son an' bloomin' 'eir . . . Ours! . . . 'Ers an' mine!
The finest kid in—Aw, the sun don't shine
Ther' ain't no joy fer me beneath the blue
Unless I'm gazin' lovin' at them two.

A little while ago it was jist 'me'
A lonely, longin' streak o' misery.
An' then 'twas "er an' me"—Doreen, my wife!
An' now it's "im an' us' an'—sich is life.

But 'struth! 'E is king-pin! The 'ead serang!
I mustn't tramp about, or talk no slang;
I mustn't pinch 'is nose, or make a face,
I mustn't—Strike! 'E seems to own the place!

Cunning? Yeh'd think, to look into 'is eyes,
'E knoo the game clean thro'; 'e seems that wise.
Wiv 'er 'an nurse 'e is the leadin' man,
An' poor ole dad's amongst the 'also ran.'

'Goog, goo,' 'e sez, and curls 'is cunnin' toes.
Yeh'd be su'prised the 'eaps o' things 'e knows.
I'll swear 'e tumbles I'm 'is father, too;
The way 'e squints at me, an' sez 'Goog, goo.'

Why! 'smornin' 'ere 'is lordship gits a grip
Fair on me finger—give it quite a nip!
An' when I tugs, 'e won't let go 'is hold!
'Angs on like that! An' 'im not three weeks old!

'Goog, goo,' 'e sez. I'll swear yeh never did
In all yer natcheril, see sich a kid.
The cunnin' ways 'e's got; the knowin' stare
Ther' ain't a youngster like 'im anywhere!

An', when 'e gits a little pain inside,
'Is dead straight griffin ain't to be denied.
I'm sent to talk sweet nuffin's to the fowls;
While nurse turns 'and-springs ev'ry time 'e 'owls.

But say, I tell yeh straight . . . I been thro'ell!
The things I thort I wouldn't dare to tell
Lest, in the tellin' I might feel again
One little part of all that fear an' pain.

It come so sudden that I lorst me block.
First, it was, 'Ell-fer-leather to the doc.,
'Oo took it all so calm 'e made me curse
An' then I sprints like mad to get the nurse.

By gum; that woman! But she beat me flat!
A man's jist putty in a game like that.
She owned me 'appy 'ome almost before
She fairly got 'er nose inside me door.

Sweatin' I was! but cold wiv fear inside
An' then, to think a man could be denied
'Is wife an' 'ome an' told to fade away
By jist one fat ole nurse 'oo's in 'is pay!

I wus too weak wiv funk to start an' rouse.
'Struth! Ain't a man the boss in 'is own 'ouse?
'You go an' chase yerself!' she tips me straight.
There's nothin' now fer you to do but—wait.'

Wait? . . . Gawd! . . . I never knoo wot waitin' meant.
In all me life till that day I was sent
To loaf around, while there inside—Aw, strike!
I couldn't tell yeh wot that hour was like!

Three times I comes to listen at the door;

Three times I drags meself away once more;
Arf dead wiv fear; 'arf dead wiv tremblin' joy . . .
An' then she beckons me, an' sez—'A boy!'

'A boy!' she sez. 'An' bofe is doin' well!'
I drops into a chair, an' jist sez—"Ell!"
It was a pray'r. I feels bofe crook an' glad....
An' that's the strength of bein' made a dad.

I thinks of church, when in that room I goes,
'Oldin' me breaf an' walkin' on me toes.
Fer 'arf a mo' I feared me nerve 'ud fail
To see 'er Iying there so still an' pale.

She looks so frail, at first, I dursn't stir.
An' then, I leans acrost an' kisses 'er;
An' all the room gits sorter blurred an' dim . . .
She smiles, an' moves 'er 'ead. 'Dear lad! Kiss 'im.'

Near smothered in a ton of snowy clothes,
First thing, I sees a bunch o' stubby toes,
Bald 'ead, termater face, an' two big eyes.
'Look, Kid,' she smiles at me. 'Ain't 'e a size?'

'E didn't seem no sorter size to me;
But yet, I speak no lie when I agree;
'E is,' I sez, an' smiles back at Doreen,
'The biggest nipper fer 'is age I've seen.'

She turns away; 'er eyes is brimmin' wet.
'Our little son!' she sez. 'Our precious pet!'
An' then, I seen a great big dropp roll down
An' fall—kersplash!—fair on 'is nibs's crown.

An' still she smiles. 'A lucky sign,' she said.
'Somewhere, in some ole book, one time I read,
'The child will sure be blest all thro' the years
Who's christened wiv 'is mother's 'appy tears.'

'Kiss 'im,' she sez. I was afraid to take
Too big a mouthful of 'im, fear 'e'd break.
An' when 'e gits a fair look at me phiz

'E puckers up 'is nose, an' then—Geewhizz!

'Ow did 'e 'owl! In 'arf a second more
Nurse 'ad me 'ustled clean outside the door.
Scarce knowin' 'ow, I gits out in the yard,
An' leans agen the fence an' thinks reel 'ard.

A long, long time I looks at my two lands.
'They're all I got,' I thinks, 'they're all that stands
Twixt this 'ard world an' them I calls me own.
An' fer their sakes I'll work 'em to the bone.'

Them vows an' things sounds like a lot o' guff.
Maybe, it's foolish thinkin' all this stuff
Maybe, it's childish-like to scheme an' plan;
But—I dunno—it's that way wiv a man.

I only know that kid belongs to me!
We ain't decided yet wot 'e's to be.
Doreen, she sez 'e's got a poit's eyes;
But I ain't got much use fer them soft guys.

I think we ort to make 'im something great
A bookie, or a champeen 'eavy-weight:
Some callin' that'll give 'im room to spread.
A fool could see 'e's got a clever 'ead.

I know 'e's good an' honest; for 'is eyes
Is jist like 'ers; so big an' lovin'-wise;
They carries peace an' trust where e'er they goes
An', say, the nurse she sez 'e's got my nose!

Dead ring fer me ole conk, she sez it is.
More like a blob of putty on 'is phiz,
I think. But 'e's a fair 'ard case, all right.
I'll swear I thort 'e wunk at me last night!

My wife an' fam'ly! Don't it sound all right!
That's wot I whispers to meself at night.
Some day, I s'pose, I'll learn to say it loud
An' careless; kiddin' that I don't feel proud.

My son! . . . If there's a Gawd 'Oos leanin' near
To watch our dilly little lives down 'ere,
'E smiles, I guess, if 'E's a lovin' one
Smiles, friendly-like, to 'ear them words—My son.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Kid

Now, this ain't a loocid story, but it 'as a 'igh-class moral.
I can mop up all the praises hurled at me by them it soots.
An' with them it don't appeal to I don't seek to pick a quarrel;
But I pause to say in passin', that I hold 'em brainless coots.

Well it mighter been a nightmare or it mighter been a vision.
Why or 'ow or where it 'appened, or 'ow long or shot ago
These are items I am shy of; but I've come to this decision:
It all 'appened some'ow somewhere, an' I'm tellin' all I know.

With this lengthy introduction - which I'm trustin', inter-arlier,
Will be paid for, cash, at space rates, to assist a bard in need
(For the lot of jingle-writers in our own sun-kissed Australier
Ain't so sunny as it might be, on the 'ole) - I'll now proceed.

There was me - who's most important, bein' here to tell the story
There was Kodak's gloomy lodger, an' a 'Enry Lawson bloke,
Also E.J. Brady's pirate, full of husky oaths and gory,
An' a plump and pleasin' female from an Ambrose Dyson joke.

Likewise with us at the geth'rin' Was Grant 'Ervey's Strong Australian.
An' a curly Souter peach; it was a treat the way she dressed;
An' a Louis Esson dryad, sparsely gowned an' somewot alien
(For which rhyme I point to many precedents amongst the best).

Also there were many others, far too noomerous to mention;
Bron men, somewot out of drorin', but exceedin' terse an' keen;
Yeller pups, George Reids an' dry dogs - but it is not my intention
To innoomerate the items in a Chris'mas BULLYTEEN.

Where we were I 'ave no notion, tho' it mighter been Parnassus.
Any'ow - but I'm forgettin' one small guest that came unbid;
Standin' in a corner sulkin', seldom speakin', 'cept to sass us,
Rubbin' 'is thin calves together, stood a Norman Lindsay kid.

But the main point of this story is that all of us was stony;
An' we needed money badly for to give ourselves a treat.
An' we wanted to present the editor with somethin' toney
In the shape of clubs or rest cures, just to try an' get 'im sweet.

'Mates, alas, there's nothin' left us,' ses the gloomy Lawson native.
'We can only look for other castaways from other wrecks.'
When the Wild Cat, on 'is windlass, scratched 'is left ear contemplative
An' remarked, 'I think I've gotter scheme to land the fatted cheques.

'We are valuable assets,' 'e went on, in tones finanshul.
'We are also reproductive, an' I think I see a chance
To relieve the present tension, an' secure a sum substanshul,
Which all comes of my acquaintance with low schemes an' 'igh finance.

'If we borrow twenty thousand on our natcheral resources
On all BULLETTEN creations - it will purchase many beers.
We can maffick, an' pay int'rest - which is a triflin' thing of course is
With a sinkin' fund extendin' over ninety-seven years.'

Well! To say we was elated is to put th ematter mildly.
I can still 'ear Brady's pirate yellin', 'Bite mates, let us bite!
I can still see Kodak's lodger kick 'is slippered feet, and wildly
Try to borrow two-an'-sixpence on the spot....But oh, that night!

'Where do I come in?' a squeaky voice arose above our shoutin',
Rose an' squeaked, shrill an' insistent, over all our joyous din.
'Twas the kid, the Lindsay youngster, standin' in 'is corner poutin'.
'Take a pull, yer bloomin' wasters! Blime, where do i come in?

'Nice lot, ain't yer? Garn, yer loafers! Let the comin' generation
Suck their theumbs an' watcher yer jag, an' 'ump the bill when it comes due;
Slave an' work when you 'ave snuffed it. An' you look for veneration
From us kids! Why, blime, who could venerate the likes of you?

'As THE BULLYTEEN been preachin' years an' years an' years for nuffin'
On the vice of floatin' loans ab' gettin' in the 'ands of Yids?
Playin' up yer borrowed money! Eatin' drinkin', swillin', stuffin'!
Then, when you 'ave checukced a seven, what a picnic for the kids!'

Spare me! You could 'ear a pin dropp when that little kid 'ad finsihed.
We just 'ung our 'eads in silence, till the Strong Australian spoke.
(Brady's pirate tore 'is whiskers, with 'is lust for jags diminished;
An' the Souter peach was sobbin' on the breast of Lawson's bloke.)

'Comrades,' ses the Strong Australian, 'see our star all glory litten!

Heed the ancient, beer-stained story! Heed the warning of the kid!
Lo, the way of ink's before us! Ringing verses shall be written
In which I shall figure largely. Yes, I shall.' An', 'struth, 'e did!

Ses the pirate, with the remnants of 'is whiskers fiercely bistlin'.
'In the war of life together we must take each wound and sear.'
'Now, we care not where we're bound for,' ses the Lawson native, whistlin'
For 'is dawg. 'It's up Matilda.' As for me, I ses, "Ear, 'ear.'

As I sed, this yarn ain't loocid, but its moral should not fail yer.
I shall ne'er fergit that ev'nin' or the voice above the din.
It's the cry of all the kiddies, born an' unborn, in Australyer,
When we flash our borrered millyuns: 'Blime, where do we come in?'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Kid Around The Corner

There's a kid around the corner
Who is filled with half-formed fears;
He is growing rather wistful
As the Christmas season nears;
For a hint has reached him lately
That has made him wonder greatly
If the jovial old Santa
Is as kind as he appears.

But the kid around the corner
Has strong faith in Santa Claus
Notwithstanding dread depression
And all economic laws.
Could we run this sad old earth right
Such a faith were all youth's birthright.
If you asked him why he holds it
He would answer 'Just because.'

There's a kid around the corner
Who will wake on Christmas morn
With his faith renewed in goodness,
Or, incredulous, forlorn,
With a child's trust sadly shaken . . .
Then how would we have him waken
In whose hands rests the miracle
Of Santa Claus reborn?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Kindly Copper

Oh, for that kindly copper
I knew long years ago,
A stalwart man and proper,
Crime's unrelenting foe.
He was for me a shield, a friend
Who sole concern was to defend
Such just rights as I know.

My bedtime thoughts went with him
What time his forthright feet,
In slow and measured rhythm,
Patrolled his midnight beat;
And, knowing he was on my side,
I blessed him, snugly satisfied,
Our concord was complete.

And now, tho' we've neglected
No duty, sought no change,
This friend I once respected
Half hostile grows, and strange.
They've made of him a hybrid thing:
And jobs we both dislike now bring
Him well within my range.

His stern eye holds suspicions
I feel I don't deserve
Re rules and requisitions
That fairly get my nerve.
And, when I motor thro' the land,
His great, prohibitive, red hand
Restrains my merry verve.

They give him duties menial
Jobs that no proud cop asks;
So that he, once so genial,
No more in favor basks.
And I am quite convinced the pop
ularity of any cop
Must suffer thro' these tasks.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Knight's Return

The conq'rin' 'ero! Me? Yes, I don't think.
This mornin' when I catch the train fer 'ome,
It's far more like a walloped pup I slink
To kennel, with resolves no more to roam.
Crusades is orf. I'm fer the simple life,
'Ome with me trustin' wife
All safe frum strife.

I've read uv knights returnin' full uv gyp,
Back to the bewchus lady in the tower.
They never seemed to git dumestic pip
In them brave days when knighthood was in flower.
But times is changed; an' 'usbands 'as to leed;
Fer knight'ood's run to seed;
It 'as indeed.

Snowy, the parson, came to say farewell
'Young friend,' 'e sez, 'You've did a Christian ack
A noble deed that you'll be glad to tell
An' boast uv to yer wife when you git back.'
'Too true,' I sez, reel chirpy. 'She'll be proud,
I'll blab it to the crowd -
If I'm allowed.'

'Good-bye! Good Luck!' 'e sez. 'I'll see to Rose,
Make yer mind easy. Ierdine yer face.
Bless yeh! Good luck, young friend!' An' orf we goes
Me an' me conscience arguin' the case.
An', as we pick up speed an' race along,
The rails make up a song:
'Yer in all wrong!'

'Yer in all wrong! Yer in all wrong! Yeh blob!
Why did yeh want to go an' 'unt fer Spike?
Yer in all wrong! Becoz yeh liked the job.
That's wot. An' don't pretend yeh didn't like.
Yer in all wrong! Wot will yeh tell Doreen?
Yeh'll 'ate to 'ave a scene.
Don't yeh feel mean?'

Two stations on, a w'iskered coot gits in
I seem to sort uv rekernise, some'ow.
But all at once I place 'im, an' I grin.
But 'e don't jerry; 'e's stone sober now.
It's 'im I scragged in Spadgers - number one -
The late suspected gun.
It's Danny Dunn.

'Sold that watch yet, ole cobber?' I remarks.
'E grabs 'is bag, an' views me battered dile,
With sudden fears uv spielers an' their larks.
But I ixplain,'an' 'e digs up a smile.
'Ah, yes,' 'e drawls. 'We met two nights ago
But I was - well, you know
Well - jist so-so.'

'E pipes me dile again, then stammers out,
'I'm sorry, sonny. Stone the crows! It's sad
To see yer face so orful cut about.
I never thort I walloped you so bad.
I'm sorry, lad, that we should come to blows.
Black eye? An' wot a nose!
Oh, stone the crows!'

I ease 'is guilty mind about me phiz,
An' we're good cobbers in a 'arf a tick.
Then 'e wades in an' tells me 'oo 'e is -
('E ain't a bad ole coot when 'e ain't shick) -
'I ain't dead broke,' 'e sez. 'That night, yeh know,
I was cleaned out uv dough,
An' - well - so-so.'

Lookin' fer land 'e is; an' 'as 'is eye
Upon a little farm jist close to me.
If 'e decides to take it by-an'-by,
'Why, stone the crows! I'll look yous up,' sez 'e.
'I need some friends: I ain't got wife nor chick;
An' yous will like me quick
When I ain't shick.'

I leaves 'im tork. Me own affairs won't let

Me pay much 'eed to all 'e 'as to say.
But, while 'e's spoutin', sudden like I get
A bright idear that brings one 'opeful ray.
One thing I 'eard pertickler while 'e spoke;
'E is a single bloke.
I lets that soak.

But later on I wished 'e'd sling 'is mag.
The nearer 'ome I get the worse I feel;
The worse I feel, the more I chew the rag;
The more I chew the rag, this crooked deal
I've served Doreen looks black an' blacker yet.
I worry till I get
All one cold sweat.

I walk 'ome frum the station, thinkin' 'ard.
Wot can I tell me wife? Gawstruth! I been
Eight long years wed, an' never 'ad to guard
Me tongue before. Wot can I tell Doreen?
An' there she's waitin' 'arf ways down our hill...
She takes one look... 'Why! Bill!'
I stands stock still.

'Oh, yes, me face,' I larfs. 'O' course. Me face.
I clean fergot. I - well - to tell the truth,
I - Don't look scared - I - Oh, it's no disgrace.
That dentist. Yes, yes! Pullin' out me tooth.
Reel butcher. Nearly frachered both me jors.
Yes, dear, let's go indoors.'
(Wow! 'Oly wars!)

'Poor Bill! Poor Dear! 'E must 'ave been a brute.'
She kisses me fair on me busted lip;
An' all me fears is stilled be that serloot.
Ar, wot a fool I was to 'ave the pip.
The game is mine before I 'ardly tried.
Dead easy, 'ow I lied!
I'm 'ome an' dried.

Yet .. . I dunno. Me triumph' don't last long.'
Twuz low down, some way, 'ow I took 'er in
Like pinchin' frum a kid. I feel dead wrong.

The parson calls it 'conshusniss uv sin.'
I might be; but it's got me worried now:
An' conshuns is a cow,
That I'll allow.

Take it frum me. To 'ave a lovin' wife
Fussin' an' pettin' you, jist through a lie
Like 'er this ev'nin' - crools all married life.
If you can't look 'er fair bang in the eye
An' feel you've earned that trust frum first to last.
You're 'eadin' downward fast...
But Rose - Oh, blast!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Lack

'This is the life!' said Dusty Dan
'This is the life to hand a man!
My happy way is strewn with flowers;
But why waste money on the showers?

'The hard cash wasted on that bath
Might yet make pleasanter my path,
If wisely spent on bottled beer
And motor cars to fetch us here!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Land Down-Under

At Slumberton-on-Slow,
When the rustics gather round
To quaff their ale, they hear a tale
That wakens doubt profound
A wild, wild tale that comes by mail
From Gaffer Gandy's Joe,
Who left his home long since to roam
In the land of the light pink snow.

And the talk goes to and fro:
'Be goom, laad, that be rich!
Pink snow, he said; an' the rain be red,
But swans be black as pitch!
A great lad for romance
Be Gaffer Gandy's Joe.
Ho, the kangaroo have pockets too!
In the land of the pale pink snow.'

At Slumberton-on-Slow
They yarn in the inn's tapp-room:
'Worms, Joe do write, they be a sight,
An' six foot long. Be goom!
Birds, he do say, laughs loud all day,
And the cherry stones do grow
Outside the skin, an' not within,
In the land of the pale pink snow.

'The lizards shed their tails,
An' the trees they sheds their bark,
But keeps their leaves while winter grieves
(Did e'er 'ee hear sick tork?)
The squirrels they fly by night from high,
Says Gaffer Gandy's Joe.
An' the fish have legs, an' the beasts lays eggs
In the land of the pale pink snow.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Last Sundowner

He sat upon a fallen log
And heaved a long, deep sigh.
His gnarled hand fondling his old dog
As his gaze went to the sky.
"There goes another pane," said he
"A soarin', roarin' pest!
They robs a man of privacy,
An' motor cars of rest."

"Sundownin' ain't the game ut was
Since men have took to wings;
An' life grows narrer, jist because
Of plans an' cars an' things.
For the planes have pinched me privit skies
An' the cars have grabbed me earth
An' all the news by wireless flies;
So what's sundownin' worth?

"Time was when I could sit me down
Where man had left no sign,
An' earth an' sky for miles aroun'
For that one hour was mine.
And I could sit an' think me thorts
An' watch the sun go west
Without no crazy ingine's snorts
To break into me rest.

"And as the afternoon grew late
I'd seek the haunts of men,
An' at some lonely homestead gate
I'd have sure welcome then;
An' tucker-bags were gladly filled,
And rest found for my back,
In `change for bits of news I spilled
And gossip of the track.

"But now that wireless spreads its lies
From this and other lands,
They look on me with hard, cold eyes

An' give with grudgin' hands.
It's them that has to give me news;
And when I seek some wide,
Once silent scene, planes spoil me views,
An' cars honk me aside."

He sat upon a fallen log
And heaved a long, deep sigh:
"We're agein', me an' my ole dog,
An' old things have to die.
Sundownin's dead; men's minds an' ways
Is changin' with a jerk.
Seems like I'll have to end me days,
Travellin'; in search of work."

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Leader That Was Pushed

Once on a time a general whose name is handed down
To the present generation as a name of high renown
Once on a time this general - I trust you understand
This happened years and years ago, and in a foreign land.
This general once stood before his army, thinking hard;
And he talked about advancing, but he didn't move a yard,
For, to put the matter plainly, though he knew his cause was right,
And desired to be the leader, yet he didn't want to fight.

He bravely talked for hours and hours of tactics and defence
(In good sooth, he was a leader of undoubted eloquence)
Till his soldiers grew impatient, for they spied afar the foe,
So they started marching forward, and the leader had to go,
Though he begged for time to elocute, they forced him to a walk;
Then they broke into a double, and he hadn't breath to talk.
If his soldiers start to push him - well, that can a leader do?
Thus he led his army forward - of necessity, 'tis true.

Oh, they forced him to a run,
And the firing of a gun
Gave him qualms about the business, but he couldn't change his mind.
He'd have dearly loved to pause
And orate about The Cause,
But he had to keep responding to the pressure from behind.
Then he yelled a battle-cry,
And he waved his sword on high,
But he mournfully reflected as he viewed the foemen's horde:
Leadership may be all right
While the foe is out of sight,
But, like the pen, the silver tongue is safer than the sword.

The fight was won. That general, his heart swelled up with pride,
Delivered speeches eloquent to his victorious side;
And the peroration hinted they should rest while they'd the chance;
But the army wanted more of it and urged him to advance.
'Twas here the general resigned to join another band
That didn't yearn to go and fight the battles of the land.

'Twas a calm, reposeful army, and that leader suited well;
For it let him talk of fighting while it sat and took a spell.

He was leader of the tired,
And he never was required
To go ranging o'er the country to attack a savage foe;
And whene'er he thought it best
To sit down and take a rest,
Well - it's rude to push a leader when he doesn't want to go.
And, if by some mischance,
He should mention an advance,
They would let him talk about it and applaud him very hard;
They would hail him as the man
Who by right was in the van;
But they'd grab him by the coat-tails if he sought to move a yard.

Give attention now, my masters, to this general's career;
He was affable and eloquent, but let me mention here
This happened very long since - twenty thousand years or so;
For now, we know, a leader leads before he's forced to go.
But if, perchance, at any time, a leader you should find
Who objects to moving onward till he gets a push behind,
Far better shift him from the front; his place is never here;
And let him join the other crowd - the Army of the Rear.

Let us have a moving army, let its leader be a man
Who doesn't need a shove behind to keep him in the van;
And if he halts to elocute, let's shift him off the track,
And put him 'mid the baggage-carts and lumber at the back.
There to seek a reputation with the busted and the bushed:
For no man may seek for Honor who insists on being pushed.
And he who seeks to lead must keep ahead a yard or so,
For - it's rude to push a leader when he doesn't want to go.

For a leader of the kind
Who requires a kick behind
Isn't any sort of leader, when you come to think of it;
And the generals we need
Are the fellows who CAN lead

The men who know the track to go, and tackle it with grit.
Wherefore, when you hear the talk
Of these fellows who would baulk,
While they flood the land with eloquence till mentally you're bushed.
Just remember, words and air
Seldom lead to anywhere,
And reflect upon the story of the leader that was pushed

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The League Of Youth

There was never a hint, when I was a boy,
That the joy of the wilds might bring man joy;
Never a thought that a wild thing slain
Might wake in the slayer pain for pain.
We were savages all, with the hunter's thrill
In the lure of the chase and the lust of the kill;
And the bud on the bough, and the bird in the nest
Were beautiful things to be possessed.

But a worthier thing comes now to the earth,
Since pity in minds of the young has birth.
'Tis the glorious gift, that wisdom brings,
Of knowing and loving all lovely things:
Of loving and sharing with all the boon
Of the glad free things that may teach us soon
The gift of living, as glad and free,
As bird and blossom in Arcady.

'Oh, youth is heedless,' the elders say,
'Youth is callous and cruel in play,'
Say they, forgetting that all youth heeds
Comes down through lauding of elders' deeds.
But the law of savage - of fang and claw
Gives what was in the end to a worthier law;
And man, emerging from ways uncouth,
Sees visions anew in the League of Youth.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Lean, Brown Man

There's a big, brown man in the hinterland
Whom the nation had forgot;
He's a stolid man and a patient man
And he does not talk a lot:
And the seasons frown or the seasons smile
As he toils to sow, to reap;
And as he toils he thinks the while;
And his thoughts are long and deep.

There's a silent man in the hinterland
A land of earth-stained clowns
To the little street-bred people cooped
In the noisy seaboard towns
In the towns where many a catch-cry's raised
And devious scheme devised,
Where the talkers reign, and thoughts, like men,
Grow smug and standardised.

There's a quite man in the hinterland
Who scorns the shifts and tricks
Of the little men that talk and scheme
In the game of politics.
They have wooed him long with sly pretence
Thro' many a season past.
He was deemed a fool, and he suffered much;
But his patience ends at last.

There's a patient man in the hinterland
Who has scant time for words,
For the sounding phrase and the cries they raise
To sway the thoughtless herds.
Long has he toiled, this patient man
That the folk be fed and housed
But guile shall know no sterner foe
Than the patient man aroused.

The Liberal Constitution

Jack Sprat would eat no fat,
His wife would eat no lean,
And so, betwixt them both, you see,
They licked the platter clean.
Old nursery rhyme

Gentlemen, I'd like to mention, with your very kind attention,
One important point I wish you all to know;
We've a policy extensive and extremely comprehensive -
Me an' Joe.
As a fact, 'tis all-embracing, just to put the matter flat;
Therefore, where's the need to mention that we favor 'this' or 'that'?

Quite unlike the other party, we're so vigorous and hearty,
We can thrive on any diet, high or low.
And, if you decide to follow us, just notice what we swallow
Me an' Joe.
It is hardly worth while mentioning what Joseph can't digest,
And, when he has picked his dishes, I, with ease, absorb the rest.

While other folks are musing o'er the menu, picking, choosing,
In a fashion most fastidious and slow,
At embracing or surrounding - all the meal we are astounding
Me an' Joe.
As an economic method it admits no ifs or buts;
For we clean up all the courses from the oysters to the nuts.

Legislative indigestion in regard to any question
Marks the party whose vitality is low;
Weaklings in the estimation of that sturdy combination,
Me an' Joe.
For the food that is politically poisonous to me
Joe takes with relish, while - well, vice versa don't you see.

I can take, with little trouble, foods political that double

Joseph up, upon the floor, in direst woe;
But they all declare, who've seen us, we're omnivorous between us
Me an' Joe.
Joseph's fond of food imported with a dash of Tory sauce;
I love fare more democratic and Australian grown, of course.

Thus, observe, in fiscal matters we contrive to clean the platters.
'Tis surprising how we make the viands go!
With our dual constitution we can do great execution
Me an' Joe.
And the others of our party have such varied appetites
That there's really very little left to feed the cat o' nights.

For, the others at the table, watching us, are quickly able
To elect the food they fancy most - although
Some they find it hard to swallow in their brave attempts to follow
Me an' Joe.
Then a little Argus Syrup or some 'Mother 'Eralds Pills'
Are most useful in averting any gastronomic ills.

Gentlemen, 'twould only weary you to state in manner dreary,
That we favor 'this,' or 'that,' or 'so-and-so,'
When, as you well know who've seen us, we can scoff the lot between us
Me an' Joe.
And I warn you to be careful of that legislative group
Which has appetite for nothing but mere Democratic soup.

Such dyspeptic politicians are not fit for their positions;
They are weak and puny creatures: let them go;
And, whatever you adhere to, you can bet your cause is dear to
Me - or Joe.
For our iron constitution is a thing to marvel at,
And, when we 'ave dined, as I have said, there's little for the cat.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Lingothatweuze

I metabloke in Collun-street
A cove I yustano
When I wus workin Southoss,
A yeerertwo ago.

Sezzi, 'Well, owye kumminup?
I spose yehnomee still?'
'E grabsme betha 'andansiz,
'W'y owsheegoibil?'

'Well, wotchadoinow?' sizzi,
Alludin' to 'is work.
'I aven gotakop,' sezee,
'At presen'. Wot's your lurk?'

'I'm upagenit pritty bad,
An' lookin' furra job,'
I answers. Then I bytsiz lug:
'Say, kinyeh lensa bob?'

'E anzitover. Then Isiz,
'Well, wotsbekumaflo?'
Referrin' to a tartuviz
But eesiz, 'Idunno.

'She yusta gimmelip,' eesiz,
'Anso we ata paht.
Iexceptin fere mag,' eesiz,
'Shewuza boshtataht.'

'Shewuz orright piece,' sizzi,
'Althoer tongue wus free.'
An then I springsa traaponim:
'I seener yestadee.'

'Gostrooth!' sizee. 'I didunno
Thet shewuz ovareer!
I 'ope she izen chasinmee;
Buttit looks bloominqueer.'

'Orright,' sizzi, 'don't loosyerblock,
You'll meeter byunbye.
But she won'trubble you bekos
I've marrider,' sizzi.

'Well, sparemedays, it beatstha band
'Ow these things workeround!
But after wotcha say,' sizzee,
'I'll standja ina pound.'

'A quid's orright,' sizzi, 'but still
I dunnowota think.'
'Don't chewitover now,' sizzee,
'But cumanavadrink.'

We adabeer an' didagit;
An' I've dunnin the Quid.
Ewuza tofter giime it.
I wunnerwye edid?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Lips Of Ages

Down thro' the ages these same sticks
Have played on man their knavish tricks.
Down thro' the ages these false lips
Have been as blessings or as whips
To scourge poor man to actions rash
In waging wars or wasting cash.
Down thro' the years, when Adam grieves,
Look to those painted lips of Eve's.

Once, modesty suggested stealth
In simulating glowing health;
But now, alas, no shame restrains
Toilets performed in trams, in trains,
At table; for these candid days
Make nothing of the frank displays
Of carmine, lard and lanoline
To make plain Jane a beauteous queen.

Down thro' the ages pig and sheep
Have tribute paid that men might weep
Or laugh or love or go quite mad
Because of lips in grease-paint clad.
Down thro' the years, when heroes fall
Look not for mortal wound at all
Seek on his brow the thin red line
Of carmined lips - Eve's fatal sign.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Listener

Why, certainly. Let's listen to the cricket.
Oh, I'm quite keen. Test match, I understand.
At... What's that? Oh, Australia's at the wicket.
South Africa - a most intriguing land.
Yes, I was there in - nineteen - let me see
In nineteen - Dear me! Memory is so tricky.
Met Cecil Rhodes, you know. He said to me,
I recollect - eh? Oh. The wicket's sticky.

Great Cecil Rhodes. There was a master mind,
A dreamer, yet so practical, creative.
South Africa, Well, well. Today I find
Their urgent problem doubtless is the native,
Zulus, you know. Basutos. In the war
With Kruger - Eh? Oh, sorry. Are they playing?
Really? What's all the caterwauling for?
Eagleton out? Pity... What was I saying?

Of course, yes, Africa. I've seen it all,
From Jo'burg up thro' Kenya to Fashoda.
One night in Cairo I plainly recall
(Oh, thanks. A very small one. Heaps of soda)...
That day I brought my first big lion down -
Wounded, you know. I thought my time had ended.
Just then Smith fired - Beg pardon? Brown? Who's Brown?
Oh, hit another fourer did he? Splendid!...

...So then the old witch doctor made his magic.
Ghastly! Incredible! Yet, who could doubt?
That's Africa, mysterious primal, tragic,
Those voodoo rites ... McCabe? Is he yet out?
What? Finished, have they? Thought I missed the din.
Twenty to two? It can't be! Shocking! Shocking!
Thanks for allowing me to listen in.
Enjoyed it, too. Well, I shan't need much rocking.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Listening Week

This is the listening week of the year
Listening-in.

A-cock and alert is the national ear
Listening-in.

All over the land in the country towns,
From the back of the Leeuwin to Darling Downs,
Layers of 'quids' or the odd half-crowns,
They are listening-in.

On the far-flung farms they are round each set,
Listening-in.

The work and the worry they all forget,
Listening-in.

Wherever an aerial soars in space
To the Cup, or the Oaks or the Steeplechase,
To the roar of the ring and the lure of the race
They are listening-in.

In the far outback there are sun-tanned men,
Listening-in.

Where the woolshed stands by the drafting pen
Listening-in.

Old Dad's come in from the Ninety Mile;
He scored on the Cup and he wears a smile,
And he 'reckons this game is well worth while'
So he's listening in.

To the edge of the desert the sound-waves go;
And, listening-in,

Ned of the Overland, Saltbush Joe
Listening-in

Recall the giants of years long past,
And the loneliness of these spaces vast;
But they reckon that life's worth living at last
With this listening-in.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Little Black Cormorant

By inlet and islet and wide river reaches,
By lake and lagoon I'm at home,
Yet oft' the far forests of blue-gum and beeches
About the broad ranges I roam,
'There's a strange, sombre bird with a hook in his beak.'
'Tis the little black cormorant raiding your creek.

And woe to the fisher and woe to the fishes
A gourmand I freely confess
When I come a-searching for succulent dishes,
Arrayed in my funeral dress,
Then the fishermen rave, and in anger they speak:
'There's a little black cormorant coming up creek!'

But I'm quick and I'm cunning, as many a greyling,
A blackfish, a trout or a bream
Has known to his sorrow when down I go sailing
To hunt him beneath the dark stream.
To my cavernous maw then they all come alike,
And 'tis death should the little black cormorant strike.

But I am an outlaw. I'm hunted and harried,
I'm banned from the havens of men.
And woe is to me if to long I have tarried
A shot o'er the waters - and then,
There is reason indeed for my funeral dress,
For, alas, here's a little black cormorant less.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Little Homes

We have heard the cheering, brothers,
We have heard the martial peal;
We have seen the soldiers marching
And the glint of sun and steel.
We have heard the songs, the shouting;
But, while forth the soldier roams,
Who has heard the weeping, brothers,
In the Little Homes?

We have seen the gay processions
And the careless, laughing crowds.;
We have seen the banners waving
Out against the peaceful clouds;
Yet, while colors proudly flutter
Over noble spires and domes,
Who has seen the mourning, brothers,
In the Little Homes?

From the Little Homes that nestle
Where the smiling fields sweep wide,
From the Little Homes that huddle
In the city, side by side,
They have called the eager fighters
Men who went with smiles and cheers;
Pride of wives and pride of mothers,
Choking back the tears!

Women of the little homesteads,
Women of the city slums,
They are waiting, ever waiting;
And the sound of muffled drums
In some stricken Home is echoed,
Where grey Grief is guest to-day.
And to-morrow? Nay, the others
Still must wait - and pray.

What the Little Homes shall suffer,
What the Little Homes shall pay
Must be more than sturdy fighters,

More than women's grief to-day.
In the years that follow after,
Be our battles won or lost,
In the Little Homes, my brothers,
They shall pay the cost.

They shall pay the cost of glory,
They shall pay the price of peace,
Years and many long years after
All the sounds of battle cease.
When the sword is sheathed - or broken
When the battle flag is furled,
Still the Little Homes must suffer
Over all the World.

Have you seen the old grey mothers
Smiling to the ringing cheers?
Have you seen the young wives striving
Bravely to hold back the tears?
Have you seen the young girl marching
By her soldier-lover's side?
Have you, seen our country's women
All aglow with pride?

Then, shall we think shame, my brothers,
To give thanks upon our knees
That the land we love should hold them
Wives and mothers such as these?
Women who still hide their sorrow
As their soldiers march away,
Turning brave and steadfast faces
To the light of day?

Oh, the Little Homes are Cheerful
Little Homes that know no pride
But the pride of sacrificing
Loved ones to the battle tide!
They are many, many brothers,
And their sacrifice is great.
Shrines are they and sacred places,
Where the women wait.

Aye, the Little Homes are holy
At the closing of the day,
When young wives must face their sorrow,
When grey mothers kneel to pray,
Facing, all alone, dread visions
Of the land the soldier roams,
Then God heed the sobbing, brothers,
In the Little Homes.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Little People

'Twas a long bush night; and the old hut light
Shone out thro' the open door
To flood the knees of the great bush trees
And the scrub that grew before.
And, as I dreamed where the firelight gleamed,
And watched the long hours lag,
Came there to my shack Kilkenny Jack
With his fiddle in its green baize bag.

So I bade him sit and rest a bit,
And we yarned of this and that.
Pipes well alight, we watched the night
As he on his old swag sat.
'Lonesome, indade, this life we lade,'
Said he, 'Why let time drag
For me an' you?' And he stooped and drew
His fiddle from its green baize bag.

Then the scrub before the old hut door
Was people suddenly
With elfin' folk who rose and spoke
Strange, mystic things to me.
Then into the glare from the bracken there
The Little People crept;
And, suddenly, by fern and tree
The fairies danced and leapt.

Kilkenny Jack he leant him back,
And his bow went to and fro;
And there outside the banshees cried
In mournful tones and low.
And where the light stabbed thro' the night
To cast dark shades about,
In many a place I saw the face
Of a leprechaun peep out.

Then the music stopped; and Jack he dropped
His fiddle, and was done;
And into the night in sudden fright

I saw the small folk run . . .
Then off he went, his small form bent
'Neath his old, familiar swag
Upon his back - Kilkenny Jack,
With his fiddle in its green baize bag.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Little Red Dog

The Glugs still live in the land of Gosh,
Under the rule of the great King Splosh.
And they climb the trees in the Summer and Spring,
Because it is reckoned the regular thing.
Down in the valley they live their lives,
Taking the air with their aunts and wives.
And they climb the trees in the Winter and Fall,
And count it improper to climb not at all.

And they name their trees with a thousand names,
Calling them after their Arts and Aims;
And some, they climb for the fun of the thing,
But most go up at the call of the King.
Some scale a tree that they fear to name,
For it bears great blossoms of scarlet shame.
But they eat of the fruit of the nameless tree,
Because they are Glugs, and their choice is free.

But every eve, when the sun goes West,
Over the mountain they call The Blest,
Whose summit looks down on the city of Gosh,
Far from the reach of the great King Splosh,
The Glugs gaze up at the heights above,
And feel vague promptings to wondrous love.
And they whisper a tale of a tinker man,
Who lives in the mount with his Emily Ann.

A great mother mountain, and kindly is she,
Who nurses young rivers and sends them to sea.
And, nestled high up on her sheltering lap,
Is a little red house with a little straw cap
That bears a blue feather of smoke, curling high,
And a bunch of red roses cocked over one eye.
And the eyes of it glisten and shine in the sun,
As they look down on Gosh with a twinkle of fun.

There's a gay little garden, a tidy white gate,
And a narrow brown pathway that will not run straight;
For it turns and it twists and it wanders about

To the left and the right, as in humorous doubt.
'Tis a humorous path, and a joke from its birth
Till it ends at the door with a wriggle of mirth.
And here in the mount lives the queer tinker man
With his little red dog and his Emily Arm.

And, once in a while, when the weather is clear,
When the work is all over, and even is near,
They walk in the garden and gaze down below
On the Valley of Gosh, where the young rivers go;
Where the houses of Gosh seem so paltry and vain,
Like a handful of pebbles strewn over the plain;
Where tiny black forms crawl about in the vale,
And stare at the mountain they fear them to scale.

And Sym sits him down by his little wife's knee,
With his feet in the grass and his back to a tree;
And he looks on the Valley and dreams of old years,
As he strokes his red dog with the funny prick ears.
And he says, 'Still they climb in their whimsical way,
While we stand on earth, yet are higher than they.
Oh, who trusts to a tree is a fool of a man!
For the wise seek the mountains, my Emily Ann.'

So lives the queer tinker, nor deems it a wrong,
When the spirit so moves him, to burst into song.
'Tis a comical song about kettles and pans,
And the graces and charms that are Emily Ann's.
'Tis a mad, freakish song, but he sings it with zest,
And his little wife vows it of all songs the best.
And he sings quite a lot, as the Summer days pass,
With his back to a tree and his feet in the grass.

And the little red dog, who is wise as dogs go,
He will hark to that song for a minute or so,
'With his head on one side, and a serious air.
Then he makes no remark; but he wanders elsewhere.
And he trots down the garden to gaze now and then
At the curious pranks of a certain blue wren:
Not a commonplace wren, but a bird marked for fame
Thro' a grievance in life and a definite aim.

Now, they never fly far and they never fly high,
And they probably couldn't, suppose they should try.
So the common blue wren is content with his lot:
He will eat when there's food, and he fasts when there's not.
He flirts and he flutters, his wife by his side,
With his share of content and forgiveable pride.
And he keeps to the earth, 'mid the bushes and shrubs,
And he dines very well upon corpulent grubs.

But the little blue wren with a grievance in life,
He was rude to his neighbours and short with his wife.
For, up in the apple-tree over his nest,
There dwelt a fat spider who gave him no rest:
A spider so fat, so abnormally stout
That he seemed hardly fitted to waddle about.
But his eyes were so sharp, and his legs were so spry,
That he could not be caught; and 'twas folly to try.

Said the wren, as his loud lamentations he hurled
At the little red dog, 'It's a rotten old world!
But my heart would be glad, and my life would be blest
If I had that fat spider well under my vest.
Then I'd call back my youth, and be seeking to live,
And to taste of the pleasures the world has to give.
But the world is all wrong, and my mind's in a fog!
'Aw, don't be a Glug!' said the little red dog.

Then, up from the grass, where he sat by his tree,
The voice of the Tinker rose fearless and free.

The little dog listened, his head on one side;
Then sought him a spot where a bored dog could hide.

'Kettles and pans! Ho, kettles and pans!
The stars are the gods' but the earth, it is man's!
Yet down in the shadow dull mortals there are
Who climb in the tree-tops to snatch at a star:
Seeking content and a surcease of care,
Finding but emptiness everywhere.
Then make for the mountain, importunate man!
With a kettle to mend . . . and your Emily Ann.

As he cocked a sad eye o'er a sheltering log,
'Oh, a Glug is a Glug!' sighed the little red dog.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Logic Of Anti-Sosh

Mister Chairman; - er - ah - when
We right-thinking business men
Are treated with much scant - um - er - civility,
I say the time has come
For us to - er - ah - um -
To defend our rights and - er - respectability.

We are right, sir, to defend
Our interests. And the trend
Of present legislation is - fantastic, sir.
That is - er - the only word
To describe it. It's absurd!
And calls for opposition - um - er - drastic, sir!

And - ah - sir. I think I can
Say this meeting to a man
Is distinctly Anti-Sosh and - er - and sensible;
And holds that Labor aims
And Socialistic claims
Are visionary and - um - reprehensible.

We are ready to resist
The - ah - rabid Socialist,
Who's as great an anarchist as any Russian, sir!
And the Labor party's laws
Are tyrannical! (Applause.)
Which - er - brings me to the subject of discussion, sir.
Regarding telephones:
The Labor Party (Groans)
Seems to think it can oppress us with impunity.
But I hold, sir, it is plain
That the benefits we gain
Should be paid for by - that is - the whole community!
As an Anti-Socialist,
Mister Chairman, I insist
(If that gentleman who interjected recently
Will endeavour to restrain
His impatience, I'll explain.

I'd remind him we conduct these meetings decently).

Mister Chairman, to resume.

When I look around this room

On the members of this - er - great society,

And consider we've to pay

For these benefits, I say

It's - er - bordering on - um - on impropriety!

The - er - people, sir, should bear

(What's that? ... I protest, sir! Chair!

This - er - person who seems bent upon confusing me

With his most unseemly din

I don't know how he got in

Cannot shake my argument, sir, by abusing me.)

And I answer him, sir, Bosh!

Bosh! How dare he call me Sosh!

Our position is invinc - er - ah - invincible!

His remarks, sir, I resent,

And I hold my argument

Is a basic principle of - um - of principle!

As my worthy friend, Bruce Smith

(Bosh sir! ... Petriana myth! ...

Six hitters! ... Marriage tie! ... er - Confiscation, sir!

Um - er - break up fam'ly ties! ...

Lies, sir! Socialistic lies!

Alarming capital and immigration, sir!)

Now - (Eh! ... Order! Sir, I claim

Your protection! What's his name?

Is this man a member? Sir, show your authority!

An imposter, I've no doubt.

Ha, I thought so! Put him out!)

Now the motion ... Carried! by a large majority.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'The Lone Wolf Of Canberra'

A man without a party, he
Knows nought of obligation
To any friend; but, fancy free.
He represents the nation.
In lonely majesty he sits
To give the Opposition fits,
Or rend the Government to bits
With fierce vituperation.

Of all he is most wise, most free,
Most pure, and - inter alia
Shorn of responsibility,
He speaks for all Australia.
Tho' parties rise or parties fall,
What cares he? He's 'Agin 'em all.'
Sole patriot, clad, at Freedom's call,
In Liberty's regalia.

All, saving him, are out of tune
When the lone wolf is howling.
He lifts his head and bays the moon
With fierce, but futile growling.
And, tho' the Opposition squirms
And Ministers would sue for terms,
He knows them all for loathy worms,
Despite the Speaker's scowling.

At Canberra he's as free as air
So say the press recorders.
He knows no man as master there
Within its sylvan borders.
And so, tho' members fret and frown,
He scarcely ever need sit down
Except to write to Sydney town
To Mister Lang, for orders.

The Long Road Home

When I go back from Billy's place I always have to roam
The mazy road, the crazy road that leads the long way home.
Ma always says, "Why don't you come through Mr Donkin's land?
The footbridge track will bring you back." Ma doesn't understand.
I cannot go that way, you know, because of Donkin's dog;
So I set forth and travel north,, and cross the fallen log.

Last week, when I was coming by, that log had lizards in it;
And you can't say I stop to play if I just search a minute.
I look around upon the ground and, if there are no lizards,
I go right on and reach the turn in front of Mrs Blizzard's.
I do not seek to cross the creek, because it's deep and floody,
And Ma would be annoyed with me if I came home all muddy.

Perhaps I throw a stone or so at Mrs Blizzard's tank,
Because it's great when I aim straight to hear the stone go "Plank
Then west I wend from Blizzard's Bend, and not a moment wait,
Except, perhaps, at Mr Knapp's, to swing upon his gate.
So up the hill I go, until I reach the little paddock
That Mr Jones at present owns and rents to Mr Craddock.

For boys my size the sudden rise is quite a heavy pull,
And yet I fear a short-cut here because of Craddock's bull;
So I just tease the bull till he's as mad as he can get,
And then I face the corner place that's been so long to let.
It's very well for Ma to tell about my dawdling habits.
What would you do, suppose you knew the place was thick with rabbits?

I do not stay for half a day, as Ma declares I do,,
No, not for more than half-an-hour - perhaps an hour - or two.
Then down the drop I run, slip-slop, where all the road is slithy.
And have to go quite close, you know, to Mr Horner's smithy.
A moment I might tarry by the fence to watch them hammer,
And, I must say, learn more that way than doing sums and grammar.

And, if I do sometimes climb through, I do not mean to linger'.
Though I did stay awhile the day Bill Homer burst his finger.
I just stand there to see the pair bang some hot iron thing
And watch Bill Horner swing the sledge and hit the anvil - Bing!

(For Mr Horner and his son are great big brawny fellows:
Both splendid chaps!) And then, perhaps, they let me blow the bellows.

A while I stop beside the shop, and talk to Mr Horner;
Then off I run, and race like fun around by Duggan's Corner.
It's getting late, and I don't wait beside the creek a minute,
Except to stop, maybe, and drop a few old pebbles in it.
A few yards more, and here's the store that's kept by Mr Whittle-
And you can't say I waste the day if I 'ust wait ... a little.

One day, you know, a year ago, a man gave me a penny,
And Mr Whittle sold me sweets (but not so very many).
You never know your luck, and so I look to see what's new
In Mr Whittle's window. There's a peppermint or two,
Some buttons and tobacco (Mr Whittle calls it "baccy"),
And fish in tins, and tape, and pins.... And then a voice calls, "Jacky!"

"I'm coming, Ma. I've been so far-around by Duggan's Corner.
I had to stay awhile to say 'Good day' to Mr Horner.
I feel so fagged; I've tramped and dragged through mud and over logs, Ma -
I could not go short-cuts, you know, because of bulls and dogs, Ma.
The creek, Ma? Why, it's very high ! You don't call that a gutter?
Bill Horner chews tobacco, Ma I'd like some bread and butter."

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Looking Glass

When I look into the looking glass
I'm always sure to see -
No matter how I dodge about -
Me, looking out at me.

I often wonder as I look,
And those strange features spy,
If I, in there, think I'm as plain
As I, out here, think I.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Lovers

One idle hour she sought to see
Whose image 'twas he cherished so
(All fondly certain whose 'twould be),
And found - a girl she did not know.

A trusty maiden's modest face,
All innocence and purity.
'What nun is this that fills my place?
Alas, he loves me not!' sighed she.

'Nay, daughter, let no foolish fears
Your trust in his devotion mar,'
Her mother said. 'Come, dry your tears;
That is the girl he thinks you are.'

All fondly curious with love
(Half guessing what he would lay bare)
He rifled her heart's treasure trove,
And found - a stranger's image there.

'This is the man she loves!' said he,
And, searching in the noble face,
Read high resolve and constancy.
'This saint,' he cried, 'usurps my place!'

'Nay,' spake his friend. 'Your anger cool;
Gaze on that God-like face once more:
Then be satisfied, O fool;
That is the man she takes you for.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Lure Of Spring

As I walked out one brave spring morn,
When earth was young and new,
I met a laughing mountain maid
As fresh as mountain dew.
Oh, blow you breezes; shine, you sun!
For this the world was well begun.
And spring's soft promise, lifted high,
Shone wattle gold against blue sky.

As I walked with her that spring morn
I sought her brave young eyes,
And to earth's olden mysteries
I straightway read replies.
Oh, yearn you, gum-tips to the sun!
For this the world was well begun.
And mysteries thronged about us now
As green buds swelled upon the bough.

I have walked out on many a Spring
Since that long-vanished day;
But aught of that ill-treasured lore
Recapture no man may.
Yet, laugh you, young grass to the sun!
For that the world was well begun.
And every bird-song gladly sung
Still whispers secrets to earth's young.

As I walk out this brave spring morn,
And man and maid I see
By some green way, I thank kind life
That gave one Spring to me.
Oh, blow you breezes; shine you sun!
For this the world was well begun:
That spring holds for young lovers yet
Deeps secret that the old forget.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Lure Of Trees

I honour all trees well; but, best of all,
I love those scarred old veterans, proud and tall,
Gazing from eminences, kingly wise,
Across great sweeps of changing earth and skies;
Gazing with seeming scorn upon the race
Of midgets who despoil this forest place
The restless race of men who, with edged tools,
With fire, have come to serve the end of fools.

Well these patricians know their own high worth;
Well know their task in serving Mother Earth:
Beckoning rain-clouds sailing overhead
That earth may drink and living things be fed,
Clutching with myriad roots the precious soil
The sun or sudden flood else would despoil,
Bending to tempests, spreading to the sky,
Remote, untamed, unconquered till they die.

I know them in the rose light of the dawn,
Sharp-etched upon the hill-tops, boldly drawn
Against the light. I know them at high noon,
Their gleaming arms held up, as for the boon
Of life they offer thanks; know them at night
When, out against the moon's enriching light,
Some bold phalanger launches from their tops
And, like a falling leaf, swings down and drops.

And still come stupid men with axe and fire
Scattering death to serve some brief desire.
'More than our lives are forfeit,' says the tree,
'For as we go, so man's prosperity
Goes with us, till this once green, gracious hill
Shall thirst in vain, when you have wrought your fill.'
I love, I honour all those forest kings;
They are such wise, such proudly scornful things.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Lyre-Tailed Menura

Far in the forest depths I dwell,
The master mimic of them all,
To pour from out my secret dell
Echo of many a bushland call,
That over all the forest spills;
Echo of many a birdland note,
When out about the timbered hills
Sounds all that borrowed lore that fills
My magic throat.

I am the artist. Songs to me
From all this gay green land are sped;
And when the wondrous canopy
Of my great, froned tail is spread-
A glorious veil, at even's hush-
Above my head, I do my part;
Then wren and robin, finch and thrush-
All are re-echoed in a rush
Of perfect art.

Here by my regal throne of state,
To serve me for a swift retreat,
The little runways radiate;
And when the tread of alien feet
Draws near I vanish: ever prone
To quick alarm when aught offends
That secret ritual of the throne.
My songs are for my mate alone,
And favoured friends.

I am the artist. None may find,
In all the world, a match for me:
Rare feathered loveliness combined
With such enchanting minstrelsy.
In a land vocal with gay song
I choose whate'er I may require;
I wait, I listen all day long,
Then to the music of a throng
I tune my lyre.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Madman

'I should go mad,' he said, 'in such a place!
The lack of company, the loneliness!
Nothing but trees to stare you in the face;
Nothing to do; no life; no pep; no pace!
I'd die of melancholy.' I said 'Yes?'
'Why, yes,' said he. 'The suburbs can be bad.
But this? Why, heavens, man! I should go mad.'

'What do you do?' he said. 'How find a way
To pass the time? Of course, the country's great
For rest and that' (I wished he'd go away;
I had a hundred things to do that day).
'Oh, well,' I said, 'I think; I meditate
And - ' 'Think? A man can't always think
Not all the time. Good lord! I'd take to drink!

'I'd go stone mad,' he said. 'I know the trees
And birds and sky, and all that sort of stuff
Please for a while. But man can't live on these.
I've got my love of nature's harmonies;
But, spare me days, man, nature's not enough.
You work, you say. But then, when work is done,
What in the thunder do you do for fun?

'Ah, well,' he said. 'It's peaceful, that I'll say.
Er - what's the time? Good heavens, I must go!
I've got a crowd of men to see to-day;
I'll miss the train! I must be on my way.
Can't spare another half a minute. So,
Good-bye. I wonder you're not dilly, lad.'
'Ah, that's just it,' I told him. 'I am mad.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Magpie Lark

By lagoons and reedy places,
Where the little river races
By the lips of dreaming pools
Where the soothing water cools
Many a verdant slope and hollow,
Here my blithesome way I follow.
Anywhere that waters glisten
Pause a little while and listen.
You will hear my plaintive note
O'er the placid mirror float
Tho' nought know I of plaint or fret:
'Pierrot! Pierrette! Pierrot! Pierrette!'

Pierrot am I, light hearted fellow,
Be the day morose or mellow;
And pierrette, my dainty wife,
Adopts a like gay view of life;
We dance; we dance amid the sedges,
Dance by duplicated edges
Of the peaceful little ponds;
Now I bow, and she responds;
And then we dance together there,
Rise aloft, and dance on air;
Rising, falling, calling yet:
'Pierrot! Pierrette! Pierrot! Pierrette!'

Thistledown was ne'er so light
As our dainty, dancing flight;
Gay pied pipers, trim and neat;
Joy is in our wings, our feet;
Grace is in our every pose . . .
We dance, we dance till, at day's close,
When the pool's dark mirrors limn
Twilit glory at the brim
Trees and opalescent sky
We dance away; and as we fly
Our call comes faint and fainter yet:
'Pierrot!. Pierrette! .. Pierrot! ...'

The March

In early, prehistoric days, before the reign of Man,
When neolithic Nature fashioned things upon a plan
That was large as it was rugged, and, in truth, a trifle crude,
There arose a dusky human who was positively rude.

Now, this was in the days when lived the monster kangaroo;
When the mammoth bunyip gambolled in the hills of Beetaloo;
They'd owned the land for centuries, and reckoned it their own;
For might was right, and such a thing as 'law' was quite unknown.

But this dusky old reformer in the ages long ago,
One morning in the Eocene discovered how to 'throw';
He studied well and practised hard until he learned the art;
Then, having planned his Great Campaign, went forth to make a start.

'See here,' he said - and hurled a piece of tertiary rock,
That struck a Tory bunyip with a most unpleasant shock -
'See here, my name is Progress, and your methods are too slow,
This land that you are fooling with must be cut up. Now go!'

They gazed at him in wonder, then they slowly backed away;
For 'throwing' things was novel in that neolithic day;
'Twas the prehistoric 'argument,' the first faint gleam of 'art.'
Yet those mammoths seemed to take it in exceedingly bad part.

Then a hoary, agéd bunyip rose, and spluttered loud and long;
He said the balck man's arguments were very, very wrong;
'You forget,' he said, indignantly 'the land is ours by right,
And to seek to wrest it from us would be - well, most impolite.'

But the savage shook his woolly head and smiled a savage smile,
And went on hurling prehistoric missiles all the while,
Till the bunyip and the others couldn't bear the argument,
And they said, 'You are a Socialist.' But, all the same - they went.

Some centuries - or, maybe, it was aeons - later on,
When the bunyip and the mammoth kangaroo had passed and gone;
While the black man slowly profited by what his fathers saw,
While he learned to fashion weapons and establish tribal law.

There came a band of pale-faced men in ships, from oversea,
Who viewed the land, then shook their heads and sadly said, 'Dear me!'
Then they landed with some rum and Bibles and a gun or two,
And started out to 'civilize,' as whites are apt to do.

They interviewed the black man and remarked, 'It's very sad,
But the use you make of this great land is postively bad;
Why, you haven't got a sheep or cow about the blessed place!
Considering the price of wool, it's simply a disgrace!'

Then they started with the Bibles and the rum - also the guns;
And some began to look for gold and others 'took up runs,'
For, they said, 'This land must be cut up it's simply useless so:
Our name is Progress, and you're out of date, so you must go!'

But the black was most indignant, and he said it was a shame;
For he'd been full and satisfied before the white man came,
And he used that awful word, 'Bowowgong,' in his argument,
Which is native for 'A blanky Socialist.' And yet - he went.

It's the same old 'march unceasing.' We are getting down the list,
And yesterday's 'Reformer' is tomorrow's 'Monopolist,'
For Hist'ry will repeat itself in this annoying way:
Who stood for 'Progress' yesterday is 'Retrograde' to-day.

To-day we view the land, as did those men for oversea,
And, like them, slowly shake our heads and sadly say, 'Dear me!
This land will have to be cut up; your methods are too slow;
Our name is Progress; you are out of date, so you must go.'

They mutter Tory Platitudes, and call the land their land;
For, like the bunyip and the black, they do not understand.
Like bunyip and like black they hark to days of long ago;
And, like them, murmur 'Socialist!' But, all the same - they'll go.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Martyr Of Bovinia

She milked the cow; and all the morn was hushed
(It was a beast that never kicked or rushed)
The startled dicky-birds of early Spring
Sat up amazed to mark this splendid thing,
Nigh fainting with delight upon the bough
She milked the cow.

She milked the cow; nor all the glory rare
Of that October morning could compare
With that sweet sylvan scene; the grace, the charm
The rhythmic movement of her dimpled arm,
Would make a poor bloke feel just anyhow
She milked the cow.

She milked the cow. 'Twas at South Sassafras
(Which is a cruel word to rhyme, alas)
And all who gazed thereon decalred, with force,
It was sublime - except the cow, of course
Who wore a patient frown upn her brow
She milked the cow.

She milked the cow - at least, she said she did.
There was the milk in proof; and God forbid
That I should doubt the statement in the least,
(I sympathised in private with the beast
Who said - but still, what does it matter now?)
She milked the cow.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Martyred Democrat

In Lady Lusher's drawing-room, where float the strains of Brahms,
While cultured caterpillars chew the leaves of potted palms
In Lady Lusher's drawing-room, upon a summer's day,
The democrats of Toorak met to pass an hour away.
They hearkened to a long address by Grabbit, M.L.C.,
While Senator O'Sweatem passed around the cakes and tea;
And all the brains and beauty of the suburb gathered there,
In Lady Lusher's drawing-room - Miss Fibwell in the chair.

(With increasing interest):

Ay, all the fair and brave were there - the fair in fetching hats;
The brave in pale mauve pantaloons and shiny boots, with spats.
But pride of all that gathering, a giant 'mid the rest,
Was Mr Percy Puttigate, in fancy socks and vest.
Despite his bout of brain-fag, plainly showing in his eyes,
Contracted while inventing something new in nobby ties,
He braved the ills and draughts and chills, damp tablecloths and mats,
Of Lady Lusher's drawing-room: this prince of Democrats.

(Resume the breeze):

Upon a silken ottoman sat Willie Dawdlerich,
Who spoke of democratic things to Mabel Bandersnitch.
And likewise there, on couch and chair, with keen, attentive ears,
Sat many sons and daughters of our sturdy pioneers;
Seed of our noble squatter-lords, those democrats of old,
Who held of this fair land of ours as much as each can hold;
Whose motto is, and ever was, despite the traitor's gab:
'Australia for Australians - as much as each can grab.'

(In cultured tones):

'Deah friends,' began Miss Fibwell, 'you - haw - understand ouah league
Is formed to stand against that band of schemers who intrigue -
That horrid band of Socialists who seek to wrest ouah raights,
And, with class legislation, strave to plague ouah days and naights.
They claim to be the workers of the land; but Ai maintain
That, tho' they stand for horny hands, we represent the bwain.

Are not bwain-workers toilers too, who labah without feah?
(The fashioner of fancy ties: 'Heah, heah! Quaite raight! Heah, heah!')

'They arrogate unto themselves the sacred name of Work.
But still, Ai ask, where is the task that we've been known to shirk?
We're toilahs, ev'ry one of us, altho' they claim we're not.'
(The toiler on the ottoman: 'Bai jove, I've heard thet rot!')
'Moahovah, friends, to serve theah ends, they're straiving, maight and main,
To drag down to theah level folk who work with mind and bwain.
They claim we do not earn ouah share, but, Ai maintain we do!
(The grafter in the fancy socks: 'The'ah beastly rottahs, too!')

(With rising inflexion):

'Yes, friends, they'll drag us down and down, compelling us to live
Just laike themselves - the selfish class, on what they choose to give.
Nay, moah, they'll make us weah theah clothes - plain working - clothes,
forsooth!
Blue dungarees in place of these.' . . . 'Mai Gahd! Is this the trooth?'

(With fine dramatic force):

A gurgling groan; a sick'ning thud; a flash of fancy socks,
And Mr Percy Puttipate fell like a stricken ox.
Crashed down, through cakes and crockery, and lay, 'mid plate and spoon,
In Lady Lusher's drawing-room one summer afternoon.

(With a rush of emotion):

A scream from Mabel Bandersnitch pierced thro' the ev'ning calm
(The cultured grubs, alone unmoved, still chewed the potted palm).
Strong men turned white with sudden fright; girls fell in faint and swoon
In Lady Lusher's drawing-room that fateful afternoon.

(With tears in the voice):

But Puttipate? ... Ah, what of him - that noble Democrat,
As he lay there with glassy stare, upon the Persian mat?
What recks he now for nobby ties, and what for fancy socks,
As he lies prone, with cake and cream smeared on his sunny locks?

(Mournfully):

Good Mr Grabbit took his head, O'Sweatem seized his feet;
They bore him to an ambulance that waited in the street.

Poor Mabel Bandersnitch sobbed loud on Dawdlerich's vest;
A pall of woefell over all - Miss Fibwell and the rest.
A mournful gloom o'erspread the room, as shades of ev'ning fell,
And, one by one, they left the place till none was left to tell
The tale of that dire tragedy that wrecked the summer calm -
Except the apathetic grubs, who went on eating palm.

(Suggestive pause; then, with fresh interest):

There still be men - low common men - who sneer at Toorak's ways,
And e'en upon poor Puttipate bestow but grudging praise.
But when you hear the vulgar sneer of some low Labor bore

(With fine dramatic intensity):

Point to that pallid patriot on Lady Lusher's floor!
Point to that daring Democrat, that hero of Toorak,
Who lifeless lay, that fateful day, upon his noble back!
Point to that hero, stricken down for our great Party's sake,
His sunny locks, his fiery socks o'er-smear'd with cream and cake.

(In scathing tones):

Then lash with scorn the base poltoon who sullies his fair fame.
Who, moved by fear, attempts to smear the lustre of that name.
Great Puttipate! The Democrat! Who perished, all too soon,
In Lady Lusher's drawing-room, one summer afternoon.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Mellowing Of Joe

When the Laborites and Liberals are bickering,
Are a-calling and a-bawling in the House,
And the strangers in the gallery are snickering,
As the members rear on end and loudly 'rouse,'
There's a voice they miss amid the vocal thundering,
A voice that led the howl a while ago.
And the people in the precincts are a-wondering
What has happened to the erstwhile acid Joe.

For no longer does he lead his noisy following
With a cheering or a sneering to the fray;
But they watch him sitting silently a-swallowing
All the gibes they hurl at him across the way.
And, as others mark his silence 'mid the bellowing
And the bawling of the blatant party cry,
Then they realise that Joseph is a-mellowing;
He's a-mellowing as time goes by.

When the Affable's a-sobbing and a-sorrowing
O'er the 'precipices,' 'chasms' and the 'brinks,'
And the Ministry's antipathy to borrowing,
Joseph mellows as he sits and sadly thinks.
Sits and mellows 'mid the bellows of his following,
While the howls of Willy Kelly smite his ear,
While the Fusion in confusion is a-wallowing
And the green, unripened members bawl 'Hear, hear!'

There is something that is sobering and saddening,
In the autumn of political careers;
And the thoughts of former verdancy are maddening
As a member mellows with the passing years.
For his greenness and his meanness set him shivering;
And he solemnly begins to ask himself,
As he feels the tree political a-quivering:
'Will I ripen on the bough or on the shelf?'

But the verdancy of Joseph is a-vanishing,
Whereat right-thinking citizens rejoice.
All his sourness and his dourness he is banishing;
You may note the alteration in his voice.
Though it is not yet attuned to softest 'cello-ing,
'Twill be sweeter, meeker music by-and-bye:
For 'tis evident that Joseph is a-mellowing,
He's a-mellowing as time goes by.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Mendicants

Charity, Charity - parson and priest
Ever in church and in chapel have taught
'Give ye in charity e'en to the least,
So may the favor of Heaven be bought.
Strive ye in Virtue, for Him that we call
Master has named it the greatest of all.
Strive ye in holiness;
Owner of acres and breeder of sheep.
Cleaning his wealth with a masterful hand,
Scheming for profit with schemes that are deep.
Yet is the squatter a generous soul
A generous donor, and this be more:
He never begrudges - nor misses - the dole
Of gratuitous guineas he flings from his store.

Charity, Charity - purchase your fame!
All the world honours a giver of alms.
Noble philanthropist! Publish his name!
Scatter his gift to the suppliant palms.
Nay! Would you ask how his guineas are won?
Mark his beneficence? See what he's done!
Thank him, ye lowly ones;
Bless him you holy ones.
Charity, Charity - worthily done!

Humble BILL HODMAN is agèd and poor;
Owning no riches and owning no lands,
Living the life of a labouring boor,
Earning his bread by the toil of his hands.
Yet is the toiler an obstinate soul
An obstinate pauper, and this be more:
He'd answer with curses if offered a dole
In charity out of a rich man's store.

Charity, Charity - ignorant clowns!
What should ye know of personal pride?
Shame on your surliness! Shame on your frowns!

Spurring the gifts that the wealthy provide!
Are they not generous? Are they not kind?
Pride is their privilege, why should ye mind?
Study servility;
Practise humility.
Charity, Charity - fools, ye are blind!

Proud Squatter REX has a charming wife
Queen of society, lady of birth;
Nurtured in luxury, smiling thro' life,
Ever enjoying the sweets of the earth.
Ah, but she pities the poor o' the land
Sweet benefactress, as kind as her lord.
Patroness she of a slum-working band,
President, too, of a hospital board.

Charity, Charity - down in the slums
Misery stalks 'mid the lean o' the land.
Angel beneficent! See where she comes,
Scattering gifts with a generous hand.
Sweet Lady Bountiful, draw in your skirt;
Shrink from the misery squalor and dirt.
Pity is lured to it?
Nay, they're inured to it.
Charity, Charity is their desert.

Labourer BILL has a toil-worn wife
Drudge of the lower class, cradled in care;
Nurtured in poverty, struggling through life,
Knowing too well all the bitterness there.
Ah, but she nurses a foolish old pride
Wife of a labourer barren of lands
Knowing the 'comforts' they humbly divide
Are earned, doubly earned, by the toil of their hands.

Charity, Charity - nay, foolish drudge!
Why should you slave till the end of your day?
Think of the wealthy who never begrudge

Gifts to the 'Home' where the indigent stay.
Why should mendicity shame such as you?
Indigence, beggary - these are not new.
Where is the blame for it?
What's in the name of it?
Charity, Charity - it is your due.

Proud Squatter REX, does your lordly soul
Shrink from the thought of a mendicant whine?
Are you too proud to solicit a dole
Won by the sweat of a fellow of thine?
What of the subsidy sued for and paid?
Paid at a word from a tool of the 'class';
Earned, hardly earned, at a labourer's trade
Charity wrung from the toil of the mass.

Charity, Charity - what's in a name?
Whine for a subsidy, lo, and it comes!
Still it is charity ever the same
Begged from a palace or cadged from the slums.
Call it a clever political game
Yours is the sordidness, yours is the shame.
Moneyed mendacity,
Skilled in duplicity.
Charity, Charity! - this is its name.

Sweet lady Bountiful, queen of your set,
Selfish for pleasure and greedy for show,
When come the toys and the treasures you get/
Have you considered or wanted to know?
Nay, would you stoop to take pence from the poor,
Soiled with the sweat of an overworked wife
Loaf on the toil of a labouring boor,
Squander his pittance to lighten your life?
Charity, Charity - cover your face!
This is your charity, this is your pride:
To laugh, and to live, and to know the disgrace
Of squandering pence that the needy provide.
Some toiling sister, some work-weary soul,
Is slaving the harder to eke out your dole.

Blush for the shame of it!
Shrink form the name of it!
Blush for your name upon Charity's roll!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Mercenary View

I knew a poor remittance man,
A decent chap, but funny,
In days when my ideas began
To be controlled by money
He wore a swank, patrician air;
But, oh, his life was filled with care,
For he had seldom cash to spare;
His mien was far from sunny.

I fear I was a snobbish youth
Who led a prig's existence.
I snubbed the chap, to tell the truth,
And kept him at a distance.
His clothes, well cut, were often worn
Threadbare. Tho' he was gently born
His friendship I refused with scorn
Despite his soft insistence.

But now the whirligig of time
Sees fit to elevate him.
While, lo, the money that was mine
Is shrinking, seriatim;
And faced by serious mishap.
While he reclines in Fortune's lap.
I'd like to find the dear old chap
I'd want to cultivate him.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Merry Sportsmen

'Arry an' me is bits of sports;
When the summer comes around
We gits our sweaters an' guns an' shorts
An' we seeks out 'untin' ground.
Tennis an' 'ikin' we reckons tame;
So we shuns the cissy push
An' goes in more for a 'e-man sport
Shootin', out in the bush.

Week-end 'fore last we 'ad some fun
Close up to a record day;
For a real good bag fell to each gun
Pea-rific, that's to say.
But the gem of it all was that darn fool bird
I got while 'e's 'avin' a barf
At the edge of a pool. 'E looked absurd.
Chee! 'Arry an' me did larf!

By lunch I'd potted a decent bag:
Three parrots, a thrush an' a jack,
An' 'Arry, two wrens an' a lark an' a mag.
Then we camps at a creek near the track;
When up comes a coot in a rig absurd
Wot talks like some bug-'untin' fool.
But 'Arry sez, "Ist!" An' 'e points to a bird
Wot is 'avin' a barf at a pool.

'Wot a charmin' pitcher!' this strange bloke said,
But I ups with me gun in a jiff
An', jist as the dicky-bird's duckin' 'is 'ead,
I skittles the beggar stiff.
Well, you should 'a' seen 'ow this strange bloke gapes:
Lip like a motherless colt.
An' eyes stickin' out like a couple o' grapes.
Chee! 'Arry an' me did larf!

'E goggles a bit, then 'e goes orf pop,
But we're two to 'is one, so we smiles.
Then he threatens to give us in charge to a cop.

Fat chance! There ain't one in miles!
Red robin it was. If you only 'ad seen!
Real trustful-like, 'avin' 'is barf,
When - Plunk! An' 'is blood spurts over the green.
Chee! Arry an' me did larf!

I can't stop larfin' whenever I think
Of that comedy there by the creek.
Singin' robin 'e was with a breast all pink.
(We are goin' again nex' week.)
There 'e was, splashin' all over the place,
When I darn near blows 'im in 'arf.
An' if you'd saw the look on that strange cove's face!
Chee! 'Arry an' me did larf!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Milch Kangaroo

'Which reminds me,' said O'Brien
'And 'tis not a word of lyin'
Of a summertime way back in eighty-two,
Whin a felly name of Brady
An' his sister (quite a lady)
Ran a dairy up beyant in Wallaloo.
But, in place of cows like Bossy
An' Strawberry and' Flossie,
It was Kangaroo she milked - I'm spakin' true;
While his pretty sister, Mary,
Was the mistress of the dairy,
Of the dairy of the milch Kangaroo.

'Now, his neighbour, name of Cleary,
He was dape in love with Mary
Small blame to him; for sure she was a drame;
But his love he had to smother
'Count of Mary's wealthy brother
Wid his waggon-loads of Kangaroo crame;
For a clever man was Brady,
Tho' some thought his methods shady;
For, in spite of all that they could say or do,
'Twas the thing he kept concealin',
Past the hope of all revealin',
Was his secret of the milch Kangaroo.

For he milked them by the dozens;
Not the Fiend and all his cousins
Could discover how he kep' the bastes in bounds.
Then Tim Cleary, thinkin' deeply,
Wint and purchased rather cheaply,
Half a dozen savage Kangaroo hounds.
For 'twas ruination utter
That this Brady and his butter
Meant to every single soul in Wallaloo.
'An' he's overworin' Mary,'
Muttered Cleary, 'wid his dairy
Wid his dairy of the milch Kangaroo.'

'Well, you've guessed it,' said O'Brien;
'For, widout a word of lyin',
Brady's flocks an' herds were scattered far an' wide;
An' 'twas aisy Cleary found him,
Wid his drames in tatters round him,
Whin he came to claim swate Mary for his bride.'
Said O'Brien: 'That's the story;
An' I here declare to glory,
Every single, blessed word of it is throe.
An', if any would misdoubt me,
I've a par of fists about me
To convince yez of the milch Kangaroo.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Milk Billy

So nice it is of you to call . . .
Yes; Monday week we done it;
Right 'igh-clarse weddin' - church an' all.
Cost Bill a bit to run it.
An' wotjer think 'e ups and sez
First night, or thereabout?
'Hey, Lil!' (Lor, it give me sich a thrill),
'Didjer think to put the milk-billy out?'

'Im! Thinkin' of the milk like that.
Show's 'e's domesticated.
'Er? She's no right to tork, the cat!
Although they are related.
It shows my Bill ain't like she sez:
A harum-scarum lout.
'Hey, Lil?' 'Wot's yer troubles, Bill?'
'Didjer think to put the milk-billy out?'

Sounds funny, comin' like from 'im,
A lover so 'igh mettled.
Show's a wife's chances ain't too slim;
Seems like 'e's gittin' settled.
S'pose every girl must fret a bit;
But them words stills me doubt:
'Hey, Lil?' 'Well? Wot's up, ole sill?'
'Don't fergit to put the milk-billy out.'

Well, 'owja think me parler seems?
Them chairs? 'E 'elped me choose 'em . . .
S'pose all young wives must 'ave their dreams,
Gawd! I don't wanta lose 'em . . .
Real 'omey, ain't it? . . . All I 'ope's
When we are old an' stout
I'll 'ear him at it still: 'Hey, Lil!
Didjer think to put the milk-billy out?'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Minglers

A sight that gives me much distress
Is George without his trousers,
Garbed, scantily, in bathing dress
Proscribed by saintly Wowsers,
And Gerty, gay and forward flirt,
Without the regulation shirt.

Though 'tis a fearsome sight, I ween,
When jam tins strew the shingle,
It is a far more shocking scene
When Bert and Benjy mingle
With Maude and Winnie in the wave;
It hurts to see them so behave.

The melancholy dead marine
Sown thick along the beaches,
The can that held the late sardine,
Or potted prawn, or peaches,
Are things of innocence beside
Gay Tom and Topsy in the tide.

I hold by stern morality,
Despite the worldings' scoffing,
And though it pains my soul to see
A fish tin in the offing,
'Tis naught beside the things I feel
Whene'er I hear Belinda squeal.

Indeed, this tin that held sardine
My sad soul sorely vexes.
The fish it harbored might have been
Unwed, and mixed in sexes!
Good brothers, can you wonder then,
That seaside damsels mix with men?

A pile of picnic scraps, 'tis true,
Can raise a mild commotion.
But what of John and Jane and Sue
Mixed in a single ocean?

A sight that stabs me to the heart
Is Billo smoodging with his tart.

But hark, my brothers, yester eve
I had a wondrous vision.
The sun was just about to leave,
With his well-known precision,
When I espied upon the sand
A tin with a familiar brand.

And, as I gazed, my limbs grew limp
And giddiness came o'er me;
For from it stepped a fish-like imp
That smirked and bowed before me!
His puckered features seemed to be
Awry with spite and devilry.

'Young man,' he said, 'You're wasting time.
Why do you sit there mooning?
So brave a youth, just in his prime,
Should find more joy in spooning.
For see! the ocean hath its pearls.
Go forth and mingle with the girls!'

And from the tins that lay about
Upon the silver shingle
I heard a wee shrill chorus shout,
'Young man, go forth and mingle!'
And then I knew each empty tin
Concealed its special imp within.

I know my eye grew wide and bright,
Despite a life ascetic,
And from the narrow path of right
I felt a tug magnetic,
That sought to draw me o'er the sand
Out to the siren-haunted strand.

I felt the red blood course anew,
I felt my pulses tingle;
And still the tiny chorus grew:
'Young man, go forth and mingle!'

Then, from the old, bashed can I saw
A lordly lobster wave a calw.

'Good fellow, have a care!' he said,
'Stray not from pathways upper!
I am the ghost of one long dead,
Slain for a sinful supper.
But once good works were done by me
Amongst the sinners of the sea.

'In life I roamed the vasty deep
Engaged upon a mission
Which was my fellow-fish to keep
From swimming to perdition.
Now I am dead' (his voice grew thin)
'Alas! they mingle in the tin!

'Beware the blood that bounds and leaps!
Your sinful feelings throttle.
Beware the imp that leers and peeps
From out each tin and bottle!
A submarine Chapzander speaks.
Beware when gay Belinda squeaks!'

Lo, as he spoke my blood grew chill,
The spell no longer bound me,
The impish chorus now was still
And silence reigned around me.
The ghostly lobster disappeared;
My heart of base desire was cleared.

But, like a man inspired, I saw
His cause for intervening.
His sad, sweet face, his waving claw
To me were full of meaning.
Indeed, a sainted fish was he,
A very Wowser of the sea.

You smile, good friend? But ah, be sure
'Tis not a theme for scoffing;
For well, too well, I know the lure
of fish tins in the offing.

A devil lurks inside each tine
To tempt unwary souls to sin.

And, top this day, I fell a thrill
'Mid tins upon the shingle;
I seem to hear that chorus shrill:
'Young man, go forth and mingle!
And yet, 'tis naught to what I feel
Whene'er I hear Belinda squeal.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Mirror

'Alas!' said the devil, said he to me
And his swart face drooped with care
'Life is a liar, a cheat,' said he
'And the end of it all - despair.
Why mourn you here, poor pawn of the Fates?
The way lies ready: the hemlock waits.
And I'll give you a toast ere you seek release:
'To Death, the gentleman, crowned with peace'!

'Have done, smart devil!' I made reply.
'Have done with your air of gloom.
The world seemed dreary for such as I
Ere you came into the room.
I was ready, I own, for the crowning sin,
But your foolish babbling makes me grin.
Yet the poisoned cup might I e'en now quaff;
But how can I drink when I want to laugh?

'Poor fool!' moaned the devil. 'Vain words you lisp,
Dull dupe of an ancient lie.
What seek you here but a will-o'-the-wisp,
Mocking you till you die?
For the world's gone mad and the nations rave.
Choose! An ugly dream, or a peaceful grave.
You shall thirst, you shall starve while the earth you roam.
Ah, pick up the dagger and drive it home.'

'Oh, foolish devil!' I made reply.
'Thus to defeat you end,
With your woeful visage and wistful eye:
I could greet you now as a friend.
For, as in a mirror, I now have seen
The fear-crazed fool that I might have been.
Come; tell me some more of this cheerless earth.'
But the devil was gone; and I shrieked with mirth.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Modern Cherub

'Give me a dad who knows his place
And never gives me cheek,
And a mother mild who treats her child
In a docile way, and meek.
Give me a house where a little lad
Is recognised as head,
And home-life's not too beastly bad,'
The little darling said.

'Give me the right to rule to roost
And I'll stay in at night,
And seldom go to the picture show
Or patronise the fight.
But I'll treat complaints with a lordly sniff
If they humbly mention bed.
Precocious parents bore me stiff,'
The sweet young cherub said.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Mooch O' Life

This ev'nin' I was sittin' wiv Doreen,
Peaceful an' 'appy wiv the day's work done,
Watchin', be'ind the orchard's bonzer green,
The flamin' wonder of the settin' sun.

Another day gone by; another night
Creepin' along to douse Day's golden light;
Another dawning when the night is gone,
To live an' love - an' so life mooches on.

Times I 'ave thought, when things was goin' crook,
When 'Ope turned nark an' Love forgot to smile,
Of somethin' I once seen in some old book
Where an ole sorehead arsts, 'Is life worf w'ile? '

But in that stillness, as the day grows dim,
An' I am sittin' there wiv 'er an' 'im-
My wife, my son! an' strength in me to strive,
I only know - it's good to be alive!

Yeh live, yeh love, yeh learn; an' when yeh come
To square the ledger in some thortful hour,
The everlastin' answer to the sum
Must allus be, 'Where's sense in gittin' sour? '

Fer when yeh've come to weigh the good an' bad -
The gladness wiv the sadness you 'ave 'ad -
Then 'im 'oo's faith in 'uman goodness fails
Fergits to put 'is liver in the scales.

Livin' an' loving learnin' day be day;
Pausin' a minute in the barmy strife
To find that 'elpin' others on the way
Is gold coined fer your profit - sich is life.

I've studied books wiv yearnings to improve,
To 'eave meself out of me lowly groove,
An' 'ere is orl the change I ever got:
'Ark at yer 'eart, an' you kin learn the lot.'

I gives it in - that wisdom o' the mind -
I wasn't built to play no lofty part.
Orl such is welkim to the joys they find;
I only know the wisdom o' the 'eart.

An' ever it 'as taught me, day be day,
The one same lesson in the same ole way:
'Look fer yer profits in the 'earts o' friends,
Fer 'atin' never paid no dividends.'

Life's wot yeh make it; an' the bloke 'oo tries
To grab the shinin' stars frum out the skies
Goes crook on life, an' calls the world a cheat,
An' tramples on the daisies at 'is feet.

But when the moon comes creepin' o'er the hill,
An' when the mopoke calls along the creek,
I takes me cup o' joy an' drinks me fill,
An' arsts meself wot better could I seek.

An' ev'ry song I 'ear the thrushes sing
That everlastin' message seems to bring;
An' ev'ry wind that whispers in the trees
Gives me the tip there ain't no joys like these:

Livin' an' loving wand'rin' on yeh way;
Reapin' the 'arvest of a kind deed done;
An' watching in the sundown of yer day,
Yerself again, grown nobler in yer son.

Knowin' that ev'ry coin o' kindness spent
Bears interest in yer 'eart at cent per cent;
Measurin' wisdom by the peace it brings
To simple minds that values simple things.

An' when I take a look along the way
That I 'ave trod, it seems the man knows best,
Who's met wiv slabs of sorrer in 'is day,
When 'e is truly rich an' truly blest.

An' I am rich, becos me eyes 'ave seen

The lovelight in the eyes of my Doreen;
An' I am blest, becos me feet 'ave trod
A land 'oo's fields reflect the smile o' God.

Livin' an' lovin'; learnin' to fergive
The deeds an' words of some un'appy bloke
Who's missed the bus - so 'ave I come to live,
An' take the 'ole mad world as 'arf a joke.

Sittin' at ev'nin' in this sunset-land,
Wiv 'Er in all the World to 'old me 'and,
A son, to bear me name when I am gone....
Livin' an' lovin' - so life mooches on.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Mountain Laboured

A patriot spake thus to an eager throng:
'Give me the power and I shall right each wrong.
And Fortune, smiling, on our land shall look'
His name was COOK.

Lo, I beheld, throughout a continent,
A nation wrestle with affairs of State,
And patriotic cries, wher'er I went,
Poured forth alike from groundlings and the great.
I heard man reason with his fellow man;
From shore to shore rang out one mighty screech,
As, daily, from a thousand platforms ran
Rivers of speech.

Consul and Senator keen combat waged.
Doctor and Saint joined hotly in the fray;
North, South and West and East the battle raged;
And ev'ry citizen had much to say;
Bland politicians talked incessantly
It seemed a very battle of the gods;
Though much they said appeared to me to be
Over the odds.

Then lo, upon the great Election Day,
The day appointed for the mighty test,
Cab, jinker, motor-car and humble dray
Hither and thither sped at the behest
Of rival statesmen whose bold streamers flared
On wall and hoarding....You can guess the rest
'Twere easy spared.

My wife remained at home to mend my socks;
But forth went I to claim my sovereign right,
To win my freedom at the ballot-box....
I got back home at twelve o'clock that night.
Or was it two next morning? I forget.
But I had done my duty like a man:
Helped in the noblest scheme man's fashioned yet
The Party Plan.

And then a solemn hush fell on the land
(I was content, considering my head,
Next Morning). And behold, on ev'ry hand,
Expectancy and hope one plainly read,
Till through the land rang out the herald's voice
Telling the upshot of that mighty fray:
'Joseph is consul! Citizens, rejoice!
'Ip, 'ip, 'ooray!'

Rejoice I did; and my prophetic soul
Saw for my country happiness and peace.
For he had reached at last the longed-for goal.
Now would our corn and oil and beer increase!
What would it profit else, this strike, this pain
A mighty Nation shaken to its soul?
Sans good result, all hope ('twas very plain)
Was up the pole.

Into the Hall of State I blithely went,
Eager to hear the dignified debate
Grave, reverend seigneurs in grave argument
Engaged, discussing great affairs of State,
Wise counsellors....But stay! What's here amiss?
Are these the honoured makers of the Law?
Now Heav'n defend our Party Plan! for this
Is what I saw:

A yelping, clamorous, unruly clan;
A small bald, agitated, snapping man;
And, as they raved, his fist he fiercely shook
His name was COOK.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Music Of Your Voice

A vase upon the mantelpiece,
A ship upon the sea,
A goat upon a mountain-top
Are much the same to me;
But when you mention melon jam,
Or picnics by the creek,
Or apple pies, or pantomimes,
I love to hear you speak.

The date of Magna Charta or
The doings of the Dutch,
Or capes, or towns, or verbs, or nouns
Do not excite me much;
But when you mention motor rides -
Down by the sea for choice
Or chasing games, or chocolates,
I love to hear your voice.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Mystic

An 'Ode to the Moon' did he indite
With his two-and-half soul-power.
('Twas the child of a starlit summer night,
Begot by a gloomy hour.)

And he vowed it was a work immense,
And he quoted it a lot,
And he published it at his own expense;
But the cold, hard world said - 'Rot!'

And he wrote him ringing verse of horse,
And the stockman, and his pipe,
And the brooding bushland; but, of course,
The world just murmured - 'Tripe!'

So he sat him down for another fling,
And his time-exposure mind
Evolved a topical sort of thing,
Of a gay and hum'rous kind.

And he looked to see the world go wild,
And laugh until it cried;
But the verse was poor and the humor mild,
And - 'Bosh!' the tired world sighed.

Then he oiled his weird, ball-bearing mind,
In a dull, despairing mood,
And he wrote a thing of a cryptic kind,
Which nobody understood.

'Twas an ode to the 'Umph' and the 'Thingmebob,'
With a lilt and a right good ring,
And hints of a smirk, a snarl, a sob,

And a murky murmuring.

Nay, nobody understood a word,
Nor strove to understand;
But few dared say it was absurd,
So most agreed 'twas 'Grand!'

Then be let his hair grow lank and long,
And an air intense he got,
And ever he strove to nurse in song
The cult of the 'Dunnowhat.'

And now he never writes in vain,
But a famous man is he,
With a ten soul-power and a chuck-lathe brain,
And an air of mystery.

So, of his lot take heed; I wot
If you aspire to fame,
Don't waste a tune on horse or moon,
But rave of Whatsitsname;
It's tame,
But still it's Whatsitsname.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Oil From Bill Shane

I got the oil: too right. A cove called Shane.
Yes; ole Bill Shane. You've 'eard of 'im, of course.
Big racin' 'ead. There's no need to explain
The things he don't know about a 'orse.
Good ole Bill Shane. They say he's made a pile
At puntin'. Shrewd! I wis I 'ad 'is brain.
An' does 'e know the game? Well, I should smile.
They can't put nothin' over ole Bill Shane.

Yes; Shane, Bill Shane ... Aw, listen, lad. Wake up!
Why everybody's 'eard of ole Bill Shane.
They say he made ten thousan' on the Cup
Last year, an' now he's got the oil again.
Wot? Owner? Trainer? Nah! Who 'eeds their guff?
Bill's a big racin' man - a punter. See?
Top dog. I alwiz sez wot's good enough
For ole Bill Shane is good enough for me.

Yes; he gave me the oil. I got it straight
Well, nearly straight. Of course, I've never spoke
To Bill 'imself direck. I got a mate
Wot knows a bloke wot knows another bloke
Wot's frien's with Shane, an' so - you un'erstand.
Wot? me give you the tip? Aw, take a walk!
Yeh think I'd do a thing so under'and?
Bill Shane would kill me if I was to talk.

Well, listen ... Now, for gosh sake, keep it dark.
An' don't let no one know it came from Shane.
Keep it strick secret. I would be a nark
To let you chuck yer money down the drain ...
Wazzat you said? He's scratched? 'Ere! Lemme look!
Scratched! Ain't that noos to knock a man clean out?
I alwiz said this puntin' game was crook ...
Who? Shane? Aw, I dunno. Some racin' tout.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Old Brass Rail

Foot on the rail in the olden days,
For all the world to see,
A jolly old lot, they took their pot
All unashamed and free,
Passing their jest from lip to lip,
Puffing away the foam,
Till a small voice cried from the path outside:
'Ma says, you're to come on home.'

Foot on the rail they faced the world
And cared not who should know;
And many they went, thro' a life mis-spent
As man a man must go
Straight to the dogs from the old brass rail,
Lost and ruined and wrecked:
But he went to his fate with the game played straight:
And he went with his head erect.

Then came the camel, with his lip adroop,
Calling an end to fun.
Tho' his cause was strong, his way was wrong,
And his task was most ill done.
Turning a man to a furtive sneak,
Stealing by ways obscure,
Bad if you will was the old, old ill;
But worse by far was the cure.

Oh, man will sin as his fathers sinned
Since ever this world was made;
But, if he must sin, then let him sin
In the open, unafraid;
Foot on the old brass rail again
For all the world to see.
A jolly old lot who takes his tot
All unashamed and free.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Old Gunn's Gully Line

The ole train puffs in once a day
On the ole Gunn's Gully line;
In a lazy, leisurely kind o' way
She comes in, wet or fine.
Nobody wants her, nobody needs her,
Nobody likes her, nobody heeds; her
Usefulness is done.
But, wet or fine, or sun or shine,
That ole train's got to run.

A man an' a dog, they loaf about
To watch the train come in;
An' a man an' a boy an' a bag get out
With Bowyang's ole cream-tin.
An' all men say wot all men know:
That all things are as all things show,
An' the trip don't pay for grease.
But, come wot may, the Heads they say
Them trips must never cease.

Now, to an' from the market town,
On the new Gunn's Gully road,
The motor cars speed up an' down,
An' trucks with many a load,
For there's the road, an' there's the car,
An' there's the chance; so, there you are!
Let progress forge ahead!
But the Heads they say them cars must pay
Or the ole train might dropp dead.

The ole train puffs out once a day
On the ole Gunn's Gully spin;
With a man inside, some days, to ride
With Bowyang's old cream-tin.
And men ask, Why? An' men ask who
The ole train serves like the morors do?
But the Heads must have their fun.
So they shoves a tax on the people's backs;
For that ole train's-got-to-run!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Old Shanty

Look at 'em! Toffs with their big cigars,
Drivin' along in their motor cars.
Nothin' at all like the olden days
When the blokes came by in their bullock drays,
When a cut o' the joint and a hunk o' bread
Was a meal for a king; an' a man was fed.

But beer! Why, man, they could lap a lot.
There was thousands made on this very spot;
Forchins taken behind this bar
An' never the sight of a motor car,
Or a dolled-up mug with 'is bag o' tricks
Lookin' for tucker at 'arf past six!

Struth! I ain't running no resterong
With food on the table the 'ole day long.
This is a pub - or it used to be,
An' the bar-room takin's is wot suits me.
But 'the food ain't 'ot!' and 'the rooms ain't clean!'
An' they spen's on likker - not one brass bean.

A bed an' a blanket was good enough
When thirsts was 'earty an' men was tough.
But the 'ole darn country has gone to pot
With their Licensin' Court an' all that rot!
A ladies' boardin' 'ouse, that's their lurk.
Aw, I'm goin' to chuck it an' look for work.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Old White Horse

In olden days the Old White Horse
Stood brave against the sky;
And ne'er a teamster shaped his course
To pass the good inn by.
Far shone its lights o' winter nights
To beckon weary men;
By the long road where calm life flowed
It loomed a landmark then.

And many a good right yarn was spun
Mid pewter-pots a gleam;
And many a friendship here begun
Grew riper as the team
Drew down the road its precious load
Of merchandise or mail,
And faced the ills of long, steep hills
To far-off Lilydale.

The tap-room rang to many a song,
While patient teams stood there;
And talk and laughter loud and long
Held nothing of despair;
For spoke they then, those bearded men,
Of fortunes shining near
Spoke with a grand faith in their land,
A faith that laughed at fear.

Gone are the days and gone the ways
Of easy, calm content;
Yet few supposed an epoch closed
The day the old inn went.
Now, past brick homes trim and cold,
The swift cars, speeding by,
Shall see no beacon as of old,
Shall see no brave White Horse stand bold
Against a hopeful sky.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Over-Fed Fuse

He has made many meals
On the Lib'ral's of late,
And the way that he feels
May be judged by his state;
For the fact that he has indigestion
Is needless, almost, to relate.

In the Kingdom of wade
He has eaten with zest;
That is plainly displayed
By the girth of his vest
Now he's hungrily eyeing McGowen
And Dacey and some of the rest.

With repletion he's sighed
In the south cabbage plot,
For he's quite satisfied
With the feed he has got;
For the Libs, they were many and juicy,
And lo, he has gobbled the lot.
They have fed him on sops
In the far northern State:
He is licking his chops,
He is feeling first-rate.
They have named him Phidkilp in that district,
Where he's dined rather largely of late.

There was quite a to-do
When he lunched in South Oss.
For he ate quite a few
Ere they noticed the loss.
But he finished his feed without winking
And is, by one mouthful, the boss.

He has chewed all the Libs.
On the old Apple Isle;
He has patted his ribs
With a satisfied smile;
And now he's quite fat and contented,

And likely rest for a while.

In the Federal crib
He has dines on 'em roast;
He's had hot devilled Lib.
And a Deakin on toast;
But he's feeling 'too full after eating,'
And languidly cheerful at most.

For this Liberal diet
Has filled him right out;
He has grown very quiet,
Exceedingly stout,
And he's taken a nap after dinner,
And has slept the session quite out.

Let us hope that, some day,
When he wakes in a huff,
The electors will say
He has had quite enough,
And prescribe him a Labor emetic,
And restrict him to plain Tory duff.

In the sweet soon-to-be,
When we open our NEWS,
Or our AGE or D.T.
Or whate'r we peruse,
We shall read: 'SUDDEN DEATH OF A GLUTTON,
THE FATE OF AN OVER-FED FUSE.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Pallid Cuckoo

Dolefully and drearily
Come I with the spring;
Wearily and cerily
My threnody I sing.
Hear my drear, discordant note
Sobbing, sobbing in my throat,
Weaving, wailing thro' the wattles
Where the builders are a-wing.

Outcast and ostracized,
Miserable me!
By the feathered world despised,
Chased from tree to tree.
Nought to do the summer thro',
My woeful weird a dree;
Singing, 'Pity, ah, pity,
Miserable me!'

I'm the menace and the warning,
Loafing, labour-shy.
In the harmony of morning
Out of tune am I-
Out of tune and out of work,
Meanly 'mid the leaves I lurk,
Fretfully to sing my sorrow,
Furtively to spy.

Outcast and desolate,
Miserable me!
Earning ever scorn and hate
For my treachery.
Shiftless drone, I grieve alone,
To a mournful key
Singing, 'Sorrow, ah, sorrow!
Miserable me!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Philistine

Smith is a very stupid man;
He lives next door to me;
He has no settled scheme or plan
Of domesticity.
He does not own a gramophone,
Nor rush for morning trains;
His garden paths are overgrown,
He seldom entertains.

In all our staid suburban street
He strikes the one false note.
He goes about in slippered feet,
And seldom wears a coat.
He shows no taste in furniture,
He never goes to church;
His ways our district prim and pure
seem, somehow, to besmirch.

I don't know how he earns his bread;
'Tis said he paints or writes;
And frequently, I've heard it said,
He works quite late at nights.
His servant told the girl we've got
He makes a lot of pelf.
It seems a pity he will not
Strive to improve himself.

She's quite a pretty girl, his wife.
Our women-folk declare
It is a shame she spoiled her life
With such a perfect bear.
And yet she seems quite satisfied
With this peculiar man;
And says, with rather foolish pride,
He is Bohemian.

He has the crudest views about
Respectability;
I've often heard him laugh and shout

On Sundays after tea;
While our select suburban clan
Pass him the stony stare.
Smith is a very stupid man,
He doesn't seem to care.

He will not join our tennis club,
Nor come to may'ral balls,
Nor meet the neighbours in a rub
At bridge, nor pay them calls.
He just delights to scoff and sneer,
And feigns to be amused
At everything we hold most dear
What wonder he's abused?

Although he's ostracised a deal
He never makes a fuss;
I sometimes think he seems to feel
He ostracises us!
But that, of course, is quite absurd;
And, risking the disgrace,
I sometimes say a kindly word
When I pass by his place.

But still, although one likes to keep
One's self a bit select,
And not be, so to speak, too cheap,
I'm broad in that respect.
So oft, on sultry summer eves,
I waive all diffidence,
And chat across the wilted leaves
That garb our garden fence.

But, oh, his talk is so absurd!
His notions are so crude.
Such drivel I have seldom heard;
His mode of speech is rude.
He mentions 'stomach' in a bark
You'd hear across the street.
He lacks those 'little ways' that mark
A gentleman discreet.

And when I speak of great affairs
His mind becomes a blank.
He shows no interest in the cares
Of folk of noble rank.
And should we chat of politics
He sneers at parliament,
And says the modern party tricks
Were by the Devil sent.

It seems he has some foolish scheme
To right all social wrong;
Some silly plan, some idle dream
To raise the fallen throng.
It tell him if we change our plan
All enterprise must end
Smith is a very stupid man;
He does not comprehend.

Good books, as I have often said,
He mentions with disdain.
Marie Corelli he's not read
Garvice, nor yet Hall Caine.
He talks of writers most obscure:
Like Virgil, Carlyle, Kant,
Whose works no scholar could endure.
His reading must be scant.

In art he is a perfect dunce.
That's plainly evident.
I recollect I showed him once
A Christmas supplement.
He asked me if it was a joke,
Although the thing was grand!
I knew the moment that he spoke
Smith didn't understand!

He lacks all soul for music, too;
He hates the gramophone;
And when we play some dance-tune new
I've often heard him groan.
He says our music gives him sad,
Sad thoughts of slaughtered things.

I think Smith is a little mad;
Nice thoughts to me it brings.

Now, I have quite a kindly heart;
Good works I do not stint;
Last week I spoke to Smith apart,
And dropped a gentle hint.
He will be snubbed, I told him flat,
By neighbours round about,
Unless he wears a better hat
On Sundays, when he's out.

Last Sunday morn he passed my place
About the hour of four;
A smile serence was on his face,
And on his head he wore
The most dilapidated hat
That I have ever seen.
'This ought to keep 'em off the mat,'
He said. What did he mean?

I wish that Smith was not so dense.
He seems to have no vice;
He's educated - in a sense
And could become quite nice.
Still, there's a certain 'genteel' brand
That marks the cultured man.
Smith doesn't seem to understand;
He's such a stupid man!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Pieman

I'd like to be a pieman, and ring a little bell,
Calling out, 'Hot pies! Hot pies to sell!'
Apple-pies and Meat-pies, Cherry-pies as well,
Lots and lots and lots of pies - more than you can tell.
Big, rich Pork-pies! Oh, the lovely smell!
But I wouldn't be a pieman if ...
I wasn't very well.
Would you?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Play

Wot's in a name? -- she sez . . . An' then she sighs,
An' clasps 'er little 'ands, an' rolls 'er eyes.
'A rose,' she sez, 'be any other name
Would smell the same.
Oh, w'erefore art you Romeo, young sir?
Chuck yer ole pot, an' change yer moniker!'

Doreen an' me, we bin to see a show --
The swell two-dollar touch. Bong tong, yeh know.
A chair apiece wiv velvit on the seat;
A slap-up treat.
The drarmer's writ be Shakespeare, years ago,
About a barmy goat called Romeo.

'Lady, be yonder moon I swear!' sez 'e.
An' then 'e climbs up on the balkiney;
An' there they smooge a treat, wiv pretty words
Like two love-birds.
I nudge Doreen. She whispers, 'Ain't it grand!'
'Er eyes is shining an' I squeeze 'er 'and.

'Wot's in a name?' she sez. 'Struth, I dunno.
Billo is just as good as Romeo.
She may be Juli-er or Juli-et --
'E loves 'er yet.
If she's the tart 'e wants, then she's 'is queen,
Names never count ... But ar, I like 'Doreen!'

A sweeter, dearer sound I never 'eard;
Ther's music 'angs around that little word,
Doreen! ... But wot was this I starts to say
About the play?
I'm off me beat. But when a bloke's in love
'Is thorts turns 'er way, like a 'omin' dove.

This Romeo 'e's lurkin' wiv a crew --
A dead tough crowd o' crooks -- called Montague.
'Is cliner's push -- wot's nicknamed Capulet --
They 'as 'em set.

Fair narks they are, jist like them back-street clicks,
Ixcep' they fights wiv skewers 'stid o' bricks.

Wot's in a name? Wot's in a string o' words?
They scraps in ole Verona wiv the'r swords,
An' never give a bloke a stray dog's chance,
An' that's Romance.
But when they deals it out wiv bricks an' boots
In Little Lon., they're low, degraded broots.

Wot's jist plain stoush wiv us, right 'ere to-day,
Is 'valler' if yer fur enough away.
Some time, some writer bloke will do the trick
Wiv Ginger Mick,
Of Spadger's Lane.
'E'll be a Romeo,
When 'e's bin dead five 'undred years or so.

Fair Juli-et, she gives 'er boy the tip.
Sez she: 'Don't sling that crowd o' mine no lip;
An' if you run agin a Capulet,
Jist do a get.'
'E swears 'e's done wiv lash; 'e'll chuck it clean.
(Same as I done when I first met Doreen.)

They smooze some more at that. Ar, strike me blue!
It gimme Joes to sit an' watch them two! '
E'd break away an' start to say good-bye,
An' then she'd sigh
'Ow, Ro-me-o!' an' git a strangle-holt,
An' 'ang around 'im like she feared 'e'd bolt.

Nex' day 'e words a gorspil cove about
A secret weddin'; an' they plan it out.
'E spouts a piece about 'ow 'e's bewitched:
Then they git 'itched ...
Now, 'ere's the place where I fair git the pip!
She's 'is for keeps, an' yet 'e lets 'er slip!

Ar! but 'e makes me sick! A fair gazob!
E's jist the glarsey on the soulful sob,
'E'll sigh and spruik, a' 'owl a love-sick vow --

(The silly cow!)

But when 'e's got 'er, spliced an' on the straight
'E crools the pitch, an' tries to kid it's Fate.

Aw! Fate me foot! Instid of slopin' soon
As 'e was wed, off on 'is 'oneymoon,
'Im an' 'is cobber, called Mick Curio,
They 'ave to go
An' mix it wiv that push o' Capulets.
They look fer trouble; an' it's wot they gets.

A tug named Tyball (cousin to the skirt)
Sprags 'em an' makes a start to sling off dirt.
Nex' minnit there's a reel ole ding-dong go --
'Arf round or so.
Mick Curio, 'e gets it in the neck,
'Ar rats!' 'e sez, an' passes in 'is check.

Quite natchril, Romeo gits wet as 'ell.
'It's me or you!' 'e 'owls, an' wiv a yell,
Plunks Tyball through the gizzard wiv 'is sword,
'Ow I ongcored!
'Put in the boot!' I sez. 'Put in the boot!'
'Ush!' sez Doreen ... 'Shame!' sez some silly coot.

Then Romeo, 'e dunno wot to do.
The cops gits busy, like they allwiz do,
An' nose around until 'e gits blue funk
An' does a bunk.
They wants 'is tart to wed some other guy.
'Ah, strike!' she sez. 'I wish that I could die!'

Now, this 'ere gorspil bloke's a fair shrewd 'ead.
Sez 'e 'I'll dope yeh, so they'll think yer dead.'
(I tips 'e was a cunnin' sort, wot knoo
A thing or two.)
She takes 'is knock-out drops, up in 'er room:
They think she's snuffed, an' plant 'er in 'er tomb.

Then things gits mixed a treat an' starts to whirl.
'Ere's Romeo comes back an' finds 'is girl
Tucked in 'er little coffing, cold an' stiff,

An' in a jiff,
'E swallows lysol, throws a fancy fit,
'Ead over turkey, an' 'is soul 'as flit.

Then Juli-et wakes up an' sees 'im there,
Turns on the water-works an' tears 'er 'air,
'Dear love,' she sez, 'I cannot live alone!'
An' wiv a moan,
She grabs 'is pockit knife, an' ends 'er cares ...
'Peanuts or lollies!' sez a boy upstairs.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Porter

I'd like to be a porter, and always on the run,
Calling out, 'Stand aside!' and asking leave of none.
Shoving trucks on people's toes, and having splendid fun,
Slamming all the carriage doors and locking every one
And, when they asked to be let in, I'd say, 'It can't be done.'
But I wouldn't be a porter if ...
The luggage weighed a ton.
Would you?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Postman

I'd like to be a postman, and walk along the street,
Calling out, 'Good Morning, Sir,' to gentlemen I meet,
Ringing every door-bell all along my beat,
In my cap and uniform so very nice and neat.
Perhaps I'd have a parasol in case of rain or heat;
But I wouldn't be a postman if ...
The walking hurt my feet.
Would you?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Push

Becos a crook done in a prince, an' narked an Emperor,
An' struck a light that set the world aflame;
Becos the bugles East an' West sooled on the dawgs o' war,
A bloke called Ginger Mick 'as found 'is game
Found 'is game an' found 'is brothers, 'oo wus strangers in 'is sight,
Till they shed their silly clobber an' put on the duds fer fight.

Yes, they've shed their silly clobber an' the other stuff they wore
Fer to 'ide the man beneath it in the past;
An' each man is the clean, straight man 'is Maker meant 'im for,
An' each man knows 'is brother man at last.
Shy strangers, till a bugle blast preached 'oly brother'ood;
But mateship they 'ave found at last; an' they 'ave found it good.

So the lumper, an' the lawyer, an' the chap 'oo shifted sand,
They are cobbers wiv the cove 'oo drove a quill;
They knut 'oo swung a cane upon the Block, 'e takes the 'and
Uv the coot 'oo swung a pick on Broken 'Ill;
An' Privit Clord Augustus drills wiv Privit Snarky Jim
They are both Australian soljers, w'ich is good enough fer 'im.

It's good enough fer orl uv 'em, as orl uv 'em 'ave seen
Since they got the same glad clobber next their skins;
An' the bloke 'oo 'olds the boodle an' the coot wivout a bean,
Why, they knock around like little Kharki twins.
An' they got a common lingo, w'ich is growin' mighty thick
Wiv ixpressive contributions frum the stock uv Ginger Mick.

'E 'as struck it fer a moral. Ginger's found 'is game at last,
An' 'e's took to it like ducklin's take to drink;
An' 'is slouchin' an' 'is grouchin' an' 'is loafin' uv the past
'E's done wiv 'em, an' dumped 'em down the sink.
'E's a bright an' shinin' sample uv a the'ry that I 'old:
That ev'ry 'eart that ever pumped is good fer chunks o' gold.

Ev'ry feller is a gold mine if yeh take an' work 'im right:
It is shinin' on the surface now an' then;
An' there's some is easy sinkin', but there's some wants dynermite,
Fer they looks a 'opeless prospect - yet they're men.

An' Ginger - 'ard-shell Ginger's showin' signs that 'e will pay;
But it took a flamin' world-war fer to blarst 'is crust away.

But they took 'im an' they drilled 'im an' they shipped 'im overseas
Wiv a crowd uv blokes 'e never met before.

'E rowed wiv 'em, an' scrapped wiv 'em, an' done some tall C.B.'s,
An' 'e lobbed wiv 'em on Egyp's sandy shore.

Then Pride o' Race lay 'olt on 'im, an' Mick shoves out 'is chest
To find 'imself Australian an' blood brothers wiv the rest.

So I gits some reel good readin' in the letter wot 'e sent
Tho' the spellin's pretty rotten now an' then.

'I 'ad the joes at first,' 'e sez; 'but now I'm glad I went,
Fer it's fine to be among reel, livin' men.

An' it's grand to be Australian, an' to say it good an' loud
When yeh bump a forrin country wiv sich fellers as our crowd.

"Struth! I've 'ung around me native land fer close on thirty year,
An' I never knoo wot men me cobbers were:

Never knoo that toffs wus white men till I met 'em over 'ere
Blokes an' coves I sort o' snouted over there.

Yes, I loafed aroun' me country; an' I never knoo 'er then;
But the reel, ribuck Australia's 'ere, among the fightin' men.

'We've slung the swank fer good an' all; it don't fit in our plan;
To skite uv birth an' boodle is a crime.

A man wiv us, why, 'e's a man becos 'e is a man,
An' a reel red-'ot Australian ev'ry time.

Fer dawg an' side an' snobbery is down an' out fer keeps.
It's grit an' reel good fellership that gits yeh friends in 'caps.

'There's a bloke 'oo shipped when I did; 'e wus lately frum 'is ma.
'Oo 'ad filled 'im full uv notions uv 'is birth;

An' 'e overworked 'is aitches till 'e got the loud 'Ha-ha'
Frum the fellers, but 'e wouldn't come to earth.

I bumped 'is lordship, name o' Keith, an' 'ad a little row,
An' 'e lost some chunks uv beauty; but 'e's good Australian now.

'There is Privit Snifty Thompson, 'oo wus once a Sydney rat,
An' 'e 'ung around the Rocks when 'e wus young.

There's little Smith uv Collin'wood, wiv fags stuck in 'is 'at,
An' a string uv dirty insults on 'is tongue.

A corperil took them in 'and - a lad frum Lameroo.
Now both is nearly gentlemen, an' good Australians too.

'There's one, 'e doesn't tork a lot, 'e sez 'is name is Trent,
Jist a privit, but 'e knows 'is drill a treat;
A stand-orf bloke, but reel good pals wiv fellers in 'is tent,
But 'is 'ome an' 'istoree 'as got 'em beat.
They reckon when 'e starts to bleed 'e'll stain 'is Kharki blue;
An' 'is lingo smells uv Oxford - but 'e's good Australian too.

'Then there's Lofty Craig uv Queensland, 'oo's a special pal uv mine;
Slow an' shy, an' kind o' nervous uv 'is height;
An' Jupp, 'oo owns a copper show, an' arsts us out to dine
When we're doo fer leave in Cairo uv a night.
An' there's Bills an' Jims an' Bennos, an' there's Roys an' 'Arolds too,
An' they're cobbers, an' they're brothers, an' Australians thro' an' thro'.

'There is farmers frum the Mallec, there is bushmen down frum Bourke,
There's college men wiv letters to their name;
There is grafters, an' there's blokes 'oo never done a 'ard day's work
Till they tumbled, wiv the rest, into the game
An' they're drillin' 'ere together, men uv ev'ry creed an' kind
It's Australia! Solid! Dinkum! that 'as left the land be'ind.

'An' if yeh want a slushy, or a station overseer,
Or a tinker, or a tailor, or a snob,
Or a 'andy bloke wiv 'orses, or a minin' engineer,
Why, we've got the very man to do yer job.
Butcher, baker, undertaker, or a Caf' de Pary chef,
'E is waitin', keen an' ready, in the little A.I.F.

'An' they've drilled us. Strike me lucky! but they've drilled us fer a cert!
We 'ave trod around ole Egyp's burnin' sand
Till I tells meself at evenin', when I'm wringin' out me shirt,
That we're built uv wire an' green-'ide in our land.
Strike! I thort I knoo 'ard yakker, w'ish I've tackled many ways,
But uv late I've took a tumble I bin dozin' orl me days.

'It's a game, lad,' writes ole Ginger, 'it's a game I'm likin' grand,
An' I'm tryin' fer a stripe to fill in time;
I 'ave took a pull on shicker fer the honour uv me land,
An' I'm umpty round the chest an' feelin' prime.

Yeh kin tell Rose, if yeh see 'er, I serloots 'er o'er the foam,
An' we'll 'ave a cray fer supper when I comes a'marchin' 'ome.'

So ole Ginger sends a letter, an' 'is letter's good to read,
Fer the things 'e sez, an' some things 'e leaves out;
An' when a bloke like 'im wakes up an' starts to take a 'eed,
Well, it's sort o' worth the writin' 'ome about.
'E's one uv many little things Australia chanced to find
She never knoo she 'ad around till bugles cleared 'er mind.

Becos ole Europe lost 'er block an' started 'eavin' bricks,
Becos the bugles wailed a song uv war,
We found reel gold down in the 'earts uv orl our Ginger Micks
We never thort worth minin' fer before.
An' so, I'm tippin' we will pray, before our win is scored:
'Thank God for Mick, an' Bill an' Jim, an' little brother Clord.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Reaper In The Bush

He was lyin' on his bunk,
In the hut behind the mill,
Ravin' like a man wild drunk,
Never silent, never still,
'Best go in an' say Good bye,'
Says old Blair. 'He's got to die.'

God! I never want to see
Any face so wrung with pain,
Nor to hear such blasphemy
Ever in my life again.
White he was, an' starey-eyed,
With his hand pressed to his side.

'Now he raves,' says Daddy Pike.
'He ain't wise to what he says
Never have I heard the like
All me wicked livin' days.'
'Raise him up a bit,' says Blair.
'Put that pillow under there.

'Raise him. . . . There now, easy, lad.
Turn a little - gently - so.
You'll not feel it near so bad. . . .
Painin'? Yes, I know, I know.
Yes, old man; it's Blair, your friend. . . .
(Boys, he's very near the end.)

Soon a saner, calmer look
Came in Murray's strainin' eyes.
Though his body heaved an' shook,
He held back his awful cries
Till another wave of pain
Gripped him, an' he shrieked again.

'Christ!' he called. 'O, Christ, the pain!
Boys, you know I ain't a funk.'
Still he took the Name in vain,
Writhin' there upon his bunk.

'Do you call him?' says old Blair.
Pointin' upward. 'He is there.'

'Blair!' he gasps. 'Do you believe?
Such as me! Is there a chance?'
'Easy, Murray. Don't you grieve.
You ain't worth a single glance
Save of pity from His eye.
Laddie, pray before you die.'

'God! I'm frightened, Blair!' says he . . .
'Boys, you know I never whined. . . .
Where's the hope for one like me?
I ain't no hymn-singin' kind.'
There was pleadin' in his glance:
'Blair,' says he, 'is there a chance?'

Old Bob Blair reached for his hand.
'Chance there is, an' certainty.
Try to think an' understand.
Nothin's There to fear,' says he.
'Him, the Merciful, the Mild,
Think ye He would strike a child?

'Think ye that he put you here,
Gave you labour, gave you pain,
So your end should be fear
That you plead to Him in vain?
Nay, dear laddie, while you've breath,
Live in hope, an' smile on death.'

With a hard hand, woman-kind,
He pushed back the sweaty hair.
'Now then, laddie, ease your mind,
Pain will end for you out There. . . .'
An' the smile on Blair's rough face
Was a blessin' an' a grace.

'God!' says Ben, 'You are a friend:
Friend, old man, an' father too.
Hold my hand right to the end

They'll take notice There of you. . . .
Good-bye, Jim, an' Dusty Dick,
Simon, Pike. . . .I'm goin' - quick.'

With his eyes shut tight he lay,
His breath comin' in great sobs.
An' his poor lips seemed to pray,
As his hand held fast to Bob's. . . .
Now his sobs an' prayin' cease.
Says old Blair, 'God give him peace!

'Give him peace!' sighed old Bob Blair,
As he rose beside the dead.
But I caught his wistful stare,
An' the muttered words he said:
'God,' he prayed - 'if one there be -
Give such faith an' peace to me.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Rhymes Of Sym

Nobody knew why it should be so;
Nobody knew or wanted to know.
It might have been checked had but someone dared
To trace its beginnings; but nobody cared.
But 'twas clear to the wise that the Glugs of those days
Were crazed beyond reason concerning a craze.

They would pass a thing by for a week or a year,
With an air apathetic, or maybe a sneer:
Some ev'ryday thing, like a crime or a creed,
A mode or a movement, and pay it small heed,
Till Somebody started to laud it aloud;
Then all but the Nobodies followed the crowd.

Thus, Sym was a craze; tho', to give him his due,
He would rather have strayed from the popular view.
But once the Glugs had him they held him so tight
That he could not be nobody, try as he might.
He had to be Somebody, so they decreed.
For Craze is an appetite, governed by Greed.

So on Saturday week to the Great Market Square
Came every Glug who could rake up his fare.
They came from the suburbs, they came from the town,
There came from the country Glugs bearded and brown,
Rich Glugs, with cigars, all well-tailored and stout,
Jostled commonplace Glugs who dropped aitches about.

There were gushing Glug maids, well aware of their charms,
And stern, massive matrons with babes in their arms.
There were querulous dames who complained of the 'squash,'
The pushing and squeezing; for, briefly, all Gosh,
With its aunt and its wife, stood agape in the ranks
Excepting Sir Stodge and his satellite Swanks.

The Mayor of Quog took the chair for the day;
And he made them a speech, and he ventured to say
That a Glug was a Glug, and the Cause they held dear
Was a very dear Cause. And the Glugs said, 'Hear, hear.'
Then Sym took the stage to a round of applause
From thousands who suddenly found they'd a Cause.

We strive together in life's crowded mart,
Keen-eyed, with clutching hands to over-reach.
We scheme, we lie, we play the selfish part,
Masking our lust for gain with gentle speech;
And masking too - O pity ignorance!
Our very selves behind a careless glance.

Ah, foolish brothers, seeking e'er in vain
The one dear gift that liesso near at hand;
Hoping to barter gold we meanly gain
For that the poorest beggar in the land
Holds for his own, to hoard while yet he spends;
Seeking fresh treasure in the hearts of friends.

We preach; yet do we deem it worldly-wise
To count unbounded brother-love a shame,
So, ban the brother-look from out our eyes,
Lest sparks of sympathy be fanned to flame.
We smile; and yet withhold, in secret fear,
The word so hard to speak, so sweet to hear -

The Open Sesame to meanest hearts,
The magic word, to which stern eyes grow soft,
And crafty faces, that the cruel marts
Have seared and scored, turn gentle - Nay, how oft
It trembles on the lip to die unppoke,
And dawning love is stifled with a joke.

Nay, brothers, look about your world to-day:
A world to you so drab, so commonplace

The flowers still are blooming by the way,
As blossom smiles upon the sternest face.
In every hour is born some thought of love;
In every heart is hid some treasure-trove.

With a modified clapping and stamping of feet
The Glugs mildly cheered him, as Sym took his seat.
But some said 'twas clever, and some said 'twas grand
More especially those who did not understand.
And some said, with frowns, tho' the words sounded plain,
Yet it had a deep meaning they craved to explain.

But the Mayor said: Silence! He wished to observe
That a Glug was a Glug; and in wishing to serve
This glorious Cause, which they'd asked him to lead,
They had proved they were Glugs of the noble old breed
That made Gosh what it was . . . and he'd ask the police
To remove that small boy while they heard the next piece.

'Now come,' said the Devil, he said to me,
With his swart face all a-grin,
'This day, ere ever the clock strikes three,
Shall you sin your darling sin.
For I've wagered a crown with Beelzebub,
Down there at the Gentlemen's Brimstone Club,
I shall tempt you once, I shall tempt you twice,
Yet thrice shall you fall ere I tempt you thrice.'

'Begone, base Devil!' I made reply -
'Begone with your fiendish grin!
How hope you to profit by such as I?
For I have no darling sin.
But many there be, and I know them well,
All foul with sinning and ripe for Hell.
And I name no names, but the whole world knows
That I am never of such as those.'

'How nowt' said the Devil. 'I'll spread my net,
And I vow I'll gather you in!
By this and by that shall I win my bet,

And you shall sin the sin!
Come, fill up a bumper of good red wine,
Your heart shall sing, and your eye shall shine,
You shall know such joy as you never have known.
For the salving of men was the good vine grown.'

'Begone, red Devil!' I made reply.
'Parch shall these lips of mine,
And my tongue shall shrink, and my throat go dry,
Ere ever I taste your wine!
But greet you shall, as I know full well,
A tipsy score of my friends in Hell.
And I name no names, but the whole world wots
Most of my fellows are drunken sots.'

'Ah, ha!' said the Devil. 'You scorn the wine!
Thrice shall you sin, I say,
To win me a crown from a friend of mine,
Ere three o' the clock this day.
Are you calling to mind some lady fair?
And is she a wife or a maiden rare?
'Twere folly to shackle young love, hot Youth;
And stolen kisses are sweet, forsooth!'

'Begone, foul Devil!' I made reply;
'For never in all my life
Have I looked on a woman with lustful eye,
Be she maid, or widow, or wife.
But my brothers! Alas! I am scandalized
By their evil passions so ill disguised.
And I name no names, but my thanks I give
That I loathe the lives my fellow-men live.'

'Ho, ho!' roared the Devil in fiendish glee.
'Tis a silver crown I win!
Thrice have you fallen! O Pharisee,
You have sinned your darling sin!
'But, nay,' said I; 'and I scorn your lure.
I have sinned no sin, and my heart is pure.'

Come, show me a sign of the sin you see!
But the Devil was gone . . . and the clock struck three.

With an increase of cheering and waving of hats
While the little boys squealed, and made noises like cats
The Glugs gave approval to Sym's second rhyme.
And some said 'twas thoughtful, and some said 'twas prime;
And some said 'twas witty, and had a fine end:
More especially those who did not comprehend.

And some said with leers and with nudges and shrugs
That, they mentioned no names, but it hit certain Glugs.
And others remarked, with superior smiles,
While dividing the metrical feet into miles,
That the thing seemed quite simple, without any doubt,
But the anagrams in it would need thinking out.

But the Mayor said, Hush! And he wished to explain
That in leading this Movement he'd nothing to gain.
He was ready to lead, since they trusted him so;
And, wherever he led he was sure Glugs would go.
And he thanked them again, and craved peace for a time,
While this gifted young man read his third and last rhyme.

(To sing you a song and a sensible song is a worthy and excellent thing;
But how could I sing you that sort of a song, if there's never a song to sing?)
At ten to the tick, by the kitchen clock, I marked him blundering by,
With his eyes astare, and his rumped hair, and his hat cocked over his eye.
Blind, in his pride, to his shoes untied, he went with a swift jig-jog,
Off on the quest, with a strange unrest, hunting the Feasible Dog.
And this is the song, as he dashed along, that he sang with a swaggering swing
(Now how had I heard him singing a song if he hadn't a song to sing?)

'I've found the authentic, identical beast!
The Feasible Dog, and the terror of Gosh!
I know by the prowl of him.
Hark to the growl of him!
Heralding death to the subjects of Splosh.
Oh, look at him glaring and staring, by thunder!
Now each for himself, and the weakest goes under!

'Beware this injurious, furious brute;
He's ready to rend you with tooth and with claw.
Tho' 'tis incredible,
Anything edible
Disappears suddenly into his maw:
Into his cavernous inner interior
Vanishes evrything strictly superior.'

He calls it 'Woman,' he calls it 'Wine,' he calls it 'Devils' and 'Dice';
He calls it 'Surfing' and 'Sunday Golf' and names that are not so nice.
But whatever he calls it-'Morals' or 'Mirth'-he is on with the hunt right quick
For his sorrow he'd hug like a gloomy Gllig if he hadn't a dog to kick.
So any old night, if the stars are right, you will find him, hot on the trail
Of a feasible dog and a teasable dog, with a can to tie to his tail.
And the song that he roars to the shuddering stars is a worthy and excellent
thing.
(Yet how could you hear him singing a song if there wasn't a song to sing?)

'I've watched his abdominous, ominous shape
Abroad in the land while the nation has slept,
Marked his satanical
Methods tyrannical;
Rigorous, vigorous vigil I kept.
Good gracious! Voracious is hardly the name for it!
Yet we have only our blindness to blame for it.

'My dear, I've autoptical, optical proof
That he's prowling and growling at large in the land.
Hear his pestiferous
Clamour vociferous,
Gurgles and groans of the beastliest brand.
Some may regard his contortions as comical.
But I've the proof that his game's gastronomical.

'Beware this obstreperous, leprous beast -
A treacherous wretch, for I know him of old.
I'm on the track of him,
Close at the back of him,
And I'm aware his ambitions are bold;

For he's yearning and burning to snare the superior
Into his roomy and gloomy interior.'

Such a shouting and yelling of hearty Bravoes,
Such a craning of necks and a standing on toes
Seemed to leave ne'er a doubt that the Tinker's last rhyme
Had now won him repute 'mid the Glugs for all time.
And they all said the rhyme was the grandest they'd heard:
More especially those who had not caught a word.

But the Mayor said: Peace! And he stood, without fear,
As the leader of all to whom Justice was dear.
For the Tinker had rhymed, as the Prophet foretold,
And a light was let in on the errors of old.
For in every line, and in every verse
Was the proof that Sir Stodge was a traitor, and worse!

Sir Stodge (said the Mayor), must go from his place;
And the Swanks, one and all, were a standing disgrace!
For the influence won o'er a weak, foolish king
Was a menace to Gosh, and a scandalous thing!
'And now,' said the Mayor, 'I stand here to-day
As your leader and friend.' And the Glugs said, 'Hooray!'

Then they went to their homes in the suburbs and town;
To their farms went the Glugs who were bearded and brown.
Portly Glugs with cigars went to dine at their clubs,
While illiterate Glugs had one more at the pubs.
And each household in Gosh sat and talked half the night
Of the wonderful day, and the imminent fight.

Forgetting the rhymer, forgetting his rhymes,
They talked of Sir Stodge and his numerous crimes.
There was hardly a C3lug in the whole land of Gosh
Who'd a lenient word to put in for King Splosh.
One and all, to the mangiest, surliest dog,
Were quite eager to bark for his Worship of Quog.

Forgotten, unnoticed, Sym wended his way
To his lodging in Gosh at the close of the day.
And 'twas there, to his friend and companion of years
To his little red dog with the funny prick ears
That he poured out his woe; seeking nothing to hide;
And the little dog listened, his head on one side.

'O you little red dog, you are weary as I.
It is days, it is months since we saw the blue sky.
And it seems weary years since we sniffed at the breeze
As it hms thro' the hedges and sings in the trees.
These we know and we love. But this city holds fears,
O my friend of the road, with the funny prick ears.
And for what me we hope from his Worship of Quog?'
'Oh, and a bone, and a kick,' said the little red dog.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Roads' End

Old Ben, the pensioner, is going down to die.
Huddled in the mail-car, he turns a wistful eye
On this familiar forest scene, the wooded mountain wall;
And nought could lure him from it save the last stern call.
He has loved it with a fierce love no reason comprehends;
The great gums, the green ways, the rough bush friends.
But doctor says his tough old heart at last has let him down;
So he's off to be 'patched up a bit' in hospital in town.

'Patched up a bit'. . . He'd heard that talk when they took Badger Jack,
And Charlie Clem, and Lame Mick. But none of these came back.
Was it Mick went first? Or Charlie? (Lordy, Lord! How men forget.)
And now they're taking Ben away; and Ben not eighty yet.
The youngest, he, of six old hulks; and three have gone away;
Till now there's only George Jones left, and old Pete Parraday -
His oldest friend, Pete Parraday, who has his dog to mind.
The cruellest break of all, that was - leaving his dog behind.

Old Ben, the pensioner, sits huddled in the car;
And his filmed eyes seek the skyline where the timbered ranges are -
This kind, green place of singing bards, of tree and scrubland dense.
He hears their words of forced good cheer and jovial pretence:
Says old George Jones, 'In hospital you'll get real proper care.'
'An' mind,' says Pete, 'no sparkin' with them pretty nurses there.
Why, man, you'll be a two-year-old when you come back agen.'
'You keep your eye on my ole dawg, an' feed 'im good,' pipes Ben.

Then, 'All aboard!' the mailman shouts 'Now, Ben, mind them old bones!'
A hand-clasp from Pete Parraday, a pat from old George Jones,
And Ben, the pensioner, goes off on his last pilgrimage...
'Broke up reel fast,' growls old George Jones, 'considerin' his age.
Hey! Don't let that dawg foller him! Here, Rover, you behave.'
They watch the sick man turn about, and feebly try to wave.
Swiftly the car speeds round the bend; the echoes die away...
'Me next? Or maybe you, George,' says old Pete Parraday.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Rose And The Bee

'Well, what tidings today?' said the bee
To the burgeoning rose.

'You are young, yet already you see
Much of life, I suppose.'

Said the rose, 'Oh, this life is so filled
With astonishing things
That I think I could not be more thrilled
E'en if roses had wings.

Three lupins have bloomed by the pond
Since last you were here;
In the nest of the blue-wrens beyond
Three nestlings appear.
A gay butterfly slept by my side
All yesternight thro'
Till dawn, when a thrush hymned his pride.
But how goes it with you?'

'There are great things at hand,' said the bee.
'Change comes to my life.
In my hive in the woollybutt tree
Strange rumors are rife.
The old queen grows restless, I fear,
She is planning to roam;
And I must adventure this year
From the old, safe home.

'Old Black Wallaby's limping, I see,
Trap again, I suppose.
Life is full of mischance,' said the bee.
'Ah, no,' sighed the rose.
'Despite all the folly and sin
And the gala and the strife,
It's a wonderful world we live in,
It's a wonderful life.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Sailor

I'd like to be a sailor - a sailor bold and bluff
Calling out, 'Ship ahoy!' in manly tones and gruff.
I'd learn to box the compass, and to reef and tack and luff;
I'd sniff and sniff the briny breeze and never get enough.
Perhaps I'd chew tobacco, or an old black pipe I'd puff,
But I wouldn't be a sailor if ...
The sea was very rough.
Would you?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Satin Bower-Bird

Spare a bloom of blue, lady,
To adorn a bower.
A violet will do, lady
Any azure flower.
Since we hold a dance to-day,
We would make our ball-room gay,
Where the scented grasses sway.
And the tall trees tower.

Beautiful but shy, lady,
Yesterday we came
Dropping from the sky, lady,
Flecks of golden flame
Golden flame and royal blue
We have come to beg of you
Any scrap of heaven's hue
For our dancing game.

Spare us but a leaf, lady,
If our suit be spurned
We shall play the thief, lady,
When your back is turned;
Ravishing your garden plot
Of the choicest you have got
Pansy or forget-me-not
Counting it well earned.

Then, if some rare chance, lady,
Later should befall.
And you gain a glance, lady,
At our dancing hall,
You will find your blossoms there
'Mid our decorations where,
With a proud, patrician air,
We hold the Bushland Ball.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Seer

Somewhere or other, 'tis doubtful where,
In the archives of Gosh is a volume rare,
A precious old classic that nobody reads,
And nobody asks for, and nobody heeds;
Which makes it a classic, and famed thro' the land,
As well-informed persons will quite understand.

'Tis a ponderous work, and 'tis written in prose,
For some mystical reason that nobody knows;
And it tells in a style that is terse and correct
Of the rule of the Swanks and its baneful effect
On the commerce of Gosh, on its morals and trade;
And it quotes a grave prophecy somebody made.

And this is the prophecy, written right bold
On a parchment all tattered and yellow and old;
So old and so tattered that nobody knows
How far into foretime its origin goes.
But this is the writing that set Glugs agog
When 'twas called to their minds by the Mayor of Quog:

When Gosh groaneth bastlie thro Greed and bys plannes
Ye rimer shall mende ye who mendes pottes and pans.

Now, the Mayor of Quog, a small suburb of Gosh,
Was intensely annoyed at the act of King Splosh
In asking the Mayor of Piphel to tea
With himself and the Queen on a Thursday at three;
When the King must have known that the sorriest dog,
If a native of Piphel, was hated in Quog.

An act without precedent! Quog was ignored!
The Mayor and Council and Charity Board,
They met and considered this insult to Quog;
And they said, ' 'Tis the work of the treacherous Og!
'Tis plain the Og influence threatens the Throne;
And the Swanks are all crazed with this trading in stone.'

Said the Mayor of Quog: 'This has long been foretold
In a prophecy penned by the Seer of old.
We must search, if we'd banish the curse of our time,
For a mender of pots who's a maker of rhyme.
'Tis to him we must look when our luck goes amiss.
But, Oh, where in all Gosh is a Glug such as this?'

Then the Mayor and Council and Charity Board
O'er the archival prophecy zealously pored,
With a pursing of lips and a shaking of heads,
With a searching and prying for possible threads
That would lead to discover this versatile Glug
Who modelled a rhyme while he mended a mug.

With a pursing of lips and a shaking of heads,
They gave up the task and went home to their beds,
Where each lay awake while he tortured his brain
For a key to the riddle, but ever in vain . . .
Then, lo, at the Mayor's front door in the morn
A tinker called out, and a Movement was born.

'Kettles and pans! Kettles and pans!
Oh, the stars are the god; but the earth, it is man's.
But a fool is the man who has wants without end,
While the tinker's content with a kettle to mend.
For a tinker owns naught but the earth, which is man's.
Then, bring out your kettles! Ho, kettles and pans!'

From the mayoral bed with unmayoral cries
The magistrate sprang ere he'd opened his eyes.
'Hold him!' he yelled, as he bounced on the floor.
'Oh, who is this tinker that rhymes at my door?
Go get me the name and the title of him 1'
They answered. 'Be calm, sir. 'Tis no one but Sym.

'Tis Sym, the mad tinker, the son of old Joi,
Who ran from his home when a bit of a boy.
He went for a tramp, tho' 'tis common belief,
When folk were not looking he went for a thief;

Then went for a tinker, and rhymes as he goes.
Some say he's crazy, but nobody knows.'

'Twas thus it began, the exalting of Sym,
And the mad Gluggish struggle that raged around him.
For the good Mayor seized him, and clothed him in silk,
And fed him on pumpkins and pasteurised milk,
And praised him in public, and coupled his name
With Gosh's vague prophet of archival fame.

The Press interviewed him a great many times,
And printed his portrait, and published his rhymes;
Till the King and Sir Stodge and the Swanks grew afraid
Of his fame 'mid the Glugs and the trouble it made.
For, wherever Sym went in the city of Gosh,
There were cheers for the tinker, and hoots for King Splosh.

His goings and comings were watched for and cheered;
And a crowd quickly gathered where'er he appeared.
All the folk flocked around him and shouted his praise;
For the Glugs followed fashion, and Sym was a craze.
They sued him for words, which they greeted with cheers,
For the way with a Glug is to tickle his ears.

'O, speak to us, Tinker! Your wisdom we crave!
They'd cry when they saw him; then Sym would look grave,
And remark, with an air, "'Tis a very fine day.'
'Now ain't he a marvel?' they'd shout. 'Hip, Hooray!'
'To live,' would Sym answer, 'To live is to feel!'
'And ain't he a poet?' a fat Glug would squeal.

Sym had a quaint fancy in phrase and in text;
When he'd fed them with one they would howl for the next.
Thus he'd cry, 'Love is love 1' and the welkin they'd lift
With their shouts of surprise at his wonderful gift.
He would say 'After life, then a Glug must meet death!'
And they'd clamour for more ere he took the next breath.

But Sym grew weary of this sort of praise,
And he longed to be back with his out-o'-door days,
With his feet in the grass and his back to a tree,
Rhyming and tinkering, fameless and free.

He said so one day to the Mayor of Quog,
And declared he'd as lief live the life of a dog.

But the Mayor was vexed; for the Movement had grown,
And his dreams had of late soared as high as a throne.
'Have a care! What is written is written,' said he.
'And the dullest Glug knows what is written must be.
'Tis the prophet of Gosh who has prophesied it;
And 'tis thus that 'tis written by him who so writ:

"Lo, the Tinker of Gosh he shall make him three rhymes:
One on the errors and aims of his times,
One on the symptoms of sin that he sees,
And the third and the last on whatever he please.
And when the Glugs hear them and mark what they mean
The land shall be purged and the nation made clean."

So Sym gave a promise to write then and there
Three rhymes to be read in the Great Market Square
To all Glugs assembled on Saturday week.
'And then,' said the Mayor, 'if still you must seek
To return to your tramping, well, just have your fling;
But I'll make you a marquis, or any old thing . . .'
Said Sym, 'I shall tinker, and still be a king.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Sentimental Bloke

An'-wilt-yeh-take-this-woman-fer-to-be
Yer-wedded-wife? -... O, strike me! Will I wot?
Take 'er? Doreen? 'E stan's there arstin' me!
As if 'e thort per'aps I'd rather not!
Take 'er? 'E seemed to think 'er kind was got
Like cigarette-cards, fer the arstin'. Still,
I does me stunt in this 'ere hitchin' rot,
An' speaks me piece: 'Righto! ' I sez, 'I will.'

'I will,' I sez. An' tho' a joyful shout
Come from me bustin' 'eart-I know it did-
Me voice got sorter mangled comin' out,
An' makes me whisper like a frightened kid.
'I will,' I squeaks. An' I'd 'a' give a quid
To 'ad it on the quite, wivout this fuss,
An' orl the starin' crowd that Mar 'ad bid
To see this solim hitchin' up of us.

'Fer-rich-er-er-fer-poorer.' So 'e bleats.
'In-sick-ness-an'-in-'ealth,'... An' there I stands,
An' dunno 'arf the chatter I repeats,
Nor wot the 'ell to do wiv my two 'ands.
But 'e don't 'urry puttin' on our brands -
This white-'aired pilot-bloke - but gives it lip,
Dressed in 'is little shirt, wiv frills an' bands.
'In sick-ness-an'-in-' Ar! I got the pip!

An' once I missed me turn; an' Ginger Mick,
'Oo's my best-man, 'e ups an' beefs it out.
'I will! ' 'e 'owls; an' fetches me a kick.
'Your turn to chin! ' 'e tips wiv a shout.
An' there I'm standin' like a gawky lout.
(Aw, spare me! But I seemed to be all 'ands!)
An' wonders wot 'e's goin' crook about,
Wiv 'arf a mind to crack 'im where 'e stands.

O, lumme! But ole Ginger was a trick!
Got up regardless fer the solim rite.
('E 'awks the bunnies when 'e toils, does Mick)

An' twice I saw 'im feelin' fer a light
To start a fag; an' trembles lest 'e might,
Thro' force o' habit like. 'E's nervis too;
That's plain, fer orl 'is air o' bluff an' skite;
An' jist as keen as me to see it thro'.

But, 'struth, the wimmnin! 'Ow they love this frill!
Fer Auntie Liz, an' Mar, o' course, wus there;
An' Mar's two uncles' wives, an' Cousin Lil,
An' 'arf a dozen more to grin and stare.
I couldn't make me 'ands fit anywhere!
I felt like I wus up afore the Beak!
But my Doreen she never turns a 'air,
Nor misses once when it's 'er turn to speak.

Ar, strike! No more swell marridges fer me!
It seems a blinded year afore 'e's done.
We could 'a' fixed it in the registree
Twice over 'fore this cove 'ad 'arf begun.
I s'pose the wimmin git some sorter fun
Wiv all this guyver, an 'is nibs's shirt.
But, seems to me, it takes the bloomin' bun,
This stylish splicin' uv a bloke an' skirt.

'To-be-yer-weddid-wife-' Aw, take a pull!
Wot in the 'ell's 'e think I come there for?
An' so 'e drawls an' drones until I'm full,
An' wants to do a duck clean out the door.
An' yet, fer orl 'is 'igh-falutin' jor,
Ole Snowy wus a reel good-meanin' bloke.
If 'twasn't fer the 'oly look 'e wore
Yeh'd think 'e piled it on jist fer a joke.

An', when at last 'e shuts 'is little book,
I 'eaves a sigh that nearly bust me vest.
But 'Eavens! Now 'ere's muvver goin' crook!
An' sobbin' awful on me manly chest!
(I wish she'd give them water-works a rest.)
'My little girl!' she 'owls. 'O, treat 'er well!
She's young - too young to leave 'er muvver's nest! '
'Orright, ole chook,' I nearly sez. Oh, 'ell!

An' then we 'as a beano up at Mar's -
A slap-up feed, wiv wine an' two big geese.
Doreen sits next ter me, 'er eyes like stars.
O, 'ow I wished their blessed yap would cease!
The Parson-bloke 'e speaks a little piece,
That makes me blush an' 'ang me silly 'ead.
'E sez 'e 'opes our lovin' will increase -
I likes that pilot fer the things 'e said.

'E sez Doreen an' me is in a boat,
An' sailin' on the matrimonial sea.
'E sez as 'ow 'e hopes we'll allus float
In peace an' joy, from storm an' danger free.
Then muvver gits to weepin' in 'er tea;
An' Auntie Liz sobs like a winded colt;
An' Cousin Lil comes 'round an' kisses me;
Until I feel I'll 'ave to do a bolt.

Then Ginger gits end-up an' makes a speech -
('E'd 'ad a couple, but 'e wasn't shick.)
'My cobber 'ere,' 'e sez, ''as copped a peach!
Of orl the barrer-load she is the pick!
I 'opes 'e won't fergit 'is pals too quick
As wus 'is frien's in olden days, becors,
I'm trusting later on,' sez Ginger Mick,
'To celebrate the chris'nin'.'... 'Oly wars!

At last Doreen an' me we gits away,
An' leaves 'em doin' nothin' to the scram
(We're honey-moonin' down beside the Bay.)
I gives a 'arf a dollar to the man
Wot drives the cab; an' like two kids we ran
To ketch the train - Ah, strike! I could 'a' flown!
We gets the carridge right agen the van.
She whistles, jolts, an' starts... An' we're alone!

Doreen an' me! My precious bit o' fluff!
Me own true weddid wife! ... An' we're alone!
She seems so frail, an' me so big an' rough -
I dunno wot this feelin' is that's grown
Inside me 'ere that makes me feel I own
A thing so tender like I fear to squeeze

Too 'ard fer fear she'll break... Then, wiv a groan
I starts to 'ear a coot call, 'Tickets, please! '

You could 'a' outed me right on the spot!

I wus so rattled when that porter spoke.

Fer, 'struth! Them tickets I 'ad fair forgot!

But 'e fist laughs, an' takes it fer a joke.

'We must ixcuse,' 'e sez, 'new-married folk.'

An' I pays up, an' grins, an' blushes red....

It shows 'ow married life improves a bloke:

If I'd bin single I'd 'a' punched 'is head!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Shorter Week

I worked for fifty hours a week,
And someone said to me,
'Don't be a serf! Throw off your chains,
And show the world you're free!'
So I cut down my working hours
And found, upon the whole,
The leisure time I had to spare
Good for my body's carking care,
And better for my soul.

I worked for forty hours a week,
And someone said to me,
'Release your bonds, you shackled slave!
Show all the world you're free!'
So I reduced my working hours
And found in leisured lull,
The more I sought to play, the more
Amusement had become a bore,
And life was rather dull.

I worked for twenty hours a week,
And someone said to me
'Awake, you mutt! Snap out of it,
And show the world you're free!'
So I cut out my working hours
And found that joy had flit.
Upon black melancholia's brink,
I sometimes used to sit and think
And sometimes merely sit.

I worked for not one hour a week,
And someone said to me,
'You lazy coot! Arise and shine!
You call this being free?'
So I resolved I'd better far
Rejoin the toiling mob.
But when I rose and looked around,
To my intense disgust I found
Someone had pinched my job.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Shrine

For them we have builded a temple
To stand as a visible sign.
For them we have builded a temple,
And set in its great heart a shrine.
Ere the dull years shall tarnish their story,
While the spirit bides close to us yet,
We have set up a shrine to their glory,
Lest men should forget.

We have raised up a visible temple,
Hewn from impermanent stone;
And the spirit shall dwell in the temple;
Yet not in the temple alone.
Lest the spirit of that great oblation,
Eternal, transcending all pride,
Dwell, too, in the heart of their nation,
In vain they have died.

For a holier place has enshrined them
From treacherous time's swift decay:
A temple more hallowed has held them
Inviolate unto today.
But the friends of their friends, too, shall perish,
The seed of their seed shall grow old,
While for ever the flame that these cherish
A nation must hold.

So soon do their feet grow weary
Of treading where glory had birth,
So soon do their souls grow weary
Of transient things of the earth.
And they go to the great consummating,
The goal of their pilgrimage won,
To triumphant battalions awaiting
They drift one by one.

When the last tired veteran totters
From this, fame's unstable abode;
When the last tired footfall has echoed

And died in the dust of the road;
Tho' they boast down the years of his story,
If the spirit he left us shall fail
No shrine may envision that glory
No temple avail.

We have builded a visible temple;
We have set us a tangible sign
For a symbol of that truer temple,
A mark of that holier shrine;
And nought of war's long tarnished story
Dwells there, not of pride nor of pain,
But all that remains of their glory
Who died not in vain.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Silent Member

He lived in Mundaloo, and Bill McClosky was his name,
But folks that knew him well had little knowledge of that same;
For he some'ow lost his surname, and he had so much to say --
He was called 'The Silent Member' in a mild, sarcastic way.

He could talk on any subject -- from the weather and the crops
To astronomy and Euclid, and he never minded stops;
And the lack of a companion didn't lay him on the shelf,
For he'd stand before a looking-glass and argue with himself.

He would talk for hours on literature, or calves, or art, or wheat;
There was not a bally subject you could say had got him beat;
And when strangers brought up topics that they reckoned he would balk,
He'd remark, 'I never heard of that.' But all the same -- he'd talk.

He'd talk at christ'nings by the yard; at weddings by the mile;
And he used to pride himself upon his choice of words and style.
In a funeral procession his remarks would never end
On the qualities and virtues of the dear departed friend.

We got quite used to hearing him, and no one seemed to care --
In fact, no happ'ning seemed complete unless his voice was there.
For close on thirty year he talked, and none could talk him down,
Until one day an agent for insurance struck the town.

Well, we knew The Silent Member, and we knew what he could do,
And it wasn't very long before we knew the agent, too,
As a crack long-distance talker that was pretty hard to catch;
So we called a hasty meeting and decided on a match.

Of course, we didn't tell them we were putting up the game;
But we fixed it up between us, and made bets upon the same.
We named a time-keep and a referee to see it through;
Then strolled around, just casual, and introduced the two.

The agent got first off the mark, while our man stood and grinned;
He talked for just one solid hour, then stopped to get his wind.
'Yes; but --' sez Bill; that's all he said; he couldn't say no more;
The agent got right in again, and fairly held the floor.

On policies, and bonuses, and premiums, and all that,
He talked and talked until we thought he had our man out flat.
'I think --' Bill got in edgeways, but that there insurance chap
Just filled himself with atmosphere, and took the second lap.

I saw our man was getting dazed, and sort of hypnotized,
And they oughter pulled the agent up right there, as I advised.
'See here -' Bill started, husky; but the agent came again,
And talked right on for four hours good -- from six o'clock to ten.

Then Bill began to crumple up, and weaken at the knees,
When all at once he ups and shouts, 'Here, give a bloke a breeze!
Just take a pull for half a tick and let me have the floor,
And I'll take out a policy.' The agent said no more.

The Silent Member swallowed hard, then coughed and cleared his throat,
But not a single word would come -- no; not a blessed note.
His face looked something dreadful -- such a look of pained dismay;
Then he have us one pathetic glance, and turned, and walked away.

He's hardly spoken since that day -- not more than 'Yes' or 'No'.
We miss his voice a good bit, too; the town seems rather slow.
He was called 'The Silent Member' just sarcastic, I'll allow;
But since that agent handled him it sort o' fits him now.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Silver-Eye

Down among the strawberries,
Up among the plums,
Cheeping in the cherry-tree
When early autumn comes,
In our silver spectacles
And sober olive suits.
We're very, very innocent;
We wouldn't touch your fruits.

Well, maybe just a speckled one,
A windfall here and there.
But raid your precious strawberries?
Oh no, we wouldn't dare.
Behold our bland astonishment,
The charge is quite absurd!
It must have been a parrot
Or some other kind of bird.

It must have been a satin bird;
It must have been a crow.
It couldn't possibly be us;
We are so meek, you know,
With our silver spectacles.
The accusation's vile!
How can you deem us guilty
When we're whistling all the while?

Well, if you've caught us in the act
There's no more to be said.
The plums are blue and succulent,
The strawberries are red.
And who'd refuse a dainty dish
When early autumn comes?
Oh, write a rhyme about us, man,
And pay for all your plums.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Singing Soldiers

'When I'm sittin' in me dug-out wiv me rifle on me knees,
An' a yowlin', 'owlin' chorus comes a-floatin' up the breeze
Jist a bit o' 'Bonnie Mary' or 'Long Way to Tipperary'
Then I know I'm in Australia, took an' planted overseas.
They've bin up agin it solid since we crossed the flamin' foam;
But they're singin' - alwiz singin' - since we left the wharf at 'ome.

'O, it's 'On the Mississippi' or 'Me Grey 'Ome in the West.'
If it's death an' 'ell nex' minute they must git it orf their chest.
'Ere's a snatch o' 'When yer Roamin' - When yer Roamin' in the Gloamin'.
'Struth! The first time that I 'eard it, wiv me 'ead on Rosie's breast,
We wus comin' frum a picnic in a Ferntree Gully train . . .
But the shrapnel made the music when I 'eard it sung again.'

So I gits it straight frum Ginger in 'is letter 'ome to me,
On a dirty scrap o' paper wiv the writin' 'ard to see.
'Strike!' sez 'e. 'It sounds like skitin'; but they're singin' while
they're fightin';
An' they socks it into Abdul to the toon o' 'Nancy Lee'.
An' I seen a bloke this mornin' wiv 'is arm blown to a rag,
'Ummin' 'Break the Noos to Mother', w'ile 'e sucked a soothin' fag.

'Now, the British Tommy curses, an' the French does fancy stunts,
An' the Turk 'e 'owls to Aller, an' the Gurkha grins an' grunts;
But our boys is singin', singin', while the blinded shells is flingin'
Mud an' death inter the trenches in them 'eavens called the Fronts.
An' I guess their souls keep singin' when they gits the tip to go . . .'
So I gits it, straight frum Ginger; an', Gawstruth! 'e ort to know.

An' 'is letter gits me thinkin' when I read sich tales as these,
An' I takes a look around me at the paddicks an' the trees;
When I 'ears the thrushes trillin', when I 'ear the magpies fillin'
All the air frum earth to 'eaven wiv their careless melerdies
It's the sunshine uv the country, caught an' turned to bonzer notes;
It's the sunbeams changed to music pourin' frum a thousand throats.

Can a soljer 'elp 'is singin' when 'e's born in sich a land?
Wiv the sunshine an' the music pourin' out on ev'ry 'and;
Where the very air is singin', an' each breeze that blows is bringin'

'Armony an' mirth an' music fit to beat the 'blazin' band.
On the march, an' in the trenches, when a swingin' chorus starts,
They are pourin' bottled sunshine of their 'Omeland frum their 'earts.

O I've 'eard it, Lord, I've 'eard it since the days when I was young,
On the beach an' in the bar-room, in the bush I've 'eard it sung;
'Belle Mahone' an' 'Annie Laurie,' 'Sweet Marie' to 'Tobermory,'
Common toons and common voices, but I've 'eard 'em when they rung
Wiv full, 'appy 'earts be'ind 'em, careless as a thrush's song
Wiv me arm around me cliner, an' me notions fur frum wrong.

So they growed wiv 'earts a-singin' since the days uv careless kids;
Beefin' out an 'appy chorus jist when Mother Nacher bids;
Singin', wiv their notes a-quiver, 'Down upon the Swanee River,'
Them's sich times I'd not be sellin' fer a stack uv golden quids.
An' they're singin', still they're singin', to the sound uv guns an' drums,
As they sung one golden Springtime underneath the wavin' gums.

When they socked it to the Southland wiv our sunny boys aboard
Them that stopped a dam torpeder, an' a knock-out punch wus scored;
Tho' their 'ope o' life grew murky, wiv the ship 'ead over turkey,
Dread o' death an' fear o' drownin' wus jist trifles they ignored.
They spat out the blarsted ocean, an' they filled 'emselves wiv air,
An' they passed along the chorus of 'Australia will be There'.

Yes, they sung it in the water; an' a bloke aboard a ship
Sez 'e knoo they wus Australians be the way thev give it lip
Sung it to the soothin' motion of the dam devourin' ocean
Like a crowd o' seaside trippers in to 'ave a little dip.
When I 'card that tale, I tell yeh, straight, I sort o' felt a choke;
Fer I seemed to 'ear 'em singin', an' I know that sort o' bloke.

Yes, I know 'im; so I seen 'im, barrackin' Eternity.
An' the land that 'e wus born in is the land that mothered me.
Strike! I ain't no sniv'lin' blighter; but I own me eyes git brighter
When I see 'em pokin' mullock at the everlastin' sea:
When I 'ear 'em mockin' terror wiv a merry slab o' mirth,
'Eill! I'm proud I bin to gaol^ in sich a land as give 'em birth!

'When I'm sittin' in me dug-out wiv the bullets droppin' near,'
Writes ole Ginger; 'an' a chorus smacks me in the flamin' ear:
P'raps a song that Rickards billed, or p'raps a line o' Waltz Matilder',

Then I feel I'm in Australia, took an' shifted over 'ere.
Till the music sort o' gits me, an' I lets me top notes roam
While I treats the gentle foeman to a chunk uv 'Ome, Sweet 'Ome'.'

They wus singin' on the troopship, they wus singin' in the train;
When they left their land be'ind 'em they wus shoutin' a refrain,
An' I'll bet they 'ave a chorus, gay an' glad in greetin' for us,
When their bit uv scappin's over, an' they lob back 'ome again. . .
An' the blokes that ain't returnin' - blokes that's paid the biggest price,
They go singin', singin', singin' to the Gates uv Paradise.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Siren

She sung a song; an' I sat silent there,
Wiv bofe 'ands grippin' 'ard on me chair;
Me 'eart, that yesterdee I thort wus broke
Wiv 'umpin sich a 'eavy load o' care,
Come swelling in me throat like I would choke.
I felt 'ot blushes climbin' to me 'air.

'Twas like that feelin' when the Spring wind breaves
Sad music in the sof'ly rustlin' leaves.
An' when a bloke sits down an' starts to chew
Crook thorts, wivout quite knowin' why 'e grieves
Fer things 'e's done 'e didn't ort to do
Fair winded wiv the 'eavy sighs 'e 'eaves.

She sung a song; an' orl at once I seen
The kind o' crool an' 'eartless broot I been.
In ev'ry word I read it like a book
The slanter game I'd played wiv my Doreen
I 'eard it in 'er song; an' in 'er look
I seen wot made me feel fair rotten mean.

Poor, 'urt Doreen! My tender bit o' fluff!
Ar, men don't understand; they're fur too rough;
Their ways is fur too coarse wiv lovin' tarts;
They never gives 'em symperthy enough.
They treats 'em 'arsh; they tramples on their 'earts,
Becos their own crool 'earts is leather-tough.

She sung a song; an' orl them bitter things
That chewin' over lovers' quarrils brings
Guv place to thorts of sorrer an' remorse.
Like when some dilly punter goes an' slings
'Is larst, lone deener on some stiffened 'orse,
An' learns them vain regrets wot 'urts an' stings.

'Twas at a beano where I lobs along
To drown them memories o' fancied wrong.
I swears I never knoo that she'd be there.
But when I met 'er eye—O, 'struth, 'twas strong!

'Twas bitter strong, that jolt o' dull despair!
'Er look o' scorn!...An' then, she sung a song.

The choon was one o' them sad, mournful things
That ketch yeh in the bellers 'ere, and brings
Tears to yer eyes. The words was uv a tart
'Oo's trackin' wiv a silly coot 'oo slings
'Er love aside, an' breaks 'er tender 'eart....
But 'twasn't that; it was the way she sings.

To 'ear 'er voice!...A bloke 'ud be a log
'Oo kep' 'is block. Me mind wus in a fog
Of sorrer for to think 'ow I wus wrong;
Ar, I 'ave been a fair ungrateful 'og!
The feelin' that she put into that song
'Ud melt the 'eart-strings of a chiner dog.

I listens wiv me 'eart up in me throat;
I drunk in ev'ry word an' ev'ry note.
Tears trembles in 'er voice when she tells 'ow
That tart snuffed out becos 'e never wrote.
An' then I seen 'ow I wus like that cow.
Wiv suddin shame me guilty soul wus smote.

Doreen she never looked my way; but stood
'Arf turned away, an' beefed it out reel good,
Until she sang that bit about the grave;
'Too late 'e learned 'e 'ad misunderstood!
An' then—Gorstrooth! The pleadin' look she gave
Fair in me face 'ud melt a'eart o' wood.

I dunno 'ow I seen that evenin' thro'.
They muster thort I was 'arf shick, I knoo.
But I 'ad 'urt Doreen wivout no call;
I seen me dooty, wot I 'ad to do.
O, strike! I could 'a' blubbed before 'em all!
But I sat tight, an' never cracked a boo.

An' when at larst the tarts they makes a rise,
A lop-eared coot wiv 'air down to 'is eyes
'E 'ooks on to Doreen, an' starts to roam
Fer 'ome an' muvver. I lines up an' cries,

"An's orf! I'm seein' this 'ere cliner 'ome!
An' there we left 'im, gapin' wiv surprise.

She never spoke; she never said no word;
But walked beside me like she never 'eard.
I swallers 'ard, an' starts to coax an' plead,
I sez I'm dead ashamed o' wot's occurred.
She don't reply; she never takes no 'eed;
Jist stares before 'er like a startled bird.

I tells 'er, never can no uvver tart
Be 'arf wot she is, if we 'ave to part.
I tells 'er that me life will be a wreck.
It ain't no go. But when I makes a start
To walk away, 'er arms is roun' me neck.
'Ah, Kid!' she sobs. 'Yeh nearly broke me 'eart!'

I dunno wot I done or wot I said.
But 'struth! I'll not forgit it till I'm dead
That night when 'ope back in me brisket lobs:
'Ow my Doreen she lays 'er little 'ead
Down on me shoulder 'ere, an' sobs an' sobs;
An' orl the lights goes sorter blurred an' red.

Say, square an' all—It don't seem right, some'ow,
To say such things; but wot I'm feelin' now
'As come at times, I s'pose, to uvver men
When you 'ave 'ad a reel ole ding-dong row,
Say, ain't it bonzer makin' up agen?
Straight wire, it's almost worth...Ar, I'm a cow!

To think I'd ever seek to 'arm a 'air
Of 'er dear 'ead agen! My oath, I swear
No more I'll roust on 'er in angry 'eat!
But still, she never seemed to me so fair;
She never wus so tender or so sweet
As when she smooged beneath the lamplight there.

She's never been so lovin' wiv 'er gaze;
So gentle wiv 'er pretty wimmin's ways.
I tells 'er she's me queen, me angel, too.
'Ah, no, I ain't no angel, Kid,' she says.

'I'm jist a woman, an' I loves yeh true!
An' so I'll love yeh all me mortal days!'

She sung a song....'Ere, in me barmy style,
I sets orl tarts; for in me hour o' trile
Me soul was withered be a woman's frown,
An' broodin' care come roostin' on me dile.
She sung a song....Me 'eart, wiv woe carst down,
Wus raised to 'Eaven be a woman's smile.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Song Of The Sulky Stockman

Come, let us sing with a right good ring
(Sing hey for lifting lay, sing hey!)
Of any old, sunny old, silly old thing.
(Sing ho for the ballad of a backblock day!)
The sun shone brightly overhead,
And the shearers stood by the shearing shed;
But "The run wants rain," the stockman said
(Sing di-dum, wattle-gum, Narrabori Ned.
For a lifting lay sing hey!)

The colts were clipped and the sheep were shorn
(Sing hey for a lilting lay, sing hey!)
But the stockman stood there all forlorn.
(Sing ho for the ballad of a backblock day!)
The rails were up and the gate was tied,
And the big black bull was safe inside;
But "The wind's gone West!" the stockman sighed
(Sing, di-dum, wattle-gum, rally for a ride.
For a lifting lay sing hey!)

The cook came out as the clock struck one
(Sing hey for a lilting lay, sing hey!)
And the boundary rider got his gun.
(Sing ho for the ballad of a backblock day!)
He fired it once at an old black crow;
But the shot went wide, for he aimed too low;
And the stockman said, "Fat stock is low."
(Sing, di-dum, wattle-gum, Jerridiiii Joe.
For a lifting lay sing hey!)

They spread their swags in the gum-tree's shade
(Sing hey for a lilting lay, sing hey!)
For the work was done and the cheques were paid.
(Sing ho for the ballad of a backblock day!)
The overseer rode in at three,
But his horse pulled back and would not gee,
And the stockman said, "We're up a tree!"
(Sing, di-dum, wattle-gum, Johnny-cake for tea.
For a lilting lay sing hey!)

The sun sank down and the stars shone out
(Sing hey for a lifting lay, sing hey!)
And the old book-keeper moped about.
(Sing ho for the ballad of a backblock day!)
The dingo walled to the mopoke's call,
The crazy colt stamped in his stall;
But the stockman groaned, "it's bunk for all."
(Sing, di-dum, wattle-gum, wattle-gum, wattle-gum,
Hey for a backblock day!
 Sing hey!
Sing hey for a lifting lay!)

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Spoilers

Ye are the Great White People, masters and lords of the earth,
Spreading your stern dominion over the world's wide girth.
Here, where my fathers hunted since Time's primordial morn,
To our land's sweet, fecund places, you came with your kine and corn.
Mouthing your creed of Culture to cover a baser creed,
Your talk was of White Man's magic, but your secret god was Greed.
And now that your generations to the second, the third have run,
White Man, what of my country? Answer, what have you done?

Now the God of my Simple People was a simple, kindly God,
Meting his treasure wisely that sprang from this generous sod,
With never a beast too many and never a beast too few,
Thro' the lean years and the fruitful, he held the balance true.
Then the White Lords came in their glory; and their cry was: 'More! Yet more!'
And to make them rich for a season they filched Earth's age-old store,
And they hunted my Simple People - hunters of yester-year -
And they drove us into the desert - while they wrought fresh deserts here.

They ravaged the verdant uplands and spoiled wealth ages old,
Laid waste with their pumps and sluices for a gunny-bag of gold;
They raided the primal forests and the kind, rain-bringing trees
That poured wealth over the lowlands thro' countless centuries;
They fed their kine on the grasslands, crowding them over the land,
Till blade and root in the lean years gave place to hungry sand.
Then, warned too late of their folly, the White Lords grew afraid,
And they cried to their great god Science; but Science could not aid.

This have you done to our country, lords of the air and the seas,
This to the hoarded riches of countless centuries -
Life-yielding loam, uncovered, unsheltered in the drought,
In the floods your hand unbridled, to the age-old sea drifts out.
You have sold man's one true birthright for a White Man's holiday,
And the smothering sands drift over where once green fields turn grey -
Filched by the White Man's folly to pamper the White Lords' vice;
And leave to your sons a desert where you found a paradise.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Spotted Heifers

Mr Jeremiah Jeffers
Owned a pair of spotted heifers
These he sold for two pounds ten
To Mr Robert Raymond Wren
Who reared them in the lucerne paddocks
Owned by Mr Martin Maddox,
And sold them, when they grew to cows,
To Mr Donald David Dowse.
A grazier, Mr Egbert Innes,
Bought them then for twenty guineas,
Milked the cows, and sold the milk
To Mr Stephen Evan Silk.
Who rents a butter factory
From Mr Laurence Lampard-Lee.
Here, once a week, come for his butter
The grocer, Mr Roland Rutter,
Who keeps a shop in Sunny Street
Next door to Mr Peter Peat.
He every afternoon at two
Sent his fair daughter, Lucy Loo,
To Mr Rutter's shop to buy
Such things as were not priced too high,
Especially a shilling tin
Of "Fuller's Food for Folk Too Thin."
This food was bought for Lucy Loo -
A girl of charming manners, who
Was much too pale and much too slight
To be a very pleasant sight.
When Lucy Loo beheld the butter
Stocked by Mr Roland Rutter,
She said, "I'll have a pound of that."
She had it, and thenceforth grew fat.
We now we go back to Mr Jeffers,
Who sold the pair of spotted heifers.
He had a son, James Edgar John,
A handsome lad to gaze upon,
Who had now reached that time of life
When young men feel they need a wife;
But no young girl about the place

Exactly had the kind of face
That seemed to suit James Edgar John -
A saddening thing to think upon,
For he grew sad and sick of life
Because he could not find a wife.
One day young James was passing by
(A look of sorrow in his eye)
The shop of Mr Roland Rutter,
When Lucy Loo came out with butter.
At once James Edgar John said, "That
Is just the girl for me! She's fat."
He offered her his heart and hand
And prospects of his father's land.
The Reverend Saul Sylvester Slight
Performed the simple marriage rite.
The happy couple went their way,
And lived and loved unto this day.
Events cannot be far foreseen;
And all ths joy might not have been
If Mr Jeremiah Jeffers
Had kept his pair of spotted heifers.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Stones Of Gosh

Now, here is a tale of the Glugs of Gosh,
In the end of the year umteen;
Of the Glugs of Gosh and their great King Splosh,
And Tush, his virtuous Queen.
And here is a tale of the Oglike Ogs,
In their neighbouring land of Podge;
Of their sayings and doings and plottings and brewings,
And something about Sir Stodge.
 Wise to profundity,
 Stout to rotundity,
That was the Knight Sir Stodge.

Oh, the King was rich, and the Queen was fair,
And they made a very respectable pair.
And whenever a Glug in that peaceful land,
Did anything no one could understand
The Knight, Sir Stodge, he looked in a book,
And charged that Glug with a crime called Crook.
And the great Judge Fudge, who wore for a hat
The skin of a female tortoise-shell cat,
He fined that Glug for his actions rash,
And frequently asked to be paid in cash.
Then every Glug went home to rest
With his head in a bag and his toes to the west;
For they knew it was best,
Since their grandpas slept with their toes to the west.

But all of the tale that is so far told
Has nothing whatever to do
With the Ogs of Podge, and their crafty dodge,
And the trade in pickles and glue.
To trade with the Glugs came the Ogs to Gosh,
And they said in the mildest of tones,
'We'll sell you pianers and pickels and spanners
For seventeen shiploads of stones
Smooth 'uns or nobbly 'uns,
Firm 'uns or wobbly 'uns,
All that we ask is stones.'

And the King said, 'What?' and the Queen said, 'Why,
That is awfully cheap to the things I buy!
That grocer of ours in the light brown hat
Asks two-and-eleven for pickles like that!
But a Glug stood up with a wart on his nose,
And he cried, 'Your Majesties! Ogs is foes!'
But the Glugs cried, 'Peace! Will you hold your jaw!
How did our grandpas fashion the law?'
Said the Knight, Sir Stodge, as he opened a book,
'If the goods were cheap then the goods they took.'
So they fined the Glug with the wart on his nose
For wearing a wart with his everyday clothes.
And the goods were brought home through a Glug named Jones;
And the Ogs went home with their loads of stones,
Which they landed with glee in the land of Podge.
Do you notice the dodge?
Not yet? Well, no more did the Knight, Sir Stodge.

In the following Summer the Ogs came back
With a cargo of eight-day clocks,
And hand-painted screens, and sewing machines,
And mangles, and scissors, and socks.
And they said, 'For these excellent things we bring
We are ready to take more stones;
And in bricks or road-metal for goods you will settle
Indented by your Mister Jones.'
Cried the Glugs praisingly:
'Why, how amazingly
Smart of industrious Jones!'

And the King said, 'Hum,' and the Queen said, 'Oo!
That curtain! What a bee-ootiful blue!'
But a Glug stood up with some very large ears,
And said, 'There is more in this thing than appears!
So we ought to be taxing these goods of the Ogs,
Or our industry soon will be gone to the dogs.'
And the King said, 'Bosh! You're un-Gluggish and rude!'
And the Queen said, 'What an absurd attitude!'
Then the Glugs cried, 'Down with political quacks!
How did our grandpas look at a tax?'
So the Knight, Sir Stodge, he opened his Book.
'No tax,' said he, 'wherever I look.'

Then they fined the Glug with the prominent ears
For being old-fashioned by several years;
And the Ogs went home with the stones, full-steam.
Do you notice the scheme?
Not yet? Nor did the Glugs in their dreamiest dreams.

Then every month to the land of the Gosh
The Ogs they continued to come,
With buttons and hooks and medical books
And rotary engines and rum,
Large cases with labels, occasional tables,
Hair tonic and fiddles and 'phones;
And the Glugs, while concealing their joy in the dealing,
Paid promptly in nothing but stones.
Why, it was screamingly
Laughable, seemingly
Asking for nothing but stones!

And the King said, 'Haw!' and the Queen said, 'Oh!
Our drawing-room now is a heavenly show
Of large overmantels and whatnots and chairs,
And a statue of Splosh at the head of the stairs.'
But a Glug stood up with a cast in his eye,
And he said, 'Far too many baubles we buy;
With all the Gosh factories closing their doors,
And importers' warehouses lining our shores.'
But the Glugs cried, 'Down with such meddlesome fools!
What did our grandpas lay down in their rules?'
And the Knight, Sir Stodge, he opened his Book:
'To cheapness,' he said, 'was the road they took.'
Then every Glug who was not too fat
Turned seventeen handsprings, and jumped on his hat.
And they fined the Glug with the cast in his eye
For looking two ways at the tenth of July,
And for having no visible Precedent, which
Is a crime in the poor and a fault in the rich.
And the Glugs cried 'Strooth!' which is Gluggish, you know,
For a phrase that, in English, is charmingly low.
Are you grasping it? No?
Well, we haven't got very much farther to go.

Now it chanced one day, in the middle of May,

There came to the great King Splosh
A policeman who said, while scratching his head:
'There isn't a stone in Gosh
To throw at a dog; for the crafty Og,
Last Saturday week, at one,
Took our last blue-metal in order to settle
A bill for a toy pop-gun.'
Said the King, jokingly:
'Why, how provokingly
Weird! But we have the gun.'

And the King said: 'Well, we are stony broke!'
But the Queen couldn't see it was much of a joke.
And she said: 'If the metal's all used up,
Pray what of the costume I want for the Cup?
It all seems so dreadfully simple to me.
The stones? Why import them from over the sea!'
But a Glug stood up with a mole on his chin,
And he said, with a most diabolical grin:
'Your Majesties, down in the country of Podge
A spy has unravelled a very cute dodge;
And the Ogs are determined to wage a war
On the Glugs next Friday, at half-past four!'
Then the Glugs all cried in a terrible fright:
'How did our grandpas manage a fight?'
And the Knight, Sir Stodge, he opened a book,
And he read: 'Some very large stones they took
And flung at the foe with exceeding force;
Which was very effective, though rude, of course.'
And, lo, with sorrowful wails and moans,
The Glugs cried: 'Where, oh, where are the stones?'
And some rushed north, and a few ran west,
Seeking the substitutes seeming best.
And they gathered the pillows and cushions and rugs
From the homes of the rich and the middle-class Glugs.
And a hasty message they managed to send
Craving the loan of some bricks from a friend.
Do you now comprehend?
Well, hold on at the curve, for we're nearing the end.

On Friday exactly at half-past four
Came the Ogs with a warlike glee;

And the first of their stones hit poor Mr. Jones,
The Captain of Industry.
Then a pebble of Podge took the Knight, Sir Stodge,
In the pit of his convex vest.
He muttered 'Un-Gluggish!' His heart grew sluggish,
He solemnly sank to rest,
'Tis inconceivable
Hardly believable
Yet he was sent to rest.

And the King said 'Ouch!' and the Queen said 'Oo!
My bee-ootiful drawing-room! What shall I do?'
But the Ogluke Ogs they hurled great rocks
Through the works of the wonderful eight-day clocks
They had sold to the Glugs but a month before
Which is very absurd, but, of course, it's war.
And the Glugs cried: 'What would our grandpas do
If they hadn't the stones that they one time threw?'
But the Knight, Sir Stodge, and his mystic book
Oblivious slept in a graveyard nook.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Stoush O' Day

Ar, these is 'appy days! An' 'ow they've flown
Flown like the smoke of some enchanted fag;
Since dear Doreen, the sweetest tart I've known,
Passed me the jolt that made me sky the rag.
An' ev'ry golding day floats o'er a chap
Like a glad dream of some celeschil scrap.

Refreshed wiv sleep Day to the mornin' mill
Comes jauntily to out the nigger, Night.
Trained to the minute, confident in skill,
'E swaggers in the East, chock-full o' skite;
Then spars a bit, an' plugs Night on the point.
Out go the stars; an' Day 'as jumped the joint.

The sun looks up, an' wiv a cautious stare,
Like some crook keekin' o'er a winder sill
To make dead cert'in everythink is square,
'E shoves 'is boko o'er an Eastem 'ill,
Then rises, wiv 'is dial all a-grin,
An' sez, ' 'Ooray! I knoo that we could win!"

Sure of 'is tittle then, the champeen Day
Begins to put on dawg among 'is push,
An', as he mooches on 'is gaudy way,
Drors tribute from each tree an' flow'r an' bush.
An', w'ile 'e swigs the dew in sylvan bars,
The sun shouts insults at the sneakin' stars.

Then, lo! the push o' Day rise to applaud;
An' all 'is creatures clamour at 'is feet
Until 'e thinks 'imself a little gawd,
An' swaggers on an' kids 'imself a treat.
The w'ile the lurkin' barrackers o' Night
Sneak in retreat an' plan another fight.

On thro' the hours, triumphant, proud an' fit,
The champeen marches on 'is up'ard way,
Till, at the zenith, bli'me! 'E—is-IT!
And all the world bows to the Boshter Day.

The jealous Night speeds ethergrams thro' space
'Otly demandin' terms, an' time, an' place.

A w'ile the champeen scorns to make reply;
'E's taken tickets on 'is own 'igh worth;
Puffed up wiv pride, an' livin' mighty 'igh,
'E don't admit that Night is on the earth.
But as the hours creep on 'e deigns to state
'E'll fight for all the earth an' 'arf the gate.

Late afternoon . . . Day feels 'is Gabby arms,
An' tells 'imself 'e don't seem quite the thing.
The 'omin' birds shriek clamorous alarms;
An' Night creeps stealthily to gain the ring.
But see! The champeen backs an' fills, becos
'E doesn't feel the Boshter Bloke 'e was.

Time does a bunk as us-u-al, nor stays
A single instant, e'en at Day's be'est.
Alas, the 'eavy-weight's 'igh-livin' ways
'As made 'im soft, an' large around the vest.
'E sez 'e's fat inside; 'e starts to whine;
'E sez 'e wants to dror the colour line.

Relentless nigger Night crawls thro' the ropes,
Advancin' grimly on the quakin' Day,
Whose noisy push, shorn of their 'igh-noon 'opes,
Wait, 'ushed an' anxious, fer the comin' fray.
And many lusty barrackers of noon
Desert 'im one by one—traitors so soon!

'E's out er form! 'E 'asn't trained enough!
They mark their sickly champeen on the stage,
An' narked, the sun, 'is backer, in a huff,
Sneaks outer sight, red in the face wiv rage.
W'ile gloomy roosters, they 'oo made the morn
Ring wiv 'is praises, creep to bed forlorn.

All hint an' groggy grows the beaten Day;
'E staggers drunkenly about the ring;
An owl loots jeerin'ly across the way,
An' bats come out to mock the fallin' King.

Now, wiv a jolt, Night spreads 'im on the floor,
An' all the west grows ruddy wiv 'is gore.

A single, vulgar star leers from the sky
An' in derision, rudely mutters, 'Yah!'
The moon, Night's conkerbine, comes glidin' by
An' laughs a 'eartless, silvery 'Ha-ha!'
Scorned, beaten, Day gives up the 'opeless fight,
An' drops 'is bundle in the lap o' Night.

So goes each day, like some celeschil mill,
E'er since I met that shyin' little peach.
'Er bonzer voice! I 'ear its music still,
As when she guv that promise fer the beach.
An', square an' all, no matter 'ow yeh start,
The commin end of most of us is - Tart.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Straight Griffin

"Eroes? Orright. You 'ave it 'ow yeh like.
Throw up yer little 'at an' come the glad;
But not too much 'Three-'Earty-Cheers' fer Mike;
There's other things that 'e'll be wantin' bad.
The boys won't 'ave them kid-stakes on their mind
Wivout there's somethin' solider be'ind.'

Now that's the dinkum oil frum Ginger Mick,
In 'orspital, somew'ere be'ind the front;
Plugged in the neck, an' lately pretty sick,
But now right on the converlescent stunt.
'I'm on the mend,' 'e writes, 'an' nearly doo
To come the 'ero act agen - Scene two.'

I'd sent some papers, knowin' 'ow time drags
Wiv blokes in blankits, waitin' fer a cure.
'An' 'Struth!' Mick writes, 'the way they et them rags
Yeh'd think that they'd bin weaned on litrachure.
They wrestled thro' frum 'Births' to 'Lost and Found';
They even give the Leaders 'arf a round.'

Mick spent a bonzer day propped up in bed,
Soothin' 'is soul wiv ev'ry sportin' page;
But in the football noos the things 'e read
Near sent 'im orf 'is top wiv 'oly rage;
The way 'is team 'as mucked it earned 'is curse;
But 'e jist swallered it - becos uv nurse.

An' then this 'eadline 'it 'im wiv bokays;
'Australian Heroes!' is the song it makes.
Mick reads the boys them ringin' words o' praise;
But they jist grins a bit an' sez 'Kid stakes!'
Sez Mick to nurse, 'You tumble wot I am?
A bloomin' little 'ero. Pass the jam!'

Mick don't say much uv nurse; but 'tween the lines -
('Im bein' not too strong on gushin' speech)
I seem to see some tell-tale sort o' signs.
Sez 'e, 'Me nurse-girl is a bonzer peach,'

An' then 'e 'as a line: "Er sad, sweet look."
'Struth! Ginger must 'a' got it frum a book.

Say, I can see ole Ginger, plain as plain,
Purrin' to feel the touch u'v 'er cool 'and,
Grinnin' a bit to kid 'is wound don't pain,
An' yappin' tork she don't 'arf understand,
That makes 'er wonder if, back where she lives,
They're all reel men be'ind them ugly chivs.

But that's orright. Ole Ginger ain't no flirt.
'You tell my Rose,' 'e writes, 'she's still the sweet.
An' if Long Jim gits rnessin' round that skirt,
When I come back I'll do 'im up a treat.
Tell 'im, if all me arms an' legs is lame
I'll bite the blighter if 'e comes that game!

There's jealousy! But Ginger needn't fret.
Rose is fer 'im, an' Jim ain't on 'er card;
An' since she spragged 'im last time that they met
I im ain't inlisted - but 'e's thinkin' 'ard.
Mick wus 'er 'ero long before the war,
An' now 'e's sort o' chalked a double score.

That's all Sir Garneo. But Mick, 'e's vowed
This "Ail the 'Ero' stunt gits on 'is nerves,
An' makes 'im peevish; tho' 'e owns 'is crowd
Can mop up all the praises they deserves.
'But don't yeh spread the 'ero on too thick
If it's exhaustin' yeh,' sez Ginger Mick.

'We ain't got no objections to the cheers;
We're good an' tough, an' we can stand the noise,
But three 'oorays and five or six long beers
An' loud remarks about 'Our Gallant Boys'
Sounds kind o' weak - if you'll ixcuse the word
Beside the fightin' sounds we've lately 'eard.

'If you'll fergive our blushes, we can stand
The 'earty cheerin' an' the songs o' praise.
The loud 'Osannas uv our native land
Makes us feel good an' glad in many ways.

An' later, when we land back in a mob,
Per'aps we might be arstin' fer a job.

'I'd 'ate,' sez Mick, 'to 'ave you think us rude,
Or take these few remarks as reel bad taste;
'Twould 'urt to 'ave it seem ingratichude,
Wiv all them 'earty praises gone to waste.
We'll take yer word fer it, an' jist remark
This 'ero racket is a reel good lark.

'Once, when they caught me toppin' off a John,
The Bench wus stern, an' torked uv dirty work;
But, 'Struth! it's bonzer 'ow me fame's come on
Since when I took to toppin' off the Turk.
So, if it pleases, shout yer loud 'Bravoos,'
An' later - don't fergit there's me, an' Rose.'

So Ginger writes. I gives it word fer word;
An' if it ain't the nice perlite reply
That nice, perlite old gents would like to've 'eard
'Oo've been 'ip-'ippin' 'im up to the sky
Well, I dunno, I s'pose 'e's gotter learn
It's rude fer 'im to speak out uv 'is turn.

'Eroes. It sounds a bit uv reel orl-right
'Our Gallant 'Eroes uv Gallipoli.'
But Ginger, when 'e's thinkin' there at night,
Uv Rose, an' wot their luck is like to bbe
After the echo dies uv all this praise,
Well - 'e ain't dazzled wiv three loud 'oorays.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Stror 'At Coot

Ar, wimmin! Wot a blinded fool I've been!
I arsts meself, wot else could I ixpeck?
I done me block complete on this Doreen,
An' now me 'eart is broke, me life's a wreck!
The dreams I dreamed, the dilly thorts I thunk
Is up the pole, an' joy 'as done a bunk.

Wimmin! O strike! I orter known the game!
Their tricks is crook, their arts is all dead snide.
The 'ole world over tarts is all the same;
All soft an' smilin' wiv no 'eart inside.
But she fair doped me wiv 'er winnin' ways,
Then crooled me pitch fer all me mortal days.

They're all the same! A man 'as got to be
Stric' master if 'e wants to snare 'em sure.
'E 'as to take a stand an' let 'em see
That triflin' is a thing'e won't indure.
'E wants to show 'em that 'e 'olds command,
So they will smooze an' feed out of 'is 'and.

'E needs to make 'em feel 'e is the boss,
An' kid 'e's careless uv the joys they give.
'E 'as to make 'em think 'e'll feel no loss
To part wiv any tart 'e's trackin' wiv.
That all their pretty ways is crook pretence
Is plain to any bloke wiv common-sense.

But when the birds is nestin' in the spring,
An' when the soft green leaves is in the bud,
'E drops 'is bundle to some fluffy thing.
'E pays 'er 'omage—an' 'is name is Mud.
She plays wiv'im an' kids 'im on a treat,
Until she 'as 'im crawlin' at 'er feet.

An' then, when 'e's fair orf 'is top wiv love,
When she 'as got 'im good an' 'ad 'er fun,
She slings 'im over like a carst-orf glove,
To let the other tarts see wot she's done.

All vanity, deceit an' 'eartless kid!
I orter known; an', spare me days, I did!

I knoo. But when I looked into 'er eyes
Them shinin' eyes o' blue all soft wiv love
Wiv MIMIC love—they seemed to 'ipnertize.
I wus content to place 'er 'igh above.
I wus content to make of 'er a queen;
An' so she seemed them days...O, 'struth!...Doreen!

I knoo. But when I stroked 'er glossy 'air
Wiv rev'rint 'ands, 'er cheek pressed close to mine,
Me lonely life seemed robbed of all its care;
I dreams me dreams, an' 'ope begun to shine.
An' when she 'eld 'er lips fer me to kiss...
Ar, wot's the use? I'm done wiv all o' this!

Wimmin!...Oh, I ain't jealous! Spare me days!
Me? Jealous uv a knock-kneed coot like that!
'Im! Wiv 'is cute stor 'at an' pretty ways!
I'd be a mug to squeal or whip the cat.
I'm glad, I am—glad 'cos I know I'm free!
There ain't no call to tork o' jealousy.

I tells meself I'm well out o' the game;
Fer look, I mighter married 'er-an' then....
Ar strike! 'Er voice wus music when my name
Wus on 'er lips on them glad ev'nin's when
We useter meet. An' then to think she'd go...
No, I ain't jealous—but—Ar, I dunno!

I took a derry on this stor 'at coot
First time I seen 'im dodgin' round Doreen.
'Im, wiv 'is giddy tie an' Yankee soot,
Ferever yappin' like a tork-machine
About 'The Hoffis' where 'e 'ad a grip....
The way 'e smiled at 'er give me the pip!

She sez I stoused 'im, when I promised fair
To chuck it, even to a friendly spar.
Stoused 'im! I never roughed 'is pretty 'air!

I only spanked 'im gentle, fer 'is mar.
If I'd 'a jabbed 'im once, there would 'a been
An inquest; an' I sez so to Doreen.

I mighter took an' cracked 'im in the street,
When she was wiv 'im there lars' Fridee night.
But don't I keep me temper when we met?
An' don't I raise me lid an' act perlite?
I only jerks me elbow in 'is ribs,
To give the gentle office to 'is nibs.

Stoused 'im! I owns I met 'im on the quiet,
An' worded 'im about a small affair;
An' when 'e won't put up 'is 'ands to fight
('E sez, 'Fer public brawls 'e didn't care')
I lays 'im 'cross me knee, the mother's joy,
An' smacks 'im 'earty, like a naughty boy.

An' now Doreen she sez I've broke me vow,
An' mags about this coot's pore, 'wounded pride.'
An' then, o' course, we 'as a ding-dong row,
Wiv 'ot an' stormy words on either side.
She sez I done it outer jealousy,
An' so, we parts fer ever—'er an' me.

Me jealous? Jealous of that cross-eyed cow!
I set 'im 'cos I couldn't sight 'is face.
'Is yappin' fair got on me nerves, some'ow.
I couldn't stand 'im 'angin' round 'er place.
A coot like that!...But it don't matter much,
She's welkim to 'im if she fancies such.

I swear I'll never track wiv 'er no more;
I'll never look on 'er side o' the street
Unless she comes an' begs me pardin for
Them things she said to me in angry 'eat.
She can't ixpeck fer me to smooze an' crawl.
I ain't at ANY woman's beck an' call.

Wimmin! I've took a tumble to their game.
I've got the 'ole bang tribe o' cliners set!
The 'ole world over they are all the same:

Crook to the core the bunch of 'em—an' yet
We could 'a' been that 'appy, 'er an' me...
But, wot's it matter? Ain't I glad I'm free?

A bloke wiv commin-sense 'as got to own
There's little 'appiness in married life.
The smoogin' game is better left alone,
Fer tarts is few that makes the ideel wife.
An' them's the sort that loves wivout disguise,
An' thinks the sun shines in their 'usban's' eyes.

But when the birds is matin' in the spring,
An' when the tender leaves begin to bud,
A feelin' comes—a dilly sorter thing
That seems to sorter swamp 'im like a flood.
An' when the fever 'ere inside 'im burns,
Then freedom ain't the thing fer wot 'e yearns.

But I 'ave chucked it all. An' yet—I own
I dreams me dreams when soft Spring breezes stirs;
An' often, when I'm moonin' 'ere alone,
A lispin' maid, wiv 'air an' eyes like 'ers,
'Oo calls me 'dad,' she climbs upon me knee,
An' yaps 'er pretty baby tork to me.

I sorter see a little 'ouse, it seems,
Wiv someone waitin' for me at the gate...
Ar, where's the sense in dreamin' barmy dreams,
I've dreamed before, and nearly woke too late.
Sich 'appiness could never last fer long,
We're strangers—'less she owns that she was wrong.

To call 'er back I'll never lift a 'and;
She'll never 'ear frum me by word or sign.
Per'aps, some day, she'll come to understand
The mess she's made o' this 'ere life o' mine.
Oh, I ain't much to look at, I admit.
But'im! The knock-kneed, swivel-eyed misfit?...

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Swagman

Oh, he was old and he was spare;
His bushy whiskers and his hair
Were all fussed up and very grey
He said he'd come a long, long way
And had a long, long way to go.
Each boot was broken at the toe,
And he'd a swag upon his back.
His billy-can, as black as black,
Was just the thing for making tea
At picnics, so it seemed to me.

'Twas hard to earn a bite of bread,
He told me. Then he shook his head,
And all the little corks that hung
Around his hat-brim danced and swung
And bobbed about his face; and when
I laughed he made them dance again.
He said they were for keeping flies -
"The pesky varmints" - from his eyes.
He called me "Codger". . . "Now you see
The best days of your life," said he.
"But days will come to bend your back,
And, when they come, keep off the track.
Keep off, young codger, if you can.
He seemed a funny sort of man.

He told me that he wanted work,
But jobs were scarce this side of Bourke,
And he supposed he'd have to go
Another fifty mile or so.
"Nigh all my life the track I've walked,"
He said. I liked the way he talked.
And oh, the places he had seen!
I don't know where he had not been -
On every road, in every town,
All through the country, up and down.
"Young codger, shun the track," he said.
And put his hand upon my head.
I noticed, then, that his old eyes

Were very blue and very wise.
"Ay, once I was a little lad,"
He said, and seemed to grow quite sad.

I sometimes think: When I'm a man,
I'll get a good black billy-can
And hang some corks around my hat,
And lead a jolly life like that.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Swanks Of Gosh

Come mourn with me for the land of Gosh,
Oh, weep with me for the luckless Glugs
Of the land of Gosh, where the sad seas wash
The patient shores, and the great King Splosh
His sodden sorrow hugs;
Where the fair Queen Tush weeps all the day,
And the Swank, the Swank, the naughty Swank,
The haughty Swank holds sway
The most mendacious, ostentatious,
Spacious Swank holds sway.

'Tis sorrow-swathed, as I know full well,
And garbed in gloom and the weeds of woe,
And vague, so far, is the tale I tell;
But bear with me for the briefest spell,
And surely shall ye know
Of the land of Gosh, and Tush, and Splosh,
And Stodge, the Swank, the foolish Swank,
The mulish Swank of Gosh-
The meretricious, avaricious,
Vicious Swank of Gosh.

Oh, the tall trees bend, and green trees send
A chuckle round the earth,
And the soft winds croon a jeering tune,
And the harsh winds shriek with mirth,
And the wee small birds chirp ribald words
When the Swank walks down the street;
But every Glug takes off his hat,
And whispers humbly, 'Look at that!
Hats off! Hats off to the Glug of rank!
Sir Stodge, the Swank, the Lord High Swank!'
Then the East wind roars a loud guffaw,
And the haughty Swank says, 'Haw!'

His brain is dull, and his mind is dense,
And his lack of saving wit complete;
But most amazingly immense
Is his inane self-confidence

And his innate conceit.
But every Glug, and great King Splosh
Bowed to Sir Stodge, the fuddled Swank,
The muddled Swank of Gosh
The engineering, peeping, peering,
Sneering Swank of Gosh.

In Gosh, sad Gosh, where the Lord Swank lives,
He holds high rank, and he has much pelf;
And all the well-paid posts he gives
Unto his fawning relatives,
As foolish as himself.
In offices and courts and boards
Are Swanks, and Swanks, ten dozen Swanks,
And cousin Swanks in hordes
Inept and musty, dry and dusty,
Rusty Swanks in hordes.

The clouds so soft, that sail aloft,
Weep laughing tears of rain;
The blue sky spread high overhead
Peeps thro' in mild disdain.
All nature laughs and jeers and chaffs
When the Swank goes out to walk;
But every Glug bows low his head,
And says in tones surcharged with dread,
'Bow low, bow low, Glugs lean, Glugs fat!'
But the North wind snatches off his hat,
And flings it high, and shrieks to see
His ruffled dignity.

They lurk in every Gov'ment lair,
'Mid docket dull and dusty file,
Solemnly squat in an easy chair,
Penning a minute of rare hot air
In departmental style.
In every office, on every floor
Are Swanks, and Swanks, distracting Swanks,
And Acting-Swanks a score,
And coldly distant, sub-assistant
Under-Swanks galore.

In peaceful days when the countryside
Poured wealth to Gosh, and the skies were blue,
The great King Splosh no fault espied,
And seemed entirely satisfied
With Swanks who muddled thro'.
But when they fell on seasons bad,
Oh, then the Swanks, the bustled Swanks,
The hustled Swanks went mad
The minute-writing, nation-blighting,
Skiting Swanks went mad.

The tall trees sway like boys at play,
And mock him when he grieves,
As one by one, in laughing fun,
They pelt him with their leaves.
And the gay green trees joke to the breeze,
As the Swank struts proudly by;
But every Glug, with reverence,
Pays homage to his pride immense
A homage deep to lofty rank
The Swank! The Swank! The pompous Swank!
But the wind-borne leaves await their chance
And round him gaily dance.

Now, trouble came to the land of Gosh:
The fear of battle, and anxious days;
And the Swanks were called to the great King Splosh,
Who said that their system would not wash,
And ordered other ways.
Then the Lord High Swank stretched forth a paw,
And penned a minute re the law,
And the Swanks, the Swanks, the other Swanks,
The brother Swanks said, 'Haw!'
These keen, resourceful, unremorseful,
Forceful Swanks said, 'Haw!'

Then Splosh, the king, in a royal rage,
He smote his throne as he thundered, 'Bosh!
In the whole wide land is there not one sage
With a cool, clear brain, who'll straight engage
To sweep the Swanks from Gosh?'
But the Lord High Stodge, from where he stood,

Cried, 'Barley! . . . Guard your livelihood!
And, quick as light, the teeming Swanks,
The scheming Swanks touched wood.
Sages, plainly, labour vainly
When the Swanks touch wood.

The stealthy cats that grace the mats
Before the doors of Gosh,
Smile wide with scorn each sunny morn;
And, as they take their wash,
A sly grimace o'erspreads each face
As the Swank struts forth to court.
But every Glug casts down his eyes,
And mutters, 'Ain't 'is 'at a size!
For such a sight our gods we thank.
Sir Stodge, the Swank! The noble Swank!
But the West wind tweaks his nose in sport;
And the Swank struts into court.

Then roared the King with a rage intense,
'Oh, who can cope with their magic tricks?'
But the Lord High Swank skipped nimbly hence,
And hid him safe behind the fence
Of Regulation VI.
And under Section Four Eight 0
The Swanks, the Swanks, dim forms of Swanks,
The swarms of Swanks lay low
These most tenacious, perspicacious,
Spacious Swanks lay low.

Cried the King of Gosh, 'They shall not escape!
Am I set at naught by a crazed buffoon?'
But in fifty fathoms of thin red tape
The Lord Swank swaddled his portly shape,
Like a large, insane cocoon.
Then round and round and round and round.
The Swanks, the Swanks, the whirling Swanks,
The twirling Swanks they wound
The swathed and swaddled, molly-coddled
Swanks inanely wound.

Each insect thing that comes in Spring

To gladden this sad earth,
It flits and whirls and pipes and skirls,
It chirps in mocking mirth
A merry song the whole day long
To see the Swank abroad.
But every Glug, whoe'er he be,
Salutes, with grave humility
And deference to noble rank,
The Swank, the Swank, the swollen Swank;
But the South wind blows his clothes awry,
And flings dust in his eye.

So trouble stayed in the land of Gosh;
And the futile Glugs could only gape,
While the Lord High Swank still ruled King Splosh
With laws of blither and rules of bosh,
From out his lair of tape.
And in cocoons that mocked the Glug
The Swanks, the Swanks, the under-Swanks,
The dunder Swanks lay snug.
These most politic, parasitic,
Critic Swanks lay snug.

Then mourn with me for a luckless land,
Oh, weep with me for the slaves of tape!
Where the Lord High Swank still held command,
And wrote new rules in a fair round hand,
And the Glugs saw no escape;
Where tape entwined all Gluggish things,
And the Swank, the Swank, the grievous Swank,
The devious Swank pulled strings
The perspicacious, contumacious
Swank held all the strings.

The blooms that grow, and, in a row,
Peep o'er each garden fence,
They nod and smile to note his style
Of ponderous pretence;
Each roving bee has fits of glee
When the Swank goes by that way.
But every Glug, he makes his bow,
And says, 'Just watch him! Watch him now!

He must have thousands in the bank!
The Swank! The Swank! The holy Swank!
But the wild winds snatch his kerchief out,
And buffet him about.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Teacher

I'd like to be a teacher, and have a clever brain,
Calling out, 'Attention, please!' and 'Must I speak in vain?'
I'd be quite strict with boys and girls whose minds I had to train,
And all the books and maps and things I'd carefully explain;
I'd make them learn the dates of kings, and all the capes of Spain;
But I wouldn't be a teacher if ...
I couldn't use the cane.
Would you?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Traveller

As I rode in to Burrumbeet,
I met a man with funny feet;
And, when I paused to ask him why
His feet were strange, he rolled his eye
And said the rain would spoil the wheat;
So I rode on to Burrumbeet.

As I rode in to Beetaloo,
I met a man whose nose was blue;
And when I asked him how he got
A nose like that, he answered, "What
Do bullocks mean when they say 'Moo'?"
So I rode on to Beetaloo.

As I rode in to Ballarat,
I met a man who wore no hat;
And, when I said he might take cold,
He cried, "The hills are quite as old
As yonder plains, but not so flat."
So I rode on to Ballarat.

As I rode in to Gundagai,
I met a man and passed him by
Without a nod, without a word.
He turned, and said he'd never heard
Or seen a man so wise as I.
But I rode on to Gundagai.

As I rode homeward, full of doubt,
I met a stranger riding out:
A foolish man he seemed to me;
But, "Nay, I am yourself," said he,
"Just as you were when you rode out."
So I rode homeward, free of doubt.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Triantiwontigongolope

There's a very funny insect that you do not often spy,
And it isn't quite a spider, and it isn't quite a fly;
It is something like a beetle, and a little like a bee,
But nothing like a wooly grub that climbs upon a tree.
Its name is quite a hard one, but you'll learn it soon, I hope.
So try:

Tri-

Tri-anti-wonti-

Triantiwontigongolope.

It lives on weeds and wattle-gum, and has a funny face;
Its appetite is hearty, and its manners a disgrace.
When first you come upon it, it will give you quite a scare,
But when you look for it again, you find it isn't there.
And unless you call it softly it will stay away and mope.
So try:

Tri-

Tri-anti-wonti-

Triantiwontigongolope.

It trembles if you tickle it or tread upon its toes;
It is not an early riser, but it has a snubbish nose.
If you sneer at it, or scold it, it will scuttle off in shame,
But it purrs and purrs quite proudly if you call it by its name,
And offer it some sandwiches of sealing-wax and soap.
So try:

Tri-

Tri-anti-wonti-

Triantiwontigongolope .

But of course you haven't seen it; and I truthfully confess
That I haven't seen it either, and I don't know its address.
For there isn't such an insect, though there really might have been
If the trees and grass were purple, and the sky was bottle green.
It's just a little joke of mine, which you'll forgive, I hope.
Oh, try!

Tri-

Tri-anti-wonti-

Triantiwontigongolope.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Vision

Of things that roam about the bush I ain't got many fears,
For I knows their ways an' habits, and I've chummed with them for years.
For man or beast or gully ghost I've pluck enough to spare;
But I draws the line at visions with the sunlight in their hair.

When a man has fought an' conquered it is good in many ways:
There's the pride in having done it, an' the other fellows' praise;
There's the glory an' the standin' that you get among the men
All their looks are more respectful since I socked it into Ben.

I was feelin' fine this mornin' when I started out to work;
An' I caught myself high-steppin' with a boastful sort of jerk;
With my head a trifle higher an' my eye a little stern.
I thought the world was mine for keeps; but I'd a lot to learn.

Young Dick, the Dusty, wasn't half as cheeky as of old;
The men were actin' friendly-like, but I kept kind of cold
An' distant, as becomes a bloke who's scored a knock-out thump
Till just approachin' dinner time; an' then I got my bump.

It's fine to see your cobbers lookin' at you like the know
You're not a man to trifle with; at least, I found it so.
Ben Murray was quite affable, an' once he whispered me
There's a certain somethin' doin', an' he'll see me privately.

I was workin' at the rip saw, cursin' at my achin' back,
When I saw the blessed vision comin' down the log-year track.
There were others in the party, but the one that got my stare
Was her with two brown, laughin' eyes an' sunlight in her hair.

'More visitors!' growled old man Pike. 'Another city push.
I'll bet a quid they ask us why we 'spoil the lovely bush.'
I hardly heard him saying it, for like a fool I stand,
My eyes full of the vision an' a batten in my hand.

'You gone to sleep?' the sawyer said. 'What's got you mesmerized?'
I start to work like fury, but my thoughts can't be disguised.
'Oh, Jim's gone dippy with the Spring'; replies old Pike an' grins.
I turn to answer dignified; but trip, an' bark my shins.

Next thing I know the boss is there, an' talkin' fine an' good.
Explaining' to the visitors how trees are made of wood.
They murmur things like 'Marvellous!' an' 'What a monster tree!'
An' then the one with sunlit hair comes right bang up to me.

'I saw you fall,' she sort of sung: you couldn't say she talked,
For her voice had springtime in it, like the way she looked an' walked.
'I saw you fall,' she sung at me. 'I hope you were not hurt.'
An' suddenly I was aware I wore my oldest shirt.

'It never hurt me half as much as your two smilin' eyes.'
That's how I could have answered her - and watched old Pike's surprise
'It never harmed me half as much as standin' here like this
With tattered shirt an' grimy hands' . . . But I just says, 'No, Miss.'

'Oh, no,' I says. 'We're pretty hard, an' have to take them cracks.'
(But just to see her sudden smile, made me as soft as wax.)
'You're strong,' she smiles. I answers, 'Oh, I'm pretty strong, all right.'
An' close behind I heard old Pike observin', 'Hear 'im skite!'

That finished me. I lost what little nerve I had, an' grew
Dead certain that I looked a fool, an' that she thought so, too.
She talked some more; but I can't tell what other things she said.
I went all cold, except my ears, an' thye were burnin' red.

I only knew her eyes were soft, her voice was kind an' low.
I never spoke another word exceptin' 'Yes' an' 'No.'
I never felt a bigger chump in all my livin' days,
Well knowin' I was gettin' worse at every word she says.

An' when she went off with the rest I stood there, lookin' sick.
Until I caught a chance remark of little Dirty Dick.
'What price the widders now?' says he. I answer fierce an' low:
'Were you addressin' me?' I says; an' Dick was prompt with 'No!'

I don't know how I finished up; my thoughts were far from clear;
For, in between me an' the bench, that vision would appear.
No other man chucked off at me, but by their looks 'twas plain
I'd lost a bit of that respect it took a fight to gain.

An', when the knock-off whistle blew, Ben Murray he came by,

An' says he'd like that private talk, but, 'Pickle it,' says I.
"Twill have to keep til later on.' He answers, 'As you like.'
Soon after that I saw him talkin' earnest with old Pike.

If I'd been right, I might have known there's somehting in the air
By the way the blokes were actin'; but a fat lot did I care.
Swell visions an' the deadly pip was what was wrong with me.
I slung a word to my old dog, an' we trudged home to tea.

An' after, in the same old way, we sits beside the fire,
To have a talk, my dog an' me, on fools an' vain desire.
I tell him I'm a silly chump to thnk the things to do.
An', with a waggle of his tail, he says he thinks so too.

I tell him I suppose she's rich, or so she seems to be;
Most likely some reel city swell - an' he don't disagree.
I says to him the chances are I'll not see her no more.
Then he gives me a funny look, an' curls up on the floor.

But I was slow to take the tip, an' went on talkin' rot
About injustice in the world, an' boiled up good an' hot.
I spouts of wrongs of workin' men an' how our rulers fail.
His eyes are shut, but he just seconds motions with his tail.

All beauty's only for the rich, all times, an' every way.
The toilers just take what is left, as I've heard Murray say
When he's bene talkin' to the boys about the workers' rights,
An' spoutin' of equality, down at the huts, of nights.

I turned the social system inside-out for my old dog.
Tho' he don't seem much entertained, but lies there like a log.
I spoke of common people's wrongs - especially of mine;
But when I came to mention love I thought I heard him whine.

But I went on, an' said straight out that, tho' I seemed above
Such nonsense once, I'd changed a bit, an' I believed in love.
I said love was a splendid thing! . . . Then, true as I am born,
He rose, an' yawned, an' shut me up with one crook glance of scorn.

It's bad enough to be a bloke without one reel close friend;
But when your dog gives you the bird it's pretty near the end.
Ashamed, I sneaked away to bunk; an' fell to dreamin' there

Of a little brown-eyed vision with the sunlight in her hair.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Warrior King

Albert, King of the Belgians,
Lived for his whole reign thro'
The father and friend of his people,
Soldier and statesman, too.
When his armies rode to the carnage,
'Twas their King who rode at their hear
To battle as great Kings battled...
And Albert the King is dead.

Albert, King of the Belgians,
Looking at doomed Louvain,
Wept for the plight of his people,
Grieved for his country's pain.
But the pride of a King upheld him;
The strength of a true King stayed,
And the love of a wise King triumphed
Thro' the travail, undismayed.

Albert, King of the Belgians,
After the red war's close,
Seeking no rest from his labors,
As a builder now arose;
Lending his life to service,
Turning to tasks anew,
Healing his country's war-wounds
Builder and comforter, too.

Albert, King of the Belgians,
Died as a Man would die,
Prone on earth's broad bosom,
Under the open sky.
To a swift and merciful passing,
Here went, at the end of his span,
A greater than King of his people
A wise and well-loved man.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Way Out

'There must be some way out,' they say.
'There must be some way out!
We've fallen on an evil day;
That we no longer doubt.
But surely there's some magic rare
To banish this dull load of care,
And strengthen out defences.
We'll find it, yet, if we but look;
But this is sure: By hook or crook,
We won't cut down expenses!'

How like a harried housewife these
Wild politicians seem.
'Oh, George!' she cries. 'Don't scold so, please!
You must find some shrewd scheme.
There surely must be some way out.
What of those deals you talked about?
Are all your plans pretences?
I want a frock; I want a hat.
My parties? Bridge debts? What of that?
I can't cut down expenses!'

But George he knows, as well we know,
There is but one way out:
When incomes fall we must go slow.
Stern facts no man may flout.
And well we know, as George must know,
A pound note just so far will go.
And all men in their senses
Well realise there's but one way,
When we fall on an evil day
We've got to cut expenses.

The magic stone philosophers
Sought in the olden years,
May, by no chance, be ours, or hers,
For all our pleas and tears.
The only magic's common sense
Despite vague schemes and sly pretence,

Wrangles and differences.
When economic stress appears,
One warning echoes down the years:
'Go slow, and cut expenses!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Weary Philosopher

I can conceive no heav'nly bliss
More perfectly complete than this:
To sit and smoke and idly chew
Reflection's cud, with nought to do.
This is, in my pet social plan,
The right of ev'ry honest man.

I can conceive no punishment
For wicked men of evil bent,
Who cheat and lie and drink and rob,
More meet than giving them a job.
This is, to my unruffled mind,
Correction of the sternest kind.

I can conceive a world, in dreams;
A happy, restful world it seems;
A wise, well-ordered globe wherein
Men toil to expiate a sin,
While harmless and right-thinking folk
Have nought to do but sit and smoke.

I ask but to be left alone;
And let the wicked man atone
In graft for having energy
To sin against society.
For, clearly, I commit no crime,
Since I do nothing all the time.

Sins of omssion, you will see,
Don't count in my philosophy
And it is safer far to shirk,
Lest, working, one might find more work.
No man is able to foresee
The far effects of energy.

But in this thoughtless, restless age
What honor is there for the sage?
When Philistines, in manner rude,
Disturb my sleepy solitude,

Where in my peaceful bower I lurk,
And coarsely shout at me: 'Get work!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The White Foxglove

Reynard, the fox, was asked to a party.
"Come", they said, in your Sunday best,
For we like good form, tho' the fun be hearty;
So all who dance must be formally dressed:
Black tail-coat and a shirt-front gleaming.
Brushed and burnished each dancing shoe,
Pantaloons with a silk braid seaming,
Clean white gloves of the snowiest hue.
This most especially -
Very especially -
Snow-white gloves of a spotless hue.

Reynard, the fox, as he dressed (says the fable)
Dreamed of the dance and his lady love,
Then he searched and he hunted in dresser and table,
But all he discovered was - one old glove!
A horrible glove, with a broad black stitching
Sorriest match for his stiff white shirt.
Could lover go wooing a maid so bewitching,
Wearing but one glove, grubby with dirt?
Oh, most disgustedly -
Very disgustedly -
Creased and crumpled and yellow with dirt.

Said Reynard, the fox, to the King of the Fairies,
"King, I come to you craving a dower.
Gloves! All as white as the lamb that was Mary's.
Pray you, fashion a pair from a magic flower.
>From a summer cloud, from the web of a spider.
Skin of a toadstool, a snowberry rind,
Down from the breast of a fledgling eider."
And the King said "Sure", for the King was kind.
Ever so graciously -
Gaily and graciously -
"Oke", said the Monarch, for he was kind.

Then Reynard, the fox, beheld a wonder:
A wave of his wand by the Fairy King -
And there, with the green leaves spreading under,

Sprang forth a sceptre, a magic thing
With garlands of gloves in a gleaming cluster,
White as the fleeces of new-shorn flocks
That fairy shepherds in Arcady muster.
And a pair they presented to Reynard, the fox.
They fitted him perfectly.
Said the King, "perfectly"
"Your Majesty.' Thank you!" said Reynard, the fox.

Reynard, the fox, made haste to the revel;
Beau of the ball, as they had to confess.
And the ladies sighed, "What a handsome devil?"
As for his lady - of course it was, "yes".
Then they danced and they fasted with merry laughter.
While Reynard weaved dreams in the clouds above.
And they called that blossom, from then ever after -
Men, foxes and fairies - the white Fox-glove.
Tall and so slenderly
Graceful and tenderly,
Swaying its sceptre - the White Fox-Glove.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Wicket Cricket Critic

If the cricket critics' nagging
Merits stern official gagging
Which I doubt
How would critical ascetics,
With their prosy homiletics,
Shut it out?
And the question then arises:
If more cricketing surprises,
Such as bodyline, begin to threaten cricket,
And another stunt, when sprung,
Call for clicking of the tongue,
Should a cricket critic critically click it?

When the barrackers grow lyric
In a manner most satiric
And profane,
How, one ventures still to wonder,
May the clamor be kept under?
How restrain?
For one barbaric larrik-
In can do a lot of barrack-
In', and cause a lot of worry at the wicket.
But would sportsmen be abusing
Cricket canons in refusing
To supply that cricket critic with a ticket?

As a critic analytic
Of the cricket critics' critic
I would say,
When we criticise their cricket,
Then the players have to stick it,
Come what may.
No specific soporific
May be used; for it is diffic-
Ult to strike a critic partly paralytic.
So there's nothing gained in seeking,
As I know; and I am speaking
As a critic of the cricket critic's critic.

The Wobble

Now the Wobble went out on the roaring tide,
With a dry dog trotting along by its side;
Went over the sea - and I vow right here
That the Wobble went out with its views as clear
As ever the views of a Wobble could be;
And the Wobble went out and over the sea.

Went over the sea for to represent
The folk of our island continent;
Went over to England where dukes and lords,
And princes, and barons, and earls in hordes,
And bankers, and boodlers, and scores of Jews
Were burning to hear of Australia's views.

O, the Wobble went over to advertise
(For it was a Wobble of goodly size)
The things that we grow and the things that we breed
Our eggs and our bacon and butter and seed,
The health of our air and the worth of our earth
(For it was a Wobble of generous girth)
And it's quite a true saying, as ev'ryone knows,
A Wobble's a Wobble wherever it goes.

The Wobble went forth from its native land,
And when they espied it adrift on the Strand
All the American tourists laff't:
'Why, if that ain't the double of our old TAFT!'
And when it appeared later on in The Row,
All the duchiest duchesses viewed the show,
And they said: 'There is nothing can advertise
A country so well as a Wobble of size.'

And they asked it along for a feed and a swill,
And a talk after dinner, as Englishmen will,
And there's nothing on earth like a gabble and gobble
Appeals to a healthy and well-bred Wobble.
And when it arose at the festive board
The barons and aldermen loudly roared.
With the dukes and the generals, 'That's the bloke!

That's the famous and only Australian Joke!

'It's the Globular Jest with the Monocled Eye
That makes the Australians laugh till they cry
The bankers and boodlers and Park Lane Jews
Wept great, glad tears in the jellies and stews;
The Lord High Chancellor split his vest,
While the baronets, admirals, peers and the rest
Agreed with the bishops and Irish M.P.'s
That no funnier Wobble came over the seas.

The Wobble gazed solemnly round the board,
While England's nobility shouted and roared
But it didn't enlarge on the things that we grow
Or the things that we breed or we dig, O no;
But it struck a delightfully humorous note
As it dealt with the things we, at intervals, float.
And it gravely declared that, as ev'ryone knows,
A feller's far better without any clothes.

'For a man,' said the Wobble, 'that uses his cash
For his personal needs is exceedingly rash.
He should gather his money and bury it in
A bit of old bagging or kerosene tin
At the end of the garden, then hasten to pop
His garments and things at his relative's shop.
He should hurry to Uncle and cheerfully float
A loan on his boots and his hat and his coat.

'And when you have blewed all that little advance
Don't dig up your money - not by any chance;
But pawn your etceteras, weskit and socks,
And the spare shirt and collars you keep on the box;
For it's better for Uncle and better for you,
And better by far for the little ones too.
And the whole darn family's more content
When the wardrobe is soaking at four per cent.'

O, every baton and duke and lord
He clung to the table and shrieked and roared;
And the Lord Chief Justice was heard to declare

That a Wobble so droll was exceedingly rare;
And all the financiers, COHEN and MOSES,
Laughed till the tears trickled over their noses;
And ev'ryone shouted, with hearty 'Ho, ho's,'
'Just fancy a Wobble without any clothes!'

The Baron of Bath threw a fit, and his Grace
The Bishop of Brixton went black to the face.
And I put it to you, as a man to a man:
Do you honestly think that Australia can
Ever hope to be blessed with another such prize
As a humorous Wobble to advertise?
For it's quite a true saying, as ev'ryone knows,
A Wobble's a Wobble wherever it goes.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Wobblers

When the scheming Fusion few
Sought to snare the Lib'ral crew,
It was plain for all to view
That they wobbled.
And when later in the day
They gave liberty away,
One might very truly say
They were hobbled.

Later on, in caucus met,
They were wont to fume and fret,
And 'tis hinted even yet
That they squabbled.
It is said they fought and scratched,
Till the Fusion scheme was hatched,
Then their diff'rences were patched
Crudely cobbled.

Then, the Commonwealth to rob,
They put up the 'Finance' job,
And 'twas patent to the mob
They were nobbled.
Now their ev'ry word and act,
Ev'ry measure they enact
Illustrates the dismal fact
They've been gobbled.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Woes Of Bill

Once upon a recent even, as I lay in fitful slumber,
Weaving dreams and seeing visions vague and utterly absurd,
Suddenly I seemed to waken, somewhat scared and rather shaken,
For I thought my name was mentioned, coupled with - 'a certain word.'

'Twas the Adjective that roused me, sanguinary and familiar,
That embellishes the diction of my fellow countrymen,
When they do commune together in regard to crops or weather -
Such a word as never, never shall defile this pious pen.

Sitting, upright on my pillow, filled with weird, uncanny feelings,
Once again I heard, distinctly someone calling on my name.
And I gazed around me vainly as a voice exclaimed quite plainly:
'Strike me up a blessed wattle if it ain't a blessed shame!'

"Tis some idiotic joker, 't's some festive friend,' I muttered,
Gazing toward my chamber window where the moonlight faintly gleamed
Then, before my bedroom curtain, I beheld a shape uncertain,
Something vague and dim and doubtful, slowly taking form it seemed.

Then, all obvious before me stood a figure most familiar,
Clad in bushman's boots and breeches and a colored cotton shirt.
Said he: 'No, yer eyes don't fail yer: Here's yer cobber, BILL AUSTRALIER,
An' I've come to ask you plainly if this game ain't blessed dirt!'

'Pardon. BILL,' said I politely; 'but I hardly get your meaning.'
'Strewth!' said BILL. 'Dead crook, I call it!' But I stayed him with a smile.
'By your leave, my worthy bloke, we'll dropp these oaths and terms colloquial,
And just talk the matter over in a peaceful, friendly style.'

BILL choked back a warm expletive - for my smile was most engaging -
And, upon my invitation, sat beside me on the bed.
And, omitting decorations - fancy oaths and execrations
That his woeful story garnished, I shall tell you what he said.

'Now my name is BILL AUSTRALIER, just plain BILL without no trimmin's,
And you'll tumble that I'm ownin' quite a tidy bit o' land;
Land that needs a bit o' workin'; an' there ain't no time for shirkin',
An' there ain't no call for loafers on the job I got on hand.

'My selection is extensive; right from sea to sea it stretches;
An' I'm needin' willin' grafters for the toil there is to do:
So some blokes called politicians speaks for overseers' positions,
An' I hands 'em out the billets, thinkin' they would see things through.

"Strewth! They ain't signed on 10 minutes 'fore they downs their tools in anger,
An', without no word o' warnin', started fightin' tooth an' nail.
An' I yelled till I grew husky, an' me face with rage went dusky,
But me most expensive language wasn't of the least avail.

'Tell yeh, I was fair bewildered till a bloke gives me the office,
Puts me wise about them factions an' this Party Guv'ment lurk.
Seems, if one side takes to toilin', then the other aims at spoilin'
Ev'ry blessed job they tackle. An' the blighters calls it WORK!

'So I puts it to 'em plainly. Sez I: 'This here Party scrappin'
In the time for which I'm payin' ain't a fair thing, anyway!'
An, I calmly asks 'em whether they can't work in peace together,
An' consider me a trifle, seein' as I find the pay.

'But it weren't no use o' torkin', they just howls and fights the harder,
Leaves me pressin' jobs to languish while they plays their party games;
Till one push turns out the stronger; then I don't chip in no longer,
For they done a bit o' graftin' while the others calls 'em names.

'Now, this year their contracts finished, so I gives 'em all the bullet,
Sacks the lot an' advertises for fresh men; an' when they came,
With near even sides, by Heaven! 38 to 37.
They remarks: 'The job be jiggered! We're too close to play the Game.'

'Game! What game? Of all the blighters!' - (Here BILL'S language grew tremendous.

I have never heard a vision curse so much in all my life.)

'Five an' seventy I'm payin' for to work, an' here's them sayin'
That the sides is too near equal an' 'twould only lead to strife!

'Strike me - !' (BILL again, in anger, aired his vast vocabulary,
Using words against his 'workmen' stronger than the law allows;
And his ultimate expletive! - Fain would I remain secretive,
But I may not. In his anger. BILL described them as FAIR COWS!)

'Fair dashed Cows! That's wot I call 'em. An' I want your straight opinion.
Am I boss of this selection that extends from sea to sea?
Here's these blinded politicians hangin' on to them positions!
An' I want the dead, straight griffen: Are they workin' points on me?'

'BILL,' said I - and tears were streaming down my whiskers as I answered -
'Precedent, and rule, and custom cannot be ignored, you know.
This Great System was imported by our fathers' (Here BILL snorted)
'From the dear old Mother Country, and we cannot let it go.'

'Wot!' yelled BILL. 'Still more imported pests upon the job to plague me!
Like the rabbits an' the foxes, burrs an' thistles, an' the rest.
Must I ever curse in anguish? Must my Big Jobs ever languish?
Can't I clear me blamed selection of this Party Guv'ment pest?'

'BILL!' I sobbed, choked with emotion - then in wonder gazed about me;
Marked the moonlight, white and ghostly, faintly gleaming through the pane:
Saw mine old familiar trousers - (Pardon this allusion, Wowers) -
Hanging on the bedpost sadly. But I searched for BILL - in vain.
Gone had he from out my chamber. Yet I sat and pondered deeply
Through that chilly winter even; and I ponder deeply still.
Evidence I've none to show men; but, I ask, was it an omen?
Did it presage good or evil, that strange vanishing of BILL?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Wonders Of The One Pound Note

Brothers!

You with but a sixpence in your pocket, and you with half a 'quid,' and
you with a solid bank balance, and sundry others;

Let not the cares of money e'er oppress you.

Today I would address you

Upon the wonders of the one pound note

And in the words that someone one day wrote

Across its face,

I trust my words will not be out of place.

Have you e'er given our pound note a glance -

When you have had a chance?

Artistic, ain't it?

I wonder what aesthete they got to paint it?

Doesn't its face attract you, and its smile

Lure you to love and fondle it a while -

The brief while that 'tis with you? Don't you feel

It has a certain - shall we say - appeal?

And, have you ever

Marvelled at all that intricate and clever -

That wonderful arrangement of the 'ones'

That pop up in the most unexpected places?

There are so many there

That, just to count them, makes you feel almost a millionaire.

And have you ever noticed how its face is

Adorned with divers writings in quaint style?

Brothers; those writing often make me smile.

Is it indeed a sin to copy such?

It doesn't matter much.

But, as a writer, I'm interested in the subject, and up to the time those few
lines were indited

I've never heard that note was copyrighted.

But, still, why need we quarrel

About that matter? But what I have been trying to say all this time is that I

consider that the pound note, beloved though it be by all classes of the

community, is, in some senses, highly immoral

For why?

It tells a lie.

What does it say?

'I (the Commonwealth treasurer) promise to pay
'One pound in gold' -
(Oh brothers! How can such vain things be told?)
'Upon demand' (he prints DEMAND in 'caps.')

But will he pay? . . . Perhaps!
Why, brothers? Why?
Go up and try,
Go up into the lordly treasuree
And ask to see
The Treasurer, and there and then unfold
The tale of your dire need for gold.
The man won't dare to look you in the face.
Demand (as he invites you to), insist, reason, argue, shout, yell your demand
at him, and he'll probably have you kicked out of the place.
Now, brothers, is that fair?
I know there was a catch in there somewhere.
So next time that you Bills and Bens, and Hals and Toms amd Dicks and
Timothys
and Thomases
Kid yourselves that you are well off, consider, it is not wealth, splosh,
spondulicks, brass, beans, dough that you possess; but merely a pocketful of
worthless promises.
The man won't recognise that note: he hates it;
Yet gaols the flatterer who imitates it.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'The Wonga Pigeon'

Men knew and loved my calling in old days
Days ere a bitter wisdom taught me fear.
Trusting and unafraid, I went my ways
By many a crude hut of the pioneer;
Calling by paths where lonely axemen strode,
By new-cleared farmland yet to know the plough;
Calling by deep sled-track and bullock road . . .
But where today man builds his last abode
Few hear my calling now.

Too trusting. When they found my flesh was sweet
Was sweet and white and succulent withal
What mattered beauty? I was good to eat!
Then trust was my undoing; and my call
A summons to men's hunger and the chase
A tame, ignoble chase with me the prey
Till far into some secret forest place
I fled, with that poor remnant of my race
I hiding here today.

And only by lost paths o'ergrown with fern
By old, abandoned tracks in scrubs remote
You may, by chance, around a sudden turn,
Win some brief, fleeting glance of my grey coat.
Then, with a swift wing-clapping, I am hence;
Or, crouching down, ingenuously seek
To merge my colors with the brush-wood dense
And trick the spoiler, with the vain defence
Of earth's harried meek.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Wooer

I nearly fell fair in my tracks.
I'm trudin' homeward with my axe
When I come on her suddenly.
'I wonder if I'm lost?' says she.
'It's risky on such roads as this.'
I lifts my hat an' says, 'Yes, miss.'
I knew 'twas rude for me to stare,
But, oh, that sunlight in her hair!

'I wonder if I'm lost? says she,
An' gives a smile that staggers me.
'An' yet, it wouldn't matter much
Supposing that I was, with such
A glorious green world about,
With bits of blue sky peepin' out.
Do you think there will be a fog?'
'No, miss,' says I, an' pats my dog.

'Oh, what a dear old dog!' says she.
'Most dogs are pretty fond of me.'
She calls him to her, an' he goes.
(He didn't find it hard, I s'pose;
I know I wouldn't if she called.)
'It's wondrous how the tracks are walled
With these great trees that touch the sky
On either side.' 'Yes, miss,' says I.

She fondles my old dog a bit;
I wait to make a bolt for it.
(There ain't no call to stand an' talk
With one who'd be too proud to walk
A half-a-yard with such as me.)
'The wind keeps workin' up,' says she.
'Yes, miss,' says I, an' lifts me hat.
An' she just let's it go at that.

She let me reach the dribblin' ford -
That day to me it fairly roared.
(At least, that's how the thing appears;

But blood was poundin' in my ears.)
She waits till I ahve fairly crossed:
'I thought I told I was lost?'
She cries. 'An' you go walkin' off,
Quite scornful, like some proud bush toff!

She got me thinkin' hard with that.
'Yes, miss,' I says, an' lifts my hat.
But she just waits there on the track,
An' lets me walk the whole way back.
'An' are you reely lost?' says I.
'Yes, sir,' says she an' drops her eye. . .
I wait, an' wait for what seems days;
But not another word she says.

I pats my dog, an' lifts my hat;
But she don't seem to notice that.
I looks up trees an' stares at logs,
An' long for twenty hats an' dogs.
'The weather's kept reel good to-day,'
I blurts at last. Say she, 'Hurray!'
'Hurray!' she says, an' then, 'Encore!'
An' gets me wonderin' what for.

'Is this the right road to 'The Height?''
I tell her it's the road, all right,
But that the way she's walkin' ain't.
At that she looked like she would faint.
'Then I was lost if I had gone
Along this road an' walked right on
An unfrequented bush track, too!
How fortunate that I met you!'

'Yes, miss,' I says. 'Yes - what?' says she.
Says I, 'Most fortunate . . . for me.'
I don't know where I found the pluck
To blurt that out an' chance my luck.
'You'll walk,' she says, 'a short way back,
So you can put me on the track?'
'I'll take you all the way,' says I,
An' looks her fair bang in the eye.

Later, I let myself right out,
An' talked: an' told her all about
The things I've done, an' what I do,
An' nearly all I'm hopin' to.
Told why I chose the game I'm at
Because my folks were poor, an' that.
She seemed reel pleased to hear me talk,
An' sort of steadied up the walk.

An' when I'd spoke my little bit,
She just takes up the thread of it;
An' later on, near knocks me down
By tellin' me she works - in town.
Works? her? I thought, the way she dressed,
She was quite rich; but she confessed
That makin' dresses was her game,
An' she was dead sick of the same.

When Good bye came, I lifts my hat;
But she holds out her hand at that.
I looked at mine, all stained with sap,
An' told her I'm a reel rough chap.
'A worker's hand,' says she, reel fine,
'An' marked with toil; but so is mine.
We're just two toilers; let us shake,
An' be good friends - for labour's sake.'

I didn't care to say no more,
For fear of what she'd take me for
But just Good bye, an' turns away,
Bustin' with things I had to say.
I don't know how I got right home.
The wonder was I didn't roam
Off in the scrub, an' dream out there
Of her with sunlight in her hair.

At home I looks around the place,
An' sees the dirt a fair disgrace;
So takes an' tidies up a bit,
An' has a shave; an' then I sit
Beside my fire to have a think.
But my old dog won't sleep a wink;

He fools, an' whines, an' nudges me,
Then all at once I thinks of tea.

I beg his pardon wiht a smile,
An'. talkin' to him all the while,
I get it ready, tellin' him
About that girl; but, 'Shut up, Jim!'
he says to me as plain as plain.
'First have some food, an' then explain.'
(I don't know how she came to tell,
But I found out her name is Nell.)

We gets our bit to eat at last.
(An', just for spite, he et his fast) . . .
I think that Nell's a reel nice name . . .
'All right, old dog, I ain't to blame
If you' . . . Just as I go to sup
My tea I stop dead, with my cup
Half up, an' . . . By the Holy Frost!
I wonder was Nell reely lost?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

The Yellow Robin

I'm the friendliest of them all,
When winter comes;
Daily at your door I call
Begging crumbs.
Clinging sideways to a stake,
Eloquent appeal I make.
'Spare a scrap for pity's sake!
This cold air numbs.'

I will follow as you dig
And search the dirt.
Worms or beetles, small or big,
Are my dessert;
And, should you seem gently kind,
From your hand I do not mind
Taking anything you find;
But I'm a flirt.

For when spring comes to the land
You are forgot.
I have great affairs on hand
As days wax hot.
Should I pass you, I pretend
To ignore my winter's friend;
Intimacy's at an end;
I know you not.

Yet, when winter comes once more,
And summer ends,
You will find me at your door
To make amends;
Clinging sideways to a stake,
Eloquent appeal I'll make:
'Spare a scrap for pity's sake!
Aw, let's be friends!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'The Yellow Tailed Thornbill'

I'm a fussy little fellow
In my kilt of glowing yellow;
As about the garden ways I bow and bend.
Many a melody I bring you,
In the soft, gay songs I sing you
With a cheery little grace-note at the end
'Chip, chip.'
Oh, I never miss that grace-note at the end.

Summer into autumn passes,
And among the rippening grasses,
'Mid the midges, goodly provender I gain.
Little for your presence caring,
Confident and greatly daring,
I will charn you with a sudden, sweet refrain
'Chip, chip.'
Oh, a very soft, yet valiant refrain.

When the time has come for nesting,
Our sagacity attesting,
We erect a neat, twin-chambered bow'r of love;
Mother in the nursery sleeping
With the babes, while sentry keeping,
Father has his parlor-bedroom up above
'Chip, chip.'
Oh, it's cosier - and quieter above.

In my kilt of golden yellow
I'm a friendly little fellow,
And my spangled sable crown I proudly bear.
Tho' my way be meek and lowly,
I can capture, win you wholly
If you'll listen to this cheerful little air
'Chip, chip.'
Oh, I'll charm you with my cheerful little air.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

There Once Was A Fellow Called Croll

There once was a fellow called Croll,
Who loved to hear periods roll
On his musical tongue.
It is he who has sung,
'Ev'n sev'n heav'ns giv'n buy not my soul'.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

There's A Good Time Coming

There's a good time coming in the golden by-and-by:
And I wish, oh, how I wish that it would come!
There's a wise day dawning, by the portents in the sky,
To usher in the glad millenium.
When heaven-sent technocracy displaces our democracy,
Goodbye to man's hypocrisy and greed.
But I wonder, oh, I wonder if we'll all be planted under
Ere the good time gladdens human need.

There's a good time coming, but the road we have to go
Is strewn with all the wreckage of the past.
And there's quite a lot of salvage ere we end this worldly woe
And gain the golden terminus at last.
The wonders of machinery that dominates our scenery
Have left the blundering ancients far behind;
But I wonder, oh, I wonder if we haven't made a blunder
In neglecting that machine, the human mind.

There's a good time coming; but the echo answers, 'When?'
And I wish, oh, I wish that I could say.
Two thousand years have scarce sufficed to change the minds of men;
We may hardly hope to change them in a day.
I would not cry calamity when others aim at amnity,
And hope within me ever conquered fear.
But I wonder, oh, I wonder, when the clouds are torn asunder,
If you and I are likely to be here.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Things To Come

When you have gone and I have gone
Beyond the ken of earthly things,
Yet watch the old race carry on
As to precarious life it clings,
Gazing together from afar,
Perched on some fixed or unfix'd star,
We may find cause to meditate
Full thankfully upon our fate.

And you shall say - or I shall say:
Those were man's great days, yours and mine,
Before his glories passed away,
His kingship fell into decline,
When he walked proudly o'er the earth
Questing his joy at its broad girth
Ere fear and folly claimed his soul
And bade him emulate the mole.

And you shall gaze and I shall gaze
In pity from our distant star
And witness, thro' the cosmic haze
Earth's bosom scored by many a scar
Where in and out, in furtive haste
Strange, pallid little creatures raced,
Short-limbed, large-pawed, with small weak eyes
That feared to look up to the skies.

We'll watch the timid little gnomes,
So altered now in shape from us,
Peer from their subterranean homes
Half vengefully, half curious;
Then, at the barking of a gun,
Back to their holes we'll watch them run.
And I shall say - or you shall say:
'These were earth's masters in our day.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

This Momentous Mummery

Well, I don't know. Maybe it's quite all right,
And maybe it is I who am perverse,
Finding in this unedifying sight
Mere mummery, and hearing but a blight
Of words and frowsty fustian - or worse
Maybe I'm wrong; and homosapiens yet,
Among the sentient, stays wise Nature's pet.

First the exordium, restrained and grim,
Stirring emotions, spreading subtle spells;
And then the swelling voice, the waving limb,
The flashing eye, the pep, the yells, the vim
The crashing peroration - and hell's bells! ...
Old stuff, so I was once led to suppose
Archaic stuff, and yet it goes, it goes.

Once Epictetus or - well, shall we say
Marcus Aurelius stirred in me a hope,
As reason grew and error fell away,
Giants might rise to lead us in our day
Out of this darkened maze in which men grope.
But now I know the man who gets that job
Is he who can spellbind the muddled mob.

But life's a paradox - Mayhap I'm wrong
In seeking guidance from the enlightened wise
Looking for leaders in the sanely strong
To spread sweet reason 'mid the puzzled throng
A paradox all men must recognise;
And it may be our world shall yet give thanks,
And owe salvation to its mountebanks.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Thistledown

She danced thro' life as light as thistledown,
The grace of Columbine, charm of Pierette,
These, and that blithesome quality of thistledown,
With memory of her linger by us yet.
A fairy, slipping thro' a world material,
Shaming dull men made gross thro' mundance schemes,
She came to us, a being half ethereal,
To lure us into lands of strange, sweet dreams.

One hour she gave us of Elysian rapture,
A mood, a vision lamentably rare;
And now in vain our dark minds would recapture
The wholesome sweetness of her dancing there
Dancing, and ever dancing, gaily, smilingly,
Lending her genius in a hundred parts.
Leading us on to Fairyland beguilingly,
Dancing and dancing straight into our hearts.

And she has gone. What need is there to tell us
She was not ours who guessed not half her worth?
Or that the high gods, watching, had grown jealous
That she should waste such sweetness on mere earth?
So she who for a little while was lent to us
To cleanse with poetry the hearts of men
A sprite, a fairy pitying Heaven sent to us
Like thistledown is wafted from our ken.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

To A Dead Mate

There's many a man who rides today
In the lonely, far out-back;
There's many a man who makes his way
On a dusty bushland track;
There's many a man in bush and town
Who mourns for a good mate gone;
There are eyes grown sad and heads cast down
Since Henry has passed on.

A mate he was, and a mate to love,
For mateship was his creed:
With a strong, true heart and a soul above
This sad world's sordid greed.
He lived as a mate, and wrote as a mate
Of the things which he believed.
Now many a good man mourns his fate,
And he leaves a nation grieved.

True champion he of the lame and halt:
True knight of the poor was he,
Who could e'er excuse a brother's fault
With a ready sympathy.
He suffered much, and much he toiled,
With his hand e'er for the right:
And he dreamed and planned while the billy boiled
In the bushland camp at night.

Joe Wilson and his mates are sad,
And the tears of bushwives fall,
For the kindly heart that Henry had
Had made him loved of all.
There's many a man who rides today,
Cast down and sore oppressed;
And thro' the land I hear them say:
'Pass, Henry, to your rest.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

To The Boys Who Took The Count

See, I'm writin' to Mick as a bloke to a bloke
To a cobber o' mine at the front
An' I'm gittin' full up uv the mullock they poke
At the cove that is bearin' the brunt.
Fer 'e mus'n't do this an' 'e shouldn't do that,
An' 'e's crook if 'e looks a bit shick,
An' 'e's gittin' too uppish, an' don't touch 'is 'at
But 'ere's 'ow I puts it to Mick.

Now it's dickin to style if yer playin' the game.
If it's marbles, or shinty, or war;
I've seen 'em lob 'ome 'ere, the 'alt an' the lame,
That wus fine 'efty fellers before.
They wus toughs, they wus crooks, they wus ev'ry bad thing,
But they mixed it as gentlemen should.
So 'ere's to the coot wiv 'is eye in a sling,
An' a smile in the one that is good.

It wus playin' the game in the oval an' ring
An' playin' fer orl it wus worth
That give 'em the knack uv a punch wiv a sting
When they fought fer the land uv their birth.
They wus pebs, they wus narks, they wus reel naughty boys,
But they didn't need no second 'int,
So ere's to the bloke wiv 'is swearin' an' noise,
An' 'is foot in a fathom uv lint.

There wus fellers I knoo in the soft days uv peace;
An' I didn't know much to their good;
An' they give more 'ard graft to the overworked p'leece
Than a reel puffick gentleman should.
They wus lookin' fer lash long before it wus doo;
When it come, they wus into it, straight.
So 'ere's to the bloke wiv 'is shoulder shot thro'
'Oo is cursin' the days 'e's to wait.

Ar, dickin to swank! when it comes to a mill,
It's the bloke wiv a punch 'oo's yer friend.
An' a coarse, narsty man wiv the moniker Bill

Earns the thanks uv the crowd in the end.
(An' when I sez 'earns' I am 'opin' no stint
Will be charged agin us by-an'-bye.)
So 'ere's to the boy wiv 'is arm in a splint
An' a 'don't-care-a-dam' in 'is eye.

'Cos the fightin's too far fer to give us a grip
Of the 'ell full uv slaughter an' noise,
There's a breed that gives me the particular pip
Be the way that they torks uv the boys.
O, they're coarse, an' they're rude, an' it's awful to liv
Wiv their cursin' an' shoutin' an' fuss.
Dam it! 'Ere's to the bloke wiv the bad-lookin' chiv
That 'e poked inter trouble fer us!

O, it's dead agin etikit, dead agin style
Fer to swear an' to swagger an' skite;
But a battle ain't won wiv a drorin'-room smile,
An' yeh 'ave to be rude in a fight.
An' it's bein' reel rude to enemy blokes
That'll earn yeh that 'ero-like touch,
So 'ere's to the boy wiv 'is curses an' jokes
'Oo is 'oppin' about on a crutch.

Now, the Turk is a gent, an' they greets 'im as such,
An' they gives doo respect to 'is Nibs;
But 'e never 'eld orf to apolergise much
When 'e slid 'is cold steel in their ribs.
An' our boys won the name that they give 'em of late
'Cos they fought like a jugful uv crooks,
So 'ere's to the bloke wiv the swaggerin' gait
An' a bullet mark spoilin' 'is looks.

So, the bloke wiv the scoff, an' the bloke wiv the sneer,
An' the coot wiv the sensitive soul,
'E 'as got to sit back, an' jist change 'is idear
Uv the stuffin' that makes a man whole.
Fer the polish an' gilt that's a win wiv the skirts
It wears thin wiv the friction uv war.
So 'ere's to the cove 'oo is nursin' 'is 'urts
Wiv an oath in the set uv 'is jor.

When yeh've stripped a cove clean an' got down to the buff
Yeh come to the meat that's the man.
If yeh want to find grit an' sich similar stuff,
Yeh've to strip on a similar plan.
Fer there's nothin' like scrappin' to bare a man's soul,
If it's Billo, or Percy, or Gus.
So 'ere's to the bloke 'oo 'ops round on a pole
An' 'owls songs goin' 'ome on the bus.

Spare me days! When a bloke takes the count in a scrap
That 'e's fightin' fer you an' fer me,
Is it fair that a snob 'as the nerve fer to snout
Any swad 'cos 'is manners is free?
They're deservin' our thanks, frum the best to the worst -
An' there's some is reel rorty, I own
But 'ere's to the coot wiv the 'ang-over thirst
'Oo sprags a stray toff fer a loan.

So I'm writin' to Mick; an' I'm feelin' reel wet
Wiv the sort o' superior nark,
'Oo tilts up 'is conk an' gits orl the boys set,
'Oo are out fer a bit uv a lark.
So I puts it to Mick, as I sez when I starts,
An' I ends wiv the solemest toast:
'Ere's to 'im - (raise yer glass) - 'oo left pride in our 'earts
An' 'is bones on Gallipoli coast.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

To The Memory Of Claude Marquet

Because to him the wise gods gave
Rare gifts, to lesser folk denied,
He might have thriven, Mammon's slave,
Rich in the goods that small men crave,
But poor in all beside.

And yet, because his was the pride
Possessed by earnest men and brave,
He stayed by his weak brothers' side
And there he fought, loved, laughed and died,
And went, loved, to his grave.

Because his was the simple heart
That found small lure in pelf or praise,
For greater ends he plied his art,
And, asking little, played his part
A rich man all his days.

The simple heart, the single aim
That guided e'er his ready pen,
The gay indifference to Fame
Things such as these shall leave a name
Cherished 'mid fellow men.

And we who knew that steady gaze,
The open hand, the ready laugh,
The fighting face and kindly ways,
Know, too, his smiling scorn of praise.
Yet this for epitaph:

A fighter all his days was he,
Yet, dying, left no enemy.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Toolangi

He was obviously English, in his Harris tweeds and stockings.
And his accent was of Oxford, and his swagger and his style
Seemed to hint at halls baronial. He despised the 'demned Colonial';
But he praised the things of England with a large and toothful smile.

He'd discourse for hours together on old England's splendid weather;
On her flowers and fruits and fashions, and her wild-fowl and her game.
At all Austral things he snorted; pinned his faith to the imported.
And he said the land was rotten. But he stayed here just the same.

Why, he came or why he lingered he was never keen to mention;
But he hinted at connections 'mid old England's nobly grand.
Seems he drew a vague remittance - some folk said a meagre pittance
And he sought to supplement it by a venture on the land.

So he journeyed to Toolangi, where the mountain ash yearns skyward,
And the messmate and the blue-gum grow to quite abnormal size.
'Spite the 'stately homes' he vaunted, 'twas the simple life he wanted;
And he got it, good and plenty, at Toolangi on the rise.

It appears he had a notion that his 'breeding' and his 'culture'
Would assure him some position as a sort of country squire;
And he built a little chalet in a pretty, fern-clad valley,
And prepared to squire it nobly in imported farm attire.

But the 'breeding' is in bullocks that they prize upon Toolangi.
Where the forelock-touching habit hasn't grown to any size.
And he found, as on he plodded, and the natives curtly nodded,
That their 'culture's' agriculture at Toolangi on the rise.

First he started poultry farming, as a mild, genteel employment;
For the business promised profit, and the labor wasn't hard;
But he wondered what the dickens was becoming of his chickens,
Till he found some English foxes prowling round his poultry yard.

So he cursed at things Australian, and invested in an orchard
That adjoined his little holding: and foresaw a life of ease.
But a flock of English starlings - pretty, 'harmless' little darlings -
Ate his apples and his peaches as they ripened on the trees.

Once again he cursed the country, and fell back on cabbage-growing
He had heard of fortunes gathered while the price was at the top
So he started, quite forgetting to erect the needful netting,
And some cheerful English rabbits finished off his cabbage crop.

Then his language grew tremendous, and he cursed at all the country;
Cursed its flora and its fauna north and south, from coast to coast:
Sat and cursed for hours together, at the 'demned colonial weather';
Till an English snow-storm bit him just as he was cursing most.

When the snow falls on Toolangi wise folk look to beam and rafter.
For the fall is oftentimes heavy as upon the roof it lies;
And it crushed the dainty chalet nestling in the pretty valley,
In the little fern-clad valley at Toolangi on the rise.

He was cursing yet, and loudly, as he crawled from out the wreckage:
Cursing as he packed his baggage and departed for his club,
For his club down in the city. Vulgar folk - it seems a pity
Hinted meanly that his club-house was a little back-street pub.

Now, away in far Toolangi, where the mountain peaks yearn skyward,
Folk will dropp the dexter eyelid and the case epitomise;
'Yes, 'the Duke' has gone for ever. British pests are far too clever.
And the English climate crushed him at Toolangi on the rise.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Two Veterans

Side by side near the road they stand
Like grave old men grown wise with years,
Veterans twain in this forest land,
Marching together, hand to hand,
Sober as ancient seers.
Gnarled and bitten and scarred and bent,
Sap run sluggish and youth all spent,
They lift spare limbs to the heartening sky,
World-worn and weary, yet loth to die.

They had known the bite of the blunt stone axe
(Wounds like warrior's long healed scars)
When they hid the quarry of hunting blacks,
Ranging the forest with eyes on the tracks
That led to these lusty spare
Spars grown old ere the spoilers came
To give this forest to blade and flame;
Too old to profit that ruthless greed
Which their likelier kinsmen went to feed.

For eight score summers the winds that blow
Down thro' the forest have worked their will;
For eight score winters storm and snow,
Frost and fury have bowed them low;
Yet stand the veterans still,
By the side of the road where the cars run down
With their transient freights to the mushroom town;
And they lift spare limbs to the deathless sky,
World-worn and weary, yet loth to die.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Uncle Jim

'I got no time fer wasters, lad,' sez 'e,
'Give me a man wiv grit,' sez Uncle Jim.
'E bores 'is cute ole eyes right into me,
While I stares 'ard an' gives it back to 'im.
Then orl at once 'e grips me 'and in 'is:
'Some'ow,' 'e sez, 'I likes yer ugly phiz.'

'You got a look,' 'e sez, 'like you could stay;
Altho' yeh mauls King's English when yeh yaps,
An' 'angs flash frills on ev'rythink yeh say.
I ain't no grammarist meself, per'aps,
But langwidge is a 'elp, I owns,' sez Unk,
'When things is goin' crook.' An' 'ere 'e wunk.

'Yeh'll find it tough,' 'e sez, 'to knuckle down.
Good farmin' is a gift—like spoutin' slang.
Yeh'll 'ave to cut the luxuries o' town,
An' chuck the manners of this back-street gang;
Fer country life ain't cigarettes and beer.'
'I'm game,' I sez. Sez Uncle, 'Put it 'ere!'

Like that I took the plunge, an' slung the game.
I've parted wiv them joys I 'eld most dear;
I've sent the leery bloke that bore me name
Clean to the pack wivout one pearly tear;
An' frum the ashes of a ne'er-do-well
A bloomin' farmer's blossomin' like 'ell.

Farmer! That's me! Wiv this 'ere strong right 'and
I've gripped the plough; and blistered jist a treat.
Doreen an' me 'as gone upon the land.
Yours truly fer the burden an' the 'eat!
Yours truly fer upendin' chunks o' soil!
The 'ealthy, 'ardy, 'appy son o' toil!

I owns I've 'ankered fer me former joys;
I've 'ad me hours o' broodin' on me woes;
I've missed the comp'ny, an' I've missed the noise,
The football matches an' the picter shows.

I've missed—but, say, it makes me feel fair mean
To whip the cat; an' then see my Doreen.

To see the colour comin' in 'er cheeks,
To see 'er eyes grow brighter day be day,
The new, glad way she looks an' laughs an' speaks
Is worf ten times the things I've chucked away.
An' there's a secret, whispered in the dark,
'As made me 'eart sing like a flamin' lark.

Jist let me tell yeh 'ow it come about.
The things that I've been thro' 'ud fill a book.
Right frum me birf Fate played to knock me out;
The 'and that I 'ad dealt to me was crook!
Then comes Doreen, an' patches up me parst;
Now Forchin's come to bunk wiv me at larst.

First orf, one night poor Mar gits suddin fits,
An' floats wivout the time to wave 'good-byes.'
Doreen is orl broke up the day she flits;
It tears me 'eart in two the way she cries.
To see 'er grief, it almost made me glad
I never knowed the mar I must 'ave 'ad.

We done poor Muvver proud when she went out
A slap-up send-orf, trimmed wiv tears an' crape.
An' then fer weeks Doreen she mopes about,
An' life takes on a gloomy sorter shape.
I watch 'er face git pale, 'er eyes grow dim;
Till—like some 'airy angel—comes ole Jim.

A cherub togged in sunburn an' a beard
An' duds that shouted "Ayseed!" fer a mile:
Care took the count the minute 'e appeared,
An' sorrer shrivelled up before 'is smile,
'E got the 'ammer-lock on my good-will
The minute that 'e sez, 'So, this is Bill.'

It's got me beat. Doreen's late Par, some way,
Was second cousin to 'is bruvver's wife.
Somethin' like that. In less than 'arf a day
It seemed 'e'd been my uncle orl me life.

'E takes me 'and: 'I dunno 'ow it is,'
'E sez, 'but, lad, I likes that ugly phiz.'

An' when 'e'd stayed wiv us a little while
The 'ouse begun to look like 'ome once more.
Doreen she brightens up beneath 'is smile,
An' 'ugs 'im till I kids I'm gettin' sore.
Then, late one night, 'e opens up 'is scheme,
An' passes me wot looks like some fond dream.

'E 'as a little fruit-farm, doin' well;
'E saved a tidy bit to see 'im thro';
'E's gittin' old fer toil, an' wants a spell;
An' 'ere's a 'ome jist waitin' fer us two.
'It's 'ers an' yours fer keeps when I am gone,'
Sez Uncle Jim. 'Lad, will yeh take it on?'

So that's the strength of it. An' 'ere's me now
A flamin' berry farmer, full o' toil;
Playin' joo-jitsoo wiv an' 'orse an' plough,
An' coaxin' fancy tucker frum the soil,
An' longin', while I wrestles with the rake,
Fer days when me poor back fergits to ache.

Me days an' nights is full of schemes an' plans
To figger profits an' cut out the loss;
An' when the pickin's on, I 'ave me 'an's
To take me orders while I act the boss;
It's sorter sweet to 'ave the right to rouse....
An' my Doreen's the lady of the 'ouse.

To see 'er bustlin' 'round about the place,
Full of the simple joy o' doin' things,
That thoughtful, 'appy look upon 'er face,
That 'ope an' peace an' pride o' labour brings,
Is worth the crowd of joys I knoo one time,
An' makes regrettin' 'em seem like a crime.

An' ev'ry little while ole Uncle Jim
Comes up to stay a bit an' pass a tip.
It gives us 'eart jist fer to look at 'im,
An' feel the friendship in 'is warm 'and-grip.

'Im, wiv the sunburn on 'is kind ole dile;
'Im, wiv the sunbeams in 'is sweet ole smile.

'I got no time fer wasters, lad,' sez 'e,
'But that there ugly mug o' yourn I trust.'
An' so I reckon that it's up to me
To make a bloomin' do of it or bust.
I got to take the back-ache wiv the rest,
An' plug along, an' do me little best.

Luck ain't no steady visitor, I know;
But now an' then it calls—fer look at me!
You wouldn't take me, 'bout a year ago,
Free gratis wiv a shillin' pound o' tea;
Then, in a blessed leap, ole Forchin lands
A missus an' a farm fair in me 'ands.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Upon The Road To Rockabout

Upon the road to Rockabout
I came upon some sheep -
A large and woolly flock about
As wide as it was deep.

I was about to turn about
To ask the man to tell
Some things I wished to learn about
Both sheep and wool as well,

When I beheld a rouseabout
Who lay upon his back
Beside a little house about
A furlong from the track.

I had a lot to talk about,
And said to him "Good day."
But he got up to walk about,
And so I went away -

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

'Urry

Now, Ma-til-der! Ain't cher dressed yet? I declare, the girl ain't up!
Last as ushul. Move yerself, you sleepy'-ead!
Are you goin' to lie there lazin',
W'ile I -- Nell, put down that basin;
Go an' see if Bill has got the poddies fed;
Tell 'im not to move that clucky -- ho, yer up, me lady, eh?
That's wot comes from gallivantin' lat ut night.
Why, the sun is nearly -- see now,
Don't chu dare talk back at me now!
Set the table, Nell! Where's Nell? Put out that light!

Now then, 'urry, goodness, 'urry! Mary, tell the men to come.
Oh there, drat the girl! MA-TIL-DER! where's the jam?
You fergot it? Well, uv all ther ...
Mary! 'Ear me tell you call ther ...
Lord! there's Baldy TANGLED IN THE BARB'-WIRE -- SAM!
Now, then, take 'er steady, clumsy, or she'll cut herself -- LEAVE OFF!
Do you want the cow to -- There! I never did!
Well, you mighter took 'er steady.
Sit up, Dad, yer late already.
Did ju put the tea in, Mary? Where's the lid?

Oh, do 'urry! Where's them buckets? Nell, 'as Bill brought in the cows?
Where's that boy? Ain't finished eatin' yet, uv course;
Eat all day if 'e wus let to.
Mary, where'd yer father get to?
Gone! Wot! Call 'im back! DAD! Wot about that 'orse?
No, indeed, it ain't my business; you kin see the man yerself.
No, I won't! I'm sure I've quite enough to do.
If 'e calls ter-day about it,
'E kin either go without it,
Or lest walk acrost the paddick out to you.

Are the cows in, B-i-ll? Oh, there they are. Well, nearly time they -- Nell,
Feed the calves, an' pack the -- Yes, indeed ju will!
Get the sepy-rater ready.
Woa, there, Baldy -- steady, steady.
Bail up. Stop-er! Hi, Matilder! MARY! BILL!
Well, uv all th' . . . Now you've done it.

Wait till Dad comes 'ome to-night;
When 'e sees the mess you've -- Don't stand starin' there!
Go an' get the cart an' neddy;
An' the cream cans - are they ready?
Where's the ... There! Fergot the fowls, I do declare!

Chuck! -- Chook! -- CHOOK! Why, there's that white un lost another chick to-day!
Nell, 'ow many did I count? -- Oh, stop that row!
Wot's 'e doin'? Oh, you daisy!
Do you mean to tell me, lazy,
Thet you 'aven't fed the pigs until jus' now?
Oh, do 'urry! There's the men ull soon be knockin' off fer lunch.
An' we 'aven't got the ... Reach that bacon down.
Get the billies, Nell, an' - Mary,
Go an' fetch the ... Wot? 'Ow dare 'e!
Bill, yer NOT to wear yer best 'at inter town!

'Ave you washed the things, Matilder? Oh, do 'urry, girl, yer late!
Seems to me you trouble more -- TAKE CARE! -- You dunce!
Now you've broke it! Well I never!
Ain't chu mighty smart an' clever;
Try'n to carry arf a dozen things at once.
No back answers now! You hussy! Don't chu dare talk back at me
Or I'll ... Nelly, did ju give them eggs to Bill?
Wot? CHU NEVER? Well I ... Mary,
Bring them dishes frum the dairy;
No, not them, the ... Lord, the sun's be'ind the hill!

'Ave you cleaned the sepy-rater, Nell? Well, get along to bed.
No; you can't go 'crosst to Thompson's place to-night;
You wus there las' Chusday - See, miss,
Don't chu toss your head at me, miss!
I won't 'ave it. Mary, 'urry with that light!
Now then, get yer Dad the paper. Set down, Dad -- ju must be tired.
'Ere, Matilder, put that almanick away!
Where's them stockin's I wus darnin'?
Bill an' Mary, stop yer yarnin'!
Now then, Dad. Heigh-ho! Me fust sit down ter-day

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Vale

So ends a life, lived to the full alway,
Thro' peace, thro' war, thro' honored peace again,
From youth unto the closing of his day
Lived simply. Yet a giant among men
Today steals quietly to seek his rest
As quietly he lived, yet none his peer.
In service of his land he gave his best
And, in simplicity, found greatness here.

Seeking no honour but his country's thanks,
No man among us won a place more high.
Comrade and leader where the myriad ranks
Stand now with bended heads as John goes by.
Ever a man, a soldier and a friend
In every heart some echo of the knell
That marks his passing throbs for this great end,
Saying in requiem, 'Pass, John, all is well.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Vi'Lits

I wus pickin' gipsy vi'lits fer to try an' square Doreen.
We 'ad words . . . about pianners - fer she wants one awful keen
'Igh words, about 'igh-toned idears - an', like a love-sick fool, 'Ere I'm pickin'
gipsy vi'lits when the kid come 'ome frum school.
'E started school a month ago, an' ain't got very far;
But, judgin' be the scraps 'e 'as, 'e's takin' after Par.

I tips there's somethin' wrong, the way 'e sneaks around the 'ouse.
An' then I seen 'is eye. Oh, strike! 'E 'ad a bonzer mouse!
A reel black-eye, that, in me day, I would 'a' worn wiv pride.
But I'm a father now, an' sez, "Ere, son, you git inside
An' show yer mother that there eye. 'Ow did it come about?'
Sez 'e, 'A big bloke gimme that. I knocked the beggar out!'

I looks fer 'arf a second at the fambily disgrace,
Then I picks another vi'lit so 'e couldn't see me face.
I wus grinnin' most unfatherlike, an' feelin' good inside.
'You show yer Mar that eye uv yours. I'm 'shamed uv you!' I lied.
I watch 'im creep inside the 'ouse, an' 'ear 'is mother's yell.
An' then I straightens up me face an' goes inside as well.

'Twus raw beef-steak an' vinegar, an' tears, before she's done.
An' the sort uv look she gimme sez, 'Yeh see 'ow 'e's begun!
I don't disturb the rites excep' to give some kind advice.
In younger days I've caught black-eyes, an' give 'em once or twice.
'That big boy should be punished,' sez Doreen, 'oo 'it our Bill.'
I pats the 'ero's bandages, an' answers 'er, "E will.'

That ev'nin', down be'ind the shed, near where the scrub grows dense,
I gives young Bill a lesson in the art uv self-defence.
I teaches 'im an uppercut that Ginger Mick tort me
In ole days, down in Spadger's Lane. I gits down on me knee
To show 'im 'ow to time 'is 'it. 'E sneaks beneath me guard
Quite sudden, while I'm yappin', an' 'e cracks me one reel 'ard.

Did it please me? Wot do you think? Strike! That kid 'as got the knack!
An' it pleased me all to pieces 'ow the ole game all came back:
Left-swings an' jolts an' short-arm jabs - the 'ole dash box uv tricks,
Sich as we used down in the Lane when we wus short uv bricks.
I'm showin' 'im a fancy 'it, a reel ole ding-dong clout,
When the murderin' young savage tries to knock me front teeth out!

Uv course, 'e 'urt 'is little 'and, an' fetches out a yell
That brings Doreen down double quick. An' then - it wus merry 'ell.
She grabs the kid up in 'er arms, an' gives me sich a look
As I ain't seen since years ago, when I done - somethin' crook.
'You'll 'ave 'im like you wus!' she cries. 'I'd sooner see 'im dead!
You want to make'im . . . ' 'Don't,' I sez. 'We'll take the rest as said.'

It 'urt to see 'er shieldin' 'im as tho' I wus a plague.
An' ain't 'e mine as much as 'ers? Yet, I seen, sort o' vague,
The woman's way she looked at it, the picters that she 'ad
Uv young Bill goin' to the pack, an' follerin' 'is dad.
I tries me 'ardest to ixplain, an' made some fool ixcuse;
But I'm marri'd to a woman, an' - Aw, wot's the flamin' use?

I tells 'er if we'd 'ave young Bill keep up 'is end at school
'E will 'ave to use 'is flippers; but I sez it like a fool.
I sez it like I wus ashamed to 'ave 'im learn to fight,
When all the time, down in me 'cart, I knoo that I wus right.
She just gives me another look, an' goes in wiv the kid.
An' me? I picks them vi'lits up, not knowin' wot I did.

I 'as them fool things in me 'and when I lobs in the 'ouse,
An' makes bets wiv meself about the chances that she'll rouse.
But 'er, she comes the calm an' cold. Think's I, 'Ere's where I fall
Fer a forty-quid pianner, if I want to square it all,
Goo'-bye to forty lovely quid - time-paymint, fifty-three -
Then all at once she smiles an' sez, 'Did you pick those fer me?'

'Did you pick those fer me,' she sez. 'Oh, Bill!' 'an then, 'Oh, Bill!'
I 'ints I 'ad idears to leave 'em to 'er in me will.

She grabs them dilly vi'lits, an' she 'olds 'em to 'er nose.
'Oh, Bill!' she smiles, 'You alwus knoo 'ow fond I wus uv those!
Oh, Bill! You dear!' She 'ugs me then, jist in the same ole way.
'Struth! I'm marri'd to a woman, an' . . . I'll learn young Bill some day!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Waiting

Oh, how I love the fine old chap
Who sits upon my left at meals,
And drops his cabbage, in my lap
From swooping fork, while he reveals
How he, at Hay, in '83,
Gave Hamlet's grand so-lil-o-quee.

He slops his supper beer o' nights,
Or fills my dexter ear with stout,
While strenuously he recites,
And hurls his lanky limbs about,
To prove that every modern cuss
Has missed the true Polonius.

His oysters down my back he'll throw,
Or freely spray me with his soup,
When suddenly inspired to show
How savage Ingomar should whoop,
Or illustrate the proper scream
With which to finish 'Denver's Dream.'

He throws his turnips everywhere;
With breakfast-tea he scalds my legs;
I've spuds and carrots in my hair;
And oft he's smitten me with eggs.
If e'er he shows, with humor grim
I'll throw these things all back at him.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Walhalla

Dark lady of the laggard dawn,
Hiding within her gully deep;
Long have night's curtains been withdrawn
Before her earliest sun-shaft's peep.
And, long before the sun sinks down,
Eve's eager shadows creep her way,
Committing to the sheltered town
Nought but a niggard glimpse of day.

And shy enough she seems these days
Who was, long since, belle of them all;
When booted diggers went their way
Around about her ramparts tall.
Full generous she was and proud,
Proffering gold by ton on ton,
Where once the toiling, teaming crowd
Made most of her ungenerous fun.

For rich she was beyond belief
Full rich enough to make man's strife;
But her youth, like her day, was brief
Too brief, but filled with glamorous life
While her wealth spread her wide renown,
While gold called to man's highest hopes
And urgent diggers crowded round
By these, her mighty timbered slopes.

Now, as calm days come and go
Peaceful her quiet hamlet sleeps
A full three thousand feet below
The far crests of her wooded steeps;
And nought, save gnarled old English trees,
Stir to recall dead day passed on,
To leave her with proud memories
Of great and golden youth long gone.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Wanderers Lost

Oh, we are the phantoms of rovers lost
See how the mocking mirages play!
Men who have ventured and paid the cost.
Lone, waiting women, 'tis vain to pray!
We dies unshriven, as rovers die,
And no man knows where our white bones lie.
Black birds gather when rovers stray,
Out where the mocking mirages play.

A maiden has waited a long year thro'.
Mark where a crow from the northward flies!
'Ah, can he be false that had sworn so true?'
They say that a wanderer woos with lies.
A maiden has waited and counted the days,
Since a lover went roving the northward ways.
What do they profit - unheeded sighs?
Mark where a crow from the northward flies!

Out in the desert a still thing lies.
Westward the sun is sinking low.
Who is to mourn when a rover dies?
Hark! 'Tis the caw of a sated crow.
Who is to tell of a mad'ning thrist
Of a lonely death in a land accurst?
Merciful God! Is she ne'er to know?
(Hark to the caw of a sated crow.)

Oh, we are the legion that never came back
Ever have rovers to count the cost.
Men who went out on the waterless track.
Curst is the plain that was ne'er recross'd!
Restless to roam o'er the desert our doom,
Till our end shall be known and our bones find a tomb.
Mourn for the souls of wanderers lost,
Ever have rovers to count the cost.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Wangaratta

At the meeting of the waters
Where the dark tree shadows play
Wangaratta's sons and daughters
Dream the drowsy hours away;
Placid see the season's greeting
Winter storm and summer sun
Wed, to flow henceforth as one.
Where two northbound rivers meeting,

Long since prone to sudden dangers
When, to dim her dawning pride,
Morgan and his wild bushrangers
Thronged her pleasant countryside,
Now in her quiet graveyard resting
Lies old shame and that rash lad,
Where a mate, on tin attesting,
Pleads that 'he was not all bad.'

Crime and she are almost strangers
Now, since those ill doers died.
Bishops reign where once bushrangers
Slew her peace and shamed her pride.
And content within her waxes
In this pious atmosphere
Where naught now save threat-worn taxes
Wakens echoes of past fear.

At the meeting of the waters
Where tree shadows shift and sway,
Nothing lingers here that slaughters
Her bucolic calm away.
Done at last with Youth's adventure
Quiet lady slow to move,
And wealthier grown she lives down censure
As she drifts in one straight groove.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Wangled By The Wayside

'Country blokes is kind,' he said,
And sat upon his swag
(I had no pipe tobacco,
So he said he'd 'risk a fag.')

'A country bloke's my sort o' bloke,
As I've had cause to find.
Them city coves is cold as mud:
But country blokes is kind.

'Now, f'rinstance, just you take yerself.
I meets you on the road,
A stranger, fur as I'm concerned
A cove I've never knowed.
An' when I sprags you for a smoke,
I'll bet you didn't mind.
You done your best; tho' fags is muck.
Country blokes is kind.

'Country hearts is rightly placed
A every battler knows.
If I'd have asked you for a feed,
Or p'raps some carst-off clo'es,
I'll wager you'd have searched your house
For all that you could find
In shape of tucker or of duds,
Yes; country blokes is kind.

'But city coves! - I ain't been there
For years - nigh on fifteen.
But lately I meandered down
Just for a change of scene
But rekernise a human bean?
They ain't that way inclined,
That crowd of stone-eyed strangers there.
Not like the conutry kind.

'To ask a bob for food or drink
In cities is a sin,
An' they goes an' calls a copper,

An' the copper turns you in.
But, if you pitch a likely tale,
Most like you don't git fined.
So I hoofs it back to country scenes
Where blokes is nice and kind.

'So here I am, back in the bush,
Still battlin' an' dead-broke.
An' the minnit I seen you I sez,
'Now, there's a country bloke,'
I sez. 'He's got that sort of face.'
I'm broke, but I'm not blind.
Stone-broke ... Well, I best push along ...
Thanks. Country blokes is kind.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

War

'E sez to me, 'Wot's orl this flamin' war?
The papers torks uv nothin' else but scraps.
An'wot's ole England got snake-'eaded for?
An' wot's the strength uv callin' out our chaps?'
'E sez to me, 'Struth! Don't she rule the sea?
Wot does she want wiv us?' 'e sez to me.

Ole Ginger Mick is loadin' up 'is truck
One mornin' in the markit feelin' sore.
'E sez to me, 'Well, mate, I've done me luck;
An' Rose is arstin', 'Wot about this war?'
I'm gone a tenner at the two-up school;
The game is crook, an' Rose is turnin' cool.

'E sez to me, "Ow is it fer a beer?"
I tips 'im 'ow I've told me wife, Doreen,
That when I comes down to the markit 'ere
I dodges pubs, an' chucks the tipples, clean.
Wiv 'er an' kid alone up on the farm
She's full uv fancies that I'll come to 'arm.

"Enpecked!" 'e sez. An' then, 'Ar, I dunno.
I wouldn't mind if I wus in yer place.
I've 'arf a mind to give cold tea a go
It's no game, pourin' snake-juice in yer face.
But, lad, I 'ave to, wiv the thirst I got.
I'm goin' over now to stop a pot.'

'E goes acrost to find a pint a 'ome;
An' meets a pal an' keeps another down.
Ten minutes later, when 'e starts to roam
Back to the markit, wiv an ugly frown,
'E spags a soljer bloke 'oo's passin' by,
An' sez 'e'd like to dot 'im in the eye.

'Your sort,' sez Mick, 'don't know yer silly mind!
They lead yeh like a sheep; it's time yeh woke
The 'eads is makin' piles out uv your kind!'
'Aw, git yer 'ead read!' sez the soljer bloke.

'Struth! 'e wus willin' wus that Kharki' chap;
I 'ad me work cut out to stop a scrap.

An 'as the soljer fades acrost the street,
Mick strikes a light an' sits down on 'is truck,
An' chews 'is fag - a sign 'is nerve is beat
An' swears a bit, an' sez 'e's done is luck.
'E grouches there ten minutes, maybe more,
Then sez quite sudden, 'Blarst the flamin'war!'

Jist then a motor car goes glidin' by
Wiv two fat toffs be'ind two fat cigars;
Mick twigs 'em frum the corner uv 'is eye
'I 'ope,' 'e sez, 'the 'Uns don't git my cars.
Me di'mons, too, don't let me sleep a wink...
Ar, 'Struth! I'd fight fer that sort - I don't think.'

'E sits there while I 'arness up me prad,
Chewin' 'is gag an' starin' at the ground.
I tumbles that 'e's got the joes reel bad,
An' don't say nothin' till 'e comes around.
'E sez 'is luck's a nark, an' swears some more.
An' then: 'Wot is the strength uv this 'ere war?'

I tells 'im wot I read about the 'Uns,
An' wot they done in Beljum an' in France,
Wiv drivin' Janes an' kids before their guns,
An' never givin' blokes a stray dawg's chance;
An' 'ow they thing they got the whole world beat.
Sez 'e, 'I'll crack the first Ducth cow I meet!'

Mick listen, while I tell 'im 'ow they starts
Be burnin' pore coves 'omes an' killin' kids,
An' comin' it reel crook wiv decent tarts,
An' fightin' foul, as orl the rules forbids,
Leavin' a string uv stiff-uns in their track.
Sez Mick, 'The dirt cows! They wants a crack!'

'E chews it over soid fer a bit,
Workin' 'is copper-top a double shift.
I don't need specs to see that 'e wus 'it
be somethin' more than Rosie's little rift.

'If they'd done that,' 'e sez, 'out 'ere - Ar, rats!
Why don't ole Eng;and belt 'em in the slats?'

Then Mick gits up an' starts another fag.
'Ar, well,' 'e sez, 'it's no affair uv mine,
If I don't work they'd pinch me on the vag;
But I'm not keen to fight so toffs kin dine
On pickled olives . . . Blarst the flamin' war!
I ain't got nothin' worth the fightin' for.

'So long,' 'e sez. 'I got ter trade me stock;
An' when yeh 'ear I've took a soljer's job
I gave yeh leave to say I've done me block
An' got a flock uv weevils in me knob.'
An' then, orf-'anded-like, 'e arsts me: 'Say,
Wot are they slingin' soljers fer their pay?

I tells 'im; an' 'e sez to me, 'So long.
Some day this rabbit trade will git me beat.'
An' Ginger Mick shoves thro' the markit throng,
An' gits 'is barrer out into the street.
An' as 'e goes, I 'ears 'is gentle roar:
'Rabee! Wile Rabbee! . . . Blarst the flamin' war!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

War Song

Sing a song o' Hempire
Mother's took a fit,
Nasty Germans buildin' ships,
An' never mentioned it.
Buildin' beastly warships,
Quite a tidy few;
Mother's got an awful start
Baby's got it too.

The King was in the Customs House,
But couldn't find a penny ;
The Lords were at their country seats
And didn't offer any;
A millyun paupers mooned about
With nothin' much to eat,
When down comes Australyer
With a Dreadnought fer the fleet.
Sing a song o' Warships,
'Orrid ole Bulow,
Layin' down 'is Dreadnoughts
An' didn't let us know
Didn't advertise it,
Till the Cablegram
Spread the awful tidings
An' the Empire shouted, 'Damn!'

Sing a song o' Hempire,
Mother's up a tree;
But the Melbourne Stock exchange
'As swore to set 'er free.
Does the German caitiff
Build upon the sly?
Then seventeen suburban may'rs
Will know the reason why!

Seventeen suburban may'rs
Of the Bulldog Breed
Fly to succor Hingland
In her hour of need.

What of 'Constant Reader'?
'Pro Bono Publico'?
Will 'Subscriber' see old Hingland
Flabbergasted? No!!

A reei, trooly battleship,
With guns an' things galore,
And splendid sails of calico
From MacMillan's store
The Stock Exchange will float it
On a sea of gush.
Wot's two millyun quid to us?
We don't care a rush!

(But - whisper - little mother,
If, later on, some day,
We want ter sorter float a loan,
To 'elp us on our way
Borrer of it back, like
After wot 'as passed,
Don't you go an' crool our pitch,
Like you did the last.)

Sing a song o' Britain's fleet
(Ow the Tories raged!)
That's goin' to guard Australyer
(If not otherwise engaged).
Sing of 'Umpty Dumpty
'Im that 'ad the fall.
Rob Australian Peter
To pay old Hinglish Paul.

Sing o' topsy-turvey;
Sing of inside-out,
Of back-to-front and upside-down
An' t'other way about.
Spend ten bloomin' millyun,
Buy yer ships galore,
An' send them all to Hingland
To guard Australyer's shore.

Sing a song o' Hempire!

We've got ter guard 'the heart.'
If it gets a limb lopped off,
That ain't a vital part.
Learn ter think Imperially
Shriek with courage grim
Fer 'the heart' must be protected
Tho' it's tough if we're the limb.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Warrnambool

A civic lady, peerly proud
Of excellences that here crowd
About her trim, well-ordered streets:
The visitor she warmly greets
E'er with a bland and kindly smile,
Full conscious of her grace the while
A grace that comes of duty done
Thro' long years in her grateful sun.

Fit cause for pride lies in her past:
Her solid buildings, reared to last,
And all her old-world atmosphere
Hinting at Holland quaintly here,
With windmills turning in the breeze
Wafted from her historic seas
That knew the sails of venturers
Long ere this pleasant land was hers.

The stone man's footprints, graved in stone,
About her ancient rocks are known;
Here, too, the Spaniard, 'neath her wave,
Found with his stately ship a grave.
And thus, thro' hist'ry, can she show
How men may wax and men may grow
By wisely planned development
To an estate of proud content.

So, 'mid her rich lands of the south
Cast from a burning mountain's mouth
She grows her fruits and lives her life
Remote from hectic city strife.
And who shall come to her wide sea,
Seeking her hospitality,
In this contented dame shall find
A gracious lady, calm and kind.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

War's End Armistice Day 1935

Greyer and older, still they stand
Wearier, quieter, still they pray;
Men who had offered their all to a land.
And their thoughts run back to an olden day
When Youth sailed gallantly, gaily forth
Romance for King, and faith to the fore
To the older, bitterer lands of the north,
To battle, that men might end all war.

Ageing Diggers, grown wiser now,
Again they are dreaming before their shrine
Of the long-gone day when they made the vow
With hearts uplifted, and eyes a-shine.
And thro' their dreaming there drifts to-day
A newer note and a sad refrain,
As their thoughts return to that bitter fray:
'Was it all in vain? Was it all in vain?'

Soberer, sterner, still they hear
Endless thunder of vengeful guns
Echoing out of a long dead year.
And, 'God,' they pray, 'must these our sons
Learn over again all we'd fain forget?
Buy over again their need of peace
Live over again worse madness yet?
Is earth's grim agony never to cease?'

Ageing Diggers before their shrine:
'Is there never a respite, no release?
We who have suffered look for a sign.
Is there never a hope for a lasting peace?
We who have known it all before:
The madness, agony, needless pain
We who once battled to end all war
Was it all in vain? Was it all in vain?'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Washing Day

I. WASHING DAY

The little gipsy vi'lits, they wus peepin' thro' the green
As she come walkin' in the grass, me little wife, Doreen.

The sun shone on the sassafras, where thrushes sung a bar.

-The 'ope an' worry uv our lives wus yelling fer 'is Mar. -

I watched 'er comin' down the green; the sun wus on 'her 'air -
Jist the woman that I marri'd, when me luck wus 'eading fair.

I seen 'er walkin' in the sun that lit our little farm.

She 'ad three clothes-pegs in 'er mouth, an' washin' on 'er arm -

Three clothes-pegs, fer I counted 'em, an' watched 'er as she come.

'The stove-wood's low,' she mumbles, 'an' young Bill 'as cut 'is thumb,'
Now, it weren't no giddy love-speech, but it seemd to take me straight
Back to the time I kissed 'er first beside 'er mother's gate.

Six years 'uv wedded life we've 'ad, an' still me dreams is sweet. . .

Aw, them bonzer little vi'lits, they wus smilin' round me feet.

An' wots a bit uv stove-wood count, wiv paddicks grinnin' green,

When a bloke gits on to dreamin' uv the old days an' Doreen -

The days I thort I snared a saint; but since I've understood

I 'ave wed a dinkum woman, which is fifty times as good.

I 'ave wed a dinkum woman, an' she's give me eyes to see.

Oh, I ain't been mollycoddled, an' there ain't no fluff on me!

But days when I wus down an' out she seemd so 'igh above;

An' a saint is made fer worship, but a woman's made fer love.

An' a bloke is growin' richer as sich things 'e comes to know. . .

(She pegs another sheet an' sez, 'The stove-wood's gettin' low.')

A bloke 'e learns a lot uv things in six years wiv a tart;

But thrushes in the sassafras ain't singin' like me 'eart.

'Tis the thrushes 'oo 'ave tort me in their choonful sort o' way

That it's best to take things singin' as yeh meet 'em day be day.

Fer I wed a reel, live woman, wiv a woman's 'appy knack

Uv torkin' reason inside out an' logic front to back.

An' I like it. 'Struth I like it! Fer a wax doll in a 'ome,
She'd give a man the flamin' pip an' longin's fer to roam.

Aw, I ain't no silk-sock sookie 'oo ab'ors the rood an' rough;
Fer, city-born an' gutter-bred, me schoolin' it wus tough.
An' I like the dinkum woman 'oo . . . (She jerks the clothes-prop, so,
An' sez, so sweet an' dangerous, 'The stove-wood's gittin' low.')

See, I've studied men in cities, an' I've studied 'em out 'ere;
I've seen 'em 'ard thro' piety an' seen 'em kind thro' beer.
I've seen the meanest doin' deeds to make the angels smile,
An' watched the proudest playin' games that crooks 'ud reckon vile.
I've studied 'em in bunches an' I've read 'em one be one,
An' there isn't much between 'em when the 'ole thing's said an' done.

An' I've sort o' studied wimmin - fer I've met a tidy few -
An' there's times, when I wus younger, when I kids meself I knew.
But 'im 'oo 'opes to count the stars or measure up the sea,
'E kin 'ave a shot at woman, fer she's fairly flummoxed me. . .
('I'll 'ave to 'ave some wood,' she sez, and sez it most perlite
An' secret to a pair uv socks; an' jams a peg in, tight.)

Now, a woman, she's a woman. I 'ave fixed that fer a cert.
They're jist as like as rows uv peas from 'at to 'em uv skirt.
An' then, they're all so different, yeh find, before yeh've done.
The more yeh know uv all of 'em the less yeh know uv one.
An' then, the more yeh know uv one. . .(She gives 'er 'air a touch:
'The stove-wood's nearly done,' she sez. 'Not that it matters much')

The little gipsy vi'lits, they wus smilin' round me feet.
An' this dreamin' dilly day-dreams on a Summer day wus sweet.
I 'eaves me frame frum orf the fence, an' grab sme little axe;
But, when I'm 'arf way to the shed, she stops me in me tracks.
'Yer lunch is ready. That ole wood kin wait a while.'
Strike! I'm marri'd to a woman. . . But she never seen me smile.

We Mean To Say

We mean to say, it never has been granted
That anyone but England could decide,
In the crease or at the wicket,
Just exactly what was cricket
And, of course, I mean to say, we have our pride.
The great old game was, as it were, invented
On the playing fields of Eton, and all that,
And to try to steal our thunder
When you think we've made a blunder
Why, dear old bean, that's talking thro' the hat!

We mean to say - the game originated
With us, back in the dear old top-hat days,
And the gentlemen who played it,
By their sterling methods, made it
A top-hole game for sportsmen - hence the phrase.
So, hang it all! If something 'isn't cricket'
It's our prerogative to say so, flat.
And it's cheek, you know, cool cheek,
When you dash in, so to speak,
And take the words out of our mouths like that.

We mean to say, there's quite a choice of phrases
That you might use, if you must make a fuss.
Curse away of you feel hot;
But it's simply bally rot
To apply our own pet shibboleth to us!
There's the code, you know - our code, we would remind you.
We made it for ourselves, and mean to stick it.
And to try to knock us flat
With a boomerang like that
By gad! It isn't done! It isn't cricket!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Weary

Aw, I'm sick o' the whole darn human race,
An' I'm sick o' this mundane ball;
I'm sick o' the sight o' me brother's face,
An' his works an' talk an' all;
I'm sick o' the silly sounds I hear,
I'm sick o' the sights I see;
Ole Omar K. he knew good cheer,
An' it's much the same with me.

Gimme a bit o' a bough to sit
Beneath, an' a book of rhyme,
An' a cuddlesome girl that sings a bit,
But don't sing all the time:
That's all I ask, an' it's only just;
For it's all that I hold dear
A bough an' a book an' a girl an' a crust;
That, an' a jug o' beer.

Then I'll cuddle me girl an' I'll quaff me ale
As we sit on the leafy floor;
An' when the book an' the beer jug fail,
I'll cuddle me girl some more.
For jugs give out an' books get slow.
But you can take my tip for square
Tho' the bough an' the book an' the beer jug go,
The girl, she's always there.

For I'm sick o' the sight o' me brother's face,
An' the world's a sight too slow;
An' I'm sick o' tryin' to go the pace,
When there ain't no pace to go;
I'm sick o' the 'gilded halls of vice,'
An' I'm sick o' the 'sainted shrine,'
I'm sick o' me own an' me friends' advice,
An' the gold that won't be mine.

I'm sick o' the sound o' me fellow's voice,
I'm sick o' his schemes an' shams;
O' trying to choose when there ain't no choice,

An' of damin' several dams;
So, gimme a girl that ain't too slow,
You can keep your book of rhyme,
An' you bough an' bread an' your beer. Wot O!
An' I'll cuddle her all the time.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Week-Ends

I don't know what's come to the summer
In these dull and decadent years;
But a fellow grows glummer and glummer
As promise of autumn appears;
For there's not been a sign of a week-end of shine,
Or the sun on the sea all aglimmer.
And, as the weeks pass, wet and windy, alas,
Thin hope grows yet slimmer and slimmer.

Oh, the sad days, the mad days,
Of rain and wind and mud!
The week speeds by with the sun on high
To come a sickening thud.
When the slippery slosh of the gum golosh
On the soaked and sodden ground
Thro' the country lane sounds once again
When the week-end comes around.

When I go to the bush for a week-end
From a city aglow in the sun,
My holiday comes to a bleak end
Ere half a day's length has been run.
And I gaze thro' the pane at the splattering rain,
Forlorn thro' a profitless Sunday,
And come back to town with the sun pouring down
To smile on my labours on Monday.

Oh, the weekends, when pique ends
In grim and gaunt despair!
Hope wakes anew as all week thro'
The glass is pointing fair,
And fine and warm: but a lurking storm
Behind the high hills grows
To spread dismay each Saturday
And another week-end goes.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

West

'I've seen so much uv dirt an' grime
I'm mad to 'ave things clean.
I've seen so much uv death,' 'e said --
'So many cobbbers lyin' dead --
You won't know wot I mean;
But, lad, I've 'ad so much uv strife
I want things straightened in my life.

'I've seen so much uv 'ate,' 'e said --
'Mad 'ate an' silly rage --
I'm yearnin' for clear thoughts,' said 'e.
'Kindness an' love seem good to me.
I want a new, white page
To start all over, clean an' good,
An' live me life as reel men should.'

We're sittin' talkin' by the fence,
The sun's jist going' down,
Paintin' the sky all gold an' pink.
Said 'e, 'When it's like that, I think --'
An' then 'e stops to frown.
Said 'e, 'I think, when it's jist so,
Uv ... God or somethin': I dunno.

'I ain't seen much uv God,' said 'e;
'Not here nor Over There;
But, partly wot I've seen an' read,
An' partly wot the padre said,
It gits me when I stare
Out West when it's like that is now.
There must be somethin' else -- some'ow.

'I've thought a lot,' said Digger Smith --
'Out There I thought a lot.
I thought uv death, an' all the rest,
An' uv me mates, good mates gone West;
An' it ain't much I've got;
But things get movin' in me 'ead
When I look over there,' 'e said.

'E's got me beat, 'as little Smith.
I knoo 'im years ago:
I knoo 'im as a reel tough boy
'Oo roughed it up with 'oly joy;
But now, well, I dunno.
An' when I ask Mar Flood she sighs --
An' sez 'e's got the Anzac eyes.

She sez 'e's got them soldier's eyes,
That makes 'er own eyes wet.
An' we must give 'im wholesome food
An' lead 'is thoughts to somethin' good
An' never let 'im fret.
But 'e ain't frettin', seems to me;
More - puzzled, fur as I can see.

The clouds above the hills was tore
Apart, until some'ow,
It seemed like some big shinin' gate.
Said 'e, 'Why, lad, I tell yeh straight,
I feel like startin' now,
An' walking on, an' on, an' thro',
Dead game an' - ain't it so to you?

'I've seen enough uv pain,' 'e said,
'An' cursin', killin' 'ordes.
I ain't the man to smooze with God
To get to 'Eaven on the nod,
Or 'owl 'ymns for rewards.
But this believin'? Why - Oh, 'Struth!
This never 'it me in me youth.

'They talk uv love 'twixt men,' said 'e.
'That sounds dead crook to you.
But lately I 'ave come to see.' ...
'Old on,' I said; 'it seems to me
There's love uv women too.
An' you?' 'E turns away 'is 'ead.
'I'm only 'alf a man,' 'e said.

'I've seen so much uv death,' said 'e,

'Me mind is in a whirl.
I've 'ad so many thoughts uv late.' ...
Said I, 'Now tell me, tell me straight,
Own up; ain't there a girl?'
Said 'e, 'I've done the best I can.
Wot does she want with 'arf a man?'

It weren't no use. 'E wouldn't talk
Uv nothin' but that sky.
Said 'e, 'Now, dinkum, talking square,
When you git gazin' over there
Don't you 'arf want to cry?
I wouldn't be surprised to see
An angel comin' out,' said 'e.

'Gone West!' said Digger Smith. 'Ah, lad,
I've seen them goin' West,
An' often wonder, when I look,
If they 'ave 'ad it dealt 'em crook,
Or if they've got the rest
They earned twice over by the spell
They spent down in that dinkum 'Ell.'

The gold was creepin' up, the sun
Was 'arf be'ind the range.
It don't seem strange a man should cry
To see that glory in the sky --
To me it don't seem strange.
'Digger!' said 'e. 'Look at it now!
There must be somethin' else -- some 'ow.'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Wet

Not guilty, yer Honor . . . An' givin' me reasons,
I'd like for to plead this `ere change in the seasons,
Plus one flamin' goat with a terrible silly
Great grin on `is map wot `ud drive a man dilly

`E lobs in me shop an' - "Is this enough rain for yeh?"
Honest yer Honor, I'd like to explain for yeh,
'Twas n't `is tone, or `is talk of the weather
And `twas n't `is grin; but the whole lot together.

"This enough rain for yeh?" Stands there inquirein',
As if this `ere rain's the one thing I'm desirin'.
"Wet, ain't it?" `e grins, with `is mackintosh leakin'
All over me carpit . . . it's justice I'm seekin'

Plain justice, yer Honor. I wonder I'm sober.
You know `ow it poured thro' the whole of October,
Then floods in November - an' this `eathen image
Sez, "Rain enough for yeh?" That started the scrimmage.

"Wet, ain't it?" `e sez. Can a man claim I wrongs `im
Right there in me shop, when I ups an' I dongs `im?
For I done al me cash - as `e well must remember,
The coot - in this `ere ice-cream joint last September.

Yes, ice-cream, yer Honor. Cool drinks - then this weather
An' `im, an' `is talk, an' `is grin all together
Well - a man can stand so much. I ain't prone to fightin',
But, if a fine must be, well, make it a light `un.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Whales

The ways of the learned to me are 'Greek,'
And professors and such amaze me.
I know, without trying, the thing they seek,
Tho' I doubt if for that they'll praise me.

They want to discover why whales are big,
So they sail, at the risk of sinking,
In ships with elaborate, technical rig,
When the facts can be learned by thinking.

I can simply account for the size of a whale
And it doesn't seem much of a riddle
It's because he's so long from the nose to the tail
And in measurement round the middle.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Wheat

'Sowin' things an' growin' things, an' watchin' of 'em grow;
That's the game,' my father said, an' father ought to know.
'Settin' things an' gettin' things to grow for folks to eat:
That's the life,' my father said, 'that's very hard to beat.'
For my father was a farmer, as his father was before,
Just sowin' things an' growin' things in far-off days of yore,
In the far-off land of England, till my father found his feet
In the new land, in the true land, where he took to growin' wheat.

Wheat, Wheat, Wheat! Oh, the sound of it is sweet!
I've been praisin' it an' raisin' it in rain an' wind an' heat
 Since the time I learned to toddle, till it's beatin' in my noddle,
Is the little song I'm singin' you of Wheat, Wheat, Wheat.

Plantin' things — an' grantin' things is goin' as they should,
An' the weather altogether is behavin' pretty good —
Is a pleasure in a measure for a man that likes the game,
An' my father he would rather raise a crop than make a name.
For my father was a farmer, an' 'All fame,' he said, 'ain't reel;
An' the same it isn't fillin' when you're wantin' for a meal.'
So I'm followin' his footsteps, an' a-keepin' of my feet,
While I cater for the nation with my Wheat, Wheat, Wheat.

Wheat, Wheat, Wheat! When the poets all are beat
By the reason that the season for the verse crop is a cheat,
 Then I comes up bright an' grinnin' with the knowledge that I'm winnin',
With the rhythm of my harvester an' Wheat, Wheat, Wheat.

Readin' things an' heedin' things that clever fellers give,
An' ponderin' an' wonderin' why we was meant to live —
Muddlin' through an' fuddlin' through philosophy an' such
Is a game I never took to, an' it doesn't matter much.
For my father was a farmer, as I might 'a' said before,
An' the sum of his philosophy was, 'Grow a little more.
For growin' things,' my father said, 'it makes life sort o' sweet
An' your conscience never swats you if your game is growin' wheat.'

Wheat, Wheat, Wheat! Oh, the people have to eat!
An' you're servin', an' deservin' of a velvet-cushion seat

In the cocky-farmers' heaven when you come to throw a seven;
An' your password at the portal will be, 'Wheat, Wheat, Wheat.'

Now, the preacher an' the teacher have a callin' that is high
While they're spoutin' to the doubtin' of the happy by an' by;
But I'm sayin' that the prayin' it is better for their souls
When they've plenty wheat inside 'em in the shape of penny rolls.
For my father was a farmer, an' he used to sit an' grieve
When he thought about the apple that old Adam got from Eve.
It was foolin' with an orchard where the serpent got 'em beat,
An' they might 'a' kept the homestead if they'd simply stuck to wheat.

Wheat, Wheat, Wheat! If you're seekin' to defeat
Care an' worry in the hurry of the crowded city street,
Leave the hustle all behind you; come an' let contentment find you
In a cosy little cabin lyin' snug among the wheat.

In the city, more's the pity, thousands live an' thousands die
Never carin', never sparin' pains that fruits may multiply;
Breathin', livin', never givin'; greedy but to have an' take,
Dyin' with no day behind 'em lived for fellow-mortals' sake.
Now my father was a farmer, an' he used to sit and laugh
At the 'fools o' life,' he called 'em, livin' on the other half.
Dyin' lonely, missin' only that one joy that makes life sweet —
Just the joy of useful labour, such as comes of growin' wheat.

Wheat, Wheat, Wheat! Let the foolish scheme an' cheat;
But I'd rather, like my father, when viv span o' life's complete,
Feel I'd lived by helpid others; earned the right to call 'em brothers
Who had gained while I was gainin' from God's earth His gift of wheat.

When the settin' sun is gettin' low above the western hills,
When the creepin' shadows deepen, and a peace the whole land fills,
Then I often sort o' soften with a feelin' like content,
An' I feel like thankin' Heaven for a day in labour spent.
For my father was a farmer, an' he used to sit an' smile,
Realizin' he was wealthy in what makes a life worth while.
Smilin', he has told me often, 'After all the toil an' heat,
Lad, he's paid in more than silver who has grown one field of wheat.'

Wheat, Wheat, Wheat! When it comes my turn to meet
Death the Reaper, an' the Keeper of the Judgment Book I greet,

Then I'll face 'em sort o' calmer with the solace of the farmer
That he's fed a million brothers with his Wheat, Wheat, Wheat.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

When So Dispoged

Oh, foolish flapper, keen to be
Considered cute and up-to-date,
Sit down a while and hark to me,
And I shall truly read your fate
Not in a tea-cup, sweetling mine;
But in the leas of a gin-and-two,
Manhattans swigged before the wine,
Martinis guzzled ere you dine;
There shall I trace your fortune true.

What see we in the stickly smear
Where still the liquor lingers, damp?
A sorry group of hags are here -
Gin-eaters, such as Mistress Gamp.
Here lurks a warning, precious pet,
For those who walk the wobbly path.
That crystal fluid, don't forget,
Was ne'er ingurgitated yet
Without some awful aftermath.

And here we see your own sweet self
Sipping some hocused hypocrene.
Innocuous? Nay, charming elf,
It may be colored pink or green,
Ambrosial amber; 'spite the hue
Such dopes deceptive men sneak in
Its basic bane yet lingers true;
It's giggle-juice, a droll's brew,
It's 'mother's ruin,' per; it's GIN!

Gin that has brought the shame of age,
The maudlin speech, the muddled mind,
Since olden days to saint and sage,
To Sairey Gamp and all her kind.
And if you (as I'll not suppose)
Be 'so dispoged' to misbehave,
I read your progress to the close:
The glazing eye, the reddening nose,
The hobnail liver, and the grave.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

When The Sun's Behind The Hill

There's a soft and peaceful feeling
Comes across the farming hand
As the shadows go a-stealing
Slow along the new-turned land.
The lazy curling smoke above the thatch is showing blue,
And the weary old plough horses wander homeward two 'n' two,
With their chains a'clinkin', clankin', when their daily toil is through,
And the sun's behind the hill.
Then it's slowly homeward plodding
As the night begins to creep,
And the barley grass is nodding
To the daisies, all asleep,
The crows are flying heavily, and cawing overhead;
The sleepy milking cows are lowing sof'ly in the shed,
And above them, in the rafters, all the fowls have gone to bed,
When the sun's behind the hill.
Then it's 'Harry, feed old Roaney!'
And it's 'Bill, put up the rail!'
And it's 'Tom, turn out the pony!'
'Mary, hurry with the pail!'
And the kiddies run to meet us, and are begging for a ride
On the broad old 'Prince' and 'Darkey' they can hardly sit astride;
And mother, she is bustling with the supper things inside,
When the sun's behind the hill.
Then it's sitting down and yarning
When we've had our bite and sup,
And the mother takes her darning,
And Bess tells how the baldy cow got tangled in the wire,
And Katie keeps the baby-boy from tumbling in the fire;
And the baccy smoke goes curling as I suck my soothing briar,
When the sun's behind the hill.
And we talk about the season,
And of how it's turning out,
And we try to guess the reason
For the long-continued drought,
Oh! a farmer's life ain't roses and his work is never done:
And a job's no sooner over than another is begun.
For he's toiling late and early from the rising of the sun
Till he sinks behind the hill.

But it grows, that peaceful feeling
While I'm sitting smoking there,
And the kiddies all are kneeling
To repeat their ev'ning prayer;
For it seems, somehow, to lighten all the care that must be bore
When the things of life are worrying, and times are troubling sore;
And I pray that God will keep them when my own long-day is o'er,
And the sun's behind the hill.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Whose Blame?

'A woman's work is never done,'
Said she.

'From dawn to setting of the sun,'
Said she.

'I toil and moil and work and slave,
And do my best to pinch and save,
And yet you say I don't behave,'
Said she.

And twenty men in twenty carts
In that suburban street
Long, long before the daylight starts
Are setting out with cakes and tarts
And fish and milk and meat
And cauliflowers, beans and bread
What time my lady lies in bed.

'All day I have to live alone,'
Said she.

'Attending to the door or 'phone,'
Said she.

'While you go gaily into town
To meet your friends, I want a gown,
A hat! This life has got me down,'
Said she.

And twenty men when day is done,
In that suburban street,
Who have performed the task of one
(If things more orderly were done),
Drive back along their beat. . .
It seems absurd. But, all the same,
Is it my lady who's to blame,
For all these economic cares,
Or just man's muddling of affairs?

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Why A Picnic, Jane?

But, why a picnic, Jane? We went last year,
And missed the Cup; and you know how you grieved
Because we lost - Oh! yes, you did, my dear.
I had the tip, but I was not believed.
It's just sheer nonsense to deny it all.
And when he won, you said, if you recall,
You'd never miss a chance like that again.
Well, cut the Cup. But why a picnic, Jane?

You know how I hate picnics - sticky things
The grizzling children and the dusty road,
The flies and all those crawlywigs with stings
My dear, I'm not selfish! But that load
Of baskets - Eh? Back him at starting price?
That's an idea. And then I could remain
To take you and the children? - M'yes. Quite nice.
Jolly, of course. But, why a picnic, Jane?

Wait! Have you thought of burglars? There you are!
The empty house. Remember that last case
Near here? ... Bright thought, my dear! You take the car.
You've solved it. I'll stay at home and mind the place.
Lonely? Not I. You take the car, of course.
I've a good book; I'll be all right alone.
That's settled then ... And now, about the horse.
Wait here, and while I think of it, I'll phone.

'Lo! That you, Sam? All set! I can't talk loud.
'Lo! can you hear me? Listen, lad. It's on.
Tomorrow, yes. Count me in the crowd.
Your car - about eleven. They'll be gone.
Great stunt, that picnic! If we make the pace
We ought to get there for the second race.
Well, Jane, that's all fixed up. I've backed our horse.
Eh? Help cut sandwiches? Why, dear, of course.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Why!

Sisters!

I've thought o'er this until my brain has blisters.

Are you, indeed, such valiant resisters

Of all the charm, the grace, the noble bearing

Of that strange creature who's condemned to wearing

A bifurcated garment, and whose hair

Is pruned, say, monthly - if mere wear and tear

Has not destroyed the crop?

Sisters, I stop

To ponder that strange statement o'er

Once more:

And, though I don't know very much about it,

Frankly, I doubt it.

For if, indeed, you have no conscious aim,

Then why, I claim,

Why, sisters, WHY,

Why the glad eye?

And, by the by,

Why that adorable, coy, cute, elusive, shy

That certain - shall we say, that certain sly

The down-dropped eye

That half expressed desire to gently lean

Oh, you know what I mean.

If there is nothing to it,

Why do you do it?

Sisters, indeed, I am truly perplexed

Nay, almost vexed . . .

Again I pause

To meditate on certain proven laws,

On certain schemes and - shall we call them traps?

Oh, well, perhaps:

Biology and sex and motor rides,

Gardens in moonlight, the jazz, the little dinner, the bush picnic, the surfing
party and many things besides

If you are really never out to catch

(Not to say snatch)

A noble husband, then - wait a minute,

Aha! I knew there must be some catch in it!

Of course, a sudden thought,

He never IS a husband till he's caught!. . .
Let me retaliate,
And boldly state:
A spinster is mistaken in supposing
That any man, no matter how imposing,
How brave, how true, how noble, how devout
A smany of us are, without a doubt
Is out
To catch a wife.
Not - on - your - LIFE!
He's out to catch a maid.
The giddy blade!
To make her wife. Believe it or ignore it,
But, sisters, this dull world's much better for it!

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Winter

Winter comes; and our complaints
Grow apace as summer faints,
Waning days grow dull and drear,
Something tells, too well, I fear,
That I've found a germ or two;
Something seems - ee! - ah! Tish-OO.

Subthig certigly does tell
That I'b very far frob weel.
Ad I'b cadging cold, I fear
As the wading days grow near,
Winter cubs; ad our complades
Grow apace as subber fades.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Winter Rhapsody

Winter has come; and tardily
Now little nipping winds are rife
Where laggard leaves, on many a tree,
Still cling tenaciously to life.
Spent Autumn with a myriad hues
Had laughed at death and mocked the worm.
And now bluff Winter shouts glad news
Of Winter joys, which I refuse,
I simply sit and squirm.

For Winter, too, holds many joys,
Pert flappers, furred to ears and chin,
With painted lips, to lure the boys,
And hose that lets the breezes in
Go laughing by . . . A gladness cleaves
E'en to yon toiler, who with firm,
Swift strokes, sweeps up the fallen leaves
And, working, whistles. . . . No Man grieves
Save I who sit and squirm.

He whistles on in merry mood,
And sweeps, and sweeps along the street.
'How like all futile life,' I brood.
Nought but frustration, death, defeat.
For as he sweeps, poor toiling hack
Sweeps up dead leaf and deadly germ,
Rude winds arise and sweep them back,
And all's to do again! Alack!
I sit, and sneer, and squirm.

I squirm to hear the football fans'
Impassioned cry of 'On the ball!'
Lure of the links, the punter's plans
I squirm, I squirm, and scorn them all,
I squirm while thrushes, fluting free,
Shout triumph over clammy care....
Ah, laggard leaf upon the tree,
Squirm on, and join my thenody;
For Winter's only gift to me

Is woollen underwear.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Wisdom After Victory

Now comes to an end all our dolorous drifting;
Clouds pass away and depression is lifting.
Because we were wise in our planning and sought
The lesser of ills that the greater be fought
Hope springs again in the heart of the nation;
Because we were brave and accepted oblation
Of sharp sacrifice, now comes recompense near
With the dawn of our glorious Centenary year.

For the good of our souls have we borne the dark sorrows
Of that gloomy day which buys many bright morrows;
For the good of our land have we chosen to shun
The glittering sand, that real treasure be won.
And we who were counted the prodigal nation
Have won new renown by our self-immolation
And the lands of the earth now in wonder behold
This youngest of lands in grave wisdom grown old.

And now we return with new heart to our labor,
And, where gloom was rife, neighbor smiles upon neighbor;
And now comes, to light our Centenary year
Not the dawn of false hope ever followed by fear
But a dawn that shall last and wax ever in brightness,
Bringing strength to the weak: to the heavy heart, lightness.
Bringing hope to the fearful and ending dismay.
Because we have chosen the fighter's hard way.

Then let us not squander our hardly-won treasure
In pursuit of false joys and enfeebling leisure.
Tried in the fire, we have proven our worth:
We have proven our strength to the peoples of earth.
If courage in ill days has won us salvation,
So wisdom in good days shall flee the temptation
To seek prosperity vain, foolish things.
Let us husband the gifts our Centenary brings.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Woolloomooloo (A Riddle)

Here's a ridiculous riddle for you:

How many o's are there in Woolloomooloo?

Two for the W, two for the m,

Four for the l's, and that's plenty for them.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Work Or Reflection

Now, I always have preserved a certain attitude
Quite definite in reference to Work
('Tis futility concealing
That I have the Weary Feeling
And tendency perennial to shirk)
Still, I always strive to recognise the principle
That earnest, steady toil is ever best;
So that, having recognised it,
Not to say idealised it,
I would fain lay down my pen and take a rest.

For, you understand, to recognise a principle
Is patently a virtue in itself.
After that you have the option,
Of its strenuous adoption,
Or the placing of it gently on a shelf.
For myself, I'm forced to own that though my theory's
A thing of beauty, even in the rough,
Dearth of cash supplies good reasons,
With the Passing of the seasons,
That this simple recognition's not enough.

For it's Work - Toil - Graft
It's accomplishment that matters in the end;
And the act of recognition,
Even by a politician,
Has not ever yet been known to make or mend.
And the man who holds a lamp-post up without much fret or fuss,
He may 'recognise a principle', and feel quite virtuous.

We have read about the lives, in ancient history,
Of the Doers back in ev'ry age and clime;
And their method of reforming
Was reflecting and performing,
More especially the latter, every time.
But the man who sat and recognised the principles,
And calmly left accomplishment to Fate,
May have won a reputation,
As a saviour of the nation,

But his name has been suppressed, at any rate.

This has clearly been the rule since far antiquity:
Before a thing is done a man must act;
And all progress lay in knowing
What to do, and straightway going
And just working till reform became a fact.
But to stand on distant nodding terms with principle
Has been a most unprofitable trick.
You may scan historic pages,
And right down throughout the ages
Mere reflection never laid a single brick.

For it's Graft - Toil - Work,
It's performance that is needed in the land.
Recognition, by the student,
Of the principle is prudent,
But it never yet has shifted any sand.
And Hell is full of futile folk who scorned the verb 'to do,'
Who 'recognised the principle' but failed to see it through.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Yarra Flats

A spieler came to Yarra Glen upon the Yarra flats;
He wore a suit of noisy cheeks and something cute in hats.
He was a wicked man, they say,
Such as they grow down Melbourne way.
A spieler gay,
From Melbourne way,
Who sought for Yarra flats.

He taught them an amusing trick with three elusive cards;
But with suspicion such vain things the Yarra flat regards.
And then, with fingers mighty quick,
He tried them with the thimble trick.
A nimble trick,
The thimble trick,
As tricky as the cards.

But still the stolid natives stood, and let him have his say,
But always changed the subject when he wanted them to play.
They were not parting with their 'dough.'
'But now,' said they, 'give us a show.
We'll do a trick,
The river trick,
The only trick we know.

'We'll bet you fifty pounds,' they said, 'that we produce a man
Who'll throw you clean across the river Yarra - and he can
Right where the stream is swift and wide
And land you on the other side.'
'I call your bluff!
Put up the stuff!'
The spieler chap replied.

They led him to the river bank - the day was bleak and cold
And on his collar and his pants their strong man took a hold.
He swung him once, he swung him twice
(The strong man's grip was like a vice)
Then, with a flop,
He let him dropp
The stream was cold as ice.

The spieler scrambled to the bank. 'I've won!' he cried. 'I've won!'
'Get out!' the simple natives jeered. 'Our strong man hasn't done.
He's only tried it once, you fool!
He's going to try again. Keep cool.'
'I've done my dash;
You take the cash,'
The spieler said: 'I'm full.'

The spieler went from Yarra Glen; his clothes were dripping wet.
'These are,' he murmured brokenly, 'the fliest flats I've met.'
And, as the natives saw him off,
They cheered him on with shout and scoff;
'We're all strong men
In Yarra Glen,
But Yarra flats are off!'

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Yarra Glen

Where the Yarra dreams along,
Now in shadow, now in sun,
Murmuring a drowsy song,
Here she rests, the placid one.
Here she rests and takes her ease,
Peaceful home of cattlemen;
Haste and hustle, things like these,
Touch her lightly - Yarra Glen.

Easy flow with little care
Flows her rich river-flats
'Mid the lush green grasses where
Roam the milkers and the fats;
Where the sun-tanned herdsmen ride
Leisurely about green fields
Sloping to the river-side,
Rich with Nature's kindly yields.

Well content to drift and dream,
Life's high fever stirs her not,
Land of cows and corn and cream
By the hastening world forgot.
Something here of olden days
Lingers still, to wake anew
Memories of placid ways
That her staid forefathers knew.

In this calm backwater set,
Here she drowns well in call
Of the city's fume and fret,
Yet oblivious to it all.
Wisely she forgoes the gift
That fast living brings to men,
Well content to dream and drift
Happy rustic, Yarra Glen.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Yarrowonga

Yarrowonga by herself
Lived too long upon a shelf
She a stolid farmer's wife.
Far remote from modern strife
Drowsily beside her door
Dreamed of hectic days long o'er.

Yarrowonga dreamed in peace,
Watched her flocks and herds increase,
Drugged by wealth she sleepier grew,
Scorned the strenuous and new,
Scorned all haste and modern ways,
Yet oozed contentment all her days.

Yarrowonga now awakes,
And a sudden interest takes
In the schemes of eager men,
Who'd restore her youth again
Who'd renew a youth half lost
And, at her contentment's cost,
Bring life-giving waters down
To rejuvenate her town.

Yarrowonga soon shall be
Resting in an inland sea
Gazing on a man-made lake
That new fruitfulness shall wake
O'er wide fields where drought has spread
Vague alarm and sudden dread.
Then shall Yarrowonga know
The dignity of years ago.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

You And I

They say the eagle is a bird
That sees some splendid sights
When he soars high into the sky
Upon his dizzy flights:
He sees the ground for miles around
Our house, and Billy Johnson's;
But we can not be Eagles, for
That would, of course, be nonsense.

But you and I, some summer day,
Providing we're allowed,
Will go up in an aeroplane
And sail right through a cloud.
But, if they say we may not go,
We'll stay upon the ground
With other things that have no wings,
And watch them walk around.

They say the bottom of the sea
Is beautiful to view;
They say the fish, whene'er they wish,
Can sail and see 'it, too,.
The shining pearls, the coral curls,
The sharks, the squids, the schnappers,
And fish with fins (though not in tins)
And fish with funny flappers.

But you and I, some sunny day,
When weather's in condition,
Will go there in a submarine,
Providing we've permission.
But if they say we may not go
We must respect their wishes;
And you and I will just keep dry
Because we are not fishes.

They say to fly so very high
Is not exactly pleasant.
They say to go deep down below

Is not quite safe at present.
But you and I don't care for that,
And, if there's time for spending,
When work is done, we'll have our fun
By simply just pretending.

The earth is quite a jolly place,
And we don't care for flying;
And things that creep down in the deep
Are sometimes rather trying.
So, if they'll grant a holiday
Or even only half,
We'll lie upon some grassy place,
And think of things, and laugh.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Youth Revisited

Can this be the old town of wheat-teams and saddle-hacks,
Of Ted Toll's smithy, with the anvil ringing clear,
Of stacks in the station yard, and stockmen, and farming hands,
Of bow-legged bound'ry riders coming in for beer
This strange, new, brisk town of sweet-shops and petrol pumps
Petrol pumps with motor cars dashing up and down?
Yet there stands the old church, the bluestone baker's shop,
And the queer, shrunken houses of my old home town.

What has become of him - Little Johnny Parkinson?
Little Johnny Parkinson out upon a bust
The long red beard of him, the red-rimmed eyes of him;
Red from the harvest field and winnowing dust.
Five foot two of him - Little Johnny Parkinson,
Driving in his wheat team, down the dusty street;
Red beard, red eyes, red bandana neckerchief
Little Johnny Parkinson, who took his whiskey neat.

What has become of him - Big Jack Herringford?
Big Jack Herringford, champion of the stacks,
Where the lumpers, laboring, climbed the crazy wooden ways
One, two, three hundred pounds upon their backs.
Big Jack Herringford, soft-hearted Hercules,
Went to the West land and won a fortune there.
Was the gold a bension to Big Jack Herringford?
Does anybody know, or does anybody care?

What has become of him - Black Tom Boliver?
Black Tom, Dude Tom, of the shearing shed
The bold, black eyes of him, the well-oiled curls of him,
The cabbage-tree hat well back upon his head.
What has become of them, all the men I used to know?
Only one I recognise of all men there;
But one has a smile for me - schoolmate Jimmy Tomlinson
Laughing Jimmy Tomlinson, with snow-white hair.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis

Yule Fever (With Apologies To The King's Minstrel)

I must go down to the shops again, to the crowded shops go I
And all I have is a long list of the gifts that I must buy,
And a few bob in the old kick and a mere spot of credit;
For he'll trust me, so the boss said, but I hate the way he said it.

I must go down to the shops again, for the call of Christmastide
Is a stern call and a hard call that may not be denied.
And all I ask is a fair choice at reasonable prices
And a hard heart for bland blokes with blandishing devices.

I must go down to the shops again. There's gifts for Mum and Dad
And Jim's gift and Joe's gift and toy for Peter's lad.
Then all I want are gloves for Clare? And June? I'll send her roses,
And - who's next? The list says - I've lost it! Holy Moses!

But I must go down to the shops again, to the shops and the milling crowd
On a hot day and a fierce day when the skies know ne'er a cloud;
And all I ask is a fair spin 'mid the masses overheating
And the loud bawl of the bored babe, and the toy drums beating.

I must go down to the shops again, for I would be counted still
With the kind ./.. of the free hand in this season of goodwill;
And all I ask is a stout heart to carry on undaunted
While we scour town for the salt-pot that we know Aunt Annie wanted.

I must go down to the shops again, for they'll ply me, sure as fate
With the pink tie and the puce sock, and I must reciprocate.
But all I ask is a long seat when the weary trek is finished
And enough left for the Yule feast ere the bank-roll be diminished.

Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis