

Classic Poetry Series

Franklin Pierce Adams
- poems -

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Franklin Pierce Adams(15 November 1881 – 23 March 1960)

Franklin Pierce Adams was an American columnist, well known by his initials F.P.A., and wit, best known for his newspaper column, "The Conning Tower", and his appearances as a regular panelist on radio's Information Please. A prolific writer of light verse, he was a member of the Algonquin Round Table of the 1920s and 1930s.

New York newspaper columnist

Adams was born Franklin Leopold Adams to Moses and Clara Schlossberg Adams in Chicago on November 15, 1881. He changed his middle name to "Pierce" when he was confirmed at age 13. Adams graduated from the Armour Scientific Academy in 1899, attended the University of Michigan for one year and worked in insurance for three years.

Signing on with the Chicago Journal in 1903, he wrote a weather column and then a humor column, "A Little about Everything". The following year he moved to the New York Evening Mail, where he worked from 1904 to 1913 and began his column, then called "Always in Good Humor", which used reader contributions.

During his time on the Evening Mail, Adams wrote what remains his best known work, the poem Baseball's Sad Lexicon, a tribute to the Chicago Cubs double play combination of "Tinker to Evers to Chance". In 1911, he added a second column, a parody of Samuel Pepy's Diary, with notes drawn from FPA's personal experiences. In 1914, he moved his column to the New York Tribune, where it was famously retitled "The Conning Tower."

During World War I, Adams was in the U.S. Army, serving in military intelligence and also writing a column, "The Listening Post", for Stars and Stripes editor Harold Ross. After the war, the so-called "comma-hunter of Park Row" (for his knowledge of the language) returned to New York and the Tribune. He moved to the New York World in 1922, and his column appeared there until the paper merged with the inferior New York Telegram in 1931. He returned to his old paper, by then called the New York Herald Tribune, until 1937, and finally moved to the New York Post, where he ended his column in September 1941.

During its long run, "The Conning Tower" featured contributions from such

writers as Robert Benchley, Edna Ferber, Moss Hart, George S. Kaufman, [Edna St. Vincent Millay](http://www.poemhunter.com/edna-st-vincent-millay/), [John O'Hara](http://www.poemhunter.com/john-myers-o-hara/), [Dorothy Parker](http://www.poemhunter.com/dorothy-parker/) and Deems Taylor. Having one's work published in "The Conning Tower" was enough to launch a career, as in the case of Dorothy Parker and James Thurber. Parker quipped, "He raised me from a couplet." Parker dedicated her 1936 publication of collected poems, *Not So Deep as a Well*, to F.P.A. Many of the poems in that collection were originally published in "The Conning Tower".

Much later, the writer E.B. White freely admitted his sense of awe: "I used to walk quickly past the house in West 13th Street between Sixth and Seventh where F.P.A. lived, and the block seemed to tremble under my feet—the way Park Avenue trembles when a train leaves Grand Central."

Adams is credited with coining the term "apronym" for last names that fit a person's career or job title, although it was later refined to "apronym" by Frank Nuessel in 1992.

Satires

No Sirree!, staged for one night only in April 1922, was a take-off of a then-popular European touring revue called *La Chauve-Souris* directed by Nikita Balieff.

Robert Benchley is often credited as the first person to suggest the parody of Balieff's group.

No Sirree! had its genesis at the studio of Neysa McMein, which served as something of a salon for Round Tablers away from the Algonquin. Acts included: "Opening Chorus" featuring Woollcott, Toohey, Kaufman, Connelly, Adams, and Benchley with violinist Jascha Heifetz providing offstage, off-key accompaniment; "He Who Gets Flapped," a musical number featuring the song "The Everlastin' Ingenue Blues" written by Dorothy Parker and performed by Robert Sherwood accompanied by "chorus girls" including Tallulah Bankhead, Helen Hayes, Ruth Gillmore, Lenore Ulric, and Mary Brandon; "Zowie, or the Curse of an Akins Heart"; "The Greasy Hag, an O'Neill Play in One Act" with Kaufman, Connelly and Woollcott; and "Mr. Whim Passes By - An A. A. Milne Play."

FPA often included parodies in his column. His satire of Edgar Allan Poe's poem "Annabel Lee" was later collected in his book *Something Else Again* (1910):

Soul Bride Oddly Dead in Queer Death Pact

High-Born Kinsman Abducts Girl from Poet-Lover—Flu Said to Be Cause of Death—Grand Jury to Probe

Annabel L. Poe of 1834½ 3rd Ave., the beautiful young fiancée of Edmund Allyn Poe, a magazine writer from the South, was found dead early this morning on the beach off E. 8th Street. Poe seemed prostrated and, questioned by the police, said that one of her aristocratic relatives had taken her to the "seashore," but that the cold winds had given her "flu," from which she never "rallied." Detectives at work on the case believe, they say, that there was a suicide compact between the Poes and that Poe also intended to do away with himself. He refused to leave the spot where the woman's body had been found.

Radio

As a panelist on the radio's Information Please (1938–48), he was the designated expert on poetry, old barroom songs and Gilbert and Sullivan, which he always referred to as Sullivan and Gilbert. A running joke on the show was that his stock answer for quotes that he didn't know was that Shakespeare was the author. (Perhaps that was a running gag: Information Please's creator/producer Dan Golenpaul auditioned Adams for the job with a series of sample questions, starting with: "Who was the Merchant of Venice?" Adams: "Antonio." Golenpaul: "Most people would say 'Shylock.'" Adams: "Not in my circle.") John Kieran was the real Shakespearean expert and could quote from his works at length.

A translator of Horace and other classical authors, F.P.A. also collaborated with O. Henry on *Lo*, a musical comedy.

Film portrayal

Adams was portrayed by the actor Chip Zien in the film *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle* (1994).

Quotes

"I find that a great part of the information I have was acquired by looking up something and finding something else on the way."

"To err is human; to forgive, infrequent."

"Elections are won by men and women chiefly because most people vote against somebody rather than for somebody."

A Ballad Of Baseball Burdens

The burden of hard hitting. Slug away
Like Honus Wagner or like Tyrus Cobb.
Else fandom shouteth: "Who said you could play?
Back to the jasper league, you minor slob!"
Swat, hit, connect, line out, goet on the job.
Else you shall feel the brunt of fandom's ire
Biff, bang it, clout it, hit it on the knob -
This is the end of every fan's desire.

The burden of good pitching. Curved or straight.
Or in or out, or haply up or down,
To puzzle him that standeth by the plate,
To lessen, so to speak, his bat-renown:
Like Christy Mathewson or Miner Brown,
So pitch that every man can but admire
And offer you the freedom of the town -
This is the end of every fan's desire.

The burden of loud cheering. O the sounds!
The tumult and the shouting from the throats
Of forty thousand at the Polo Grounds
Sitting, ay, standing sans their hats and coats.
A mighty cheer that possibly denotes
That Cub or Pirate fat is in the fire;
Or, as H. James would say, We've got their goats -
This is the end of every fan's desire.

The burden of a pennant. O the hope,
The tenuous hope, the hope that's half a fear,
The lengthy season and the boundless dope,
And the bromidic, "Wait until next year."
O dread disgrace of trailing in the rear,
O Piece of Bunting, flying high and higher
That next October it shall flutter here:
This is the end of every fan's desire.

ENVOY

Ah, Fans, let not the Quarry but the Chase

Be that to which most fondly we aspire!
For us not Stake, but Game; not Goal, but Race -

THIS is the end of every fan's desire.

Franklin Pierce Adams

A Gotham Garden Of Verses

I

In summer when the days are hot
The subway is delayed a lot;
In winter, quite the selfsame thing;
In autumn also, and in spring.

And does it not seem strange to you
That transportation is askew
In this--I pray, restrain your mirth!--
In this, the Greatest Town on Earth?

II

All night long and every night
The neighbors dance for my delight;
I hear the people dance and sing
Like practically anything.

Women and men and girls and boys,
All making curious kinds of noise
And dancing in so weird a way,
I never saw the like by day.

So loud a show was never heard
As that which yesternight occurred:
They danced and sang, as I have said,
As I lay wakeful in my bed.

They shout and cry and yell and laugh
And play upon the phonograph;
And endlessly I count the sheep,
Endeavouring to fall asleep.

III

It is very nice to think
This town is full of meat and drink;
That is, I'd think it very nice

If my pappa but had the price.

IV

This town is so full of a number of folks,
I'm sure there will always be matter for jokes.

Franklin Pierce Adams

A Lament

Horace: Book II, Elegy 8

"Eripitur nobis iam pridem cara puella---"

While she I loved is being torn
From arms that held her many years,
Dost thou regard me, friend, with scorn,
Or seek to check my tears?

Bitter the hatred for a jilt,
And hot the hates of Eros are;
My hatred, slay me as thou wilt,
For thee'd be gentler far.

Can I endure that she recline
Upon another's arm? Shall they
No longer call that lady "mine"
Who "mine" was yesterday?

For Love is fleeting as the hours.
The town of Thebes is draped with moss,
And Ilium's well-known topless towers
Are now a total loss.

Fell Thebes and Troy; and in the grave
Have fallen lords of high degree.
What songs I sang! What gifts I gave!
. . . . She never fell for me.

Franklin Pierce Adams

A New York Child's Garden Of Verses

(With the usual.)

I

In winter I get up at night,
And dress by an electric light.
In summer, autumn, ay, and spring,
I have to do the self-same thing.

I have to go to bed and hear
Pianos pounding in my ear,
And hear the janitor cavort
With garbage cans within the court.

And does it not seem hard to you
That I should have these things to do?
Is it not hard for us Manhat-
Tan children in a stuffy flat?

II

It is very nice to think
The world is full of food and drink;
But, oh, my father says to me
They cost all of his salaree.

III

When I am grown to man's estate
I shall be very proud and great;
E'en now I have no reverence,
'Cause I read comic supplements.

IV

New York is so full of a number of kids
I'm sure pretty soon we shall be invalids.

V

A child should always say what's true,
And speak when he is spoken to;
And then, when manhood's age he strikes,
He may be boorish as he likes.

Franklin Pierce Adams

A Perfect Woman Nobly Planned

(The man who wants the perfect wife should marry a
'stock-size.' She comes cheaper.-_London Chronicle_.)

Ah, Myrtilla, woe and dear me!
Lackadaydee and alas!
What is this, I greatly fear me,
That has come to pass?

Craving, as I do, perfection,
Loathing anything like flaws,
I must raise a slight objection
To your building laws.

You are five one-and-a-quarter,
And your girth is thirty-three-
Myrtie, you're a little shorter
Than you ought to be.

It is far from my intentions
Your proportions to describe,
Briefly, Myrtie, your dimensions
Do not seem to jibe.

Farewell, Myrt, for Ethelisa
Seems to be my certain fate,
Stupid? Silly? Sure, but she's a
Perfect thirty-eight.

Franklin Pierce Adams

A Plea

Writers of baseball, attention!
When you're again on the job-
When, in your rage for invention,
You with the language play hob-
Most of your dope we will pardon,
Though of the moth ball it smack;
But-cut out the 'sinister garden,'
Chop the 'initial sack.'

Rake poor old Roget's 'Thesaurus'
For phrases fantastic and queer;
And though on occasions you bore us,
We will refrain from a sneer.
We will endeavour to harden
Ourselves to the rest of your clack,
If you'll cut out the 'sinister garden'
And chop the 'initial sack.'

Singers of words that are scrambled,
Say, if you will, that he 'died,'
Write, if you must, that he 'ambled'-
We shall be last to deride.
But us to the Forest of Arden,
Along with the misanthrope Jaques,
If you cling to the 'sinister garden'
And stick to 'initial sack.'

Speak of the 'sphere's aberration,'
Mention the 'leathery globe,'
Say he got 'free transportation'-
Though that try the patience of Job.
But if you're wise you'll discard en-
Cumbrances such as we thwack-
Especially 'sinister garden'
And the 'initial sack.'

Franklin Pierce Adams

A Poor Excuse, But Our Own

(Why don't you ever write any child poetry?
-A MOTHER.)

My right-hand neighbour hath a child,
A pretty child of five or six,
Not more than other children wild,
Nor fuller than the rest of tricks-
At five he rises, shine or rain,
And noisily plays 'fire' or 'train.'

Likewise a girl, *_aetatis_* eight,
He hath. Each morning, as a rule,
Proudly my neighbour will relate
How bright Mathilda is at school.
My ardour, less than half of mild,
Bids me to comment, 'Wondrous child!'

All through the vernal afternoon
My other neighbour's children skate
A wild Bacchantic rigadoon
On rollers; nor does it abate
Till dark; and then his babies cry
What time I fain would versify.

Did I but set myself to sing
A children's song, I'd stand revealed
A bard that did the infant thing
As well as Riley or 'Gene Field.
I could write famous Children Stuff,
If they'd keep quiet long enough.

Franklin Pierce Adams

A Psalm Of Labouring Life

Tell me not, in doctored numbers,
Life is but a name for work!
For the labour that encumbers
Me I wish that I could shirk.

Life is phony! Life is rotten!
And the wealthy have no soul;
Why should you be picking cotton,
Why should I be mining coal?

Not employment and not sorrow
Is my destined end or way;
But to act that each tomorrow
Finds me idler than today.

Work is long, and plutes are lunching;
Money is the thing I crave;
But my heart continues punching
Funeral time-clocks to the grave.

In the world's uneven battle,
In the swindle known as life,
Be not like the stockyard's cattle--
Stick your partner with the knife!

Trust no boss, however pleasant!
Capital is but a curse!
Strike,--strike in the living present!
Fill, oh fill the bulging purse.!

Lives of strikers all remind us
We can make our lives a crime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Bills for double overtime.

Charges that, perhaps another,
Working for a stingy ten
Bucks a day, some mining brother
Seeing, shall walk out again.

Let us, then, be up and striking,
Discontent with all of it;
Still undoing, still disliking,
Learn to labour--and to quit.

Franklin Pierce Adams

A Quatrain

A quatrain fills a little space,
Although it's pretty small,
And oftentimes, as in this case,
It has no point at all.

Franklin Pierce Adams

A Soft Susurrus

A soft susurrus in the night,
A song whose singer is unseen-
'Twere poetry itself to write
'A soft susurrus in the night!'
I know, as those mosquitos bite,
That I forgot to fix that screen,
'A soft susurrus in the night!'
A song whose singer is unseen.

Franklin Pierce Adams

A Summer Summary

Shall I, lying in a grot,
Die because the day is hot?
Or declare I can't endure
Such a torrid temperature?
Be it hotter than the flames
South Gehenna Junction claims,
If it be not so to me,
What care I how hot it be?

Shall I say I love the town
Praised by Robinson and Browne?
Shall I say, 'In summer heat
Old Manhattan can't be beat?'
Be it luring as a bar,
Or my neighbour's motor-car,
If I think it is pazziz
What care I how fine it is?

Shall I prate of rural joys
Far from civic smoke and noise?
Shall I, like the others, drool
'But the nights are always cool?'
If I hate to rise at six
Shall I praise the suburbs? Nix!
If the country's not for me,
What care I how good it be?

Town or country, cool or hot,
Differs nothing, matters not;
For to quote that Roman cuss,
Why dispute 'de gustibus?'
If to this or that one should
Take a fancy, it is good.
If these rhymes look good to me,
What care I how bad they be?

Franklin Pierce Adams

A Wish

(An Apartmental Ditty.)

Mine be a flat beside the Hill;
A vendor's cry shall soothe my ear
A landlord shall present his bill
At least a dozen times a year.

The tenor, oft, below my flat,
Shall practise 'Violets' and such;
And in the area a cat
Shall beat the band, the cars, and Dutch.

Around the neighbourhood shall be
About a hundred thousand kids;
And, eke in that vicinitee,
Ten pianolas without lids.

And mornings, I suppose, by gosh,
I'll be awakened prompt at seven,
By ladies hanging up the wash
Only a mile or so from heaven.

Franklin Pierce Adams

A Word For It

'Scorn not the sonnet.' Well, I reckon not,
I would not scorn a rondeau, villanelle,
Ballade, sestina, triolet, rondel,
Or e'en a quatrain, humble and forgot,
An so it made my Pegasus to trot
His morning lap what time he heard the bell;
An so it made the poem stuff to jell-
To mix a met.-an so it boil'd the pot.

Oh, sweet set form that varies not a bit!
I taste thy joy, not quite unknown to Keats.
'Scorn? ' Nay, I love thy fine symmetric
grace.
In sonnets one knows always where to quit,
Unlike in other poems where one cheats
And strings it out to fill the yawning
space.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Abelard And Heloïse

["There are so many things I want to talk to you about." Abelard probably said to Heloïse, "but how can I when I can only think about kissing you?" --KATHARINE LANE in the Evening Mail.]

Said Abelard to Heloïse:

"Your tresses blowing in the breeze
Enchant my soul; your cheek allures;
I never knew such lips as yours."

Said Heloïse to Abelard:

"I know that it is cruel, hard,
To make you fold your yearning arms
And think of things besides my charms."

Said Abelard to Heloïse:

"Pray, lets discuss the Portuguese;
Their status in the League of Nations.
. . . . Come, slip me seven osculations.
"The Fourteen Points," said Heloïse,
"Are pure Woodrovian fallacies."
Said Abelard: "Ten times fourteen
The points you have, O beaucoup queen!"

"Lay off," said Heloïse, "all that stuff.
I've heard the same old thing enough."
"But," answered Abelard, "your lips
Put all my thoughts into eclipse."

"O Abelard," said Heloïse,
"Don't take so many liberties."
"I do it but to show regard."

And Heloïse told her chum that night
That Abelard was Awful Bright;
And--thus is drawn the cosmic plan--
She loved an Intellectual Man.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Advice

AD ARIUSTUM FUSCUM

I

Horace: Book I, Ode 22.

'_Integer vitae sclerisque purus_'-

_Take it from me: A guy who's square,
His chances always are the best.
I'm in the know, for I've been there,
And that's no ancient Roman jest._

What time he hits the hay to rest
There's nothing on his mind but hair,
No javelin upon his chest-
Take it from me, a guy who's square.

There's nothing that can throw a scare
Into the contents of his vest;
His name is Eva I-Don't-Care;
His chances always are the best.

Why, once, when I was way out West,
Singing to Lalage, a bear
Came up, and I was some distressed-
I'm in the know, for I've been there.

But back he went into his lair,
(Cage, corner, den, retreat, nook, nest) ,
And left me to 'The Maiden's Prayer'-
And that's no ancient Roman jest.

In Newtonville or Cedar Crest,
In Cincinnati or Eau Claire,
I'll warble till I am a pest,
'My Lalage'-no matter where-
_Take it from me! _

II

Fuscus, my friend, take it from me-
I know the world and what it's made of-
One on the square has naught to be
Afraid of.

The Moorish bows and javelins? Nope.
Such deadly things need not alarm him.
Why, even arrows dipped in dope
Can't harm him!

He's safe in any clime or land,
Desert or river, hill or valley;
Safe in all places on the Rand-
McNally.

Why, one day in my Sabine grot,
I sang for Lalage to hear me;
A wolf came in and he did not
Come near me!

Ah, set me on the sunless plain,
In China, Norway, or Matanzas,
Ay, place me anywhere from Maine
To Kansas.

Still of my Lalage I'll sing,
Where'er the Fates may chance to dropp me;
And nobody nor anything
Shall stop me.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Advising Chloë

Horace: Book I, Ode 23

"Vitas hinnuleo me similis, Chloë--"

Why shun me, my Chloë? Nor pistol nor bowie
Is mine with intention to kill.
And yet like a llama you run to your mamma;
You tremble as though you were ill.

No lion to rend you, no tiger to end you,
I'm tame as a bird in a cage.
That counsel maternal can run for The Journal--
You get me, I guess. . . . You're of age.

Franklin Pierce Adams

After Hearing Robin Hood

The songs of Sherwood Forest
Are lilac-sweet and clear;
The virile rhymes of merrier times
Sound fair upon mine ear.

Sweet is their sylvan cadence
And sweet their simple art.
The balladry of the greenwood tree
Stirs memories in my heart.

O braver days and elder
With mickle valor dight,
How ye bring back the time, alack!
When Harry Smith could write!

Franklin Pierce Adams

Again Endorsing The Lady

Horace: Book II, Elegy 2

"Liber eram et vacuo meditabar vivere lecto--"

I was free. I thought that I had entered
Love's Antarctic Zone.

"A truce to sentiment," I said. "My nights
shall be my own."

But Love had double-crossed me. How can
Beauty be so fair?

The grace of her, the face of her--and oh,
her yellow hair!

And oh, the wondrous walk of her! So doth
a goddess glide.

Jove's sister--ay, or Pallas--hath no statelier
a stride.

Fair as Iscomache herself, the Lapithanian
maid;

Or Brimo where at Mercury's side her virgin
form she laid.

Surrender now, ye goddesses whom erst the
shepherd spied!

Upon the heights of Ida lay your vestitures
aside!

And though she reach the countless years of
the Cumæan Sibyl,

May never, never Age at those delightful
features nibble!

Franklin Pierce Adams

Again Endorsing The Lady, Ii

I thought that I was wholly free,
That I had Love upon the shelf;
"Hereafter," I declared in glee,
"I'll have my evenings to myself."
How can such mortal beauty live?
(Ah, Jove, thine errings I forgive!)

Her tresses pale the sunlight's gold;
Her hands are featly formed and taper;
Her--well, the rest ought not be told
In any modest family paper.
Fair as Ischomache, and bright
As Brimo. Quæque queen is right.

O goddesses of long ago,
A shepherd called ye sweet and slender.
He saw ye, so he ought to know;
But sooth to her ye must surrender.
O may a million years not trace
A single line upon that face!

Franklin Pierce Adams

An Election Night Pantoum

Gaze at the good-natured crowd,
List to the noise and the rattle!
Heavens! that woman is loud-
Loud as the din of a battle.

List to the noise and the rattle!
Hark to the honk of the horn
Loud as the din of a battle!
There! My new overcoat's torn!

Hark to the honk of the horn!
Cut out that throwing confetti!
There! My new overcoat's torn-
Looks like a shred of spaghetti.

Cut out that throwing confetti!
Look at the gentleman, stewed;
Looks like a shred of spaghetti-
Don't get so terribly rude!

Look at the gentleman, stewed!
Look at the glare of the rocket!
Don't get so terribly rude,
Keep your hand out of my pocket!

Look at the glare of the rocket!
Take that thing out of my face!
Keep your hand out of my pocket!
This is a shame and disgrace.

Take that thing out of my face!
Curse you! Be decent to ladies!
This is a shame and disgrace,
Worse than traditions of Hades.

Curse you! Be decent to ladies!
(Heavens! that woman is loud.)
Worse than traditions of Hades
Gaze at the 'good-natured' crowd!

Franklin Pierce Adams

An Ode In Time Of Inauguration

(March 4, 1913)

Thine aid, O Muse, I consciously beseech;
I crave thy succour, ask for thine assistance
That men may cry: "Some little ode! A peach!"
O Muse, grant me the strength to go the distance!
For odes, I learn, are dithyrambs, and long;
Exalted feeling, dignity of theme
And complicated structure guide the song.
(All this from Webster's book of high esteem.)

Let complicated structures not becloud
My lucid lines, nor weight with overloading.
To Shelley, Keats, and Wordsworth and that crowd
I yield the bays for grand and lofty oding.
Mine but the task to trace a country's growth,
As evidenced by each innauguration
From Washington's to Wilson's primal oath--
In these U.S., the celebrated nation.

But stay! or ever that I start to sing,
Or e'er I loose my fine poetic forces,
I ought, I think, to do the decent thing,
Ti Wit: give credit to my many sources:
Barnes's "Brief History of the U.S.A.,"
Bryce, Ridpath, Scudder, Fiske, J.B. McMaster,
A book of odes, a Webster, a Roget--
The bibliography of this poetaster.

Flow, flow, my pen, as gently as sweet Afton ever flowed!
An thou dost ill, shall this be a poor thing, but mine ode.

G.W., initial prex,
Right down in Wall Street, New York City,
Took his first oath. Oh, multiplex
The whimsies quaint, the comments witty
One might evolve from that! I scorn
To mock the spot where he was sworn.

On next Inauguration Day
He took the avouchment sempiternal
Way down in Phil-a-delph-i-a,
Where rises now the L.H. Journal.
His farewell speech in '96
Said: "'Ware the Trusts and all their tricks!"

John Adams fell on darksome days:
March fourth was blustery and sleety;
The French behaved in horrid ways
Until John Jay drew up a treaty.
Came the Eleventh Amendment, too,
Providing that--but why tell you?

T. Jefferson, one history showed,
Held all display was vain and idle;
Alone, unpanoplied he rode;
Alone he hitched his horse's bridle.
No ball that night, no carouse,
But back to Conrad's boarding house.

He tied that bridle to the fence
The morning of inauguration;
John Davis saw him do it; whence
Arose his "simple" reputation.
The White House, though, with Thomas J.,
Had chefs--and parties every day.

THE MUSE INTERRUPTS THE ODIST

If I were you I think I'd change my medium;
I'm weary of your meter and your style.
The sameness of it sickens me to tedium;
I'll quit unless you switch it for a while.

THE ODIST REPLIES

I bow to thee, my Muse, most eloquent of pleaders;
But why embarrass me in front of all these readers?

Madison's inauguration

Was a lovely celebration.
In a suit of wool domestic
Rode he, stately and majestic,
Making it be manifest
Clothes American are best.
This has thundered through the ages.
(See our advertising pages.)

Lightly I pass along, and so
Come to the terms of James Monroe
Who framed the doctrine far too well
Known for the odist to retell.
His period of friendly dealing
Began The Era of Good Feeling.

John Quincy Adams followed him in Eighteen Twenty-Four;
Election was exciting--the details I shall ignore.
But his inauguration as our country's President
Was, take it from McMaster, some considerable event.
It was a brilliant function, and I think I ought to add
The Philadelphia "ledger" said a gorgeous time was had.

Old Andrew Jackson's pair of terms were terribly exciting;
That stern, intrepid warrior had little else than fighting.
A time of strife and turbulence, of politics and flurry.
But deadly dull for poem themes, so, Mawruss, I should worry!

In Washington did Martin Van
A stately custom then decree;
Old Hickory, the vetran,
Must ride with him, the people's man,
For all the world to see.
A pleasant custom, in a way,
And yet I should have laughed
To see the Sage of Oyster Bay
On Tuesday ride with Taft.
(Pardon me this
Parenthetical halt:
That sight you'll miss,
But it isn't my fault.)

William Henry Harrison came

Riding a horse of alabaster,
But the weather that day was a sin and a shame,
Take it from me and John McMaster.
Only a month--and Harrison died,
And V.P. Tyler began preside.
A far from popular prex was he,
And the next one was Polk from Tennessee.
There were two inaugural balls for him
But the rest of his record is rather dim.

Had I the pen of a Pope or a Thackeray,
Had I the wisdom of Hegel or Kant,
Then might I sing as I'd like to of Zachary,
Then might I sing a Taylorian chant.
Oh, for the lyrical art of a Tennyson!
Oh, for the skill of Macaulay or Burke!
None of these mine; so I give him my benison,
Turning reluctantly back to my work.

O Millard Fillmore! when a man refers
To thee, what direful, awful thing occurs?
Though in name itself thy name have nought of wit,
Yet--and this doth confound me to admit
When I do hear it, I do smile; nay, more--
I laugh, I scream, I cachinnate, I roar
As Wearied Business Men do shake with glee
At mimes that say "Dubuque" or "Kankakee";
As basement-brows that laugh at New Rochelle;
As lackwits laugh when actors mention Hell.
Perhaps--it may be so--I am not sure--
Perhaps it is that thou wast so obscure,
And that one seldom hears a single word of thee;
I know a lot of girls that never heard of thee.
Hence did I smile, perhaps. . . . How very near
The careless laughing to the thoughtful tear!
O Fillmore, let me sheathe my mocking pen.
God rest thee! I'll not laugh at thee again!

I heard it remarked that to Pierce's election
There wasn't a soul had the slightest objection.
I have also been told, by some caustical wit,
That no one said 'nay' when he wanted to quit.

Yet Franklin Pierce, forgotten man,
I celebrate your fame.
I'm doing just the best I can
To keep alive your name,
Though as President, F.P.,
You didn't do as much for me.

Of James Buchanan things a score
I might recite. I'll say that he was
The only White House bachelor--
The only one, that's what J.B. was.
For he was a bachelor--
For he might have been a bigamist,
A Mormon, A polygamist,
And had thirty wives or more;
But this be his memorial:
He was ever unuxorial,
And he remained a bachelor--
He re-mai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ained a bachelor .

Lincoln! I falter, feeling it to be
As if all words of mine in praise of him
Were as the veriest dolt that saw the sun;
And God had spoken him and said to him:
"I bid you tell me what you think of it."
And he should answer: "Oh, the sun is very nice."
So sadly fitted I to speak in praise
Of Lincoln.

Now during Andrew Johnson's term the currency grew stable;
We bought Alaska and we laid the great Atlantic cable;
And then there came eight years of Grant; thereafter four of Hayes;
And in his time the parties fell on fierce and parlous days;
And Garfield came, and Arthur too, And Congress shoes were worn,
And Brooklyn Bridge was built and I, your gifted bard, was born.

Cleveland and Harrison came along then;
Followed an era of Cleveland again.
Came then McKinley and--light me a pipe--
Hey there, composing room, get some new type!

I sing him now as I shall sing him again;

I sing him now as I have sung before.
How fluently his name comes off my pen!
O Theodore!

Bless you and keep you, T.R.!
Energy tireless, eternal,
Fixed and particular star,
Theodore, Teddy, the Colonel.

Energy tireless, eternal;
Hater of grafters and crooks!
Theodore, Teddy, the Colonel,
Writer and lover of books.

Hater of grafters and crooks,
Forceful, adroit, and expressive,
Writer and lover of books,
Nevertheless a progressive.

Forceful, adroit, and expressive,
Often asserting the trite;
Nevertheless a progressive;
Errant, but generally right.

Often asserting the trite;
Stubborn, and no one can force you.
Errant, but generally right--
Yet, on the whole, I indorse you.

Stubborn, and no one can force you,
Fixed and particular star,
Yet, on the whole, I indorse you,
Bless you and keep you T.R.!

It blew, it rained, it snowed, it stormed, it froze, it hailed, it sleeted
The day that William Howard Taft upon the chair was seated.
The four long years that followed--ah, that I should make a rhyme of it!
For Mr. taft assures me that he had an awful time of it.
And yet meseems he did his best; and as we bid good-bye,
I'll add he did a better job than you'd have done--or I.

Welcome to thee! I shake thy hand,

New prey of our well-known land.
May what we merit, and no less,
Descend to give us happiness!
May what we merit, and no more,
Descend on us in measured store!
Give us but peace when we shall earn
The right to such a rich return!
Give us but plenty when we show
That we deserve to have it so!

Mine ode is finished! Tut! It is a slight one,
But blame me not; I do as I am bid.
The editors of COLLIER'S said to write one,
And I did.

Franklin Pierce Adams

An Ultimatum To Myrtilla

Ah, Myrtilla mine, you said-
And your tone was earnest, very-
You would never deck your head
With this vernal millinery.

Myrt, to mince no words, you lied;
Oh, that I should live to know it!
You that are my nearly-bride;
I that am your nearly-poet!

For I saw the awful lid
You had on at 10 this morning;
Myrt, it was a merrywid,
Spite of my decisive warning.

Still, I can forgive you that;
Though the thing look ne'er so silly;
I will overlook the hat
If you promise this, Myrtillie:

Wear your lacebelows and fluffs;
Wear the awfulest creations-
But-omit the stylish puffs
And the vogueish transformations.

Myrt, if you inflate your hair
I shall-well-excoriate you,
And, I positively swear,
Loathe, despise, detest, and hate you.

Franklin Pierce Adams

And Yet It Is A Gentle Art

(Parody is a genre frowned upon by your professors
of literature... And yet it is a gentle art-
'The Point of View' in May _Scribner's_.)

A sweet disorder in the verse
That never looks behind
Shall profit not who steals my purse,
Let joy be unconfined!

How vainly men themselves amaze!
The stars began to blink,
An art that there were few to praise,
Nor any dropp to drink.

O sleep, it is a blessed thing
Which I must ne'er enjoy!
There never was a fairer spring
Than when I was a boy.

One fond embrace and then we part!
Good-by, my lover, good-by!
And yet it is a gentle art,
Which nobody can deny.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Ballade Of Ancient Acts

AFTER HENLEY

Where are the wheezes they essayed
And where the smiles they made to flow?
Where's Caron's seltzer siphon laid,
A squirt from which laid Herbert low?
Where's Charlie Case's comic woe
And Georgie Cohan's nasal drawl?
The afterpiece? The olio?
Into the night go one and all.

Where are the japeries, fresh or frayed,
That Fields and Lewis used to throw?
Where is the horn that Shepherd played?
The slide trombone that Wood would blow?
Amelia Glover's l.f. toe?
The Rays and their domestic brawl?
Bert Williams with "Oh, I Don't Know?"
Into the night go one and all.

Where's Lizzy Raymond, peppy jade?
The braggart Lew, the simple Joe?
And where the Irish servant maid
That Jimmie Russel used to show?
Ben Harney's where? And Artie Hall?
Nash Walker, Darktown's grandest beau?
Into the night go one and all.

L'ENVOI

Prince, though our children laugh "Ho! Ho!"
At us who gleefully would fall
For acts that played the Long Ago,
Into the night go one and all.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Ballade Of The Breakfast Table

When the Festal Board, as the papers say,
Groans 'neath the weight of a lot to eat,
At breakfast, Fruhstuck or dejeuner,
(As a bard tri-lingual I'm rather neat)
At breakfast, then, if I may repeat,
This is what gets me into a huff,
This is a query I cannot beat:
Why don't they ever have spoons enough?

I've broken my fast with the grave and gay,
With hoi polloi and with the elite;
I've been all over the U. S. A.
From Dorchester Crossing to Kearney Street.
But aye when I sit in the morning seat
Comes to my notice the self-same bluff,
Plenty of food, but in this they cheat:
Why don't they ever have spoons enough?

Take it at breakfast, only to-day:
This was the layout, fresh and sweet:
Canteloupe, sweet as the new-mown hay; [Footnote: And about as edible.]
Cereal-one of the brands[Footnote: To advertisers: This space for sale.]
of wheat;
Soft-boiled eggs (we've cut out the meat) :
Coffee (a claro-manila-buff) :
Napery, china, and glasses complete-
Why don't they ever have spoons enough?

L'ENVOI

Autocratesses, forgive my heat,
But isn't it time to change that stuff?
Small is the benison I entreat-
Why don't they ever have spoons enough?

Franklin Pierce Adams

Ballade Of The Hardy Annual

Many a jest that refuses to die
Bobs up again as the seasons appear;
Deathless it hits us again in the eye-
Changeless and dull as the calendar year.
Musty and mouldy and yellow and sere,
Stronger, withal, than the sturdiest oak;
Ancient and solemn and deadly and drear-
Down with the grandmother-funeral joke!

Soon as the snow has forgotten to fly,
All through the day of the 'leathery sphere,'
Jokelets and pictures and verses we spy
All on the theme of the grandmother dear.
Bonnets, umbrellas, and buckets of beer
Please us and tickle us quite to the choke.
But-on this matter our attitude's clear-
Down with the grandmother-funeral joke!

Giggle we can at a blueberry pie;
Scream at a comedy king or ameer;
Simply guffaw when the jestermen guy
Marriage, a thing at which no one should jeer.
Things that in others elicit a tear
All of our risibles simply unyoke;
But from this stand we're unwilling to veer:
Down with the grandmother-funeral joke!

L'ENVOI

Brothers in motley, the season is here;
Small is the boon that we sadly invoke:
Butcher it, murder it, jump on its ear! -
Down with the grandmother-funeral joke!

Franklin Pierce Adams

Ballade Of The Traffickers

Up goes the price of our bread--
Up goes the cost of our caking!
People must ever be fed;
Bakers must ever be baking.
So, though our nerves may be quaking,
Dumbly, in arrant despair,
Pay we the crowd that is taking
All that the traffic will bear.

Costly to sleep in a bed!
Costlier yet to be waking!
Costly for one who is wed!
Ruinous for one who is raking!
Tradespeople, ducking and draking,
Charge you as much as they dare,
Asking, without any faking,
All that the traffic will bear.

Roof that goes over our head,
Thirst so expensive for slaking,
Paper, apparel, and lead--
Why are their prices at breaking?
Yet, though our purses be aching,
Little the traffickers care;
Getting, for chopping and steaking,
All that the traffic will bear.

L'ENVOI

Take thou my verses, I pray, King,
Letting my guerdon be fair.
Even a bard must be making
All that the traffic will bear.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Baseball's Sad Lexicon

These are the saddest of possible words:

Tinker to Evers to Chance.

Trio of Bear-cubs, fleeter than birds,

Tinker to Evers to Chance.

Ruthlessly pricking our gonfalon bubble,

Making a Giant hit into a double --

Words that are weighty with nothing but trouble:

Tinker to Evers to Chance.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Bedbooks

(There is said to be a steady demand for 'bedbooks' in England. There are readers who find in Gibbon a sedative for tired nerves; there are others who enjoy Trollope's quiet humour. Some people find in Henry James's tangled syntax the restful diversion they seek, and others enjoy Mr. Howells's unexciting realism.
- *The Sun*.)

How sleep the brave who sink to rest,
Lulled by the waves of dreamy diction,
Like that appearing in the best
Of modern fiction!

When sleeplessness the Briton claims,
And hits him with her wakeful wallop,
He goes to Gibbon or to James,
Or maybe Trollope.

No paltry limit, such as those
The craving-slumber Yankee curses-
He has a wealth of poppy prose
And opiate verses.

A grain of-ought I mention names
And say whence sleep may be inspired?
Is it the thing to say of James,
'He makes me tired?'

To say 'a dose of Phillips, or
A capsule of Sinclair or Brady,
Is just the thing to make me snore?'
Oh, lackadaydee!

Nay! It were churlish to review
And specify by marked attention
Our bedbooks. They are far too nu-
Merous to mention.

Bon Voyage - And Vice Versa

Propertius: Elegy VIII, Part 1

"Tune igitur demens nec te mea cura moratur?---"

O Cynthia, hast thou lost thy mind?
Have I no claim on thine affection?
Dost love the chill Illyrian wind
With something passing predilection?
And is thy friend--whoe'er he be--
The kind to take the place of me?

Ah, canst thou bear the surging deep?
Canst thou endure the hard ship's-mattress?
For scant will be thy hours of sleep
From Staten Island to Cape Hatt'ras;
And won't thy fairy feet be froze
With treading on the foreign snows?

I hope that doubly blows the gale,
With billows twice as high as ever,
So that the captain, fain to sail,
May not achieve his mad endeavor!
The winds, when that they cease to roar,
Shall find me wailing on the shore.

Yet merit thou my love or wrath,
O False, I pray that Galatea
May smile upon thy watery path!
A pleasant trip,--that's the idea.
Light of my life, there never shall
For me be any other gal.

And sailors, as they hasten past,
Will always have to hear my query:
"Where have you seen my Cynthia last?
Has anybody seen my dearie?"
I'll shout: "In Malden or Marquette
Where'er she be, I'll have her yet!"

Franklin Pierce Adams

Broadmindedness

How narrow his vision, how cribbed and confined!
How prejudiced all of his views!
How hard is the shell of his bigoted mind!
How difficult he to excuse!

His face should be slapped and his head should be banged;
A person like that ought to die!
I want to be fair, but a man should be hanged
Who's any less liberal than I.

Franklin Pierce Adams

'Carpe Diem,' Or Cop The Day

AD LEUCONOEN

Horace: Book I, Ode 13.

'Tu ne quoesieris, scire nefas-'

It is not right for you to know, so do not ask,
Leuconoe,
How long a life the gods may give or ever we
are gone away;
Try not to read the Final Page, the ending
colophonian,
Trust not the gypsy's tea-leaves, nor the
prophets Babylonian.
Better to have what is to come enshrouded
in obscurity
Than to be certain of the sort and length of
our futurity.
Why, even as I monologue on wisdom and
longevity
How Time has flown! Spear some of it!
The longest life is brevity.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Despite

The terrible things that the Governor
Of Kansas says alarm me;
And yet somehow we won the war
In spite of the Regular Army.

The things they say of the old N.G.
Are bitter and cruel and hard;
And yet we walloped the enemy
In spite of the National Guard.

Too late, too late, was our work begun;
Too late were our forces sent;
And yet we smeared the horrible Hun
In spite of the President.

"What a frightful flivver this Baker is!"
Cried many a senator;
And yet we handed the Kaiser his
In spite of the Sec. of War.

A sadly incompetent, sinful crew
Is that of the recent fight;
And yet we put it across, we do,
In spite of a lot of spite.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Fifty-Fifty

For something like eleven summers
I've written things that aimed to teach
Our careless mealy-mouthéd mummings
To be more sedulous of speech.

So sloppy of articulation
So limping and so careless they,
About distinct enunciation,
Often I don't know what they say.

The other night an able actor,
Declaiming of some lines I heard,
I hailed a public benefactor,
As I distinguished every word.

But, oh! the subtle disappointment!
Thorn on the celebrated rose
And fly within the well-known ointment!
(Allusions everybody knows).

Came forth the words exact and snappy.
And as I sat there, that P.M.,
I mused, "Was I not just as happy
When I could not distinguish them?"

Franklin Pierce Adams

Fragment

"Militis in galea nidum fecere columbæ,"--

PETRONIUS

WITHIN the soldier's helmet see
The nesting dove;
Venus and Mars, it seems to me,
In love.

Franklin Pierce Adams

From: Horace To: Phyllis Subject: Invitation

Horace: Book IV, Ode 11

"Est mihi nonum superantis annum--"

Phyllis, I've a jar of wine,
(Alban, B.C. 49)
Parsley wreathes, and, for your tresses,
Ivy that your beauty blesses.

Shines my house with silverware;
Fronnage decks the altar stair--
Sacred vervain, a device
For a lambkin's sacrifice.

Up and down the household stairs
What a festival prepares!
Everybody's superintending--
See the sooty smoke ascending!

What, you ask me, is the date
Of the day we celebrate?
13th April, month of Venus--
Birthday of my boss, Mycænas.

Let me, Phyllis, say a word
Touching Telephus, a bird
Ranking far too high above you;
(And the loafer doesn't love you).

Lessons, Phyllie, may be learned
From Phaëton--how he was burned!
And recall Bellerophon was
One equestrian who thrown was.

Phyllis, of my loves the last,
My philandering days are past.
Sing you, in your clear contralto,
Songs I write for the rialto.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Georgie Porgie

BY MOTHER GOOSE AND OUR OWN SARA TEASDALE

Bennie's kisses left me cold,
Eddie's made me yearn to die,
Jimmie's made me laugh aloud,--
But Georgie's made me cry.

Bennie sees me every night,
Eddie sees me every day,
Jimmie sees me all the time,--
But Georgie stays away.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Glycera Rediviva

Horace: Book I, Ode 19

"Mater sæva Cupidinum"

Venus, the cruel mother of
The Cupids (symbolising Love),
Bids me to muse upon and sigh
For things to which I've said "Good-bye!"

Believe me or believe me not,
I give this Glycera girl a lot:
Pure Parian marble are her arms--
And she has eighty other charms.

Venus has left her Cyprus home
And will not let me pull a pome
About the Parthians, fierce and rough,
The Scythian war, and all that stuff.

Set up, O slaves, a verdant shrine!
Uncork a quart of last year's wine!
Place incense here, and here verbenas,
And watch me while I jolly Venus!

Franklin Pierce Adams

Help

The Passionate Householder to his Love

Come, live with us and be our cook,
And we will all the whimsies brook
That German, Irish, Swede, and Slav
And all the dear domestics have.

And you shall sit upon the stoop
What time we go and cook the soup,
And you shall hear, both night and day,
Melodious pianolas play.

And we will make the beds, of course,
You'll have two autos and a horse,
A lady to Marcel your tresses,
And all the madame's half-worn dresses.

Your gowns shall be of lace and silk,
Your laving shall be done in milk.
Two trained physicians when you cough,
And Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays off.

When you are mashing Irish spuds
You'll wear the very finest duds.
If good to you these prospects look,
Come, live with us and be our cook.

On callers we have put no stops,
We love the iceman and the cops,
And no alarm clock with its ticks
And bell to ring at half-past six.

O Gretchen, Bridget, Hulda, Mary,
Come, be our genius culinary.
If good to you these prospects look,
Come, live with us and be our cook.

Franklin Pierce Adams

His Monument

Horace: Book III, Ode 30

"Exegi monumentum aere perennius---"

The monument that I have built is durable as brass,
And loftier than the Pyramids which mock the years that pass.
No blizzard can destroy it, nor furious rain corrode--
Remember, I'm the bard who built the first Horatian Ode.

I shall not altogether die; a part of me's immortal.
A part of me shall never pass the mortuary portal;
And when I die my fame shall stand the nitric test of time--
The fame of me of lowly birth, who built the lofty rhyme!

Ay, fame shall be my portion when no trace there is of me,
For I first made Æolian songs the songs of Italy.
Accept I pray, Melpomene, my modest meed of praise,
And crown my thinning, graying locks with wreathes of Delphic bays!

Franklin Pierce Adams

How

How can I work when you play the piano,
Feminine person above?
How can I think, with your ceaseless soprano
Singing: 'Ah, Love-'
'?

How can I dream of a subject aesthetic,
Far from the purlieus of prose?
How, with the call of the peripatetic
'High! High cash clo'es!'
'?

How can I write when the children are crying?
How can I poetize-how?
How can I help imper_fect_ versifying?
(There is some now.)

How can I bathe in the thought-waves of
beauty?
How, with my nerves on the slant,
Can I perform my poetical duty?
Frankly, I can't.

Franklin Pierce Adams

How Do You Tackle Your Work

How do you tackle your work each day?
Are you scared of the job you find?
Do you grapple the task that comes your way
With a confident, easy mind?
Do you stand right up to the work ahead
Or fearfully pause to view it?
Do you start to toil with a sense of dread?
Or feel that you're going to do it?

You can do as much as you think you can,
But you'll never accomplish more;
If you're afraid of yourself, young man,
There's little for you in store.
For failure comes from the inside first,
It's there if we only knew it,
And you can win, though you face the worst,
If you feel that you're going to do it.

Success! It's found in the soul of you,
And not in the realm of luck!
The world will furnish the work to do,
But you must provide the pluck.
You can do whatever you think you can,
It's all in the way you view it.
It's all in the start you make, young man:
You must feel that you're going to do it.

How do you tackle your work each day?
With confidence clear, or dread?
What to yourself do you stop and say
When a new task lies ahead?
What is the thought that is in your mind?
Is fear ever running through it?
If so, just tackle the next you find
By thinking you're going to do it.
--From "A Heap o' Linin'," by Edgar A. Guest

I tackle my terrible job each day
With a fear that is well defined;

And I grapple the task that comes my way
With no confidence in my mind.
I try to evade the work ahead,
As I fearfully pause to view it,
And I start to toil with a sense of dread,
And doubt that I'm going to do it.

I can't do as much as I think I can,
And I never accomplish more.
I am scared to death of myself, old man,
As I may have observed before.
I've read the proverbs of Charley Schwab,
Carnegie, and Marvin Hughitt;
But whenever I tackle a difficult job,
O gosh! I hate to do it!

I try to believe in my vaunted power
With that confident kind of bluff,
But somebody tells me The Conning Tower
Is nothing but awful stuff.
And I take up my impotent pen that night,
And idly and sadly chew it,
As I try to write something merry and bright,
And I know that I shall not do it.

And that's how I tackle my work each day--
With terror and fear and dread--
And all I can see is a long array
Of empty columns ahead.
And those are the thoughts that are in my mind,
And that's about all there's to it.
As long as there's work, of whatever kind,
I'm certain I cannot do it.

Franklin Pierce Adams

I Remember, I Remember

I remember, I remember
The house where I was born;
The rent was thirty-two a month,
Which made my father mourn.
He said he could remember when
His father paid the rent;
And when a man's expenses did
Not take his every cent.

I remember, I remember--
My mother telling my cousin
That eggs had gone to twenty-six
Or seven cents a dozen;
And how she told my father that
She didn't like to speak
Of things like that, but Bridget now
Demanded four a week.

I remember, I remember--
And with a mirthless laugh--
My weekly board at college took
A jump to three and a half.

I bought an eighteen-dollar suit,
And father told me, "Sonny,
I'll pay the bill this time, but, Oh,
I am not made out of money!"

I remember, I remember,
When I was young and brave
And I declared, "Well, Birdie, we
Shall now begin to save."
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from wealth
Than when I was a boy.

Franklin Pierce Adams

If Amy Lowell Had Been James Whitcomb Riley

When you came you were like red wine and honey,
And the taste of you burnt my mouth with its sweetness.
Now you are like morning bread--
Smooth and pleasant,
I hardly taste you at all, for I know your savour,
But I am completely nourished.

--AMY LOWELL, in *The Chimæra*.

When I wuz courtin' Annie, she wuz honey an' red wine,
She made me feel all jumpy, did that ol' sweetheart o' mine;
Wunst w'en I went to Crawfordsville, on one o' them there trips,
I kissed her--an' the burnin' taste wuz sizzlin' on my lips.
An' now I've married Annie, an' I see her all the time,
I do not feel the daily need o' bustin' into rhyme.
An' now the wine-y taste is gone, fer Annie's always there,
An' I take her fer granted now, the same ez sun an' air.
But though the honey taste wuz sweet, an' though the wine wuz strong,
Yet ef I lost the sun an' air, I couldn't git along.

Franklin Pierce Adams

If The Advertising Man Had Been Gilbert

Never mind the slippery wet street--
The tire with a thousand claws will hold you.
Stop as quickly as you will--
Those thousand claws grip the road like a vise.
Turn as sharply as you will--
Those thousand claws take a steel-prong grip on the road to prevent a side skid.
You're safe--safer than anything else will make you--
Safe as you would be on a perfectly dry street.
And those thousand claws are mileage insurance too.

--From the Lancaster Tire and Rubber Company's advertisement in the Saturday Evening Post

Never mind if you find it wet upon the street and slippery;
Never bother if the street is full of ooze;
Do not fret that you'll upset, that you will spoil your summer frippery,
You may turn about as sharply as you choose.
For those myriad claws will grip the road and keep the car from skidding,
And your steering gear will hold it fast and true;
Every atom of the car will be responsive to your bidding,
AND those thousand claws are mileage insurance too--
Oh, indubitably,
Those thousand claws are mileage insurance too.

Franklin Pierce Adams

If The Advertising Man Had Been Praed, Or Locker

"C'est distingue," says Madame La Mode,
'Tis a fabric of subtle distinction.
For street wear it is superb.
The chic of the Rue de la Paix--
The style of Fifth Avenue--
The character of Regent Street--
All are expressed in this new fabric creation.
Leather-like, but feather-light--
It drapes and folds and distends to perfection.
And it may be had in dull or glazed,
Plain or grained, basket weave or moiréd surfaces!

--Advertisement of Pontine, in Vanity Fair.

"C'est distingue," says Madame La Mode.
Subtly distinctive as a fabric fair;
Nor Keats nor Shelley in his loftiest ode
Could thrum the line to tell how it will wear.

The flair, the chic, that is Rue de la Paix,
The style that is Fifth Avenue, New York.
The character of Regent Street in May--
As leather strong, yet light as any cork.
All these for her in this fair fabric clad.
(Light of my life, O thou my Genevieve!)
In surface dull or glazed it may be had--
In plain or grained, moiréd or basket weave.

Franklin Pierce Adams

I'M Out Of The Army Now

When first I doffed my olive drab,
I thought, delightfully though mutely,
"Henceforth I shall have pleasure ab-
Solutely."

Dull with the drudgery of war,
Sick of the name of fighting,
I yearned, I thought, for something more
Exciting.

The rainbow be my guide, quoth I;
My suit shall be a brave and proud one
Gay-hued my socks; and oh, my tie
A loud one.

For me the theater and the dance;
Primrose the path I would be wending;
For me the roses of romance
Unending.

Those were my inner thoughts that day
(And those of many another million)
When once again I should be a
Civilian.

I would not miss the o.d.;
(Monotony I didn't much like)
I would not miss the reveille,
And such the like.

I don't . . . And do I now enjoy
My walks along the primrose way so?
Is civil life the life? Oh, boy,
I'll say so.

Franklin Pierce Adams

It Happens In The B.R. Families

'Twas on the shores that round our coast
From Deal to Newport lie
That I roused from sleep in a huddled heap
An elderly wealthy guy.

His hair was graying, his hair was long,
And graying and long was he;
And I heard this grouch on the shore avouch,
In a singular jazzless key:

"Oh, I am a cook and a waitress trim
And a maid of the second floor,
And a strong chauffeur and a housekeeper,
And the man who tends the door!"

And he shook his fists and he tore his hair,
And he started to frisk and play,
Till I couldn't help thinking the man had been drinking,
So I said (in the Gilbert way):

"Oh, elderly man, I don't know much
Of the ways of societee,
But I'll eat my friend if I comprehend
However you can be

"At once a cook and a waitress trim
And the maid of the second floor,
And a strong chauffeur and a housekeeper,
And the man who tends the door."

Then he smooths his hair with a nervous air,
And a gulp in his throat he swallows,
And that elderly guy he then lets fly
Substantially as follows:

"We had a house down Newport way,
And we led a simple life;
There was only I," said the elderly guy,
And my daughter and my wife.

"And of course the cook and a waitress trim
And the maid of the second floor,
And a strong chauffeur and a housekeeper,
And the man who tends the door."

"One day the cook she up and left,
She up and left us flat.
She was getting a hundred and ten a mon-
Th, but she couldn't work for that.

"And the waitress trim was her bosom friend,
And she wouldn't stay no more;
And our strong chauffeur eloped with her
Who was the maid of the second floor.

"And we couldn't get no other help,
So I had to cook and wait.
It was quite absurd," wept the elderly bird.
"I deserve a better fate.

"And I drove the car and I made the beds
Till the housekeeper up and quit;
And the man at the door found that a bore,
Which is why I am, to wit:

"At once a cook and a waitress trim
And the maid of the second floor,
And a strong chauffeur and a housekeeper,
And the man who tends the door."

Franklin Pierce Adams

It Was A Famous Victory

It was a summer evening;
Old Kaspar was at home,
Sitting before his cottage door--
Like in the Southey pome--
And near him, with a magazine,
Idled his grandchild, Geraldine.

"Wy don't you ask me," Kaspar said
To the child upon the floor,
"Why don't you ask me what I did
When I was in the war?
They told me that each little kid
Would surely ask me what I did.

"I've had my story ready
For thirty years or more."
"Don't bother, Grandpa," said the child;
"I find such things a bore.
Pray leave me to my magazine,"
Asserted little Geraldine.

Then entered little Peterkin,
To whom the gaffer said:
"You'd like to hear about the war?
How I was left for dead?"
"No. And, besides," declared the youth,
"How do I know you speak the truth?"

Arose the Wan, embittered man,
The hero of this pome,
And walked, with not unsprightly step,
Down to the Soldiers' Home,
Where he, with seven other men,
Sat swapping lies till half-past ten.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Lines On And From

("Sir: For the first time in twenty-three years 'Bartlett's Familiar Quotations' has been revised and enlarged, and under a separate cover we are sending you a copy of the new edition. We would appreciate an expression of opinion from you of the value of this work after you have had an ample opportunity of examining it." --THE PUBLISHERS)

Of making many books there is no end--
So Sancho Panza said, and so say I.
Thou wert my guide, philosopher and friend
When only one is shining in the sky.

Books cannot always please, however good;
The good is oft interred with their bones.
To be great is to be misunderstood,
The anointed soverign of sighs and groans.

The Moving Finger writes, and having writ,
I never write as funny as I can.
Remote, unfriendly, studious let me sit
And say to all the world, "This was a man!"

Go, lovely Rose, that lives its little hour!
Go, little booke! and let who will be clever!
Roll on! From yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moon and I could keep this up forever.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Lines On Reading Frank J. Wilstach's

As neat as wax, as good as new,
As true as steel, as truth is true,
Good as a sermon, keen as hate,
Full as a tick, and fixed as fate--

Brief as a dream, long as the day,
Sweet as the rosy morn in May,
Chaste as the moon, as snow is white,
Broad as barn doors, and new as sight--

Useful as daylight, firm as stone,
Wet as a fish, dry as a bone,
Heavy as lead, light as a breeze--
Frank Wilstach's book of similies.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Lines Written On The Sunny Side Of Frankfort Street

Sporting with Amaryllis in the shade,
(I credit Milton in parenthesis),
Among the speculations that she made
Was this:

"When"--these her very words--"when you return,
A slave to duty's harsh commanding call,
Will you, I wonder, ever sigh and yearn
At all?"

Doubt, honest doubt, sat then upon my brow.
(Emotion is a thing I do not plan).
I could not fairly answer then, but now
I can.

Yes, Amaryllis, I can tell you this,
Can answer publicly and unafraid:
You haven't any notion how I miss
The shade.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Maud Muller Mutatur

In 1909 toilet goods were not considered a serious matter and no special department of the catalogs were devoted to it. A few perfumes and creams were scattered here and there among bargain goods.

In 1919 an assortment of perfumes that would rival any city department store is shown, along with six pages of other toilet articles, including rouge and eyebrow pencils.

--From "How the Farmer Has Changed in a Decade: Toilet Goods," in Farm and Fireside's advertisement.

Maud Muller, on a summer's day,
Powdered her nose with Bon Sachet.

Beneath her lingerie hat appeared
Eyebrows and cheeks that were well veneered.

Singing she rocked on the front piazz,
To the tune of "The Land of the Sky Blue Jazz."

But the song expired on the summer air,
And she said, "This won't get me anywhere."

The Judge in his car looked up at her
And signalled "Stop!" to his brave chauffeur.

He smiled a smile that is known as broad,
And he said to Miss Muller, "Hello, how's Maud?"

"What sultry weather is this? Gee whiz!"
Said Maud. Said the Judge, "I'll say it is."

"Your coat is heavy. Why don't you shed it?
Have a drink?" said Maud. Said the Judge, "You said it."

And Maud, with the joy of bucolic youth,
Blended some gin and some French vermouth.

Maud Muller sighed, as she poured the gin,
"I've got something on Whittier's heroine."

"Thanks," said the judge, "a peppier brew
From a fairer hand was never knew."

And when the judge had had number 7,
Maud seemed an angel direct from Heaven.

And the judge declared, "You're a lvoely girl,
An' I'm for you Maudie, I'll tell the worl'."

And the judge said, "Marry me, Maudie dearie?"
And Maud said yes to the well known query.

And she often thinks, in her rustic way,
As she powders her nose with Bon Sachet,

"I never'n the world would a' got that guy,
If I'd waited till after the First o' July.

And of all glad words of prose or rhyme,
The gladdest are, "Act while there yet is time."

Franklin Pierce Adams

No Good Deed Goes Unpunished

There was a man in our town who had King Midas' touch;
He gave away his millions to the colleges and such;
And people cried: "The hypocrite! He ought to understand
The ones who really need him are the children of this land!"
When Andrew Croesus built a home for children who were sick,
The people said they rather thought he did it as a trick,
And writers said: "He thinks about the drooping girls and boys,
But what about conditions with the men whom he employs?"

There was a man in our town who said that he would share
His profits with his laborers, for that was only fair,
And people said: "Oh, isn't he the shrewd and foxy gent?
It cost him next to nothing for that free advertisement!"

There was a man in our town who had the perfect plan
To do away with poverty and other ills of man,
But he feared the public jeering, and the folks who would defame him,
So he never told the plan he had, and I can hardly blame him.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Office Mottoes

Motto heartening, inspiring,
Framed above my pretty *desk,
Never Shelley, Keats, or Byring*
Penned a phrase so picturesque!
But in me no inspiration
Rides my low and prosy brow-
All I think of is vacation
When I see that lucubration:

DO IT NOW

When I see another sentence
Framed upon a brother's wall,
Resolution and repentance
Do not flood o'er me at all
As I read that nugatory
Counsel written years ago,
Only when one comes to borry[Footnote: Entered under the Pure License of
1906.]
Do I heed that ancient story:

TELL HIM NO

Mottoes flat and mottoes silly,
Proverbs void of point or wit,
'KEEP A-PLUGGIN' WHEN IT'S HILLY!'
'LIFE'S A TIGER: CONQUER IT!'
Office mottoes make me weary
And of all the bromide bunch
There is only one I seri-
ously like, and that's the cheery:

GONE TO LUNCH

Oh Man!

Man hath harnessed the lightning;
Man hath soared to the skies;
Mountain and hill are clay to his will;
Skillful he is, and wise.
Sea to sea hath he wedded,
Canceled the chasm of space,
Given defeat to cold and heat;
Splendour is his, and grace.

His are the topless turrets;
His are the plumbless pits;
Earth is slave to his architrave,
Heaven is thrall to his wits.
And so in the golden future,
He who hath dulled the storm
(As said above) may make a glove
That'll keep my fingers warm.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Old Environment

I used to think that this environ-
ment talk was all a lot of guff;
Place mattered not with Keats and Byron
Stuff.

If I have thoughts that need disclosing,
Bright be the day or hung with gloom,
I'll write in Heaven or the composing-
Room.

Times are when with my nerves a-tingle,
Joyous and bright the songs I sing;
Though, gay, I can't dope out a single
Thing.

And yet, by way of illustration,
The gods my graying head annoit . . .
I wrote this piece at Inspiration
point.

Franklin Pierce Adams

On A Wine Of Horace's

What time I read your mighty line,
O Mr. Q. Horatius Flaccus,
In praise of many an ancient wine--
You twanged a wickid lyric to Bacchus!--
I wondered, like a Yankee hick,
If that old stuff contained a kick.

So when upon a Paris card
I glimpsed a Falernian, I said: "Waiter,
I'll emulate that ancient bard,
And pass upon his merits later."
Professor Mendell, quelque sport,
Suggested that we split a quart.

O Flaccus, ere I ceased to drink
Three glasses and a pair of highballs,
I could not talk, I could not think;
For I was pickled to the eyeballs.
If you sopped up Falernian wine
How did you ever write a line?

Franklin Pierce Adams

On First Looking Into Bee Palmer's Shoulders

WITH BOWS TO KEATS AND KEITH'S
["The World's Most Famous Shoulders"]

Then I felt like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken,
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific--and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise--
Silent upon a peak in Darien."

"BEE" PALMER has taken the raw human--all too human--stuff of the underworld, with its sighs of sadness and regret, its mad merriment, its swift blaze of passion, its turbulent dances, its outlaw music, its songs of the social bandit, and made a new art product of the theatre. She is to the sources of jazz and the blues what François Villon was to the wild life of Paris. Both have found exquisite blossoms of art in the sector of life most removed from the concert room and the boudoir, and their harvest has the vigour, the resolute life, the stimulating quality, the indelible impress of daredevil, care-free, do-as-you-please lives of the picturesque men and women who defy convention. --From Keith's Press Agent.

Much have I travell'd in the realms of jazz,
And many goodly arms and shoulders seen
Quiver and Quake--if you know what I mean;
I've seen a lot, as everybody has.
Some plaudits got, while others got the razz.
But when I saw Bee Palmer, shimmy queen,
I shook--in sympathy--my troubled bean,
And said, "This is the utter razmatazz."

Then felt I like some patient with a pain
When a new surgeon swims into his ken,
Or like stout Brodie, when, with reeling brain,
He jumped into the river. There and then
I swayed and took the morning train
To Norwalk, Naugatuck, and Darien.

On Profiteering

Although I hate
A profiteer
With unabated
Loathing;
Though I detest
The price they smear
On pants and vest
And clothing;

Yet I admit
My meed of crime,
Nor do one whit
Regret it;
I'd triple my
Price for a rhyme,
If I thought I
Could get it.

Franklin Pierce Adams

On The Flight Of Time

Horace: Book I, Ode 2

"Tu ne quæsieris, scire nefas, quem, mihi, quem tibi"

AD LEUCONOEN

Look not, Leuconoë, into the future;
Seek not to find what the answer may be;
Let no Chaldean clairvoyant compute your
Time of existence. . . . It irritates me!

Better to bear whatever may happen soever
Patiently, playing it through like a sport,
Whether the end of your breathing is Never,
Or, as is likely, your time will be short.

This is the angle, the true situation;
Get me, I pray, for I'm putting you hep:
While I've been fooling with versification
Time has been flying. . . . Both gates!
Watch your step!

Franklin Pierce Adams

On The Importance Of Being Earnest

"Gentle Jane was as good as gold,"
To borrow a line from Mr. Gilbert;
She hated War with a hate untold,
She was a pacifistic filbert.
If you said "Perhaps"--she'd leave the hall.
You couldn't argue with her at all.

"Teasing Tom was a very bad boy,"
(Pardon my love for a good quotation).
To talk of war was his only joy,
And his single purpose was preparation.
* * * * *

And what both of these children had to say
I never knew, for I ran away.

Franklin Pierce Adams

On The Uses Of Adversity

"Nam nihil est, quod non mortalibus afferat usum."

--PETRONIUS

Nothing there is that mortal man may utterly despise;
What in our wealth we treasured, in our poverty we prize.

The gold upon a sinking ship has often wrecked the boat,
While on a simple oar a shipwrecked man may keep afloat.

The burglar seeks the plutocrat, attracted by his dress--
The poor man finds his poverty the true preparedness.

Franklin Pierce Adams

On Tradition

LINES PROVOKED BY HEARING A YOUNG MAN WHISTLING

No carmine radical in Art,
I worship at the shrine of Form;
Yet open are my mind and heart
To each departure from the norm.
When Post-Impressionism emerged,
I hesitated but a minute
Before I saw, though it diverged,
That there was something healthy in it.

And eke when Music, heavenly maid,
Undid the chains that chafed her feet,
I grew to like discordant shade--
Unharmony I thought was sweet.
When verse divorced herself from sound,
I wept at first. Now I say: "Oh, well,
I see some sense in Ezra Pound,
And nearly some in Amy Lowell."

Yet, though I storm at every change,
And each mutation makes me wince,
I am not shut to all things strange--
I'm rather easy to convince.
But hereunto I set my seal,
My nerves awry, askew, abristling:
I'll never change the way I feel
Upon the question of Free Whistling.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Present Imperative

Horace: Book I, Ode 11

"Tu ne quaesieris--scire nefas
--quem mihi; quem tibi--"

AD LEUCONOEN

Nay query not, Leuconoë, the finish of the fable;
Eliminate the worry as to what the years may hoard!
You only waste your time upon the Babylonian Table--
(Slang for the ouija board).

And as to whether Jupiter, the final, unsurpassed one,
May add a lot of winters to our portion here below,
Or this impinging season is to be our very last one--
Really, I'd hate to know.

Apply yourself to wisdom! Sweep the floor and wash the dishes,
Nor dream about the things you'll do in 1928!
My counsel is to cease to sit and yearn about your wishes,
Cursing the throws of fate.

My! how I have been chattering on matters sad and pleasant!
(Endure with me a moment while I polish off a rhyme).
If I were you, I think, I'd bother only with the present--
Now is the only time.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Propertius's Bid For Immortality

Horace: Book III, Ode 3

"Carminis interea nostri redæmus in orbem---"

Let us return, then, for a time,
To our accustomed round of rhyme;
And let my songs' familiar art
Not fail to move my lady's heart.

They say that Orpheus with his lute
Had power to tame the wildest brute;
That "Variations on a Theme"
Of his would stay the swiftest stream.

They say that by the minstrel's song
Cithæron's rocks were moved along
To Thebes, where, as you may recall,
They formed themselves to frame a wall.

And Galatea, lovely maid,
Beneath wild Etna's fastness stayed
Her horses, dripping with the mere,
Those Polypheman songs to hear.

What marvel, then, since Bacchus and
Apollo grasp me by the hand,
That all the maidens you have heard
Should hang upon my slightest word?

Tænerian columns in my home
Are not; nor any golden dome;
No parks have I, nor Marcian spring,
Nor orchards--nay, nor anything.

The Muses, though, are friends of mine;
Some readers love my lyric line;
And never is Callipoe
Awearied by my poetry.

O happy she whose meed of praise
Hath fallen upon my sheaf of lays!
And every song of mine is sent
To be thy beauty's monument.

The Pyramids that point the sky,
The House of Jove that soars so high,
Mausolus' tomb--they are not free
From Death his final penalty.

For fire or rain shall steal away
The crumbling glory of their day;
But fame for wit can never die,
And gosh! I was a gay old guy!

Franklin Pierce Adams

Recuerdo

We were very tired, we were very merry--
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.
It was bare and bright, and smelled like a stable--
But we looked into a fire, we leaned across a table,
We lay on a hilltop underneath the moon;
And the whistles kept blowing, and the dawn came soon.

We were very tired, we were very merry--
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry,
And you ate an apple, and I ate a pear,
From a dozen of each we had bought somewhere;
And the sky went wan, and the wind came cold,
And the sun rose dripping, a bucketful of gold.

We were very tired, we were very merry,
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry,
We hailed "Good morrow, mother!" to a shawl-covered head,
And bought a morning paper, which neither of us read;
And she wept, "God bless you!" for the apples and pears,
And we gave her all our money but our subway fares.
--EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY, in Poetry.

I was very sad, I was very solemn--
I had worked all day grinding out a column.
I came back from dinner at half-past seven,
And I couldn't think of anything till quarter to eleven;
And then I read "Recuerdo," by Miss Millay,
And I said, "I'll bet a nickel I can write that way."

I was very sad, I was very solemn--
I had worked all day whittling out a column.
I said, "I'll bet a nickel I can chirp such a chant,"
And Mr. Geoffrey Parsons said, "I'll bet you can't."
I bit a chunk of chocolate and found it sweet,
And I listened to the trucking on Frankfort Street.

I was very sad, I was very solemn--
I had worked all day fooling with a column.
I got as far as this and took my verses in

To Mr. Geoffrey Parsons, who said, "Kid, you win."
And--not not that I imagine that anyone'll care--
I blew that jitney on a subway fare.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Regarding (1) The U.S. And (2) New York

Before I was a travelled bird,
I scoffed, in my provincial way,
At other lands; I deemed absurd
All nations but these U.S.A.

And--although Middle-Western born--
Before I was a travelled guy,
I laughed at, with unhidden scorn,
All cities but New York, N.Y.

But now I've been about a bit--
How travel broadens! How it does!
And I have found out this, to wit:
How right I was! How right I was!

Franklin Pierce Adams

Results Ridiculous

("Humourists have amused themselves by translating famous sonnets into free verse. A result no less ridiculous would have been obtained if somebody had re-written a passage from 'Paradise Lost' as a rondeau." --George Soule in the New Republic)

"PARADISE LOST"

Sing, Heavenly Muse, in lines that flow
More smoothly than the wandering Po,
Of man's descending from the height
Of Heaven itself, the blue, the bright,
To Hell's unutterable throe.

Of sin original and the woe
That fell upon us here below
From man's pomonic primal bite--
Sing, Heavenly Muse!

Of summer sun, of winter snow, Of future days, of long ago,
Of morning and "the shades of night,"
Of woman, "my ever new delight,"
Go to it, Muse, and put us Joe--
Sing, Heavenly Muse!

* * * * *

"THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER"

THE wedding guest sat on a stone,
He could not chose but hear
The mariner. They were there alone.
The wedding guest sat on a stone.
"I'll read you something of my own,"
Declared that mariner.
The wedding guest sat on a stone--
He could not chose but hear.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Rich Man

The rich man has his motor-car,
His country and his town estate.
He smokes a fifty-cent cigar
And jeers at Fate.

He frivols through the livelong day,
He knows not Poverty, her pinch.
His lot seems light, his heart seems gay;
He has a cinch.

Yet though my lamp burns low and dim,
Though I must slave for livelihood—
Think you that I would change with him?
You bet I would!

Franklin Pierce Adams

Rus. Vs. Urbs

Whenever the penner of this pome
Regards a lovely country home,
He sighs, in words not insincere,
"I think I'd like to live out here."

And when the builder of this ditty
Returns to this pulsating city,
The perpetrator of this pome
Yearns for a lovely country home.

Franklin Pierce Adams

So Shines A Good Deed In A Naughty World

There was a man in our town, and he
was wondrous rich;
He gave away his millions to the colleges
and sich;
And people cried: "The hypocrite! He ought
to understand
The ones who really need him are the children
of this land."

When Andrew Croesus built a home for children
who were sick,
The people said they rather thought he did it
as a trick,
And writers said: "He thinks about the drooping
girls and boys,
But what about conditions with the men whom
he employs?"

There was a man in our town who said that he
would share
His profits with his laborers, for that was
only fair,
And people said: "Oh, isn't he the shrewd and
foxy gent?
It cost him next to nothing for that free
advertisement."

There was a man in our town who had the perfect
plan
To do away with poverty and other ills of man,
But he feared the public jeering, and the folks
who would defame him,
So he never told the plan he had, and I can hardly
blame him.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Song Of Synthetic Virility

Oh, some may sing of the surging sea, or chant
of the raging main;
Or tell of the taffrail blown away by the raging
hurricane.
With an oh, of the feel of the salt sea spray as
it stippls the guffy's cheek!
And oh, for the sob of the creaking mast and the
halyard's aching squeak!
And some may sing of the galley-foist, and some of
the quadrireme,
And some of the day when the xebec came and hit us
abaft the beam.
Oh, some may sing of the girl in Kew that died for
a sailor's love,
And some may sing of the surging sea, as I may have
observed above.

Oh, some may long for the Open Road, or crave for
the prairie breeze,
And some, o'er sick of the city's strain, may yearn
for the whispering trees.
With an oh, for the rain to cool my face, and the
wind to blow my hair!
And oh, for the trail to Joyous Garde, where I may
find my fair!
And some may love to lie in the field in the stark
and silent night,
The glistening dew for a coverlet and the moon and
stars for light.
Let others sing of the souging pines and the winds
that rustle and roar,
And others long for the Open Roadm as I may have
remarked before.

Ay, some may sing of the bursting bomb and the
screech of a screaming shell,
Or tell the tale of the cruel trench on the other
side of hell.
And some may talk of the ten mile hike in the dead

of a winter night,
And others chaunt of the doughtie Kyng with mickle
valour dight.
And some may long for the song of a child and the
lullaby's fairy charm,
And others yearn for the crack of the bat and the
wind of the pitcher's arm.
Oh, some have longed for this and that, and others
have craved and yearned;
And they all may sing of whatever they like, as far
as I'm concerned.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Such Stuff As Dreams

Jenny kissed me in a dream;
So did Elsie, Lucy, Cora,
Bessie, Gwendolyn, Eupheme,
Alice, Adelaide, and Dora.
Say of honour I'm devoid,
Say monogamy has miss'd me,
But don't say to Dr. Freud
Jenny kiss'd me.

Franklin Pierce Adams

The Ballad Of Justifiable Homicide

They brought to me his mangled corpse
And I feared lest I should swing.

"O tell me, tell me,--and make it brief--
Why hast thou done this thing?

"Had this man robbed the starving poor
Or lived a gunman's life,
Had he set fire to cottages,
Or run off with thy wife?"

"He hath not robbed the starving poor
Or lived a gunman's life;
He hath set fire to no cottage,
Nor run off with my wife.

"Ye ask me such a question that
It now my lips unlocks:
I learned he was the man who planned
The second balcony box."

The jury pondered never an hour,
They thought not even a little,
But handed in unanimously
A verdict of acquittal.

Franklin Pierce Adams

The Ballad Of The Murdered Merchant

All stark and cold the merchant lay,
All cold and stark lay he.
And who hath killed the fair merchant?
Now tell the truth to me.

Oh, I have killed this fair merchant
Will never again draw breath;
Oh, I have made this fair merchant
To come unto his death.

Oh, why hast thou killed this fair merchant
Whose corpse I now behold?
And why hast caused this man to lie
In death all stark and cold?

Oh, I have killed this fair merchant
Whose kith and kin make moan,
For that he hath stolen my precious time
When he useth the telephone.

The telephone bell rang full and clear;
The receiver did I seize.
"Hello!" quoth I, and quoth a girl,
"Hello! . . . One moment, please."

I waited moments ane and twa,
And moments three and four,
And then I sought the fair merchant
And spilled his selfish gore.

That business man who scorneth to waste
His moments sae rich and fine
In calling a man to the telephone
Shall never again waste mine!

And every time a henchwoman
Shall cause me a moment's loss,
I'll forthwith fare to that office
And stab to death her boss.

Rise up! Rise up! thou blesséd knight!
And off thy bended knees!
Go forth and slay all folk who make
Us wait "One moment, please."

Franklin Pierce Adams

The Ballad Of The Thoughtless Waiter

I saw him lying cold and dead
Who yesterday was whole.
"Why," I inquired, "hath he expired?
And why hath fled his soul?"

"but yesterday," his comrade said,
"All health was his, and strength;
And this is why he came to die--
If I may speak at length.

"But yesternight at dinnertime
At a not unknown café,
He had a frugal meal as you
Might purchase any day.

"The check for his so simple fare
Was only eighty cents,
And a dollar bill with a right good will
Came from his opulence.

"The waiter brought him twenty cents.
'Twas only yesternight
That he softly said who now is dead
'Oh, keep it. 'Ats a' right.'

"And the waiter plainly uttered 'Thanks,'
With no hint of scorn or pride;
And my comrade's heart gave a sudden start
And my comrade up and died."

Now waiters overthwart this land,
In tearooms and in dives,
Mute be your lips whatever the tips,
And save your customers' lives.

Franklin Pierce Adams

The Ballade Of The Average Reader

I try to touch the public taste,
For thus I earn my daily bread.
I try to write what folks will paste
In scrap books after I am dead.
By Public Craving I am led.
(I' sooth, a most despotic leader)
Yet, though I write for Tom and Ned,
I've never seen an average reader.

The Editor is good and chaste,
But says: (Above the public's head;
This is too good; 'twill go to waste.
Write something commonplac-
Ed.)
Write for the average reader, fed
By pre-digested near-food's feeder,
But though my high ideals have fled,
I've never seen an average reader.

How many lines have been erased!
How many fancies have been shed!
How many failures might be traced
To this-this average-reader dread!
I've seen an average single bed;
I've seen an average garden-weeder;
I've seen an average cotton thread-
I've never seen an average reader.

L'ENVOI

Most read of readers, if you've read
The works of any old succeder,
You know that he, too, must have said:
'I've never seen an Average Reader.'

Franklin Pierce Adams

The Carlyses

[I was talking with a newspaper man the other day who seemed to think that the fact that Mrs. Carlyle threw a teacup at Mr. Carlyle should be given to the public merely as a fact. But a fact presented to the people without the proper--or even, if necessary, without the improper--human being to go with it does not mean anything and does not really become alive or caper about in people's minds. But what I want and what I believe most people want when a fact is being presented is one or two touches that will make natural and human questions rise in and play about like this: 'Did a servant see Mrs. Carlyle throw the teacup? Was the servant an English servant with an English imagination or an Irish servant with an Irish imagination? What would the fact have been like if Mr. Browning had been listening at the keyhole? Or Oscar Wilde, or Punch, or the Missionary Herald, or The New York Sun, or the Christian Science Monitor?'--GERALD STANLEY LEE in the Saturday Evening Post]

BY OUR OWN ROBERT BROWNING

As a poet heart- and fancy-free--whole,
I listened at the Carlyle's keyhole;
And I saw, I, Robert Browning, saw,
Tom hurl a teacup at Jane's jaw.
She silent sat, nor tried to speak up
When came the wallop with the teacup--
A Cup not filled with Beaune or Clicquot,
But one that brimmed with Orange Pekoe.
"Jane Welsh Carlyle," said Thomas, bold,
"The tea you brewed for m' breakfast's cold!
I'm feeling low i' my mind; a thing
You know b' this time. Have at you!" . . . Bing!
And hurled, threw he at her the teacup;
And I wrote it, deeming it unique, up.

* * * *

BY OUR OWN OSCAR WILDE

LADY LEFFINGWELL (coldly).--A full tea-cup! What a waste! So many good women and so little good tea.
[Exit Lady Leffingwell]

* * * *

FROM OUR OWN "PUNCH"

A MANCHESTER autograph collector, we are informed, has just offered £50 for the signature of Tea Carlyle.

* * * *

FROM OUR OWN "MISSIONARY HERALD"

From what clouds cannot sunshine be distilled! When, in a fit of godless rage, Mr. Carlyle threw a teacup at the good woman he had vowed at the altar to love, honour, and obey, she smiled and the thought of China entered her head. Yesterday Mrs. Carlyle enrolled as a missionary, and will sail for the benighted land of the heathen tomorrow.

* * * *

FROM OUR OWN "NEW YORK SUN"

Fortunate is MRS JANE WELSH CARLYLE to have escaped with her life, though if she had not, no American worthy of the traditions of Washington could simulate acute sorrow. MR. CARLYLE, wearied of the dilatory demands of the BAKERIAN War Department, properly took the law into his own strong hands. The argument that resulted in the teacup's leaving MR. CARLYLE'S hands was common in most households. It transpires that MRS. CARLYLE, with a Bolshevistic tendency that makes patriots wonder what the Department of Justice--to borrow a phrase from a newspaper cartoonist--thinks about, had begun championing the British-Wilson League of Nations, that league which will make ironically true our "E PLURIBUS UNUM"--one of many. Repeated efforts by MR. CARLYLE, in appeals to the Department of Justice, the Military Intelligence Division, and the City Government, were of no avail. And so MR. CARLYLE, like the red-blooded American he is, did what the authorities should have saved him from the embarrassing trouble of doing.

* * * *

FROM OUR OWN "CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR"

It is reported that Mr. Thomas Carlyle has thrown a teacup at Mrs. Carlyle, and

much exaggerated and acrid comment has been made on this incident. If it had been a whiskey glass, or a cocktail glass, the results might have been fatal. In Oregon, which went dry in 1916, the number of women hit by crockery has decreased 4.3 per cent in three years. Of 1,844 women in Oregon hit by crockery in 1915, 1,802 were hit by glasses containing, or destined to contain, alcoholic stimulants. More than 94 per cent of these accidents resulted fatally. The remaining 22 women, hit by tea or coffee cups, are now happy, useful members of society.

Franklin Pierce Adams

The Comfort Of Obscurity

INSPIRED BY READING MR. KIPLING'S POEMS AS
PRINTED IN THE NEW YORK PAPERS

Though earnest and industrious,
I still am unillustrious;
No papers empty purses
Printing verses
Such as mine.

No lack of fame is chronicker
Than that about my monicker;
My verse is never cabled
At a fabled
Rate per line.

Still though the Halls
Of Literature are closed
To me a bard obscure I
Have a consolation The
Copyreaders crude and rough
Can't monkey with my
Humble stuff and change MY
Punctuation.

Franklin Pierce Adams

The Dictaphone Bard

[And here is a suggestion: Did you ever try dictating your stories or articles to the dictaphone for the first draft? I would be glad to have you come down and make the experiment.--From a shorthand reporter's circular letter.]

(As "The Ballad of the Tempest" would have to issue from the dictaphone to the stenographer)

We were crowded in the cabin comma
Not a soul would dare to sleep dash comma
It was midnight on the waters comma
And a storm was on the deep period

Apostrophe Tis a fearful thing in capital Winter
To be shattered by the blast comma
And to hear the rattling trumpet
Thunder colon quote capital Cut away the mast exclamation point close quote

So we shuddered there in silence comma dash
For the stoutest held his breath comma
While the hungry sea was roaring comma
And the breakers talked with capital Death period

As thus we sat in darkness comma
Each one busy with his prayers comma
Quote We are lost exclamation point close quote the captain shouted comma
As he staggered down the stairs period

But his little daughter whispered comma
As she took his icy hand colon
Quote Isn't capital God upon the ocean comma
Just the same as on the land interrogation point close quote

Then we kissed the little maiden comma
And we spake in better cheer comma
And we anchored safe in harbor
When the morn was shining clear period

Franklin Pierce Adams

The Doughboy's Horace

Horace: Book III, Ode 9

"Donec eram gratus tibi--"

HORACE, PVT. --TH INFANTRY, A.E.F., WRITES:

While I was fussing you at home
You put the notion in my dome
That I was the Molasses Kid.
I batted strong. I'll say I did.

LYDIA, ANYBURG U.S.A., WRITES:

While you were fussing me alone
To other boys my heart was stone.
When I was all that you could see
No girl had anything on me.

HORACE:

Well, say, I'm having some romance
With one Babette, of Northern France.
If that girl gave me the command
I'd dance a jig in No-Man's Land.

LYDIA:

I, too, have got a young affair
With Charley--say, that boy is there!
I'd just as soon go out and die
If I thought it'd please that guy

HORACE:

Suppose I can this foreign wren
And start things up with you again?
Suppose I promise to be good?
I'd love you Lyd. I'll say I would.

LYDIA:

Though Charley's good and handsome--oh, boy!
And you're a stormy fickle doughboy,
So give the Hun his final whack,
And I'll marry you when you come back.

Franklin Pierce Adams

The Higher Education

(Harvard's prestige in football is a leading factor. The best players in the leading preparatory schools prefer to study at Cambridge, where they can earn fame on the gridiron. They do not care to be identified with Yale and Princeton.--JOE VILA in the Evening Sun.)

"Father," began the growing youth,
"Your pleading finds me deaf;
Although I know you speak the truth
About the course at Shef.
But think you that I have no pride,
To follow such a trail?
I cannot be identified
With Princeton or with Yale."

"Father," began another lad,
Emerging from his prep;
"I know you are a Princeton grad,
But the coaches have no pep.
But though the Princeton pros provide
Fine courses to inhale;
I cannot be identified
With Princeton or with Yale."

"I know," he said, "that Learning helps
A lot of growing chaps;
That Yale has William Lyon Phelps,
And Princeton Edward Capps.
But while, within the Football Guide,
The Haughton hosts prevail,
I cannot be identified
With Princeton or with Yale."

Franklin Pierce Adams

The Jazzy Bard

Labor is a thing I do not like;
Workin's makes me want to go on strike;
Sittin' in an office on a sunny afternoon,
Thinkin o' nothin' but a ragtime tune.

'Cause I got the blues, I said I got the blues,
I got the paragraphic blues,
Been a'sittin' here since ha' pas' ten,
Bitin' a hole in my fountain pen;
Brain's all stiff in the creakin' joints,
Can't make up no wheezes on the fourteen points;
Can't think o' nothin' 'bout the end o' booze,
'Cause I got the para--, I said I got the paragraphic, I mean the column
constructin' blues.

Franklin Pierce Adams

The Last Laugh

Horace: Epode 25

"Nox erat et cælo fulgebat Luna sereno---"

How sweet the moonlight sleeps," I quoted,
"Upon this bank!" that starry night--
The night you vowed you'd be devoted--
I'll tell the world you held me tight.

The night you said until Orion
Should cease to whip the wintry sea,
Until the lamb should love the lion,
You would, you swore, be all for me.

Some day Neæra, you'll be sorry.
No mollycoddle swain am I.
I shall not sit and pine, by gorry!
Because you're with some other guy!

No, I shall turn my predilection
Upon some truer, fairer Jane;
And all your prayer and genuflection
For my return shall be in vain.

And as for you, who choose to sneer, O,
Though deals in lands and stocks you swing,
Though handsome as a movie hero,
Though wise you are, and everything;

Yet, when the loss of her you're mourning,
How I shall laugh at all your woe!
How I'll remind you of this warning,
And laugh, "Ha! ha! I told you so!"

Franklin Pierce Adams

The Return Of The Soldier

Lady when I left you
Ere I sailed the sea,
Bitterly bereft you
Told me you would be.

Frequently and often
When I fought the foe,
How my heart would soften,
Pitying your woe!

Still, throughout my yearning,
It was my belief,
That my mere returning
Would annul your grief.

Arguing ex parte,
Maybe you can tell
Why I find your heart A.
W.O.L.

Franklin Pierce Adams

The Shepherd's Resolution

If she be not so to me,
What care I how fair she be?

BY OUR OWN JEROME D. KERN, AUTHOR OF "YOU'RE HERE AND I'M HERE"

I don't care if a girl is fair
If she doesn't seem beautiful to me,
I won't waste away if she's fair as day,
Or prettier than meadows in the month of May;
As long as you are there for me to see,
I don't care and you don't care
How many others are beyond compare--
You're the only one I like to have around.

I won't mind if she's everything combined,
If she doesn't seem wonderful to me,
I won't fret if she's everybody's pet,
Or considered by all as the one best bet;
As long as you and I are only we,
I don't care and you don't care
How many others are beyond compare,
You're the only one I like to have around.

Franklin Pierce Adams

The Stalling Of Q.H.F.

Horace: Epode 14

"Mollis inertia cur tantam diffuderit imis"

Maecenas, you fret me, you worry me
Demanding I turn out a rhyme;
Insisting on reasons, you hurry me;
You want my Iambics on time.
You say my ambition's diminishing;
You ask why my poem's not done.
The god it is keeps me from finishing
The stuff I've begun.

Be not so persistent, so clamorous.
Anacreon burned with a flame
Candescently, crescently amorous.
You rascal, you're doing the same!
Was no fairer the flame that burned Ilium.
Cheer up, you're a fortunate scamp,
. . . Consider avuncular William
And Phryne, the vamp.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Those Two Boys

WHEN Bill was a lad he was terribly bad.□

He worried his parents a lot;□

He'd lie and he'd swear and pull little girls' hair;□

His boyhood was naught but a blot.□

At play and in school he would fracture each rule—□ 5

In mischief from autumn to spring;□

And the villagers knew when to manhood he grew□

He would never amount to a thing.□

When Jim was a child he was not very wild;□

He was known as a good little boy;□

He was honest and bright and the teacher's delight—□

To his mother and father a joy.□

All the neighbors were sure that his virtue'd endure,□

That his life would be free of a spot;□

They were certain that Jim had a great head on him□15

And that Jim would amount to a lot.□

And Jim grew to manhood and honor and fame□

And bears a good name;□

While Bill is shut up in a dark prison cell—□

You never can tell.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Thoughts In A Far Country

I rise and applaud, in the patriot manner,
Whenever (as often) I hear
The palpitant strains of "The Star Spangled Banner,"--
I shout and cheer.

And also, to show my unbound devotion,
I jump to my feet with a "Whee!"
Whenever "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean"
Is played near me.

My fervour's so hot and my ardour so searing--
I'm hoarse for a couple of days--
You've heard me, I'm positive, joyously cheering
"The Marsailles"

I holler for "Dixie." I go off my noodle,
I whistle, I pound, and I stamp
Whenever an orchestra plays "Yankee Doodle,"
Or "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp."

But if you would enter my confidence, reader,
Know that I'd go clean off my dome,
And madly embrace any orchestra leader
For "Home, Sweet Home."

Franklin Pierce Adams

Thoughts On The Cosmos

I

I do not hold with him who thinks
The world is jonahed by a jinx;
That everything is sad and sour,
And life a withered hothouse flower.

II

I hate the Polyanna pest
Who says that All Is for the Best,
And hold in high, unhidden scorn
Who sees the Rose, nor feels the Thorn.

III

I do not like extremists who
Are like the pair in (I) and (II);
But how I hate the wabbly gink,
Like me, who knows not what to think!

Franklin Pierce Adams

To A Light Housekeeper

(Who hitches laundering articles to the curtain string and pastes them on the pane.)

Lady, thou that livest
Just across the way,
If a hang thou givest
What the people say,
If a cuss thou carest
What a poet thinks-
Hearken, if thou darest,
Most immodest minx!

Though thy gloves thou tiest,
To the curtain string,
Though the things thou driest
Gird me while I sing,
Hankies and inventions
Of the lacy tribe-
Things I may not mention,
Let alone describe.

These I mutely stand for
Though the sight offend,
THIS I reprimand for;
Take it from a friend:

Cease to pin thy tresses
To the window sill,
Or I'll tell the presses-
Honestly, I will.

Franklin Pierce Adams

To A Prospective Cook

Curly locks, Curly Locks, wilt thou be ours?
Thou shalt not wash dishes, nor yet weed the flowers,
But stand in the kitchen and cook a fine meal,
And ride every night in an automobile.

Curly Locks, Curly Locks, come to us soon!
Thou needest not to rise until mid-afternoon;
Thou mayest be Croatian, Armenian, or Greek;
Thy guerdon shall be what thy askest per week.

Curly Locks, Curly Locks, give us a chance!
Thou shalt not wash windows, nor iron my pants.
Oh, come to the cosiest of seven-room bowers,
Curly Locks, Curly Locks, wilt thou be ours?

Franklin Pierce Adams

To A Vers Librist

"Oh bard," I said, "your verse is free;
The shackles that encumber me,
The fetters that are my obsession,
Are never gyves to your expression.

"The fear of falsities in rhyme,
In metre, quantity, or time,
Is never yours; you sing along
Your unpremeditated song."

"Correct," the young vers librist said.
"Whatever pops into my head
I write, and have but one small fetter:
I start each line with a capital letter.

"But rhyme and metre--Ishkebibble!--
Are actually negligible.
I go ahead, like all my school,
Without a single silly rule."

Of rhyme I am so reverential
He made me feel quite inconsequential.
I shed some strongly saline tears
For bards I loved in younger years.

"If Keats had fallen for your fluff,"
I said, "he might have done good stuff.
If Burns had thrown his rhymes away,
His songs might still be sung to-day."

O bards of rhyme and metre free,
My gratitude goes out to ye
For all your deathless lines--ahem!
Let's see, now . . . What is one of them?

Franklin Pierce Adams

To Alice-Sit-By-The-Hour

Lady in the blue kimono, you that live across the way,
One may see you gazing, gazing gazing all the livelong day,
Idly looking out your window from your vantage point above.
Are you convalescent, lady? Are you worse? Are you in love?

Ever gazing, as you hang there on the little window seat,
Into flats across the way or down upon the prosy street,
Can't you rent a pianola? Can't you iron, sew, or cook?
Write a letter, bake a pudding, make a bed or read a book?

Tell me of the fascination you indubitably find
In the "High Cash Cloe's!" man's holler in the hurdy-gurdy grind.
Are your Spanish castles blue prints? Are you waiting for a knight
To descend upon your fastness and to save you from your plight?

Lady in the blue kimono, idle mollycoddle dame,
Does your doing nothing never make you feel the blush of shame?
As you sit and stare and ditto, not a single thing to do,
Lady in the blue kimono, lady, how I envy you!

Franklin Pierce Adams

To An Aged Cut-Up

Horace: Book III, Ode 15

"Uxor pauperis Ibyci,
Tandem nequitiae fige modum tuæ--"

IN CHLORIN

Dear Mrs. Ibycus, accept a little sound advice,
Your manners and your speech are overbold;
To chase around the sporty way you do is far from nice;
Believe me, darling, you are growing old.

Now Pholoë may fool around (she dances like a doe!)
A débutante has got to think of men;
But you were twenty-seven over thirty years ago--
You ought to be asleep at half-past ten.

O Chloris, cut the ragging and the roses and the rum--
Delete the drink, or better, chop the booze!
Go buy a skein of yarn and make the knitting needles hum,
And imitate the art of Sister Suse.

Franklin Pierce Adams

To An Aged Cut-Up, Ii

Chloris lay off the flapper stuff;
What's fit for Pholoë, a fluff,
Is not for Ibycus's wife--
A woman at your time of life!

Ignore, old dame, such pleasures as
The shimmy and "the Bacchus Jazz";
Your presence with the maidens jars--
You are the cloud that dims the stars.

Your daughter Pholoë may stay
Out nights on the Appian Way;
her love for Nothus, as you know,
Makes her as playful as a doe.

No jazz for you, no jars of wine,
No rose that blooms incarnadine.
For one thing only you are fit:
Buy some Lucerian wool--and knit!

Franklin Pierce Adams

To Myrtilla

Twelve fleeting years ago my Myrt,
(Ehu fugaces! maybe more)
I wrote of the directoire skirt
You wore.

Ten years ago, Myrtilla mine,
The hobble skirt engaged my pen.
That was, I calculate, in Nine-
Teen Ten.

The polo coat, the feathered lid,
The phony furs of yesterfall,
The current shoe--I tried to kid
Them all.

Vain every vitriolic bit,
Silly all my sulphuric song.
Rube Goldberg said a bookful; it
'S all wrong.

Bitter the words I used to fling
But you, despite my angriest Note,
Were never swayed by anything
I wrote.

So I surrender. I am beat.
And, though the admission rather girds,
In any garb you're just too sweet
For words.

Franklin Pierce Adams

To W. Hohenzollern, On Discontinuing The Conning Tower

William, it was, I think, three years ago--
As I recall, one cool October morning--
(You have The Tribune files; I think they'll show
I gave you warning).

I said, in well-selected words and terse,
In phrases balanced, yet replete with power,
That I should cease to pen the prose and verse
Known as The Tower
That I should stop this Labyrinth of Light--
Though stopping make the planet leaden-hearted--
Unless you stop the well-known Schrecklichkeit
Your nation started.

I printed it in type that you could read;
My paragraphs were thewed, my rhymes were sinewed.
You paid, I judge from what ensued, no heed . . .
The war continued.

And though my lines with fortitude were fraught,
Although my words were strong, and stripped of stuffing,
You, William, thought--oh, yes, you did--you thought
That I was bluffing.

You thought that I would fail to see it through!
You thought that, at the crux of things, I'd cower!
How little, how imperfectly you knew
The Conning Tower!

You'll miss the column at the break of day.
I have no fear that I shall be forgotten.
You'll miss the daily privilege to say:
"That stuff is rotten!"

Or else--as sometimes has occurred--when I
Have chanced upon a lucky line to blunder,
You'll miss the precious privilege to cry:

"That bird's a wonder!"

Well, William, when your people cease to strafe,
When you have put an end to all this war stuff,
When all the world is reasonably safe,
I'll write some more stuff.

And when you miss the quip and wanton wile,
And learn you can't endure the Towerless season,
O William, I shall not be petty . . . I'll
Listen to reason.

Franklin Pierce Adams

To W. Hohenzollern, On Resuming The Conning Tower

Well William, since I wrote you long ago--
As I recall, one cool October morning--
(I have The Tribune files. They clearly show
I gave you warning).

Since when I penned that consequential ode,
The world has seen a vast amount of slaughter,
And under many a Gallic bridge has flowed
A lot of water.

I said when your people ceased to strafe,
That when you'd put an end to all this war stuff,
And all the world was reasonably safe
I'd write some more stuff.

That when you missed the quip and wanton wile
And learned you couldn't bear a Towerless season,
I quote, "O, I shall not be petty. . . . I'll
Listen to reason."

Labuntur anni, not to say Eheu
Fugaces! William, by my shoulders glistening!
I have the final laugh, for it was you
Who did the listening.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Unshackled Thoughts On Chivalry, Romance, Adventure, Etc.

Yesterday afternoon, while I was walking on Worth Street,
A gust of wind blew my hat off.
I swore, petulantly, but somewhat noisily.
A young woman had been near, walking behind me;
She must have heard me, I thought.
And I was ashamed, and embarrassedly sorry.
So I said to her: "If you heard me, I beg your pardon."
But she gave me a frightened look
And ran across the street,
Seeking a policeman.
So I thought, Why waste five hours trying to versify the incident?
Verse libre would serve her right.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Us Potes

Swift was sweet on Stella;
Poe had his Lenore;
Burns' fancy turned to Nancy
And a dozen more.

Poe was quite a trifler;
Goldsmith was a case;
Byron'd flirt with any skirt
From Liverpool to Thrace.

Sheridan philandered;
Shelley, Keats, and Moore
All were there with some affair
Far from lit'rachoor.

Fickle is the heart of
Each immortal bard.
Mine alone is made of stone-
Gotta work too hard.

Franklin Pierce Adams

Vain Words

Humble, surely, mine ambition;
It is merely to construct
Some occasion or condition
When I may say "usufruct."

Ernest am I and assiduous;
Yet I'm certain that I shan't amount
To a lot till I use "viduous,"
"Indiscerptible," and "tantamount."

Franklin Pierce Adams

Variation On A Theme

June 30th, 1919

Notably fond of music, I dote on a
clearer tone
Than ever was blared by a bugle or zoomed
by a saxophone;
And the sound that opens the gates for me of
a Paradise revealed
Is something akin to the note revered by the
blesséd Eugene Field,
Who sang in pellucid phrasing that I perfectly
will recall
Of the clink of the ice in the pitcher that the
boy brings up the hall.
But sweeter to me than the sparrow's song or
the goose's autumn honks
Is the sound of the ice in the shaker as the
barkeeper mixes a Bronx.

Between the dark and the daylight, when I'm
worried about The Tower,
Comes a pause in the day's tribulations that
is known as the cocktail hour;
And my soul is sad and jaded, and my heart
is a thing forlorn,
And I view the things I have written with a
sickening, scathing scorn.
Oh, it's then I fare with some other slave who
is hired for the things he writes
To a Den of Sin where they mingle gin--such
as Lipton's, Mouquin's or Whyte's,
And my spirit thrills to a music sweeter than
Sullivan or Puccini--
The swash of the ice in the shaker as he mixes
a Dry martini.

The drys will assert that metallic sound is the
selfsame canon made
By the ice in a shaker that holds a drink

like orange or lemonade;
But on the word of a traveled man and a
bard who has been around,
The sound of tin on ice and gin is a snappier,
happier sound.
And I mean to hymn, as soon as I have a
moment of leisure time,
The chill susurrus of cocktail ice in an adequate
piece of rhyme.
But I've just had an invitation to hark, at a
beckoning bar,
To the sound of the ice in the shaker as the
barkeeper mixes a Star.

Franklin Pierce Adams

War And Peace

"This war is a terrible thing," he said,
"With its countless numbers of needless dead;
A futile warfare it seems to me,
Fought for no principle I can see.
Alas, that thousands of hearts should bleed
For naught but a tyrant's boundless greed!"

* * * *

Said the wholesale grocer, in righteous mood,
As he went to adulterate salable food.

Spake as follows the merchant king:
"Isn't this war a disgusting thing?
Heartless, cruel, and useless, too;
It doesn't seem that it can be true.
Think of the misery, want and fear!
We ought to be grateful we've no war here.

* * * *

"Six a week"--to a girl--"That's flat!
I can get a thousand to work for that."

Franklin Pierce Adams

What Flavour?

Horace: Book III, Ode 13

"O fons Bandisæ, splendidior vitro---"

Worthy of flowers and syrups sweet,
O fountain of Bandusian onyx,
To-morrow shall a goatling's bleat
Mix with the sizz of thy carbonics.

A kid whose budding horns portend
A life of love and war--but vainly!
For thee his sanguine life shall end--
He'll spill his blood, to put it plainly.

And never shalt thou feel the heat
That blazes in the days of sirius,
But men shall quaff thy soda sweet,
And girls imbibe thy drinks delirious.

Fountain whose dulcet cool I sing,
Be thou immortal by this Ode (a
Not wholly metricious thing),
Bandusian fount of ice-cream soda!

Franklin Pierce Adams

When You Meet A Man From Your Own Home Town

Sing, O Muse, in treble clef,
A little song of the A.E.F.,
And pardon me, please, if I give vent
To something akin to sentiment.
But we have our moments Over Here
When we want to cry and we want to cheer;
And the hurrah feeling will not down
When you meet a man from your own home town.

It's many a lonesome, longsome day
Since you embarked from the U.S.A.,
And you met some men--it's a great big war--
From towns that you never had known before;
And you landed here, and your rest camp mate
Was a man from some strange and distant state.
Liked him? Yes; but you wanted to see
A man from the town where you used to be.

And then you went, by design or chance,
All over the well-known map of France;
And you yearned with a yearn that grew and grew
To talk with a man from the burg you knew.
And some lugubrious morn when
Your morale is batting about .110,
"Where are you from?" and you make reply,
And the O.D. warrior says, "So am I."

The universe wears a smiling face
As you spill your talk of the old home place;
You talk of the streets, and the home town jokes,
And you find that you know each other's folks;
And you haven't any more woes at all
Ad you both decide that the world is small--
A statement adding to its renown
When you meet a man from your own home town.

You may be among the enlisted men,
You may be a Lieut. or a Major-Gen.;
Your home may be up in the Chilkoot Pass,

In Denver, Col., or in Pittsfield, Mass. ;
You may have come from Chicago, Ill.,
Buffalo, Portland, or Louisville--
But there's nothing, I'm gambling, can keep you down,
When you meet a man from your own home town.

* * * * *

If you want to know why I wrote this pome,
Well . . . I've just had a talk with a guy from home.

Franklin Pierce Adams