Classic Poetry Series

Horace Smith
- poems -

Publication Date:
2012

Publisher:
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Horace Smith(31 December 1779 - 12 July 1849)

Horace (born Horatio) Smith was an English poet and novelist, perhaps best known for his participation in a sonnet-writing competition with Percy Bysshe Shelley. It was of him that Shelley said: "Is it not odd that the only truly generous person I ever knew who had money enough to be generous with should be a stockbroker? He writes poetry and pastoral dramas and yet knows how to make money, and does make it, and is still generous."

Biography

Smith was born in London, the son of a London solicitor, and the fifth of eight children. He was educated at Chigwell School with his elder brother James Smith, also a writer. Horace first came to public attention in 1812 when he and his brother James (four years older than he) produced a popular literary parody connected to the rebuilding of the Drury Lane Theatre, after a fire in which it had been burnt down. The managers offered a prize of £50 for an address to be recited at the Theatre's reopening in October. The Smith brothers hit on the idea of pretending that the most popular poets of the day had entered the competition and writing a book of addresses rejected from the competition in parody of their various styles. James wrote the parodies of Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge and Crabbe, and Horace took on Byron, Moore, Scott and Bowles.

The book was a smash, and went through seven editions within three months. The Rejected Addresses still stands the most widely popular parodies ever published in the country. The book was written without malice; none of the poets caricatured took offence, while the imitation is so clever that both Byron and Scott claimed that they could scarcely believe they had not written the addresses ascribed to them. The only other collaboration by the two brothers was Horace in London (1813).

Smith went on to become a prosperous stockbroker. Smith knew Shelley as a member of the circle around Leigh Hunt. Smith helped to manage Shelley's finances. Sonnet-writing competitions were not uncommon; Shelley and Keats wrote competing sonnets on the subject of the Nile River. Inspired by Diodorus Siculus (Book 1, Chapter 47), they each wrote and submitted a sonnet on the subject to The Examiner. Shelley's Ozymandias was published on 11 January 1818 under the pen name Glirastes, and Smith's On a Stupendous Leg of Granite, Discovered

Standing by Itself in the Deserts of Egypt, with the Inscription Inserted Below was published on 1 February 1818 with the initials H.S. (and later in his collection Amarynthus).

After making his fortune, Horace Smith produced a series of historical novels: Brambletye House (1826), Tor Hill (1826), Reuben Apsley (1827), Zillah (1828), The New Forest (1829), Walter Colyton (1830), among others. Three volumes of Gaieties and Gravities, published by him in 1826, contain many clever essays both in verse and prose, but the only piece that remains much remembered is the " Address to the Mummy in Belzoni's Exhibition."

Horace Smith died at Tunbridge Wells on 12 July 1849.

Air--Give That Wreath To Me

I.

Give that brief to me,
Without so much bother;
Never let it be
Given to another.
Why this coy resistance?
Wherefore keep such distance?
Why hesitate so long to give that brief to me?

II.

Should'st thou ever find
Any counsel willing
To conduct thy case
For one pound one shilling;
Scorn such vulgar tricks, love;
One pound three and six, love,
Is the proper thing,--then give that brief to me.

III.

Should thy case turn out
Hopeless and delusive,
Still I'd rave and shout,
Using terms abusive.
Truth and sense might perish,
Still thy cause I'd cherish,
Hallow'd by thy gold,--then give that brief to me.

IV.

Should the learned judge
Sit on me like fury,
Still I'd never budge--
There's the British Jury!
Should that stay prove rotten,
Bowen, Brett, and Cotton {143}
Would upset them all,--then give that brief to me.

Horace Smith

Air--Three Fishers Went Sailing.

Three attorneys came sailing down Chancery Lane,
Down Chancery Lane e'er the courts had sat;
They thought of the leaders they ought to retain,
But the Junior Bar, oh, they thought not of that;
For serjeants get work and Q.C.'s too,
And solicitors' sons-in-law frequently do,
While the Junior Bar is moaning.

Three juniors sat up in Crown Office Row,
In Crown Office Row e'er the courts had sat,
They saw the solicitors passing below,
And the briefs that were rolled up so tidy and fat,
For serjeants get work, etc.

Three briefs were delivered to Jones, Q.C,
To Jones, Q.C., e'er the courts had sat;
And the juniors weeping, and wringing their paws,
Remarked that their business seemed uncommon flat;
For Serjeants get work and Q.C.'s too,
But as for the rest it's a regular 'do,'
And the Junior Bar is moaning.

Horace Smith

An Attempt To Remember The

And Willie, my eldest born, is gone, you say, little Anne,
Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like a man;
He was only fourscore years, quite young, when he died;
I ought to have gone before, but must wait for time and tide.

So Harry's wife has written; she was always an awful fool,
And Charlie was always drunk, which made our families cool;
For Willie was walking with Jenny when the moon came up the dale,
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside me chirrupt the nightingale.

Jenny I know had tripped, and she knew that I knew of it well.
She began to slander me. I knew, but I wouldn't tell!
And she to be slandering me, the impertinent, base little liar;
But the tongue is a fire, as you know, my dear, the tongue is a fire.

And the parson made it his text last week; and he said likewise,
That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies;
That a downright hearty good falsehood doesn't so very much matter,
But a lie which is half a truth is worse than one that is flatter.

Then Willie and Jenny turned in the sweet moonshine,
And he said to me through his tears, 'Let your good name be mine,'
'And what do I care for Jane.' She was never over-wise,
Never the wife for Willie: thank God that I keep my eyes.

'Marry you, Willie!' said I, and I thought my heart would break,
'But a man cannot marry his grandmother, so there must be some mistake.'
But he turned and clasped me in his arms, and answered, 'No, love, no!
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago!'

So Willie and I were wedded, though clearly against the law,
And the ringers rang with a will, and Willie's gloves were straw;
But the first that ever I bear was dead before it was born--
For Willie I cannot weep, life is flower and thorn.

Pattering over the boards, my Annie, an Annie like you,
Pattering over the boards, and Charlie and Harry too;
Pattering over the boards of our beautiful little cot,
And I'm not exactly certain whether they died or not.

And yet I know of a truth, there is none of them left alive,
For Willie went at eighty, and Harry at ninety-five;
And Charlie at threescore years, aye! or more than that I'll be sworn,
And that very remarkable infant that died before it was born.

So Willie has gone, my beauty, the eldest that bears the name,
It's a soothing thought--'In a hundred years it'll be all the same.'
'Here's a leg for a babe of a week,' says doctor, in some surprise,
But fetch me my glasses, Annie, I'm thankful I keep my eyes.

Horace Smith

An Olde Lyric

I.

Oh, saw ye my own true love, I praye,
My own true love so sweete?
For the flowers have lightly toss'd awaye
The prynte of her faery feete.
Now, how can we telle if she passed us bye?
Is she darke or fayre to see?
Like sloes are her eyes, or blue as the skies?
Is't braided her haire or free?

II.

Oh, never by outward looke or signe,
My true love shall ye knowe;
There be many as fayre, and many as fyne,
And many as brighte to showe.
But if ye coude looke with angel's eyes,
Which into the soule can see,
She then would be seene as the matchless Queene
Of Love and of Puritie.

Horace Smith

At The Tavern

Champagne doth not a luncheon make,
Nor caviare a meal;
Men gluttonous and rich may take
These till they make them ill.
If I've potatoes to my chop,
And after that have cheese,
Angels in Pond & Spiers's shop
Serve no such luxuries.

Horace Smith

Effusion By A Cigar Smoker

Warriors! who from the cannon's mouth blow fire,
Your fame to raise,
Upon its blaze,
Alas! ye do but light your funeral pyre!
Tempting Fate's stroke;
Ye fall, and all your glory ends in smoke.
Safe in my chair from wounds and woe,
My fire and smoke from mine own mouth I blow.

Ye booksellers! who deal, like me, in puffs,
The public smokes,
You and your hoax,
And turns your empty vapor to rebuffs.
Ye through the nose
Pay for each puff; when mine the same way flows,
It does not run me into debt;
And thus, the more I fume, the less I fret.

Authors! created to be puff'd to death,
And fill the mouth
Of some uncouth
Bookselling wight, who sucks your brains and breath,
Your leaves thus far
(Without its fire) resemble my cigar;
But vapid, uninspired, and flat:
When, when, O Bards, will ye compose like that?

Since life and the anxieties that share
Our hopes and trust,
Are smoke and dust,
Give me the smoke and dust that banish care.
The roll'd leaf bring,
Which from its ashes, Phoenix-like, can spring;
The fragrant leaf whose magic balm
Can, like Nepenthe, all our sufferings charm.

Oh, what supreme beatitude is this!
What soft and sweet
Sensations greet

My soul, and wrap it in Elysian bliss!
I soar above
Dull earth in these ambrosial clouds, like Jove,
And from my empyrean height
Look down upon the world with calm delight.

Horace Smith

Impromptu In The Assize Court At Lincoln

The moon in the valley of Ajalon
Stood still at the word of the prophet;
But since certain 'Essays' were written
We don't think so very much of it.
Now, a prophet is raised up among us,
Whose miracles none can gainsay;
For he spoke, and the great river Witham
Flowed three days, uphill, the wrong way.

Horace Smith

Isle Of Wight--Spring, 1891

I know not what the cause may be,
Or whether there be one or many;
But this year's Spring has seemed to me
More exquisite than any.

What happy days we spent together
In that fair Isle of primrose flowers!
How brilliant was the April weather!
What glorious sunshine and what showers!

I think the leaves peeped out and in
At every change from cold to heat;
The grass threw off a livelier sheen
From dewdrops sparkling at our feet.

What wealth of early bloom was there--
The wind flow'r and the primrose pale,
On bank or copse, and orchis rare,
And cowslip covering Wroxhall dale.

And, oh, the splendour of the sea,--
The blue belt glimmering soft and far,
Through many a tumbled rock and tree
Strewn 'neath the overhanging scar!

'Tis twenty years and more, since here,
As man and wife we sought this Isle,
Dear to us both, O wife most dear,
And we can greet it with a smile.

Not now alone we come once more,
But bringing young ones of our brood--
One boy (Salopian), and four
Girls, blooming into maidenhood.

And I had late begun to fret
And sicken at the sordid town--
The crime, the guilt, and, loathlier yet,
The helpless, hopeless sinking down;

The want, the misery, the woe,
The stubborn heart which will not turn;
The tears which will or will not flow;
The shame which does or does not burn.

And Winter's frosts had proved unkind,
With darkest gloom and deadliest cold;
A time which will be brought to mind,
And talked of, when our boys are old.

And thus the contrast seemed to wake
New vigour in the heart and brain;
Sea, land, and sky conspired to make
The jaded spirit young again;

Or hopes for growing girl or boy,
Or thankfulness for things that be,
Or sweet content in wedded joy,
Set all the world to harmony.

And so I know not if it be
That there are causes one or many,
But this year's Spring still seems to me
More exquisite than any.

Horace Smith

Letter From The Town Mouse To The Country Mouse

I.

Oh for a field, my friend; oh for a field!
I ask no more
Than one plain field, shut in by hedgerows four,
Contentment sweet to yield.
For I am not fastidious,
And, with a proud demeanour, I
Will not affect invidious
Distinctions about scenery.
I sigh not for the fir trees where they rise
Against Italian skies,
Swiss lakes, or Scottish heather,
Set off with glorious weather;
Such sights as these
The most exacting please;
But I, lone wanderer in London streets,
Where every face one meets
Is full of care,
And seems to wear
A troubled air,
Of being late for some affair
Of life or death:--thus I, ev'n I,
Long for a field of grass, flat, square, and green
Thick hedges set between,
Without or house or bield,
A sense of quietude to yield;
And heave my longing sigh,
Oh for a field, my friend; oh for a field!

II.

For here the loud streets roar themselves to rest
With hoarseness every night;
And greet returning light
With noise and roar, renewed with greater zest.
Where'er I go,
Full well I know
The eternal grinding wheels will never cease.

There is no place of peace!
Rumbling, roaring, and rushing,
Hurrying, crowding, and crushing,
Noise and confusion, and worry, and fret,
From early morning to late sunset--
Ah me! but when shall I respite get--
What cave can hide me, or what covert shield?
So still I sigh,
And raise my cry,
Oh for a field, my friend; oh for a field!

III.

Oh for a field, where all concealed,
From this life's fret and noise,
I sip delights from rural sights,
And simple rustic joys.
Where, stretching forth my limbs at rest,
I lie and think what likes me best;
Or stroll about where'er I list,
Nor fear to be run over
By sheep, contented to exist
Only on grass and clover.
In town, as through the throng I steer,
Confiding in the Muses,
My finest thoughts are drowned in fear
Of cabs and omnibuses.
I dream I'm on Parnassus hill,
With laurels whispering o'er me,
When suddenly I feel a chill--
What was it passed before me?
A lady bowed her gracious head
From yonder natty brougham--
The windows were as dull as lead,
I didn't know her through them.
She'll say I saw her, cut her dead,--
I've lost my opportunity;
I take my hat off when she's fled,
And bow to the community!
Or sometimes comes a hansom cab,
Just as I near the crossing;
The 'cabby' gives his reins a grab,

The steed is wildly tossing.
Me, haply fleeing from his horse,
He greets with language somewhat coarse,
To which there's no replying;
A brewer's dray comes down that way,
And simply sends me flying!
I try the quiet streets, but there
I find an all-pervading air
Of death in life, which my despair
In no degree diminishes.
Then homewards wend my weary way,
And read dry law books as I may,
No solace will they yield.
And so the sad day finishes
With one long sigh and yearning cry,
Oh for a field, my friend; oh for a field!

IV.

The fields are bright, and all bedight
With buttercups and daisies;
Oh, how I long to quit the throng
Of human forms and faces:
The vain delights, the empty shows,
The toil and care bewild'rin',
To feel once more the sweet repose
Calm Nature gives her children.
At times the thrush shall sing, and hush
The twitt'ring yellow-hammer;
The blackbird fluster from the bush
With panic-stricken clamour;
The finch in thistles hide from sight,
And snap the seeds and toss 'em;
The blue-tit hop, with pert delight,
About the crab-tree blossom;
The homely robin shall draw near,
And sing a song most tender;
The black-cap whistle soft and clear,
Swayed on a twig top slender;
The weasel from the hedge-row creep,
So crafty and so cruel,
The rabbit from the tussock leap,

And splash the frosty jewel.
I care not what the season be--
Spring, summer, autumn, winter--
In morning sweet, or noon-day heat,
Or when the moonbeams glint, or
When rosy beams and fiery gleams,
And floods of golden yellow,
Proclaim the sweetest hour of all--
The evening mild and mellow.
There, though the spring shall backward keep,
And loud the March winds bluster,
The white anemone shall peep
Through loveliest leaves in cluster.
There primrose pale or violet blue
Shall gleam between the grasses;
And stitchwort white fling starry light,
And blue bells blaze in masses.
As summer grows and spring-time goes,
O'er all the hedge shall ramble
The woodbine and the wilding rose,
And blossoms of the bramble.
When autumn comes, the leafy ways
To red and yellow turning,
With hips and haws the hedge shall blaze,
And scarlet briony burning.
When winter reigns and sheets of snow,
The flowers and grass lie under;
The sparkling hoar frost yet shall show,
A world of fairy wonder.
To me more dear such scenes appear,
Than this eternal racket,
No longer will I fret and fag!
Hey! call a cab, bring down my bag,
And help me quick to pack it.
For here one must go where every one goes,
And meet shoals of people whom one never knows,
Till it makes a poor fellow dyspeptic;
And the world wags along with its sorrows and shows,
And will do just the same when I'm dead I suppose;
And I'm rapidly growing a sceptic.
For its oh, alas, well-a-day, and a-lack!
I've a pain in my head and an ache in my back;

A terrible cold that makes me shiver,
And a general sense of a dried-up liver;
And I feel I can hardly bear it.
And it's oh for a field with four hedgerows,
And the bliss which comes from an hour's repose,
And a true, true friend to share it.

Horace Smith

Love And Liberty

The linnet had flown from its cage away,
And flitted and sang in the light of day--
Had flown from the lady who loved it well,
In Liberty's freer air to dwell.
Alas! poor bird, it was soon to prove,
Sweeter than Liberty is Love.

When night came on it had ceased to sing,
And had hidden its head beneath its wing.
It thought of the warm room left behind,
The shelter from cold and rain and wind;
It could not sleep, when to sleep it strove--
Liberty needeth the help of Love.

The night owls shrieked as they wheeled along,
Bent upon slaughter, and rapine, and wrong:
There was devilish mirth in their wild halloo,
And the linnet trembled when near they drew;
'Twas fearful to watch them madly rove,
Drunken with Liberty, left of Love.

When morning broke, a grey old crow
Was pecking some carrion down below;
A poor little lamb, half alive, half-dead,
And the crow at each peck turned up its head
With a cunning glance at the linnet above--
What a demon is Liberty left of Love!

Then an eagle hovered far up in the sky,
And the linnet trembled, but could not fly;
With a swoop to the earth the eagle fell,
And rose up anon with a savage yell.
The birds in the woodlands dared not move.
What a despot is Liberty left of Love!

By and bye there arrived, with chattering loud,
Chaffinch and sparrow and finch, in a cloud;
Round and around in their fierce attack,
They plucked the feathers from breast and back;

And the poor little linnet all vainly strove,
Fighting with Liberty left of Love.

'Alas!' it said, with a cry of pain,
'Carry me back to my cage again;
There let me dwell in peaceful ease,
Piping whatever songs I please;
Here, if I stay, my death shall prove,
Liberty dieth left of Love.'

Horace Smith

Lullaby

Sleep, little baby, sleep, love, sleep!
Evening is coming, and night is nigh;
Under the lattice the little birds cheep,
All will be sleeping by and by.
Sleep, little baby, sleep.

Sleep, little baby, sleep, love, sleep!
Darkness is creeping along the sky;
Stars at the casement glimmer and peep,
Slowly the moon comes sailing by.
Sleep, little baby, sleep.

Sleep, little baby, sleep, love, sleep!
Sleep till the dawning has dappled the sky;
Under the lattice the little birds cheep,
All will be waking by and by.
Sleep, little baby, sleep.

Horace Smith

My Boating Song

I.

Oh this earth is a mineful of treasure,
A goblet, that's full to the brim,
And each man may take for his pleasure
The thing that's most pleasant to him;
Then let all, who are birds of my feather,
Throw heart and soul into my song;
Mark the time, pick it up all together,
And merrily row it along.

Hurrah, boys, or losing or winning,
Feel your stretchers and make the blades bend;
Hard on to it, catch the beginning,
And pull it clean through to the end.

II.

I'll admit 'tis delicious to plunge in
Clear pools, with their shadows at rest;
'Tis nimble to parry, or lunge in
Your foil at the enemy's chest;
'Tis rapture to take a man's wicket,
Or lash round to leg for a four;
But somehow the glories of cricket
Depend on the state of the score.

But in boating, or losing or winning,
Though victory may not attend;
Oh, 'tis jolly to catch the beginning,
And pull it clean through to the end.

III.

'Tis brave over hill and dale sweeping,
To be in at the death of the fox;
Or to whip, where the salmon are leaping,
The river that roars o'er the rocks;
'Tis prime to bring down the cock pheasant;

And yachting is certainly great;
But, beyond all expression, 'tis pleasant
To row in a rattling good eight.

Then, hurrah, boys, or losing or winning,
What matter what labour we spend?
Hard on to it, catch the beginning,
And pull it clean through to the end.

IV.

Shove her off! Half a stroke! Now, get ready!
Five seconds! Four, three, two, one, gun!
Well started! Well rowed! Keep her steady!
You'll want all your wind e'er you've done.
Now you're straight! Let the pace become swifter!
Roll the wash to the left and the right!
Pick it up all together, and lift her,
As though she would bound out of sight!

Hurrah, Hall! Hall, now you're winning,
Feel your stretchers and make the blades bend;
Hard on to it, catch the beginning,
And pull it clean through to the end.

V.

Bump! Bump! O ye gods, how I pity
The ears those sweet sounds never heard;
More tuneful than loveliest ditty
E'er poured from the throat of a bird.
There's a prize for each honest endeavour,
But none for the man who's a shirk;
And the pluck that we've showed on the river,
Shall tell in the rest of our work.

At the last, whether losing or winning,
This thought with all memories blend,--
We forgot not to catch the beginning,
And we pulled it clean through to the end.

On Circuit

Two neighbours, fighting for a yard of land;
Two witnesses, who _lie_ on either hand;
Two lawyers, issuing many writs and pleas;
Two clerks, in a dark passage counting fees;
Two counsel, calling one another names;
Two courts, where lawyers play their little games;
Two weeks at Leeds, which wear the soul away;
Two judges getting limper every day;
Two bailiffs of the court with aspect sour--
So runs the round of life from hour to hour.

Horace Smith

Ozymandias

In Egypt's sandy silence, all alone,
Stands a gigantic Leg, which far off throws
The only shadow that the Desart knows:-
'I am great OZYMANDIAS,' saith the stone,
'The King of Kings; this mighty City shows
'The wonders of my hand.'- The City's gone,-
Nought but the Leg remaining to disclose
The site of this forgotten Babylon.

We wonder,-and some Hunter may express
Wonder like ours, when thro' the wilderness
Where London stood, holding the Wolf in chace,
He meets some fragment huge, and stops to guess
What powerful but unrecorded race
Once dwelt in that annihilated place.

Horace Smith

Prologue To A Charade.--

In olden time--in great Eliza's age,
When rare Ben Jonson ruled the humorous stage,
No play without its Prologue might appear
To earn applause or ward the critic's sneer;
And surely now old customs should not sleep
When merry Christmas revelries we keep.
He loves old ways, old faces, and old friends,
Nor to new-fangled fancies condescends;
Besides, we need your kindly hearts to move
Our faults to pardon and our freaks approve,
For this our sport has been in haste begun,
Unpractised actors and impromptu fun;
So on our own deserts we dare not stand,
But beg the favour that we can't command.
Most flat would fall our 'cranks and wanton wiles,'
Reft of your favouring 'nods and wreathed smiles,'
As some tame landscape desolately bare
Is charmed by sunshine into seeming fair;
So, gentle friends, if you your smiles bestow,
That which is tame in us will not seem so.
Our play is a charade. We split the word,
Each syllable an act, the whole a third;
My first we show you by a comic play,
Old, but not less the welcome, I dare say.
My second will be brought upon the stage
From lisping childhood down to palsied age.
Last, but not least, our country's joy and pride,
A British Jury will my whole decide;
But what's the word you'll ask me, what's the word?
That you must guess, or ask some little bird;
Guess as you will you'll fail; for 'tis no doubt
One of those things 'no fellow can find out.'

Horace Smith

Prothalamion

Nothing so true as what you once let fall,--
'To growl at something is the lot of all;
Contentment is a gem on earth unknown,
And Perfect Happiness the wizard's stone.
Give me,' you cried, 'to see my duty clear,
And room to work, unhindered in my sphere;
To live my life, and work my work alone,
Unloved while living, and unwept when gone.
Let none my triumphs or my failures share,
Nor leave a sorrowing wife and joyful heir.'

Go, like St. Simon, on your lonely tower,
Wish to make all men good, but want the power.
Freedom you'll have, but still will lack the thrall,--
The bond of sympathy, which binds us all.
Children and wives are hostages to fame,
But aids and helps in every useful aim.

You answer, 'Look around, where'er you will,
Experience teaches the same lesson still.
Mark how the world, full nine times out of ten,
To abject drudgery dooms its married men:
A slave at first, before the knot is tied,
But soon a mere appendage to the bride;
A cover, next, to shield her arts from blame;
At home ill-tempered, but abroad quite tame;
In fact, her servant; though, in name, her lord;
Alive, neglected; but, defunct, adored.'

This picture, friend, is surely overdone,
You paint the tribe by drawing only one;
Or from one peevish grunt, in haste, conclude
The man's whole life with misery imbued.

Say, what can Horace want to crown his life,
Blest with eight little urchins, and a wife?
His lively grin proclaims the man is blest,
Here perfect happiness must be confessed!
Hark, hear that melancholy shriek, alack!--

That vile lumbago keeps him on the rack.

This evil vexed not Courthope's happy ways,
Who wants no extra coat on coldest days.
His face, his walk, his dress--whate'er you scan,
He stands revealed the prosperous gentleman.
Still must he groan each Sabbath, while he hears
The hoarse Gregorians vex his tortured ears.

Sure Bosanquet true happiness must know,
While wit and wisdom mingle as they flow,
Him Bromley Sunday scholars will obey;
For him e'en Leech will work a good half day;
He strives to hide the fear he still must feel,
Lest sharp Jack Frost should catch his Marshal Niel.

Peace to all such; but were there one, whose fires
True genius kindles and fair fame inspires;
Blest with demurrers, statements, counts, and pleas,
And born to arbitrations, briefs, and fees;
Should such a man, couched on his easy throne,
(Unlike the Turk) desire to live alone;
View every virgin with distrustful eyes,
And dread those arts, which suitors mostly prize,
Alike averse to blame, or to commend,
Not quite their foe, but something less than friend;
Dreading e'en widows, when by these besieged;
And so obliging, that he ne'er obliged;
Who, in all marriage contracts, looks for flaws,
And sits, and meditates on Salic laws;
While Pall Mall bachelors proclaim his praise,
And spinsters wonder at his works and ways;
Who would not smile if such a man there be?
Who would not weep if Atticus were he?

Oh, blest beyond the common lot are they,
On whom Contentment sheds her cheerful ray;
Who find in Duty's path unmixed delight,
And perfect Pleasure in pursuit of Right;
Thankful for every Joy they feel, or share,
Unsought for blessings, like the light and air,
And grateful even for the ills they bear;

Wedded or single, taking nought amiss,
And learning that Content is more than Bliss.

Oh, friend, may each domestic joy be thine,
Be no unpleasing melancholy mine.
As rolling years disclose the will of Fate,
I see you wedded to some equal mate;
Thronged by a crowd of growing girls and boys,
A heap of troubles, but a host of joys.
On sights like these, should length of days attend,
Still may good luck pursue you to the end;
Still heaven vouchsafe the gifts it has in store;
Still make you, what you would be, more and more;
Preserve you happy, cheerful, and serene,
Blest with your young retainers, and your Queen.

Horace Smith

The Curate To His Slippers

Take, oh take those boots away,
That so nearly are outworn;
And those shoes remove, I pray--
Pumps that but induce the corn!
But my slippers bring again,
Bring again;
Works of love, but worked in vain,
Worked in vain!

Horace Smith

To A Scientific Friend

You say 'tis plain that poets feign,
And from the truth depart;
They write with ease what fibs they please,
With artifice, not art;
Dearer to you the simply true--
The fact without the fancy--
Than this false play of colours gay,
So very vague and chancy.
No doubt 'tis well the truth to tell
In scientific coteries;
But I'll be bold to say she's cold,
Excepting to her votaries.
The false disguise of tawdry lies
May hide sweet Nature's face;
But in her form the blood runs warm,
As in the human race;
And in the rose the dew-drop glows,
And, o'er the seas serene,
The sunshine white still breaks in light
Of yellow, blue, and green.
In thousand rays the fancy plays;
The feelings rise and bubble;
The mind receives, the heart believes,
And makes each pleasure double.
Then spare to draw without a flaw,
Nor all too perfect make her,
Lest Nature wear the dull, cold air
Of some demurest Quaker--
Whose mien austere is void of cheer,
Or sense of sins forgiven,
And her sweet face has lost all grace
Of either earth or heaven.

Horace Smith

To The Rev. A. A. In The Country From His Friend In London

Thou little village curate,
Come quick, and do not wait;
We'll sit and talk together,
So sweetly _tete-a-tete_.

Oh do not fear the railway
Because it seems so big--
Dost thou not daily trust thee
Unto thy little gig.

This house is full of painters,
And half shut up and black;
But rooms the very snuggest
Lie hidden at the back.
Come! come! come!

Horace Smith

Young England

The times still 'grow to something strange';
We rap and turn the tables;
We fire our guns at awful range;
We lay Atlantic cables;
We bore the hills, we bridge the seas--
To me 'tis better far
To sit before my fire at ease,
And smoke a mild cigar.

We start gigantic bubble schemes,--
Whoever _can_ invent 'em!--
How splendid the prospectus seems,
With int'rest cent. per centum
His shares the holder, startled, sees
At eighty below par:
I dawdle to my club at ease,
And light a mild cigar.

We pickle peas, we lock up sound,
We bottle electricity;
We run our railways underground,
Our trams above in this city
We fly balloons in calm or breeze,
And tumble from the car;
I wander down Pall Mall at ease,
And smoke a mild cigar.

Some strive to get a post or place,
Or entree to society;
Or after wealth or pleasure race,
Or any notoriety;
Or snatch at titles or degrees,
At ribbon, cross, or star:
I elevate my limbs at ease,
And smoke a mild cigar.

Some people strive for manhood right
With riots or orations;
For anti-vaccination fight,

Or temperance demonstrations:
I gently smile at things like these,
And, 'mid the clash and jar,
I sit in my arm-chair at ease,
And smoke a mild cigar.

They say young ladies all demand
A smart barouche and pair,
Two flunkies at the door to stand,
A mansion in May Fair:
I can't afford such things as these,
I hold it safer far
To sip my claret at my ease,
And smoke a mild cigar.

It may be proper one should take
One's place in the creation;
It may be very right to make
A choice of some vocation;
With such remarks one quite agrees,
So sensible they are:
I much prefer to take my ease,
And smoke a mild cigar.

They say our morals are so so,
Religion still more hollow;
And where the upper classes go,
The lower always follow;
That honour lost with grace and ease
Your fortunes will not mar:
That's not so well; but, if you please,
We'll light a fresh cigar.

Rank heresy is fresh and green,
E'en womenkind have caught it;
They say the Bible doesn't mean
What people always thought it;
That miracles are what you please,
Or nature's order mar:
I read the last review at ease,
And smoke a mild cigar.

Some folks who make a fearful fuss,
In eighteen ninety-seven,
Say, heaven will either come to us,
Or we shall go to heaven;
They settle it just as they please;
But, though it mayn't be far,
At any rate there's time with ease
To light a fresh cigar.

It may be there is something true;
It may be one might find it;
It may be, if one looked life through,
That something lies behind it;
It may be, p'raps, for aught one sees,
The things that may be, are:
I'm growing serious--if you please
We'll light a fresh cigar.

Horace Smith