

BALLADS

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***Free***editorial 

## **A Ballad of Abbreviations**

The American's a hustler, for he says so,  
And surely the American must know.  
He will prove to you with figures why it pays so  
Beginning with his boyhood long ago.  
When the slow-maturing anecdote is ripest,  
He'll dictate it like a Board of Trade Report,  
And because he has no time to call a typist,  
He calls her a Stenographer for short.

He is never known to loiter or malingering,  
He rushes, for he knows he has 'a date' ;  
He is always on the spot and full of ginger,  
Which is why he is invariably late.  
When he guesses that it's getting even later,  
His vocabulary's vehement and swift,  
And he yells for what he calls the Elevator,  
A slang abbreviation for a lift.

Then nothing can be nattier or nicer  
For those who like a light and rapid style.  
Than to trifle with a work of Mr Dreiser  
As it comes along in waggons by the mile.  
He has taught us what a swift selective art meant  
By description of his dinners and all that,  
And his dwelling, which he says is an Apartment,  
Because he cannot stop to say a flat.

We may whisper of his wild precipitation,  
That it's speed is rather longer than a span,  
But there really is a definite occasion  
When he does not use the longest word he can.  
When he substitutes, I freely make admission,  
One shorter and much easier to spell ;  
If you ask him what he thinks of Prohibition,  
He may tell you quite succinctly it is Hell.

## **A Ballad of Theatricals**

Though all the critics' canons grow-  
Far seedier than the actors' own-  
Although the cottage-door's too low-  
Although the fairy's twenty stone-  
Although, just like the telephone,  
She comes by wire and not by wings,  
Though all the mechanism's known-  
Believe me, there are real things.

Yes, real people-even so-  
Even in a theatre, truth is known,  
Though the agnostic will not know,  
And though the gnostic will not own,  
There is a thing called skin and bone,  
And many a man that struts and sings  
Has been as stony-broke as stone . . .  
Believe me, there are real things

There is an hour when all men go;  
An hour when man is all alone.  
When idle minstrels in a row  
Went down with all the bugles blown-  
When brass and hymn and drum went down,  
Down in death's throat with thunderings-  
Ah, though the unreal things have grown,  
Believe me, there are real things.

ENVOY.

Prince, though your hair is not your own  
And half your face held on by strings,  
And if you sat, you'd smash your throne-  
-Believe me, there are real things.

## **A Ballade of an Anti-puritan**

They spoke of Progress spiring round,  
Of light and Mrs Humphrey Ward-  
It is not true to say I frowned,  
Or ran about the room and roared;  
I might have simply sat and snored-  
I rose politely in the club  
And said, 'I feel a little bored;  
Will someone take me to a pub?'

The new world's wisest did surround  
Me; and it pains me to record  
I did not think their views profound,  
Or their conclusions well assured;  
The simple life I can't afford,  
Besides, I do not like the grub-  
I want a mash and sausage, 'scored'-  
Will someone take me to a pub?

I know where Men can still be found,  
Anger and clamorous accord,  
And virtues growing from the ground,  
And fellowship of beer and board,  
And song, that is a sturdy cord,  
And hope, that is a hardy shrub,  
And goodness, that is God's last word-  
Will someone take me to a pub?

Envoi

Prince, Bayard would have smashed his sword  
To see the sort of knights you dub-  
Is that the last of them-O Lord  
Will someone take me to a pub?

## A Ballade of Suicide

The gallows in my garden, people say,  
Is new and neat and adequately tall;  
I tie the noose on in a knowing way  
As one that knots his necktie for a ball;  
But just as all the neighbours--on the wall--  
Are drawing a long breath to shout "Hurray!"  
The strangest whim has seized me. . . . After all  
I think I will not hang myself to-day.

To-morrow is the time I get my pay--  
My uncle's sword is hanging in the hall--  
I see a little cloud all pink and grey--  
Perhaps the rector's mother will not call-- I fancy  
that I heard from Mr. Gall  
That mushrooms could be cooked another way--  
I never read the works of Juvenal--  
I think I will not hang myself to-day.

The world will have another washing-day;  
The decadents decay; the pedants pall;  
And H.G. Wells has found that children play,  
And Bernard Shaw discovered that they squall,  
Rationalists are growing rational--  
And through thick woods one finds a stream astray  
So secret that the very sky seems small--  
I think I will not hang myself to-day.

Envoi

Prince, I can hear the trumpet of Germinal,  
The tumbrils toiling up the terrible way;  
Even to-day your royal head may fall,  
I think I will not hang myself to-day.