Classic Poetry Series

Stephen Leacock

- 2 poems -

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Stephen Leacock (30 December 1869 – 28 March 1944)

Stephen Butler Leacock, FRSC (30 December 1869 – 28 March 1944) was an English-born Canadian teacher, political scientist, writer, and humorist. In the early part of the 20th century he was the best-known humorist in the English-speaking world.

Leacock was born in Swanmore, near Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire, England, and at the age of six moved to Canada with his family, which settled on a farm in Egypt, Ontario, near the village of Sutton and the shores of Lake Simcoe. While the family had been well off in England (the Leacocks had made a fortune in Madeira and lived on an estate called Oak Hill on the Isle of Wight), Leacock's father, Peter, had been banished from the manor for marrying Agnes Butler without his parents' permission. The farm in the Georgina township of York County was not a success and the family (Leacock was the third of eleven children) was kept afloat by money sent by Leacock's grandfather. Peter Leacock became an alcoholic; in the fall of 1878, he travelled west to Manitoba with his brother E.P. Leacock, leaving behind Agnes and the children. E.P. Leacock was the subject of the title sketch in Stephen's 1942 work My Remarkable Uncle. Stephen Leacock, always of obvious intelligence, was sent by his grandfather to the elite private school of Upper Canada College in Toronto, also attended by his older brothers, where he was top of the class and was chosen as head boy. Leacock graduated in 1887, and returned home to find that his father had returned from Manitoba. Soon after, his father left the family again and never returned.There is some disagreement about what happened to Peter Leacock; some suggest that he went to live in Argentina, while other sources indicate that he moved to Nova Scotia and changed his name to Lewis. In 1877, seventeen-year-old Leacock started at University College at the University of Toronto, where he was admitted to the Zeta Psi fraternity. His first year was bankrolled by a small scholarship, but Leacock found he could not return to his studies the following year because of financial difficulties. He left university to work as a teacher — an occupation he disliked immensely — at Strathroy, Uxbridge and finally in Toronto. As a teacher at Upper Canada College, his alma mater, he was able simultaneously to attend classes at the University of Toronto and, in 1891, earn his degree through part-time studies. It was during this period that his first writing was published in The Varsity, a campus newspaper.

Academic and political life
Disillusioned with teaching, in 1899 he began graduate studies at the University of Chicago under Thorstein Veblen, where he received a doctorate in political science and political economy. He moved from Chicago, Illinois to Montreal, Quebec, where he eventually became the William Dow Professor of Political Economy and long-time chair of the Department of Economics and Political Science at McGill University.He was closely associated with Sir Arthur

Currie, former commander of the Canadian Corps in the Great War and principal of McGill from 1919 until his death in 1933. In fact, Currie had been a student observing Leacock's practice teaching in Strathroy in 1888. In 1936, Leacock was forcibly retired by the McGill Board of Governors—an unlikely prospect had Currie lived.Leacock was both a social conservative and a partisan Conservative. He opposed giving women the right to vote, disliked non-Anglo-Saxon immigration and supported the introduction of social welfare legislation. He was a staunch champion of the British Empire and went on lecture tours to further the cause.Although he was considered as a candidate for Dominion elections by his party, it declined to invite the author, lecturer, and maverick to stand for election. Nevertheless, he would stump for local candidates at his summer home.

Literary life
Early in his career, Leacock turned to fiction, humour, and short reports to supplement (and ultimately exceed) his regular income. His stories, first published in magazines in Canada and the United States and later in novel form, became extremely popular around the world. It was said in 1911 that more people had heard of Stephen Leacock than had heard of Canada. Also, between the years 1915 and 1925, Leacock was the most popular humorist in the English-speaking world. A humorist particularly admired by Leacock was Robert Benchley from New York. Leacock opened correspondence with Benchley, encouraging him in his work and importuning him to compile his work into a book. Benchley did so in 1922, and acknowledged the nagging from north of the border. Near the end of his life, the American comedian Jack Benny recounted how he had been introduced to Leacock's writing by Groucho Marx when they were both young vaudeville comedians. Benny acknowledged Leacock's influence and, fifty years after first reading him, still considered Leacock one of his favorite comic writers. He was puzzled as to why Leacock's work was no longer well known in the United States.During the summer months, Leacock lived at Old Brewery Bay, his summer estate in Orillia, across Lake Simcoe from where he was raised and also bordering Lake Couchiching. A working farm, Old Brewery Bay is now a museum and National Historic Site of Canada. Gossip provided by the local barber, Jefferson Short, provided Leacock with the material which would become Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town (1912), set in the thinly-disguised Mariposa. Although he wrote learned articles and books related to his field of study, his political theory is now all but forgotten. Leacock was awarded the Royal Society of Canada's Lorne Pierce Medal in 1937, nominally for his academic work. “The proper punishment for the Hohenzollerns, and the Hapsburgs, and the Mecklenburgs, and the Muckendorfs, and all such puppets and princelings, is that they should be made to work; and not made to work in the glittering and glorious sense, as generals and chiefs of staff, and legislators, and land-barons, but in the plain and humble part of laborers looking for a job. (Leacock 1919: 9)”

Personal life
In 1900 Leacock married Beatrix ("Trix") Hamilton, niece of Sir Henry Pellatt (who had built Casa Loma, the largest castle in North America). In 1915 — after 15 years of marriage — the couple had their only child, Stephen Lushington Leacock. While Leacock doted on the boy, it became apparent early on that "Stevie" suffered from a lack of growth hormone. Growing to be only four feet tall, he had a love-hate relationship with Leacock, who tended to treat him like a child. His wife Beatrix Hamilton died in 1925 due to breast cancer. Stephen Leacock, one of Canada’s leading humor writers, was born in England in 1869. His father, Peter Leacock, and his mother, Agnes Emma Butler Leacock, were both from well-to-do families. The family, eventually to consist of eleven children, immigrated to Canada in 1876, settling on a one hundred-acre farm in Sutton, Ontario. There Stephen was home-schooled until he was enrolled in Upper Canada College, Toronto. He became the head boy in 1887, and then entered the University of Toronto to study languages and literature. Despite completing two years of study in one year, he was forced to leave the university because his father had abandoned the family. Instead, Leacock enrolled in a three-month course at Strathroy Collegiate Institute to become a qualified high school teacher. His first appointment was at Uxbridge High School, Ontario, but he was soon offered a post at Upper Canada College, where he remained from 1889 through 1899. At this time,

he also resumed part-time studies at the University of Toronto, graduating with a B.A. in 1891. However, Leacock's real interests were turning towards economics and political theory, and in 1899 he was accepted for postgraduate studies at the University of Chicago, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1903. In 1900, Leacock married Beatrix Hamilton, an aspiring actress; the couple had one son, born in 1915. Leacock was offered a post at McGill University, where he remained until he retired in 1936. In 1906, he wrote Elements of Political Science, which remained a standard college textbook for the next twenty years and became his most profitable book. He also began public speaking and lecturing, and he took a year's leave of absence in 1907 to speak throughout Canada on the subject of national unity. He typically spoke on natural unity or the British Empire for the rest of his life. Leacock began submitting articles to the Toronto humor magazine Grip in 1894, and soon was publishing many humorous articles in Canadian and American magazines. In 1910, he privately published the best of these as Literary Lapses. The book was spotted by a British publisher, John Lane, who brought out editions in London and New York, assuring Leacock's future as a writer. This was confirmed by Nonsense Novels (1911), and probably his best book of humorous sketches, Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town (1912). Leacock's humorous style was reminiscent of Mark Twain and Charles Dickens at their sunniest. However, his Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich (1914) is a darker collection that satirizes city life. Collections of sketches continued to follow almost annually at times, with a mixture of whimsy, parody, nonsense, and satire that was never bitter. Leacock was enormously popular not only in Canada but in the United States and Britain. In later life, Leacock wrote on the art of humor writing and also published biographies of Twain and Dickens. After retirement, a lecture tour to western Canada lead to his book My Discovery of the West: A Discussion of East and West in Canada (1937), for which he won the Governor General's Award. He also won the Mark Twain medal and received a number of honorary doctorates. Other nonfiction books on Canadian topics followed and he began work on an autobiography. Leacock died of throat cancer in Toronto in 1944. A prize for the best humor writing in Canada was named after him, and his house at Orillia on the banks of Lake Couchiching became the Stephen Leacock Museum.

Death and tributes
Predeceased by Trix (who had died of breast cancer in 1925), Leacock was survived by Stevie, who died in his fifties. In accordance with his wishes, after his death from throat cancer, Leacock was buried in St George the Martyr Churchyard, Sutton, Ontario. Shortly after his death, Barbara Nimmo, his niece, literary executor and benefactor, published two major posthumous works: Last Leaves (1945) and The Boy I Left Behind Me (1946). His physical legacy was less treasured, and his abandoned summer cottage became derelict. It was rescued from oblivion when it was declared a National Historic Site of Canada in 1958 and ever since has operated as a museum called the Stephen Leacock Memorial Home. In 1947, the Stephen Leacock Award was created to recognize the best in Canadian literary humour. In 1969, the centennial of his birth, Canada Post issued a six cent stamp with his image on it. The following year, the Stephen Leacock Centennial Committee had a plaque erected at his English birthplace and a mountain in the Yukon was named after him.A number of buildings in Canada are named after Leacock, including the Stephen Leacock Building at McGill University, a theatre in Keswick, Ontario, and schools in Toronto and Ottawa.

Screen adaptations
Two Leacock short stories have been adapted as National Film Board of Canada animated shorts by Gerald Potterton: My Financial Career and The Awful Fate of Melpomenus Jones. Sunshine Sketches, based on Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town, aired on CBC Television in 1952-1953; it was the first Canadian broadcast of an English-language dramatic series, as it debuted on the first night that television was broadcast in Toronto. In 2012, a screen adaptation based on Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town was aired on CBC Television to celebrate both the 75th anniversary of the CBC and the 100th anniversary of Leacock's original collection of short stories. The recent screen adaptation featured Gordon Pinsent as a mature Leacock.

Works:

Elements of Political Science (1906)

Baldwin, Lafontaine, Hincks: Responsible Government (1907)

Practical Political Economy (1910)

Literary Lapses (1910)

includes "The New Food"
Nonsense Novels (1911)

Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town (1912)

Behind the Beyond (1913)

Adventurers of the Far North (1914)

The Dawn of Canadian History (1914)

The Mariner of St. Malo (1914)

Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich (1914)

Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy (1915)

Essays and Literary Studies (1916)

Further Foolishness (1916)

Frenzied Fiction (1918)

The Hohenzollerns in America (1919)

Winsome Winnie (1920)

The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice (1920)

My Discovery of England (1922)

College Days (1923)

Over the Footlights (1923)

The Garden of Folly (1924)

Mackenzie, Baldwin, Lafontaine, Hincks (1926)

Winnowed Wisdom (1926)

Short Circuits (1928)

The Iron Man and the Tin Woman (1929)

Economic Prosperity in the British Empire (1930)

The Economic Prosperity of the British Empire (1931)

The Dry Pickwick (1932)

Afternoons in Utopia (1932)

Mark Twain (1932)

Charles Dickens: His Life and Work (1933)

Humour: Its Theory and Technique, with Examples and Samples (1935)

Hellements of Hickonomics in Hiccoughs of Verse Done in Our Social Planning Mill (1936)

Funny Pieces (1936)

The Greatest Pages of American Humor (1936)

Here Are My Lectures (1937)

Humour and Humanity (1937)

My Discovery of the West (1937)

Model Memoirs (1938)

Too Much College (1939)

Our British Empire (1940)

Canada: The Foundations of Its Future (1941)
My Remarkable Uncle (1942)

Our Heritage of Liberty (1942)

Montreal: Seaport and City (1942)

Happy Stories (1943)

How to Write (1943)

Canada and the Sea (1944)

While There Is Time (1945)

Last Leaves (1945)

The Boy I Left Behind Me (1946)

Wet Wit and Dry Humor

Laugh with Leacock

Back to Prosperity

The Greatest Pages of Charles Dickens

Essays and Literary Studies

Oh! Mr. Malthus!

"Mother, Mother, here comes Malthus,
Mother, hold me tight!
Look! It's Mr. Malthus, Mother!
Hide me out of sight."
This was the cry of little Jane
In bed she moaning lay,
Delirious with Stomach Pain,
That would not go away.
All because her small Existence
Over-pressed upon Subsistence;
Human Numbers didn't need her;
Human Effort couldn't feed her.
Little Janie didn't know
The Geometric Ratio.
Poor Wee Janie had never done
Course Economics No. 1;
Never reached in Education
Theories of Population, --
Theories which tend to show
Just how far our Food will go,
Mathematically found
Just enough to go around.
This, my little Jane, is why
Pauper Children have to die.
Pauper Children underfed
Die delirious in Bed;
Thus at Malthus's Command
Match Supply with true Demand.
Jane who should have gently died
Started up and wildly cried, --

"Look, mother, look, he's there again
I see him at the Window Pane,
Father, -- don't let him, -- he's behind
That shadow on the window blind, --"
In vain the anxious parents soothe, --
What can avail their useless Love?
"Darling, lie down again; don't mind;
Branches are moving in the Wind."
With panting Breath, with Eyes that stare,
Again she cries, "He's there, he's there!"
The frightened Parents look, aghast,
Is it that something really passed?
What is it that they seem to scan,
Ghost or Abstraction, Dream or Man? --
That long drawn Face, the cloven Lip,
The crooked Fingers all a-grip,
The sunken Face, cadaverous,
The dress, Ah, God deliver us!
What awful Sacrilege is that?
The Choker and the Shovel Hat,
The Costume black and sinister,

The dress of God's own minister!
What fiend could ever urge a Man
To personate a Clergyman!
The Father strides with angry fist
"Out, out! you damned Economist!"
His wife restrains his threatening Paw, --
"William, it's economic Law!"
She shrieks, -- "Oh William! don't you know
The Geometric Ratio? --
William, God means it for the best
Our Darling's taken! we've transgressed -- "
And crying, "Two times two makes four,"
She crashes swooning to the Floor.
And when her Senses come again
Janie had passed from mortal Pain
And scowling Malthus had moved on
Murm'ring, "That's one more Infant gone,"
To other Windows, one by one; --
Later he came and took their Son.
With Jane and John gone, out of seven,
They kept at five and just broke even.
"Mary," the chastened Father said,
"I feel God's wisdom; two are dead
The world has only food for five,
Quintuplets are the thing that thrive."
She sobbed, -- "We'll do it if we can!
But, oh that awful Malthus Man."

Such is the tale, we have it straight from Wordsworth's pious Pen
He happened to be out, not late, just after sunset, when
He met a little cottage Girl, she was eight years old, (she said),
Her Hair was thick, he saw, with Curls that clustered on her Head;
And he recalls in pious Verse the Interview she gave
While sitting eating Porridge on her Sister Janie's Grave,
Reciting with her Baby Voice and placid Infant's Breath
The orthodox complacent Thought on pauper Children's death;
And thus the plump and happy Child, her Belly full of food,
Drowsy with Sunset Porridge smiled, -- the World was pretty good.
With her little Belly fully
Satisfied, her Mind got woolly;
She was just like all the rest
Couldn't stand an acid Test,
Took her thoughts too near the Place
Where Digestion had its Base.
What the Child mistook for Knowledge
Just fresh air and lots of Porridge, --
Here is where Biology
Moves into Ontology.

But Willie, Willie Wordsworth, if again you walk the Street
Just meet a little Cottage Girl, and get the thing complete.
You'll find her just as charming as a Child upon a Grave,

And her Hair in Curl is permanent with what she calls a Wave.
She needs no babbling Innocence, no baby Words to show,
The danger spots of little Tots in moving Ratio.
That population is a Thing that all the world must shun,
She'll show you as a Theorem in Economics One, --
At least until four years ago, when all the World went crack
And all the world got overfed, and all the World got slack.
And by the Bump we call the Slump, Production's Force was torn
And Coffee Beans went up in Flames beside ungathered Corn
And Melons floated out to Sea and Hogs were left unborn,
And beer rolled down the Tennessee and California Wine
Was used as Blood for Hollywood, and Rye thrown in the Rhine
And Super-Products in a Stack, --
But stop, a bit, we must turn back.

Turn back to Malthus as he walked o'er English Fields and Downs
And walked at night the crooked Streets of crooked English Towns,
Lifeless, undying, Shade or Man, as one that could not die
A hundred years his Shadow fell, a hundred Years to lie,
The Shadow on the Window Pane when Malthus' Ghost went by.

He chuckled as he passed at night God's Acre filled with Dead;
The little Graves were packed as tight as Paupers in a Bed.
But he never heard the little wings that rustled overhead,
Or heard the Voices in the Air
Of unborn Souls lamenting there.

He wandered in the Summer Lanes when all the World was green,
And he never heard the Wedding Bells of Brides that might have been,
Tall English Flowers that drooped and fell and withered on the stem,
Victims of Malthus' evil Spell, -- what should he know of them?
In rustled Silk and Lavender the Garden Path they trod
And listened where the Hollyhocks and tall Delphiniums nod,
And whisper to the blushing Face behind the Bonnet hid,
Of Wedding Bells that were to ring, -- that were, but never did.
And he never knew the empty Homes with angry Quarrels rent,
He never knew the blighted Souls, out of their Nature bent,
The blighted life of Man and Wife where Children are not sent,
And Love's Illusion wears away
And Single Self comes back to stay.

He scowled to see the Working Class was disobedient still,
The teaching that the Gentry grasped was lost on Jane and Bill,
And round the Slum
The Children come,
As Children ever will.

In vain upon the Brain of Jane and Bill was cast the Thought
That Hope of Social Gain was nil and Poverty their lot,
That social Betterment could not
Permit a Baby in the Cot.
"All right," says Bill, "we'll have them still,"

And Jane she said, "Whoi not?"
"I likes to see 'em, reverend sir,
A crawling round, and so does her;
We're not like Gentry Folks, you see,
There ain't much else for her and me."

And all the while the World roared on, each Decade passing by,
Machine and Power and glowing Sun to Malthus gave the Lie.
The silly Pedants could not see
Man's Food grows faster far than he.
The Wheat Plant easily can grow
A hundred grains per Seed
Three times a year, what, Baker, Ho!
How much is it you need?
One Buckwheat Pancake, only one,
Swells in three months to half a ton.
The Barley of a single Year
Would turn the Rhine to Lager Beer.
The oyster with a million Lives,
If each potential Oyster thrives,
As with Encouragement they do,
Can turn the World to Oyster Stew,
Our social Future only wants
Bigger and Brighter Restaurants.

Thus from a hundred dusty Chairs in dusty Schools of Thought,
Professors' talks with Boards and Chalks the Work of Malthus taught,
Explained the social Danger hid
In each superfluous extra Kid.
Each Decade as it moved along
Rehearsed the wearisome Sing Song.
"When Numbers on Subsistence press then Wages cannot rise,
Humanity is in Distress because it multiplies.
No hope of social Betterment can ever be made good
Because the Wicked Working Class will eat up all the Food.
So if the Poor are here to stay
We need not worry anyway,
And Patati et Patata
And Quack, quack, quack, and there you are!"

With every Decade more and more two Giant Forms were seen
To stride across the Universe as Power and as Machine,
And little Man beside them ran, knee-high he ran between,
All ignorant he was of why,
Or what these Things might mean.
Their Eyes of Brass, their Arms of Steel,
That Grip and Drive the Plunging Wheel,
That tear the Forest, burst the Soil,
And make the cloven Ocean boil,
Turn the white torrent's foaming Might
To strike with Death or blaze with Light.
-- What is the meaning, Little Man,

And have you got your little Plan?
"Ask teacher?" My dear sir, alack!
Your Teacher only says, "Quack, quack."

Thus forward drove the World, divorced from any one Control,
Each Man might grasp a little Part, no man could view the Whole.
The Giants drove it like the Wind
And Little Man clung on behind,
Picture of Terror and Despair
His Coat Tails flying in the Air.
Faster and faster, on they sped,
Machine and Power went mad, saw red,
On Little Man fell their Attack
And smashed his World to Bric-a-brac, --
Broke it with War and at its Cease,
They turned and broke it worse with Peace,
Broke it with overwork, and then, with myriads of Workless Men;
Starved it with Want, then changed their Clutch and choked the World with Overmuch.
And when their Rage had spent its Shocks,
Left little Man upon the Rocks
Of Economic Paradox.

His mournful Face and weeping Eyes
Look on his World in mild Surprise,
See Milk on the Potomac roll
And milkless Children on the Dole,
A crazy World it seems, grotesque,
Where all his Theory is Burlesque,
All jig-saw Bits,
Where nothing Fits
So there he sits
Bereft of Wits, --
And murmurs through his little Hat,
"Will someone tell me where I'm at?"

Start once again, O Little Man!
Remember, when you first began,
What a determined Cuss you were
And how your Efforts made a Stir;
Recall again through Time's dim haze
The dear old Neolithic Days!
With bed-room Exercise your Shape
You raised above the Common Ape.
You muttered to yourself, "They'll see!
There's no Ourang-Outang in me."
You practised every manual Trick, --
Like how to use a pointed Stick,
Bent down a Bough and let it go
And grasped the notion of a Bow.
Deep-seated in a Cocoa-tree,
You learned to count as far as three;
Moved into Theory, went higher,

And saw that Heat was got from Fire.
You did not know it, but you were
The first Research Professor, sir,
Contained, within your hairy Body,
A noble Rutherford or Soddy.
Nay, -- what is more, -- your Lot was rude
But showed the College attitude,
You made it an unswerving Rule
To disregard the Common Fool,
You overlooked the silly chaff
Of Laughing Jackass, gay Giraffe,
You heeded not the caustic Smile
Of Dinosaur or Crocodile,
Passed undisturbed the Ridicule
Of comic Crow or haw-haw Mule, --
In short, in Culture's earliest Span
You acted like an Oxford Man.
Their Idleness soon proved their Loss;
You made yourself Creation's Boss
Do it again, -- see what I mean? --
Come Little Man! Beat the Machine.
You that the Pterodactyl slew, --
Show this new Demon who is who!

And first you have to throw away
The stuff that led you all astray.
Numbers are not the Bane of Man
And numbers never yet outran, --
... Go think it out; I'm sure you can.
For want and Poverty may come to empty Prairie, crowded Slum, --
Enough, enough -- it's quite enough,
Get rid of all the Malthus Stuff. --

Let's seek the Shade of Malthus out from where he walks at Night,
And bring him up for Punishment, -- It certainly seems right;
He that misled a hundred Years Man's Footsteps from his Path, --
That turned our Household Joy to Tears, -- how shall he feel our Wrath?
Shall boiling Oil reduce his Flesh to Chicken à la King,
Would molten Lead upon his Head be pretty much the Thing?
Ah, no! not bye-gone Cruelty his erring Soul shall harry,
We'll fit the Punishment to Crime, make Mr. Malthus marry.
Ho! Reverend Robert, come and doff
That cleric suit; yes, take it off, --
Nay, never mind the leather Face
The faded parchment skin,
Come, stand up, Robert, chuck a Brace,
Another life begin!

We'll dress him all in Love's Attire our great grandfathers knew
As one who led a Bride to wed the Year of Waterloo.
Behold the Sandy Beaver Hat, the Sandy-coloured Suit
The gorgeous Vest, the high Cravat, the glowing Hessian Boot!

Enormous Buttons, made of Horn,
Our Wedding Bridegroom shall adorn.
O! Hear the Bells -- that ring Ding, Dong,
For Malthus Euthalameon,
Pop-u-la-tion for the Na-tion
Spells and tells its long sal-va-tion.

Now hold the Chime a little Time,
Malthus, the ringers stand beside
And let us go and bring the Bride.
She stands upon the Garden Path where she was wont to tread,
Eternal flowers, that know not Death, still nod beside her head.
In rustled Silk and Lavender, a hundred Years alone,
Is it in Truth a Maiden's Form, or withered Frame of Bone?
Seek not the hooded Face to scan where hides the drooping Head
Perchance the Curls lie damp upon the Features of the Dead;
Perchance in place of glowing Life, now desiccated, null,
Earth's final Parody of Love, the Simpering of a Skull.

Or Maid, or Ghost, or Pictured Fate
Let her be what she may,
We bring her forth to join her Mate
This Golden Wedding Day.

Moving before us,
Singing in Chorus,
Golden and Glorious,
Time honoured Lay,
Of wearing a Bonnet,
A blue ribbon on it,
On a Golden Wedding Day.

 Bring on the same old Thesis
Of how Man Increases
As the Clover Blossoms blow.
And we'll sing such Pieces
Till we get Paresis
And we go where Ratios go.

For if Man increases
If he never, never ceases
If he never, never says, "Go Slow!"
If he will not let the Pop-stop
Why then, ergo, there's a drop-stop
But it's all right -- Let er -- go.

Stephen Leacock

The Social Plan

I know a very tiresome Man
Who keeps on saying, "Social Plan."
At every Dinner, every Talk
Where Men foregather, eat or walk,
No matter where, -- this Awful Man
Brings on his goddam Social Plan.

The Fall in Wheat, the Rise in Bread,
The social Breakers dead ahead,
The Economic Paradox
That drives the Nation on the rocks,
The Wheels that false Abundance clogs --
And frightens us from raising Hogs, --
This dreary field, the Gloomy Man
Surveys and hiccoughs, Social Plan.

Till simpler Men begin to find
His croaking aggravates their mind,
And makes them anxious to avoid
All mention of the Unemployed,
And leads them even to abhor
The People called Deserving Poor.
For me, my sympathies now pass
To the poor Plutocratic Class.
The Crowd that now appeals to me
Is what he calls the Bourgeoisie.

So I have got a Social Plan
To take him by the Neck,
And lock him in a Luggage van
And tie on it a check,
Marked MOSCOW VIA TURKESTAN,
Now, how's that for a Social Plan?

Stephen Leacock