

Classic Poetry Series

Charles Stuart Calverley

- poems -

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Charles Stuart Calverley (22 December 1831 – 17 February 1884)

Charles Stuart Calverley was an English poet and wit. He was the literary father of what has been called "the university school of humour".

Early life

He was born at Martley, Worcestershire, and given the name Charles Stuart Blayds. In 1852, his father, the Rev. Henry Blayds, resumed the old family name of Calverley, which his grandfather had exchanged for Blayds in 1807. Charles went up to Balliol College, Oxford from Harrow School in 1850, and was soon known in Oxford as the most daring and high-spirited undergraduate of his time. He was a universal favourite, a delightful companion, a brilliant scholar and the playful enemy of all "dons." In 1851 he won the Chancellor's prize for Latin verse, but it is said that the entire exercise was written in an afternoon, when his friends had locked him into his rooms, refusing to let him out until he had finished what they were confident would prove the prize poem.

A year later, to avoid the consequences of a college escapade (he had been expelled from Oxford), he too changed his name to Calverley and moved to Christ's College, Cambridge. Here he was again successful in Latin verse, the only undergraduate to have won the Chancellor's prize at both universities. In 1856 he took second place in the first class in the Classical Tripos.

Later life

He was elected fellow of Christ's (1858), published *Verses and Translations* in 1862, and was called to the bar in 1865. Injuries sustained in a skating accident prevented him from following a professional career, and during the last years of his life he was an invalid. He died of Bright's disease.

Works

His *Translations into English and Latin* appeared in 1866; his *Theocritus translated into English Verse* in 1869; *Fly Leaves* in 1872; and *Literary Remains* in 1885.

His *Complete Works*, with a biographical notice by Walter Joseph Sendall, a contemporary at Christ's and his brother-in-law, appeared in 1901.

Eserleri:

Translations into English and Latin (1866)
Theocritus translated into English Verse (1869)

Fly Leaves (1872)
Literary Remains (1885)
Complete Works (1901)

A, B, C.

A is an Angel of blushing eighteen:
B is the Ball where the Angel was seen:
C is her Chaperone, who cheated at cards:
D is the Deuxtemps, with Frank of the Guards:
E is the Eye which those dark lashes cover:
F is the Fan it peeped wickedly over:
G is the Glove of superlative kid:
H is the Hand which it spitefully hid:
I is the Ice which spent nature demanded:
J is the Juvenile who hurried to hand it:
K is the Kerchief, a rare work of art:
L is the Lace which composed the chief part.
M is the old Maid who watch'd the girls dance:
N is the Nose she turned up at each glance:
O is the Olga (just then in its prime):
P is the Partner who wouldn't keep time:
Q 's a Quadrille, put instead of the Lancers:
R the Remonstrances made by the dancers:
S is the Supper, where all went in pairs:
T is the Twaddle they talked on the stairs:
U is the Uncle who 'thought we'd be going':
V is the Voice which his niece replied 'No' in:
W is the Waiter, who sat up till eight:
X is his Exit, not rigidly straight:
Y is a Yawning fit caused by the Ball:
Z stands for Zero, or nothing at all.

Charles Stuart Calverley

Beer

1 In those old days which poets say were golden --
2 (Perhaps they laid the gilding on themselves:
3 And, if they did, I'm all the more beholden
4 To those brown dwellers in my dusty shelves,
5 Who talk to me 'in language quaint and olden'
6 Of gods and demigods and fauns and elves,
7 Pan with his pipes, and Bacchus with his leopards,
8 And staid young goddesses who flirt with shepherds:)

9 In those old days, the Nymph called Etiquette
10 (Appalling thought to dwell on) was not born.
11 They had their May, but no Mayfair as yet,
12 No fashions varying as the hues of morn.
13 Just as they pleased they dressed and drank and ate,
14 Sang hymns to Ceres (their John Barleycorn)
15 And danced unchaperoned, and laughed unchecked,
16 And were no doubt extremely incorrect.

17 Yet do I think their theory was pleasant:
18 And oft, I own, my 'wayward fancy roams'
19 Back to those times, so different from the present;
20 When no one smoked cigars, nor gave At-homes,
21 Nor smote a billiard-ball, nor winged a pheasant,
22 Nor 'did' her hair by means of long-tailed combs,
23 Nor migrated to Brighton once a year,
24 Nor -- most astonishing of all -- drank Beer.

25 No, they did not drink Beer, 'which brings me to'
26 (As Gilpin said) 'the middle of my song.'
27 Not that 'the middle' is precisely true,
28 Or else I should not tax your patience long:
29 If I had said 'beginning,' it might do;
30 But I have a dislike to quoting wrong:
31 I was unlucky -- sinned against, not sinning --
32 When Cowper wrote down 'middle' for 'beginning.'

33 So to proceed. That abstinence from Malt
34 Has always struck me as extremely curious.
35 The Greek mind must have had some vital fault,
36 That they should stick to liquors so injurious --
37 (Wine, water, tempered p'raps with Attic salt) --
38 And not at once invent that mild, luxurious,
39 And artful beverage, Beer. How the digestion
40 Got on without it, is a startling question.

41 Had they digestions? and an actual body
42 Such as dyspepsia might make attacks on?
43 Were they abstract ideas -- (like Tom Noddy
44 And Mr. Briggs) -- or men, like Jones and Jackson?
45 Then nectar -- was that beer, or whisky-toddy?
46 Some say the Gaelic mixture, I the Saxon:
47 I think a strict adherence to the latter

48 Might make some Scots less pigheaded, and fatter.
 49 Besides, Bon Gaultier definitely shows
 50 That the real beverage for feasting gods on
 51 Is a soft compound, grateful to the nose
 52 And also to the palate, known as 'Hidgson.'
 53 I know a man -- a tailor's son -- who rose
 54 To be a peer: and this I would lay odds on,
 55 (Though in his Memoirs it may not appear,)
 56 That that man owed his rise to copious Beer.

57 O Beer! O Hodgson, Guinness, Allsopp, Bass!
 58 Names that should be on every infant's tongue!
 59 Shall days and months and years and centuries pass,
 60 And still your merits be unrecked, unsung?
 61 Oh! I have gazed into my foaming glass,
 62 And wished that lyre could yet again be strung
 63 Which once rang prophet-like through Greece, and taught her
 64 Misguided sons that the best drink was water.

65 How would he now recant that wild opinion,
 66 And sing -- as would that I could sing -- of you!
 67 I was not born (alas!) the 'Muses' minion,
 68 I'm not poetical, not even blue:
 69 And he, we know, but strives with waxen pinion,
 70 Whoe'er he is that entertains the view
 71 Of emulating Pindar, and will be
 72 Sponsor at last to some now nameless sea.

73 Oh! when the green slopes of Arcadia burned
 74 With all the lustre of the dying day,
 75 And on Cithæron's brow the reaper turned,
 76 (Humming, of course, in his delightful way,
 77 How Lycidas was dead, and how concerned
 78 The Nymphs were when they saw his lifeless clay;
 79 And how rock told to rock the dreadful story
 80 That poor young Lycidas was gone to glory:~)

81 What would that lone and labouring soul have given,
 82 At that soft moment for a pewter pot!
 83 How had the mists that dimmed his eye been riven,
 84 And Lycidas and sorrow all forgot!
 85 If his own grandmother had died unshriven,
 86 In two short seconds he'd have recked it not;
 87 Such power hath Beer. The heart which Grief hath cankered
 88 Hath one unfailing remedy -- the Tankard.

89 Coffee is good, and so no doubt is cocoa;
 90 Tea did for Johnson and the Chinamen:
 91 When 'Dulce est desipere in loco'
 92 Was written, real Falernian winged the pen.
 93 When a rapt audience has encored 'Fra Poco'

94 Or 'Casta Diva,' I have heard that then
95 The Prima Donna, smiling herself out,
96 Recruits her flagging powers with bottled stout.

97 But what is coffee, but a noxious berry,
98 Born to keep used-up Londoners awake?
99 What is Falernian, what is Port or Sherry,
100 But vile concoctions to make dull heads ache?
101 Nay stout itself -- (though good with oysters, very) --
102 Is not a thing your reading man should take.
103 He that would shine, and petrify his tutor,
104 Should drink draught Allsopp in its 'native pewter.'

105 But hark! a sound is stealing on my ear --
106 A soft and silvery sound -- I know it well.
107 Its tinkling tells me that a time is near
108 Precious to me -- it is the Dinner Bell.
109 O blessed Bell! Thou bringest beef and beer,
110 Thou bringest good things more than tongue may tell:
111 Seared is, of course, my heart -- but unsubdued
112 Is, and shall be, my appetite for food.

113 I go. Untaught and feeble is my pen:
114 But on one statement I may safely venture:
115 That few of our most highly gifted men
116 Have more appreciation of their trencher.
117 I go. One pound of British beef, and then
118 What Mr. Swiveller called a 'modest quencher';
119 That home-returning, I may 'soothly say,'
120 'Fate cannot touch me: I have dined to-day.'

Charles Stuart Calverley

Changed

1 I know not why my soul is rack'd:
2 Why I ne'er smile as was my wont:
3 I only know that, as a fact,
4 I don't.
5 I used to roam o'er glen and glade
6 Buoyant and blithe as other folk:
7 And not unfrequently I made
8 A joke.

9 A minstrel's fire within me burn'd.
10 I'd sing, as one whose heart must break,
11 Lay upon lay: I nearly learn'd
12 To shake.
13 All day I sang; of love, of fame,
14 Of fights our fathers fought of yore,
15 Until the thing almost became
16 A bore.

17 I cannot sing the old songs now!
18 It is not that I deem them low;
19 'Tis that I can't remember how
20 They go.
21 I could not range the hills till high
22 Above me stood the summer moon:
23 And as to dancing, I could fly
24 As soon.

25 The sports, to which with boyish glee
26 I sprang erewhile, attract no more;
27 Although I am but sixty-three
28 Or four.
29 Nay, worse than that, I've seem'd of late
30 To shrink from happy boyhood -- boys
31 Have grown so noisy, and I hate
32 A noise.

33 They fright me, when the beech is green,
34 By swarming up its stem for eggs:
35 They drive their horrid hoops between
36 My legs: --
37 It's idle to repine, I know;
38 I'll tell you what I'll do instead:
39 I'll drink my arrowroot, and go
40 To bed.

Charles Stuart Calverley

Charades

I.

She stood at Greenwich, motionless amid
The ever-shifting crowd of passengers.
I marked a big tear quivering on the lid
Of her deep-lustrous eye, and knew that hers
Were days of bitterness. But, 'Oh! what stirs'
I said 'such storm within so fair a breast?'
Even as I spoke, two apoplectic curs
Came feebly up: with one wild cry she prest
Each singly to her heart, and faltered, 'Heaven be blest!'

Yet once again I saw her, from the deck
Of a black ship that steamed towards Blackwall.
She walked upon MY FIRST. Her stately neck
Bent o'er an object shrouded in her shawl:
I could not see the tears--the glad tears--fall,
Yet knew they fell. And 'Ah,' I said, 'not puppies,
Seen unexpectedly, could lift the pall
From hearts who KNOW what tasting misery's cup is,
As Niobe's, or mine, or Mr. William Guppy's.'

* * *

Spake John Grogblossom the coachman to Eliza Spinks the cook:
'Mrs. Spinks,' says he, 'I've foundered: 'Liza dear, I'm overtook.
Druv into a corner reglar, puzzled as a babe unborn;
Speak the word, my blessed 'Liza; speak, and John the coachman's yourn.'

Then Eliza Spinks made answer, blushing, to the coachman John:
'John, I'm born and bred a spinster: I've begun and I'll go on.
Endless cares and endless worrits, well I knows it, has a wife:
Cooking for a genteel family, John, it's a goluptious life!

'I gets 20 pounds per annum--tea and things o' course not reckoned, -
There's a cat that eats the butter, takes the coals, and breaks MY
SECOND:
There's soci'ty--James the footman;--(not that I look after him;
But he's aff'ble in his manners, with amazing length of limb -

'Never durst the missis enter here until I've said 'Come in':
If I saw the master peeping, I'd catch up the rolling-pin.
Christmas-boxes, that's a something; perkisites, that's something too;
And I think, take all together, John, I won't be on with you.'

John the coachman took his hat up, for he thought he'd had enough;
Rubbed an elongated forehead with a meditative cuff;
Paused before the stable doorway; said, when there, in accents mild,
'She's a fine young 'oman, cook is; but that's where it is, she's
spiled.'

* * *

I have read in some not marvellous tale,
(Or if I have not, I've dreamed)
Of one who filled up the convivial cup
Till the company round him seemed

To be vanished and gone, tho' the lamps upon
Their face as aforetime gleamed:
And his head sunk down, and a Lethe crept
O'er his powerful brain, and the young man slept.

Then they laid him with care in his moonlit bed:
But first--having thoughtfully fetched some tar -
Adorned him with feathers, aware that the weather's
Uncertainty brings on at nights catarrh.

They staid in his room till the sun was high:
But still did the feathered one give no sign
Of opening a peeper--he might be a sleeper
Such as rests on the Northern or Midland line.

At last he woke, and with profound
Bewilderment he gazed around;
Dropped one, then both feet to the ground,
But never spake a word:

Then to my WHOLE he made his way;
Took one long lingering survey;
And softly, as he stole away,
Remarked, 'By Jove, a bird!'

II.

If you've seen a short man swagger tow'rds the footlights at Shoreditch,
Sing out 'Heave aho! my hearties,' and perpetually hitch
Up, by an ingenious movement, trousers innocent of brace,
Briskly flourishing a cudgel in his pleased companion's face;

If he preluded with hornpipes each successive thing he did,
From a sun-browned cheek extracting still an ostentatious quid;
And expectorated freely, and occasionally cursed:-
Then have you beheld, depicted by a master's hand, MY FIRST.

O my countryman! if ever from thy arm the bolster sped,
In thy school-days, with precision at a young companion's head;
If 'twas thine to lodge the marble in the centre of the ring,
Or with well-directed pebble make the sitting hen take wing:

Then do thou--each fair May morning, when the blue lake is as glass,
And the gossamers are twinkling star-like in the beaded grass;

When the mountain-bee is sipping fragrance from the bluebell's lip,
And the bathing-woman tells you, Now's your time to take a dip:

When along the misty valleys fieldward winds the lowing herd,
And the early worm is being dropped on by the early bird;
And Aurora hangs her jewels from the bending rose's cup,
And the myriad voice of Nature calls thee to MY SECOND up:-

Hie thee to the breezy common, where the melancholy goose
Stalks, and the astonished donkey finds that he is really loose;
There amid green fern and furze-bush shalt thou soon MY WHOLE behold,
Rising 'bull-eyed and majestic'--as Olympus queen of old:

Kneel,--at a respectful distance,--as they kneeled to her, and try
With judicious hand to put a ball into that ball-less eye:
Till a stiffness seize thy elbows, and the general public wake -
Then return, and, clear of conscience, walk into thy well-earned steak.

III.

Ere yet 'knowledge for the million'
Came out 'neatly bound in boards;'
When like Care upon a pillion
Matrons rode behind their lords:
Rarely, save to hear the Rector,
Forth did younger ladies roam;
Making pies, and brewing nectar
From the gooseberry-trees at home.

They'd not dreamed of Pan or Vevay;
Ne'er should into blossom burst
At the ball or at the levee;
Never come, in fact, MY FIRST:
Nor illumine cards by dozens
With some labyrinthine text,
Nor work smoking-caps for cousins
Who were pounding at MY NEXT.

Now have skirts, and minds, grown ampler;
Now not all they seek to do
Is create upon a sampler
Beasts which Buffon never knew:
But their venturous muslins rustle
O'er the cragstone and the snow,
Or at home their biceps muscle
Grows by practising the bow.

Worthier they those dames who, fable
Says, rode 'palfreys' to the war
With gigantic Thanes, whose 'sable

Destriers caracoled' before;
Smiled, as--springing from the war-horse
As men spring in modern 'cirques' -
They plunged, ponderous as a four-horse
Coach, among the vanished Turks:-

In the good times when the jester
Asked the monarch how he was,
And the landlady address her
Guests as 'gossip' or as 'coz';
When the Templar said, 'Gramercy,'
Or, 'Twas shrewdly thrust, i' fegs,'
To Sir Halbert or Sir Percy
As they knocked him off his legs:

And, by way of mild reminders
That he needed coin, the Knight
Day by day extracted grinders
From the howling Israelite:
And MY WHOLE in merry Sherwood
Sent, with preterhuman luck,
Missiles--not of steel but firwood -
Thro' the two-mile-distant buck.

IV.

Evening threw soberer hue
Over the blue sky, and the few
Poplars that grew just in the view
Of the hall of Sir Hugo de Wynkle:
'Answer me true,' pleaded Sir Hugh,
(Striving to woo no matter who,)
'What shall I do, Lady, for you?
'Twill be done, ere your eye may twinkle.
Shall I borrow the wand of a Moorish enchanter,
And bid a decanter contain the Levant, or
The brass from the face of a Mormonite ranter?
Shall I go for the mule of the Spanish Infantar -
(That R, for the sake of the line, we must grant her,) -
And race with the foul fiend, and beat in a canter,
Like that first of equestrians Tam o' Shanter?
I talk not mere banter--say not that I can't, or
By this MY FIRST--(a Virginia planter
Sold it me to kill rats)--I will die instanter.'
The Lady bended her ivory neck, and
Whispered mournfully, 'Go for--MY SECOND.'
She said, and the red from Sir Hugh's cheek fled,
And 'Nay,' did he say, as he stalked away
The fiercest of injured men:
'Twice have I humbled my haughty soul,

And on bended knee I have pressed MY WHOLE -
But I never will press it again!

V.

On pinnacled St. Mary's
Lingers the setting sun;
Into the street the blackguards
Are skulking one by one:
Butcher and Boots and Bargeman
Lay pipe and pewter down;
And with wild shout come tumbling out
To join the Town and Gown.

And now the undergraduates
Come forth by twos and threes,
From the broad tower of Trinity,
From the green gate of Caius:
The wily bargeman marks them,
And swears to do his worst;
To turn to impotence their strength,
And their beauty to MY FIRST.

But before Corpus gateway
MY SECOND first arose,
When Barnacles the freshman
Was pinned upon the nose:
Pinned on the nose by Boxer,
Who brought a hobnailed herd
From Barnwell, where he kept a van,
Being indeed a dogsmeat man,
Vendor of terriers, blue or tan,
And dealer in MY THIRD.

'Twere long to tell how Boxer
Was 'countered' on the cheek,
And knocked into the middle
Of the ensuing week:
How Barnacles the Freshman
Was asked his name and college;
And how he did the fatal facts
Reluctantly acknowledge.

He called upon the Proctor
Next day at half-past ten;
Men whispered that the Freshman cut
A different figure then:-
That the brass forsook his forehead,
The iron fled his soul,
As with blanched lip and visage wan

Before the stony-hearted Don
He kneeled upon MY WHOLE.

VI.

Sikes, housebreaker, of Houndsditch,
Habitually swore;
But so surpassingly profane
He never was before,
As on a night in winter,
When--softly as he stole
In the dim light from stair to stair,
Noiseless as boys who in her lair
Seek to surprise a fat old hare -
He barked his shinbone, unaware
Encountering MY WHOLE.

As pours the Anio plainward,
When rains have swollen the dykes,
So, with such noise, poured down MY FIRST,
Stirred by the shins of Sikes.
The Butler Bibulus heard it;
And straightway ceased to snore,
And sat up, like an egg on end,
While men might count a score:
Then spake he to Tigerius,
A Buttons bold was he:
'Buttons, I think there's thieves about;
Just strike a light and tumble out;
If you can't find one, go without,
And see what you may see.'

But now was all the household,
Almost, upon its legs,
Each treading carefully about
As if they trod on eggs.
With robe far-streaming issued
Paterfamilias forth;
And close behind him,--stout and true
And tender as the North, -
Came Mrs. P., supporting
On her broad arm her fourth.

Betsy the nurse, who never
From largest beetle ran,
And--conscious p'raps of pleasing caps -
The housemaids, formed the van:
And Bibulus the Butler,
His calm brows slightly arched;
(No mortal wight had ere that night

Seen him with shirt unstarched
And Bob, the shockhaired knifeboy,
Wielding two Sheffield blades,
And James Plush of the sinewy legs,
The love of lady's maids:
And charwoman and chaplain
Stood mingled in a mass,
And 'Things,' thought he of Houndsditch,
'Is come to a pretty pass.'

Beyond all things a Baby
Is to the schoolgirl dear;
Next to herself the nursemaid loves
Her dashing grenadier;
Only with life the sailor
Parts from the British flag;
While one hope lingers, the cracksman's fingers
Drop not his hard-earned 'swag.'

But, as hares do MY SECOND
Thro' green Calabria's copses,
As females vanish at the sight
Of short-horns and of wopses;
So, dropping forks and teaspoons,
The pride of Houndsditch fled,
Dumbfounded by the hue and cry
He'd raised up overhead.

* * *

They gave him--did the Judges -
As much as was his due.
And, Saxon, should'st thou e'er be led
To deem this tale untrue;
Then--any night in winter,
When the cold north wind blows,
And bairns are told to keep out cold
By tallowing the nose:
When round the fire the elders
Are gathered in a bunch,
And the girls are doing crochet,
And the boys are reading Punch:-
Go thou and look in Leech's book;
There haply shalt thou spy
A stout man on a staircase stand,
With aspect anything but bland,
And rub his right shin with his hand,
To witness if I lie.

Charles Stuart Calverley

Companions - A Tale Of A Grandfather

I KNOW not of what we ponder'd
Or made pretty pretence to talk,
As, her hand within mine, we wander'd
Tow'rd the pool by the lime-tree walk,
While the dew fell in showers from the passion flowers
And the blush-rose bent on her stalk.

I cannot recall her figure:
Was it regal as Juno's own?
Or only a trifle bigger
Than the elves who surround the throne
Of the Faëry Queen, and are seen, I ween,
By mortals in dreams alone?

What her eyes were like I know not:
Perhaps they were blurr'd with tears;
And perhaps in you skies there glow not
(On the contrary) clearer spheres.
No! as to her eyes I am just as wise
As you or the cat, my dears.

Her teeth, I presume, were "pearly:"
But which was she, brunette or blonde?
Her hair, was it quaintly curly,
Or as straight as a beadle's wand?
That I fail'd to remark: it was rather dark
And shadowy round the pond.

Then the hand that repos'd so snugly
In mine,—was it plump or spare?
Was the countenance fair or ugly?
Nay, children, you have me there!
My eyes were p'haps blurr'd; and besides I 'd heard
That it 's horribly rude to stare.

And I,—was I brusque and surly?
Or oppressively bland and fond?
Was I partial to rising early?
Or why did we twain abscond,
When nobody knew, from the public view
To prowl by a misty pond?

What pass'd, what was felt or spoken,—
Whether anything pass'd at all,—
And whether the heart was broken
That beat under that shelt'ring shawl,—
(If shawl she had on, which I doubt),—has gone,
Yes, gone from me past recall.

Was I haply the lady's suitor?
Or her uncle? I can't make out;
Ask your governess, dears, or tutor.

For myself, I 'm in hopeless doubt
As to why we were there, who on earth we were,
And what this is all about.

Charles Stuart Calverley

Dirge

'Dr. Birch's young friends will reassemble to-day, Feb. 1st.'

White is the wold, and ghostly
The dank and leafless trees;
And 'M's and 'N's are mostly
Pronounced like 'B's and 'D's:
'Neath bleak sheds, ice-encrusted,
The sheep stands, mute and stolid:
And ducks find out, disgusted,
That all the ponds are solid.

Many a stout steer's work is
(At least in this world) finished;
The gross amount of turkies
Is sensibly diminished:
The holly-boughs are faded,
The painted crackers gone;
Would I could write, as Gray did,
An Elegy thereon!

For Christmas-time is ended:
Now is 'our youth' regaining
Those sweet spots where are 'blended
Home-comforts and school-training.'
Now they're, I dare say, venting
Their grief in transient sobs,
And I am 'left lamenting'
At home, with Mrs. Dobbs.

O Posthumus! 'Fugaces
Labuntur anni' still;
Time robs us of our graces,
Evade him as we will.
We were the twins of Siam:
Now SHE thinks ME a bore,
And I admit that I am
Inclined at times to snore.

I was her own Nathaniel;
With her I took sweet counsel,
Brought seed-cake for her spaniel,
And kept her bird in groundsel:
We've murmured, 'How delightful
A landscape, seen by night, is,' -
And woke next day in frightful
Pain from acute bronchitis.

* * *

But ah! for them, whose laughter
We heard last New Year's Day, -
(They reeked not of Hereafter,

Or what the Doctor'd say,) -
For those small forms that fluttered
Moth-like around the plate,
When Sally brought the buttered
Buns in at half-past eight!

Ah for the altered visage
Of her, our tiny Belle,
Whom my boy Gus (at his age!)
Said was a 'deuced swell!
P'raps now Miss Tickler's tocsin
Has caged that pert young linnet;
Old Birch perhaps is boxing
My Gus's ears this minute.

Yet, though your young ears be as
Red as mamma's geraniums,
Yet grieve not! Thus ideas
Pass into infant craniums.
Use not complaints unseemly;
Tho' you must work like bricks;
And it IS cold, extremely,
Rising at half-past six.

Soon sunnier will the day grow,
And the east wind not blow so;
Soon, as of yore, L'Allegro
Succeed Il Penseroso:
Stick to your Magnall's Questions
And Long Division sums;
And come--with good digestions -
Home when next Christmas comes.

Charles Stuart Calverley

Dover To Munich

Farewell, farewell! Before our prow
Leaps in white foam the noisy channel,
A tourist's cap is on my brow,
My legs are cased in tourists' flannel:

Around me gasp the invalids -
(The quantity to-night is fearful) -
I take a brace or so of weeds,
And feel (as yet) extremely cheerful.

The night wears on:- my thirst I quench
With one imperial pint of porter;
Then drop upon a casual bench -
(The bench is short, but I am shorter) -

Place 'neath my head the harve-sac
Which I have stowed my little all in,
And sleep, though moist about the back,
Serenely in an old tarpaulin.

* * *

Bed at Ostend at 5 A.M.
Breakfast at 6, and train 6.30.
Tickets to Konigswinter (mem.
The seats objectionably dirty).

And onward through those dreary flats
We move, with scanty space to sit on,
Flanked by stout girls with steeple hats,
And waists that paralyse a Briton; -

By many a tidy little town,
Where tidy little Fraus sit knitting;
(The men's pursuits are, lying down,
Smoking perennial pipes, and spitting

And doze, and execrate the heat,
And wonder how far off Cologne is,
And if we shall get aught to eat,
Till we get there, save raw polonies:

Until at last the 'grey old pile'
Is seen, is past, and three hours later
We're ordering steaks, and talking vile
Mock-German to an Austrian waiter.

* * *

Konigswinter, hateful Konigswinter!
Burying-place of all I loved so well!
Never did the most extensive printer

Print a tale so dark as thou could'st tell!

In the sapphire West the eve yet lingered,
Bathed in kindly light those hill-tops cold;
Fringed each cloud, and, stooping rosy-fingered,
Changed Rhine's waters into molten gold; -

While still nearer did his light waves splinter
Into silvery shafts the streaming light;
And I said I loved thee, Konigswinter,
For the glory that was thine that night.

And we gazed, till slowly disappearing,
Like a day-dream, passed the pageant by,
And I saw but those lone hills, uprearing
Dull dark shapes against a hueless sky.

Then I turned, and on those bright hopes pondered
Whereof yon gay fancies were the type;
And my hand mechanically wandered
Towards my left-hand pocket for a pipe.

Ah! why starts each eyeball from its socket,
As, in Hamlet, start the guilty Queen's?
There, deep-hid in its accustomed pocket,
Lay my sole pipe, smashed to smithereens!

* * *

On, on the vessel steals;
Round go the paddle-wheels,
And now the tourist feels
As he should;
For king-like rolls the Rhine,
And the scenery's divine,
And the victuals and the wine
Rather good.

From every crag we pass'll
Rise up some hoar old castle;
The hanging fir-groves tassel
Every slope;
And the vine her lithe arms stretches
O'er peasants singing catches -
And you'll make no end of sketches,
I should hope.

We've a nun here (called Therese),
Two couriers out of place,
One Yankee, with a face
Like a ferret's:
And three youths in scarlet caps

Drinking chocolate and schnapps -
A diet which perhaps
Has its merits.

And day again declines:
In shadow sleep the vines,
And the last ray through the pines
Feebly glows,
Then sinks behind yon ridge;
And the usual evening midge
Is settling on the bridge
Of my nose.

And keen's the air and cold,
And the sheep are in the fold,
And Night walks sable-stoled
Through the trees;
And on the silent river
The floating starbeams quiver; -
And now, the saints deliver
Us from fleas.

* * *

Avenues of broad white houses,
Basking in the noontide glare; -
Streets, which foot of traveller shrinks from,
As on hot plates shrinks the bear; -

Elsewhere lawns, and vista'd gardens,
Statues white, and cool arcades,
Where at eve the German warrior
Winks upon the German maids; -

Such is Munich:- broad and stately,
Rich of hue, and fair of form;
But, towards the end of August,
Unequivocally WARM.

There, the long dim galleries threading,
May the artist's eye behold,
Breathing from the 'deathless canvass'
Records of the years of old:

Pallas there, and Jove, and Juno,
'Take' once more 'their walks abroad,'
Under Titian's fiery woodlands
And the saffron skies of Claude:

There the Amazons of Rubens
Lift the failing arm to strike,
And the pale light falls in masses

On the horsemen of Vandyke;

And in Berghem's pools reflected
Hang the cattle's graceful shapes,
And Murillo's soft boy-faces
Laugh amid the Seville grapes;

And all purest, loveliest fancies
That in poets' souls may dwell
Started into shape and substance
At the touch of Raphael. -

Lo! her wan arms folded meekly,
And the glory of her hair
Falling as a robe around her,
Kneels the Magdalene in prayer;

And the white-robed Virgin-mother
Smiles, as centuries back she smiled,
Half in gladness, half in wonder,
On the calm face of her Child:-

And that mighty Judgment-vision
Tells how man essayed to climb
Up the ladder of the ages,
Past the frontier-walls of Time;

Heard the trumpet-echoes rolling
Through the phantom-peopled sky,
And the still voice bid this mortal
Put on immortality.

* * *

Thence we turned, what time the blackbird
Pipes to vespers from his perch,
And from out the clattering city
Pass'd into the silent church;

Marked the shower of sunlight breaking
Thro' the crimson panes o'erhead,
And on pictured wall and window
Read the histories of the dead:

Till the kneelers round us, rising,
Cross'd their foreheads and were gone;
And o'er aisle and arch and cornice,
Layer on layer, the night came on.

Charles Stuart Calverley

Forever

"Forever": 'tis a single word!
Our rude forefathers deemed it two:
Can you imagine so absurd
A view?

"Forever"! What abysses of woe
The word reveals, what frenzy, what
Despair! "For ever" (printed so)
Did not.

It looks, ah me! how trite and tame!
It fails to sadden or appal
Or solace--it is not the same
At all.

O thou to whom it first occurred
To solder the disjointed, and dower
The native language with a word
Of power:

We bless thee! Whether far or near
Thy dwelling, whether dark or fair
Thy kingly brow, is neither here
Nor there.

But in men's hearts shall be thy throne,
While the great pulse of England beats.
Thou coiner of a word unknown
To Keats!

And nevermore must printer do
As men did long ago; but run
"For" into "ever," bidding two
Be one.

"Forever"! passion-fraught, it throws
O'er the dim page a gloom, a glamour:
It's sweet, it's strange; and I suppose
It's grammar.

"Forever"! 'Tis a single word!
And yet our fathers deemed it two:
Nor am I confident they erred;
Are you?

Charles Stuart Calverley

Gemini And Virgo

Some vast amount of years ago,
Ere all my youth had vanished from me,
A boy it was my lot to know,
Whom his familiar friends called Tommy.

I love to gaze upon a child;
A young bud bursting into blossom;
Artless, as Eve yet unbeguiled,
And agile as a young opossum:

And such was he. A calm-browed lad,
Yet mad, at moments, as a hatter:
Why hatters as a race are mad
I never knew, nor does it matter.

He was what nurses call a 'limb;'
One of those small misguided creatures,
Who, though their intellects are dim,
Are one too many for their teachers:

And, if you asked of him to say
What twice 10 was, or 3 times 7,
He'd glance (in quite a placid way)
From heaven to earth, from earth to heaven:

And smile, and look politely round,
To catch a casual suggestion;
But make no effort to propound
Any solution of the question.

And so not much esteemed was he
Of the authorities: and therefore
He fraternized by chance with me,
Needing a somebody to care for:

And three fair summers did we twain
Live (as they say) and love together;
And bore by turns the wholesome cane
Till our young skins became as leather:

And carved our names on every desk,
And tore our clothes, and inked our collars;
And looked unique and picturesque,
But not, it may be, model scholars.

We did much as we chose to do;
We'd never heard of Mrs. Grundy;
All the theology we knew
Was that we mightn't play on Sunday;

And all the general truths, that cakes
Were to be bought at four a-penny,

And that excruciating aches
Resulted if we ate too many:

And seeing ignorance is bliss,
And wisdom consequently folly,
The obvious result is this -
That our two lives were very jolly.

At last the separation came.
Real love, at that time, was the fashion;
And by a horrid chance, the same
Young thing was, to us both, a passion.

Old POSER snorted like a horse:
His feet were large, his hands were pimply,
His manner, when excited, coarse:-
But Miss P. was an angel simply.

She was a blushing gushing thing;
All--more than all--my fancy painted;
Once--when she helped me to a wing
Of goose--I thought I should have fainted.

The people said that she was blue:
But I was green, and loved her dearly.
She was approaching thirty-two;
And I was then eleven, nearly.

I did not love as others do;
(None ever did that I've heard tell of)
My passion was a byword through
The town she was, of course, the belle of.

Oh sweet--as to the toilworn man
The far-off sound of rippling river;
As to cadets in Hindostan
The fleeting remnant of their liver -

To me was ANNA; dear as gold
That fills the miser's sunless coffers;
As to the spinster, growing old,
The thought--the dream--that she had offers.

I'd sent her little gifts of fruit;
I'd written lines to her as Venus;
I'd sworn unflinchingly to shoot
The man who dared to come between us:

And it was you, my Thomas, you,
The friend in whom my soul confided,
Who dared to gaze on her--to do,
I may say, much the same as I did.

One night I SAW him squeeze her hand;
There was no doubt about the matter;
I said he must resign, or stand
My vengeance--and he chose the latter.

We met, we 'planted' blows on blows:
We fought as long as we were able:
My rival had a bottle-nose,
And both my speaking eyes were sable.

When the school-bell cut short our strife,
Miss P. gave both of us a plaster;
And in a week became the wife
Of Horace Nibbs, the writing-master.

* * *

I loved her then--I'd love her still,
Only one must not love Another's:
But thou and I, my Tommy, will,
When we again meet, meet as brothers.

It may be that in age one seeks
Peace only: that the blood is brisker
In boy's veins, than in theirs whose cheeks
Are partially obscured by whisker;

Or that the growing ages steal
The memories of past wrongs from us.
But this is certain--that I feel
Most friendly unto thee, oh Thomas!

And wheresoe'er we meet again,
On this or that side the equator,
If I've not turned teetotaller then,
And have wherewith to pay the waiter,

To thee I'll drain the modest cup,
Ignite with thee the mild Havannah;
And we will waft, while liquoring up,
Forgiveness to the heartless ANNA.

Charles Stuart Calverley

Hic Vir, Hic Est

Often, when o'er tree and turret,
Eve a dying radiance flings,
By that ancient pile I linger
Known familiarly as 'King's.'
And the ghosts of days departed
Rise, and in my burning breast
All the undergraduate wakens,
And my spirit is at rest.

What, but a revolting fiction,
Seems the actual result
Of the Census's enquiries
Made upon the 15th ult.?
Still my soul is in its boyhood;
Nor of year or changes recks.
Though my scalp is almost hairless,
And my figure grows convex.

Backward moves the kindly dial;
And I'm numbered once again
With those noblest of their species
Called emphatically 'Men':
Loaf, as I have loafed aforetime,
Through the streets, with tranquil mind,
And a long-backed fancy-mongrel
Trailing casually behind:

Past the Senate-house I saunter,
Whistling with an easy grace;
Past the cabbage-stalks that carpet
Still the beefy market-place;
Poising evermore the eye-glass
In the light sarcastic eye,
Lest, by chance, some breezy nursemaid
Pass, without a tribute, by.

Once, an unassuming Freshman,
Through these wilds I wandered on,
Seeing in each house a College,
Under every cap a Don:
Each perambulating infant
Had a magic in its squall,
For my eager eye detected
Senior Wranglers in them all.

By degrees my education
Grew, and I became as others;
Learned to court delirium tremens
By the aid of Bacon Brothers;
Bought me tiny boots of Mortlock,
And colossal prints of Roe;
And ignored the proposition

That both time and money go.

Learned to work the wary dogcart
Artfully through King's Parade;
Dress, and steer a boat, and sport with
Amaryllis in the shade:
Struck, at Brown's, the dashing hazard;
Or (more curious sport than that)
Dropped, at Callaby's, the terrier
Down upon the prisoned rat.

I have stood serene on Fenner's
Ground, indifferent to blisters,
While the Buttress of the period
Bowled me his peculiar twisters:
Sung 'We won't go home till morning';
Striven to part my backhair straight;
Drunk (not lavishly) of Miller's
Old dry wines at 78:-

When within my veins the blood ran,
And the curls were on my brow,
I did, oh ye undergraduates,
Much as ye are doing now.
Wherefore bless ye, O beloved ones:-
Now unto mine inn must I,
Your 'poor moralist,' {51a} betake me,
In my 'solitary fly.'

Charles Stuart Calverley

Isabel

Now o'er the landscape crowd the deepening shades,
And the shut lily cradles not the bee;
The red deer couches in the forest glades,
And faint the echoes of the slumberous sea:
And ere I rest, one prayer I'll breathe for thee,
The sweet Egeria of my lonely dreams:
Lady, forgive, that ever upon me
Thoughts of thee linger, as the soft starbeams
Linger on Merlin's rock, or dark Sabrina's streams.

On gray Pilatus once we loved to stray,
And watch far off the glimmering roselight break
O'er the dim mountain-peaks, ere yet one ray
Pierced the deep bosom of the mist-clad lake.
Oh! who felt not new life within him wake,
And his pulse quicken, and his spirit burn -
(Save one we wot of, whom the cold DID make
Feel 'shooting pains in every joint in turn,')
When first he saw the sun gild thy green shores, Lucerne?

And years have past, and I have gazed once more
On blue lakes glistening beneath mountains blue;
And all seemed sadder, lovelier than before -
For all awakened memories of you.
Oh! had I had you by my side, in lieu
Of that red matron, whom the flies would worry,
(Flies in those parts unfortunately do,)
Who walked so slowly, talked in such a hurry,
And with such wild contempt for stops and Lindley Murray!

O Isabel, the brightest, heavenliest theme
That ere drew dreamer on to poesy,
Since 'Peggy's locks' made Burns neglect his team,
And Stella's smile lured Johnson from his tea -
I may not tell thee what thou art to me!
But ever dwells the soft voice in my ear,
Whispering of what Time is, what Man might be,
Would he but 'do the duty that lies near,'
And cut clubs, cards, champagne, balls, billiard-rooms, and beer.

Charles Stuart Calverley

Lines Suggested By The Fourteenth Of February - I

Ere the morn the East has crimsoned,
When the stars are twinkling there,
(As they did in Watts's Hymns, and
Made him wonder what they were
When the forest-nymphs are beading
Fern and flower with silvery dew -
My infallible proceeding
Is to wake, and think of you.

When the hunter's ringing bugle
Sounds farewell to field and copse,
And I sit before my frugal
Meal of gravy-soup and chops:
When (as Gray remarks) 'the moping
Owl doth to the moon complain,'
And the hour suggests eloping -
Fly my thoughts to you again.

May my dreams be granted never?
Must I aye endure affliction
Rarely realised, if ever,
In our wildest works of fiction?
Madly Romeo loved his Juliet;
Copperfield began to pine
When he hadn't been to school yet -
But their loves were cold to mine.

Give me hope, the least, the dimmest,
Ere I drain the poisoned cup:
Tell me I may tell the chymist
Not to make that arsenic up!
Else, this heart shall soon cease throbbing;
And when, musing o'er my bones,
Travellers ask, 'Who killed Cock Robin?'
They'll be told, 'Miss Sarah J-s.'

Charles Stuart Calverley

Lines Suggested By The Fourteenth Of February - II

Darkness succeeds to twilight:
Through lattice and through skylight
The stars no doubt, if one looked out,
Might be observed to shine:
And sitting by the embers
I elevate my members
On a stray chair, and then and there
Commence a Valentine.

Yea! by St. Valentinus,
Emma shall not be minus
What all young ladies, whate'er their grade is,
Expect to-day no doubt:
Emma the fair, the stately -
Whom I beheld so lately,
Smiling beneath the snow-white wreath
Which told that she was 'out.'

Wherefore fly to her, swallow,
And mention that I'd 'follow,'
And 'pipe and trill,' et cetera, till
I died, had I but wings:
Say the North's 'true and tender,'
The South an old offender;
And hint in fact, with your well-known tact,
All kinds of pretty things.

Say I grow hourly thinner,
Simply abhor my dinner -
Tho' I do try and absorb some viand
Each day, for form's sake merely:
And ask her, when all's ended,
And I am found extended,
With vest blood-spotted and cut carotid,
To think on Her's sincerely.

Charles Stuart Calverley

Love

1 Canst thou love me, lady?
2 I've not learn'd to woo:
3 Thou art on the shady
4 Side of sixty too.
5 Still I love thee dearly!
6 Thou hast lands and pelf:
7 But I love thee merely
8 Merely for thyself.

9 Wilt thou love me, fairest?
10 Though thou art not fair;
11 And I think thou wearest
12 Someone-else's hair.
13 Thou could'st love, though, dearly:
14 And, as I am told,
15 Thou art very nearly
16 Worth thy weight, in gold.

17 Dost thou love me, sweet love?
18 Tell me that thou dost!
19 Women fairly beat one,
20 But I think thou must.
21 Thou art loved so dearly:
22 I am plain, but then
23 Thou (to speak sincerely)
24 Art as plain again.

25 Love me, bashful fairy!
26 I've an empty purse:
27 And I've 'moods,' which vary;
28 Mostly for the worse.
29 Still, I love thee dearly:
30 Though I make (I feel)
31 Love a little queerly,
32 I'm as true as steel.

33 Love me, swear to love me
34 (As, you know, they do)
35 By yon heaven above me
36 And its changeless blue.
37 Love me, lady, dearly,
38 If you'll be so good;
39 Though I don't see clearly
40 On what ground you should.

41 Love me -- ah or love me
42 Not, but be my bride!
43 Do not simply shove me
44 (So to speak) aside!
45 P'raps it would be dearly
46 Purchased at the price;
47 But a hundred yearly

48 Would be very nice.

Charles Stuart Calverley

Lovers and a Reflection

In moss-prankt dells which the sunbeams flatter
(And heaven it knoweth what that may mean;
Meaning, however, is no great matter)
Where woods are a-tremble with words a-tween.

Thro' God's own heather we wonned together,
I and my Willie (O love my love):
I need hardly remark it was glorious weather,
And flitter-bats wavered alow, above;

Boats were curtseying, rising, bowing,
(Boats in that climate are so polite,)
And sands were a ribbon of green endowing,
And O the sun-dazzle on bark and bight!

Thro' the rare red heather we danced together
(O love my Willie,) and smelt for flowers:
I must mention again it was glorious weather,
Rhymes are so scarce in this world of ours:

By rises that flushed with their purple favors,
Thro' becks that brattled o'er grasses sheen,
We walked or waded, we two young shavers,
Thanking our stars we were both so green.

We journeyed in parallels, I and Willie,
In fortunate parallels! Butterflies,
Hid in weltering shadows of daffodilly
Or marjoram, kept making peacock eyes:

Song-birds darted about, some inky
As coal, some snowy (I ween) as curds;
Or rosy as pinks, or as roses pinky-
They reckon of no eerie To-come, those birds!

But they skim over bents which the mill-stream washes,
Or hang in the lift 'neath a white cloud's hem;
They need no parasols, no goloshes;
And good Mrs. Trimmer she feedeth them.

Then we thrid God's cowslips (as erst His heather),
That endowed the wan grass with their golden blooms;
And snapt-(it was perfectly charming weather)-
Our fingers at Fate and her goddess-glooms:

And Willie 'gan sing-(Oh, his notes were fluty;
Wafts fluttered them out to the white-winged sea)-
Something made up of rhymes that have done much duty,
Rhymes (better to put it) of 'ancientry':

Bowers of flowers encountered showers
In William's carol-(O love my Willie!)

Then he bade sorrow borrow from blithe tomorrow
I quite forget what-say a daffodilly.

A nest in a hollow, 'with buds to follow,'
I think occurred next in his nimble strain;
And clay that was 'kneaden' of course in 'Eden'-
A rhyme most novel I do maintain:

Mists, bones, the singer himself, love-stories,
And all least furlable things got 'furled';
Not with any design to conceal their glories,
But simply and solely to rhyme with 'world.'

O if 'billows' and 'pillows' and 'hours' and 'flowers,'
And all the brave rhymes of an elder day,
Could be furled together, this genial weather,
And carted or carried on wafts away,
Nor ever again trotted out-ah me!
How much fewer volumes of verse there'd be.

Charles Stuart Calverley

Ode To Tobacco

Thou, who when fears attack
Bidst them avaunt, and Black
Care, at the horseman's back
Perching, unseatest;
Sweet when the morn is gray;
Sweet when they've cleared away
Lunch; and at close of day
Possibly sweetest!

I have a liking old
For thee, though manifold
Stories, I know, are told
Not to thy credit:
How one (or two at most)
Drops make a cat a ghost,—
Useless, except to roast—
Doctors have said it;

How they who use fusees
All grow by slow degrees
Brainless as chimpanzees,
Meagre as lizards,
Go mad, and beat their wives,
Plunge (after shocking lives)
Razors and carving-knives
Into their gizzards.

Confound such knavish tricks!
Yet know I five or six
Smokers who freely mix
Still with their neighbors,—
Jones, who, I'm glad to say,
Asked leave of Mrs. J.,
Daily absorbs a clay
After his labors.

Cats may have had their goose
Cooked by tobacco juice;
Still, why deny its use
Thoughtfully taken?
We're not as tabbies are;
Smith, take a fresh cigar!
Jones, the tobacco jar!
Here's to thee, Bacon!

Charles Stuart Calverley

Ode--'On A Distant Prospect' Of Making A Fortune

Now the 'rosy morn appearing'
Floods with light the dazzled heaven;
And the schoolboy groans on hearing
That eternal clock strike seven:-
Now the waggoner is driving
Towards the fields his clattering wain;
Now the bluebottle, reviving,
Buzzes down his native pane.

But to me the morn is hateful:
Wearily I stretch my legs,
Dress, and settle to my plateful
Of (perhaps inferior) eggs.
Yesterday Miss Crump, by message,
Mentioned 'rent,' which 'p'raps I'd pay;'
And I have a dismal presage
That she'll call, herself, to-day.

Once, I breakfasted off rosewood,
Smoked through silver-mounted pipes -
Then how my patrician nose would
Turn up at the thought of 'swipes!'
Ale,--occasionally claret, -
Graced my luncheon then:- and now
I drink porter in a garret,
To be paid for heaven knows how.

When the evening shades are deepened,
And I doff my hat and gloves,
No sweet bird is there to 'cheep and
Twitter twenty million loves:.'
No dark-ringed canaries
Sing to me of 'hungry foam;'
No imaginary 'Marys'
Call fictitious 'cattle home.'

Araminta, sweetest, fairest!
Solace once of every ill!
How I wonder if thou bearest
Mivins in remembrance still!
If that Friday night is banished
Yet from that retentive mind,
When the others somehow vanished,
And we two were left behind:-

When in accents low, yet thrilling,
I did all my love declare;
Mentioned that I'd not a shilling -
Hinted that we need not care:
And complacently you listened
To my somewhat long address -
(Listening, at the same time, isn't

Quite the same as saying Yes).

Once, a happy child, I carolled
O'er green lawns the whole day through,
Not unpleasingly apparelled
In a tightish suit of blue:-
What a change has now passed o'er me!
Now with what dismay I see
Every rising morn before me!
Goodness gracious, patience me!

And I'll prowl, a moodier Lara,
Through the world, as prowls the bat,
And habitually wear a
Cypress wreath around my hat:
And when Death snuffs out the taper
Of my Life, (as soon he must),
I'll send up to every paper,
'Died, T. Mivins; of disgust.'

Charles Stuart Calverley

On The Brink

I WATCH'D her as she stoop'd to pluck
A wild flower in her hair to twine;
And wish'd that it had been my luck
To call her mine;

Anon I heard her rate with mad,
Mad words her babe within its cot,
And felt particularly glad
That it had not.

I knew (such subtle brains have men!)
That she was uttering what she shouldn't;
And thought that I would chide, and then
I thought I would n't.

Few could have gaz'd upon that face,
Those pouting coral lips, and chided:
A Rhadamanthus, in my place,
Had done as I did.

For wrath with which our bosoms glow
Is chain'd there oft by Beauty's spell;
And, more than that, I did not know
The widow well.

So the harsh phrase pass'd unprov'd:
Still mute—(O brothers, was it sin?)—
I drank, unutterably mov'd,
Her beauty in.

And to myself I murmur'd low,
As on her upturn'd face and dress
The moonlight fell, "Would she say No,—
By chance, or Yes?"

She stood so calm, so like a ghost,
Betwixt me and that magic moon,
That I already was almost
A finish'd coon.

But when she caught adroitly up
And sooth'd with smiles her little daughter;
And gave it, if I 'm right, a sup
Of barley-water;

And, crooning still the strange, sweet lore
Which only mothers' tongues can utter,
Snow'd with deft hand the sugar o'er
Its bread-and-butter;

And kiss'd it clingingly (ah, why
Don't women do these things in private?)—

I felt that if I lost her, I
Should not survive it.

And from my mouth the words nigh flew,—
The past, the future, I forgot 'em,—
"Oh, if you 'd kiss me as you do
That thankless atom!"

But this thought came ere yet I spake,
And froze the sentence on my lips:
"They err who marry wives that make
Those little slips."

It came like some familiar rhyme,
Some copy to my boyhood set;
And that 's perhaps the reason I'm
Unmarried yet.

Would she have own'd how pleas'd she was,
And told her love with widow's pride?
I never found out that, because
I never tried.

Be kind to babes and beasts and birds,
Hearts may be hard though lips are coral;
And angry words are angry words:
And that 's the moral.

Charles Stuart Calverley

Peace. A Study

He stood, a worn-out City clerk —
 Who'd toil'd, and seen no holiday,
For forty years from dawn to dark —
 Alone beside Caermarthen Bay.
He felt the salt spray on his lips;
 Heard children's voices on the sands;
Up the sun's path he saw the ships
 Sail on and on to other lands;
And laugh'd aloud. Each sight and sound
 To him was joy too deep for tears;
He sat him on the beach, and bound
 A blue bandana round his ears
And thought how, posted near his door,
 His own green door on Camden Hill,
Two bands at least, most likely more,
 Were mingling at their own sweet will
Verdi with Vance. And at the thought
 He laugh'd again, and softly drew
That Morning Herald that he'd bought
 Forth from his breast, and read it through.

Charles Stuart Calverley

Striking

It was a railway passenger,
And he lept out jauntilie.
'Now up and bear, thou stout porter,
My two chattels to me.

'Bring hither, bring hither my bag so red,
And portmanteau so brown:
(They lie in the van, for a trusty man
He labelled them London town

'And fetch me eke a cabman bold,
That I may be his fare, his fare;
And he shall have a good shilling,
If by two of the clock he do me bring
To the Terminus, Euston Square.'

'Now,--so to thee the saints alway,
Good gentleman, give luck, -
As never a cab may I find this day,
For the cabman wights have struck:
And now, I wis, at the Red Post Inn,
Or else at the Dog and Duck,
Or at Unicorn Blue, or at Green Griffin,
The nut-brown ale and the fine old gin
Right pleasantly they do suck.'

'Now rede me aright, thou stout porter,
What were it best that I should do:
For woe is me, an I reach not there
Or ever the clock strike two.'

'I have a son, a lytel son;
Fleet is his foot as the wild roebuck's:
Give him a shilling, and eke a brown,
And he shall carry thy chattels down,
To Euston, or half over London town,
On one of the station trucks.'

Then forth in a hurry did they twain fare,
The gent, and the son of the stout porter,
Who fled like an arrow, nor turned a hair,
Through all the mire and muck:
'A ticket, a ticket, sir clerk, I pray:
For by two of the clock must I needs away.'
'That may hardly be,' the clerk did say,
'For indeed--the clocks have struck.'

Charles Stuart Calverley

The Auld Wife

PART I

The auld wife sat at her ivied door,
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
A thing she had frequently done before;
And her spectacles lay on her apron'd knees.

The piper he pip'd on the hill-top high,
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
Till the cow said, "I die," and the goose asked "Why?"
And the dog said nothing, but search'd for fleas.

The farmer he strode through the square farmyard;
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
His last brew of ale was a trifle hard,
The connection of which with the plot one sees.

The farmer's daughter hath frank blue eyes;
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
She hears the rooks caw in the windy skies,
As she sits at her lattice and shells her peas.

The farmer's daughter hath ripe red lips;
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
If you try to approach her away she skips
Over tables and chairs with apparent ease.

The farmer's daughter hath soft brown hair;
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
And I met with a ballad, I can't say where,
Which wholly consisted of lines like these.

PART II

She sat with her hands 'neath her dimpled cheeks,
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
And spake not a word. While a lady speaks
There is hope, but she did n't even sneeze.

She sat with her hands 'neath her crimson cheeks;
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
She gave up mending her father's breeks,
And let the cat roll in her best chemise.

She sat with her hands 'neath her burning cheeks,
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
And gaz'd at the piper for thirteen weeks;
Then she follow'd him out o'er the misty leas.

Her sheep follow'd her, as their tails did them,
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
And this song is consider'd a perfect gem;

And as to the meaning, it 's what you please.

Charles Stuart Calverley

The Cock And The Bull

You see this pebble-stone? It's a thing I bought
Of a bit of a chit of a boy i' the mid o' the day —
I like to dock the smaller parts-o'-speech,
As we curtail the already cur-tail'd cur
(You catch the paronomasia, play 'po' words?),
Did, rather, i' the pre-Landseerian days.
Well, to my muttuns. I purchased the concern,
And clapt it i' my poke, having given for same
By way o' chop, swop, barter or exchange —
'Chop' was my snickering dandiprat's own term —
One shilling and fourpence, current coin o' the realm.
O-n-e one and f-o-u-r four
Pence, one and fourpence — you are with me, sir? —
What hour it skills not: ten or eleven o' the clock,
One day (and what a roaring day it was
Go shop or sight-see — bar a spit o' rain!)
In February, eighteen sixty nine,
Alexandrina Victoria, Fidei
Hm — hm — how runs the jargon? being on throne.

Such, sir, are all the facts, succinctly put,
The basis or substratum — what you will —
Of the impending eighty thousand lines.
'Not much in 'em either,' quoth perhaps simple Hodge.
But there's a superstructure. Wait a bit.
Mark first the rationale of the thing:
Hear logic rivel and levigate the deed.
That shilling — and for matter o' that, the pence —
I had o' course upo' me — wi' me say —
(Mecum's the Latin, make a note o' that)
When I popp'd pen i' stand, scratch'd ear, wip'd snout,
(Let everybody wipe his own himself)
Sniff'd — tch! — at snuffbox; tumbled up, he-heed,
Haw-haw'd (not hee-haw'd, that's another guess thing
Then fumbled at, and stumbled out of, door,
I shoved the timber ope wi' my omoplat;
And in vestibulo, i' the lobby to-wit,
(Iacobi Facciolati's rendering, sir,)
Donn'd galligaskins, antigropeloes,
And so forth; and, complete with hat and gloves,
One on and one a-dangle i' my hand,
And ombrifuge (Lord love you!), case o' rain,
I flopp'd forth, 'sbuddikins! on my own ten toes,
(I do assure you there be ten of them,)
And went clump-clumping up hill and down dale
To find myself o' the sudden i' front o' the boy.
Put case I hadn't 'em on me, could I ha' bought
This sort-o'-kind-o'-what-you-might-call toy,
This pebble-thing, o' the boy-thing? Q.E.D.
That's proven without aid from mumping Pope,
Sleek porporate or bloated Cardinal.
(Isn't it, old Fatchaps? You're in Euclid now.)

So, having the shilling — having i' fact a lot —
And pence and halfpence, ever so many o' them,
I purchased, as I think I said before,
The pebble (lapis, lapidis, -di, -dem, -de —
What nouns 'crease short i' the genitive, Fatchaps, eh?)
O' the boy, a bare-legg'd beggarly son of a gun,
For one-and-fourpence. Here we are again.

Now Law steps in, bigwigg'd, voluminous-jaw'd;
Investigates and re-investigates.
Was the transaction illegal? Law shakes head.
Perpend, sir, all the bearings of the case.

At first the coin was mine, the chattel his.
But now (by virtue of the said exchange
And barter) vice versa all the coin,
Per juris operationem, vests
I' the boy and his assigns till ding o' doom;
(In sæcula sæculo-o-o-orum;
I think I hear the Abate mouth out that.)
To have and hold the same to him and them... .
Confer some idiot on Conveyancing.
Whereas the pebble and every part thereof,
And all that appertaineth thereunto,
Quodcunque pertinet ad eam rem,
(I fancy, sir, my Latin's rather pat)
Or shall, will, may, might, can, could, would or should,
(Subaudi cætera — clap we to the close —
For what's the good of law in a case o' the kind)
Is mine to all intents and purposes.
This settled, I resume the thread o' the tale.

Now for a touch o' the vendor's quality.
He says a gen'lman bought a pebble of him,
(This pebble i' sooth, sir, which I hold i' my hand) —
And paid for 't, like a gen'lman, on the nail.
'Did I o'ercharge him a ha'penny? Devil a bit.
Fiddlepin's end! Get out, you blazing ass!
Gabble o' the goose. Don't bugaboo-baby me!
Go double or quits? Yah! tittup! what's the odds?'
— There's the transaction view'd i' the vendor's light.

Next ask that dumped hag, stood snuffling by,
With her three frowsy blowsy brats o' babes,
The scum o' the kennel, cream o' the filth-heap — Faugh!
Aie, aie, aie, aie! ?t?t?t?t??,
('Stead which we blurt out Hoighty toighty now) —
And the baker and candlestickmaker, and Jack and Gill,
Blair'd Goody this and queasy Gaffer that.
Ask the schoolmaster. Take schoolmaster first.

He saw a gentleman purchase of a lad

A stone, and pay for it rite, on the square,
 And carry it off per saltum, jauntily,
 Propria quæ maribus, gentleman's property now
 (Agreeably to the law explain'd above),
 In proprium usum, for his private ends.
 The boy he chuck'd a brown i' the air, and bit
 I' the face the shilling: heaved a thumping stone
 At a lean hen that ran cluck clucking by,
 (And hit her, dead as nail i' post o' door,)
 Then abiit — what's the Ciceronian phrase? —
 Excessit, evasit, erupit — off slogs boy;
 Off like bird, avi similis — (you observed
 The dative? Pretty i' the Mantuan!) — Anglice,
 Off in three flea skips. Hactenus, so far,
 So good, tam bene. Bene, satis, male — ,
 Where was I with my trope 'bout one in a quag?
 I did once hitch the syntax into verse:
 Verbum personale, a verb personal,
 Concordat — ay, 'agrees,' old Fatchaps — cum
 Nominativo, with its nominative,
 Genere, i' point o' gender, numero,
 O' number, et persona, and person. Ut,
 Instance: Sol ruit, down flops sun, et and,
 Montes umbrantur, out flounce mountains. Pah!
 Excuse me, sir, I think I'm going mad.
 You see the trick on 't though, and can yourself
 Continue the discourse ad libitum.
 It takes up about eighty thousand lines,
 A thing imagination boggles at;
 And might, odds-bobs, sir! in judicious hands,
 Extend from here to Mesopotamy.

Charles Stuart Calverley

There Stands A City

Ingoldsby

Year by year do Beauty's daughters,
In the sweetest gloves and shawls,
Troop to taste the Chattenham waters,
And adorn the Chattenham balls.

'Nulla non donanda lauru'
Is that city: you could not,
Placing England's map before you,
Light on a more favoured spot.

If no clear translucent river
Winds 'neath willow-shaded paths,
'Children and adults' may shiver
All day in 'Chalybeate baths:'

If 'the inimitable Fechter'
Never brings the gallery down,
Constantly 'the Great Protector'
There 'rejects the British crown:'

And on every side the painter
Looks on wooded vale and plain
And on fair hills, faint and fainter
Outlined as they near the main.

There I met with him, my chosen
Friend--the 'long' but not 'stern swell,' {15a}
Faultless in his hats and hosen,
Whom the Johnian lawns know well:-

Oh my comrade, ever valued!
Still I see your festive face;
Hear you humming of 'the gal you'd
Left behind' in massive bass:

See you sit with that composure
On the eeliest of hacks,
That the novice would suppose your
Manly limbs encased in wax:

Or anon,--when evening lent her
Tranquil light to hill and vale, -
Urge, towards the table's centre,
With unerring hand, the squail.

Ah delectablest of summers!
How my heart--that 'muffled drum'
Which ignores the aid of drummers -
Beats, as back thy memories come!

Oh, among the dancers peerless,

Fleet of foot, and soft of eye!
Need I say to you that cheerless
Must my days be till I die?

At my side she mashed the fragrant
Strawberry; lashes soft as silk
Drooped o'er saddened eyes, when vagrant
Gnats sought watery graves in milk:

Then we danced, we walked together;
Talked--no doubt on trivial topics;
Such as Blondin, or the weather,
Which 'recalled us to the tropics.'

But--oh! in the deuxtemps peerless,
Fleet of foot, and soft of eye! -
Once more I repeat, that cheerless
Shall my days be till I die.

And the lean and hungry raven,
As he picks my bones, will start
To observe 'M. N.' engraven
Neatly on my blighted heart.

Charles Stuart Calverley

To Mrs. Goodchild

The night-wind's shriek is pitiless and hollow,
The boding bat flits by on sullen wing,
And I sit desolate, like that 'one swallow'
Who found (with horror) that he'd not brought spring:
Lonely as he who erst with venturous thumb
Drew from its pie-y lair the solitary plum.

And to my gaze the phantoms of the Past,
The cherished fictions of my boyhood, rise:
I see Red Ridinghood observe, aghast,
The fixed expression of her grandam's eyes;
I hear the fiendish chattering and chuckling
Which those misguided fowls raised at the Ugly Duckling.

The House that Jack built--and the Malt that lay
Within the House--the Rat that ate the Malt -
The Cat, that in that sanguinary way
Punished the poor thing for its venial fault -
The Worrier-Dog--the Cow with Crumpled horn -
And then--ah yes! and then--the Maiden all forlorn!

O Mrs. Gurton--(may I call thee Gammer?)
Thou more than mother to my infant mind!
I loved thee better than I loved my grammar -
I used to wonder why the Mice were blind,
And who was gardener to Mistress Mary,
And what--I don't know still--was meant by 'quite contrary'?

'Tota contraria,' an 'Arundo Cami'
Has phrased it--which is possibly explicit,
Ingenious certainly--but all the same I
Still ask, when coming on the word, 'What is it?'
There were more things in Mrs. Gurton's eye,
Mayhap, than are dreamed of in our philosophy.

No doubt the Editor of 'Notes and Queries'
Or 'Things not generally known' could tell
That word's real force--my only lurking fear is
That the great Gammer 'didna ken hersel':
(I've precedent, yet feel I owe apology
For passing in this way to Scottish phraseology).

Alas, dear Madam, I must ask your pardon
For making this unwarranted digression,
Starting (I think) from Mistress Mary's garden:-
And beg to send, with every expression
Of personal esteem, a Book of Rhymes,
For Master G. to read at miscellaneous times.

There is a youth, who keeps a 'crumpled Horn,'
(Living next me, upon the selfsame story,)
And ever, 'twixt the midnight and the morn,

He solaces his soul with Annie Laurie.
The tune is good; the habit p'raps romantic;
But tending, if pursued, to drive one's neighbours frantic.

And now,--at this unprecedented hour,
When the young Dawn is 'trampling out the stars,' -
I hear that youth--with more than usual power
And pathos--struggling with the first few bars.
And I do think the amateur cornopean
Should be put down by law--but that's perhaps Utopian.

Who knows what 'things unknown' I might have 'bodied
Forth,' if not checked by that absurd Too-too?
But don't I know that when my friend has plodded
Through the first verse, the second will ensue?
Considering which, dear Madam, I will merely
Send the aforesaid book--and am yours most sincerely.

Charles Stuart Calverley

Visions

'She was a phantom,' &c.

In lone Glenartney's thickets lies couched the lordly stag,
The dreaming terrier's tail forgets its customary wag;
And plodding ploughmen's weary steps insensibly grow quicker,
As broadening casements light them on towards home, or home-brewed
liquor.

It is (in fact) the evening--that pure and pleasant time,
When stars break into splendour, and poets into rhyme;
When in the glass of Memory the forms of loved ones shine -
And when, of course, Miss Goodchild's is prominent in mine.

Miss Goodchild!--Julia Goodchild!--how graciously you smiled
Upon my childish passion once, yourself a fair-haired child:
When I was (no doubt) profiting by Dr. Crabb's instruction,
And sent those streaky lollipops home for your fairy suction!

'She wore' her natural 'roses, the night when first we met' -
Her golden hair was gleaming 'neath the coercive net:
'Her brow was like the snowdrift,' her step was like Queen Mab's,
And gone was instantly the heart of every boy at Crabb's.

The parlour-boarder chassed tow'rds her on graceful limb;
The onyx decked his bosom--but her smiles were not for him:
With ME she danced--till drowsily her eyes 'began to blink,'
And I brought raisin wine, and said, 'Drink, pretty creature, drink!'

And evermore, when winter comes in his garb of snows,
And the returning schoolboy is told how fast he grows;
Shall I--with that soft hand in mine--enact ideal Lancers,
And dream I hear demure remarks, and make impassioned answers:-

I know that never, never may her love for me return -
At night I muse upon the fact with undisguised concern -
But ever shall I bless that day: (I don't bless, as a rule,
The days I spent at 'Dr. Crabb's Preparatory School.')

And yet--we two MAY meet again--(Be still, my throbbing heart!) -
Now rolling years have weaned us from jam and raspberry tart:-
One night I saw a vision--'Twas when musk-roses bloom
I stood--WE stood--upon a rug, in a sumptuous dining-room:

One hand clasped hers--one easily reposed upon my hip -
And 'BLESS YE!' burst abruptly from Mr. Goodchild's lip:
I raised my brimming eye, and saw in hers an answering gleam -
My heart beat wildly--and I woke, and lo! it was a dream.

Charles Stuart Calverley

Voices Of The Night

'The tender Grace of a day that is past.'

The dew is on the roses,
The owl hath spread her wing;
And vocal are the noses
Of peasant and of king:
'Nature' (in short) 'reposes';
But I do no such thing.

Pent in my lonesome study
Here I must sit and muse;
Sit till the morn grows ruddy,
Till, rising with the dews,
'Jeameses' remove the muddy
Spots from their masters' shoes.

Yet are sweet faces flinging
Their witchery o'er me here:
I hear sweet voices singing
A song as soft, as clear,
As (previously to stinging)
A gnat sings round one's ear.

Does Grace draw young Apollos
In blue mustachios still?
Does Emma tell the swallows
How she will pipe and trill,
When, some fine day, she follows
Those birds to the window-sill?

And oh! has Albert faded
From Grace's memory yet?
Albert, whose 'brow was shaded
By locks of glossiest jet,'
Whom almost any lady'd
Have given her eyes to get?

Does not her conscience smite her
For one who hourly pines,
Thinking her bright eyes brighter
Than any star that shines -
I mean of course the writer
Of these pathetic lines?

Who knows? As quoth Sir Walter,
'Time rolls his ceaseless course:
'The Grace of yore' may alter -
And then, I've one resource:
I'll invest in a bran-new halter,
And I'll perish without remorse.

Charles Stuart Calverley