

SONGS OF EDUCATION

AND

OTHER POEMS

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***Free***editorial 

# Songs of Education

## I. HISTORY

Form 991785, Sub-Section D

The Roman threw us a road, a road,  
And sighed and strolled away:  
The Saxon gave us a raid, a raid,  
A raid that came to stay;  
The Dane went west, but the Dane confessed  
That he went a bit too far;  
And we all became, by another name,  
The Imperial race we are.

The Imperial race, the inscrutable race,  
The invincible race we are.

Though Sussex hills are bare, are bare,  
And Sussex weald is wide,  
From Chichester to Chester  
Men saw the Norman ride;  
He threw his sword in the air and sang  
To a sort of a light guitar;  
It was all the same, for we all became  
The identical nobs we are.

The identical nobs, individual nobs,  
Unmistakable nobs we are.

The people lived on the land, the land,  
They pottered about and prayed;  
They built a cathedral here and there  
Or went on a small crusade:  
Till the bones of Becket were bundled out  
For the fun of a fat White Czar,  
And we all became, in spoil and flame,  
The intelligent lot we are.

The intelligent lot, the intuitive lot,  
The infallible lot we are.

O Warwick woods are green, are green,

But Warwick trees can fall:  
And Birmingham grew so big, so big,  
And Stratford stayed so small.  
Till the hooter howled to the morning lark  
That sang to the morning star:  
And we all became, in freedom's name,  
The fortunate chaps we are.

The fortunate chaps, felicitous chaps,  
The fairy-like chaps we are.

The people, they left the land, the land,  
But they went on working hard:  
And the village green that had got mislaid  
Turned up in the squire's back-yard:  
But twenty men of us all got work  
On a bit of his motor car;  
And we all became, with the world's acclaim,  
The marvellous mugs we are:

The marvellous mugs, miraculous mugs,  
The mystical mugs we are.

## II. GEOGRAPHY

Form 17955301, Sub-Section Z

The earth is a place on which England is found,  
And you find it however you twirl the globe round;  
For the spots are all red and the rest is all grey,  
And that is the meaning of Empire Day.

Gibraltar's a rock that you see very plain,  
And attached to its base is the district of Spain.  
And the island of Malta is marked further on,  
Where some natives were known as the Knights of St. John.

Then Cyprus, and east to the Suez Canal,  
That was conquered by Dizzy and Rothschild his pal  
With the Sword of the Lord in the old English way:  
And that is the meaning of Empire Day.

Our principal imports come far as Cape Horn;  
For necessities, cocoa; for luxuries, corn;  
Thus Brahmins are born for the rice-field, and thus,  
The Gods made the Greeks to grow currants for us;

Of earth's other tributes are plenty to choose,  
Tobacco and petrol and Jazzing and Jews:  
The Jazzing will pass but the Jews they will stay;  
And that is the meaning of Empire Day.

Our principle exports, all labelled and packed,  
At the ends of the earth are delivered intact:  
Our soap or our salmon can travel in tins  
Between the two poles and as like as two pins;  
So that Lancashire merchants whenever they like  
Can water the beer of a man in Klondike  
Or poison the meat of a man in Bombay;  
And that is the meaning of Empire Day.

The day of St. George is a musty affair  
Which Russians and Greeks are permitted to share;  
The day of Trafalgar is Spanish in name  
And the Spaniards refuse to pronounce it the same;  
But the day of the Empire from Canada came  
With Morden and Borden and Beaverbrook's fame  
And saintly seraphical souls such as they:  
And that is the meaning of Empire Day.

## V. THE HIGHER MATHEMATICS

Form 339125, Sub-Section M

Twice one is two,  
Twice two is four,  
But twice two is ninety-six if you know the way to score.  
Half of two is one,  
Half of four is two,  
But half of four is forty per cent. if your name is Montagu:  
For everything else is on the square  
If done by the best quadratics;  
And nothing is low in High Finance  
Or the Higher Mathematics.

A straight line is straight  
And a square mile is flat:  
But you learn in trigonometrics a trick worth two of that.  
Two straight lines  
Can't enclose a Space,  
But they can enclose a Corner to support the Chosen Race:  
For you never know what Dynamics do  
With the lower truths of Statics;

And half of two is a touring car  
In the Higher Mathematics.

There is a place apart  
Beyond the solar ray,  
Where parallel straight lines can meet in an unofficial way.  
There is a room that holds  
The examiner or his clerks,  
Where you can square the circle or the man that gives the marks.  
Where you hide in the cellar and then look down  
On the poets that live in the attics;  
For the whole of the house is upside down  
In the Higher Mathematics.

## **On the Disastrous Spread of Aestheticism in all Classes**

Impetuously I sprang from bed,  
Long before lunch was up,  
That I might drain the dizzy dew  
From the day's first golden cup.

In swift devouring ecstasy  
Each toil in turn was done;  
I had done lying on the lawn  
Three minutes after one.

For me, as Mr. Wordsworth says,  
The duties shine like stars;  
I formed my uncle's character,  
Decreasing his cigars.

But could my kind engross me? No!  
Stern Art-what sons escape her?  
Soon I was drawing Gladstone's nose  
On scraps of blotting paper.

Then on-to play one-fingered tunes  
Upon my aunt's piano.  
In short, I have a headlong soul,  
I much resemble Hanno.

(Forgive the entrance of the not  
Too cogent Carthaginian.  
It may have been to make a rhyme;  
I lean to that opinion.)

Then my great work of book research  
Till dusk I took in hand-  
The forming of a final, sound  
Opinion on The Strand.

But when I quenched the midnight oil,  
And closed the Referee,  
Whose thirty volumes folio  
I take to bed with me,

I had a rather funny dream,  
Intense, that is, and mystic;  
I dreamed that, with one leap and yell,  
The world became artistic.

The Shopmen, when their souls were still,  
Declined to open shops-  
And Cooks recorded frames of mind  
In sad and subtle chops.

The stars were weary of routine:  
The trees in the plantation  
Were growing every fruit at once,  
In search of sensation.

The moon went for a moonlight stroll,  
And tried to be a bard,  
And gazed enraptured at itself:  
I left it trying hard.

The sea had nothing but a mood  
Of 'vague ironic gloom,'  
With which t'explain its presence in  
My upstairs drawing-room.

The sun had read a little book  
That struck him with a notion:  
He drowned himself and all his fires  
Deep in a hissing ocean.

Then all was dark, lawless, and lost:  
I heard great devilish wings:

I knew that Art had won, and snapt  
The Covenant of Things.

I cried aloud, and I awoke,  
New labours in my head.  
I set my teeth, and manfully  
Began to lie in bed.

Toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing,  
So I my life conduct.  
Each morning see some task begun,  
Each evening see it chucked.

But still, in sudden moods of dusk,  
I hear those great weird wings,  
Feel vaguely thankful to the vast  
Stupidity of things.

Envoi

Clear was the night: the moon was young  
The larkspurs in the plots  
Mingled their orange with the gold  
Of the forget-me-nots.

The poppies seemed a silver mist:  
So darkly fell the gloom.  
You scarce had guessed yon crimson streaks  
Were buttercups in bloom.

But one thing moved: a little child  
Crashed through the flower and fern:  
And all my soul rose up to greet  
The sage of whom I learn.

I looked into his awful eyes:  
I waited his decree:  
I made ingenious attempts  
To sit upon his knee.

The babe upraised his wondering eyes,  
And timidly he said,  
"A trend towards experiment  
In modern minds is bred.

"I feel the will to roam, to learn  
By test, experience, nous,

That fire is hot and ocean deep,  
And wolves carnivorous.

"My brain demands complexity,"  
The lisping cherub cried.  
I looked at him, and only said,  
"Go on. The world is wide."

A tear rolled down his pinafore,  
"Yet from my life must pass  
The simple love of sun and moon,  
The old games in the grass;

"Now that my back is to my home  
Could these again be found?"  
I looked on him and only said,  
"Go on. The world is round."

## **The Aristocrat**

The Devil is a gentleman, and asks you down to stay  
At his little place at What'sitsname (it isn't far away).  
They say the sport is splendid; there is always something new,  
And fairy scenes, and fearful feats that none but he can do;  
He can shoot the feathered cherubs if they fly on the estate,  
Or fish for Father Neptune with the mermaids for a bait;  
He scaled amid the staggering stars that precipice, the sky,  
And blew his trumpet above heaven, and got by mastery  
The starry crown of God Himself, and shoved it on the shelf;  
But the Devil is a gentleman, and doesn't brag himself.

O blind your eyes and break your heart and hack your hand away,  
And lose your love and shave your head; but do not go to stay  
At the little place in What'sitsname where folks are rich and  
clever;  
The golden and the goodly house, where things grow worse for  
ever;  
There are things you need not know of, though you live and die  
in vain,  
There are souls more sick of pleasure than you are sick of pain;  
There is a game of April Fool that's played behind its door,  
Where the fool remains for ever and the April comes no more,  
Where the splendour of the daylight grows drearier than the

dark,  
And life droops like a vulture that once was such a lark:  
And that is the Blue Devil that once was the Blue Bird;  
For the Devil is a gentleman, and doesn't keep his word.

## **St. Francis Xavier**

The Apostle of the Indies

He left his dust, by all the myriad tread  
Of yon dense millions trampled to the strand,  
Or 'neath some cross forgotten lays his head  
Where dark seas whiten on a lonely land:  
He left his work, what all his life had planned,  
A waning flame to flicker and to fall,  
Mid the huge myths his toil could scarce withstand,  
And the light died in temple and in hall,  
And the old twilight sank and settled over all.

He left his name, a murmur in the East,  
That dies to silence amid older creeds,  
With which he strove in vain: the fiery priest  
Of faiths less fitted to their ruder needs:  
As some lone pilgrim, with his staff and beads,  
Mid forest-brutes whom ignorance makes tame,  
He dwelt, and sowed an Eastern Church's seeds  
He reigned, a teacher and a priest of fame:  
He died and dying left a murmur and a name.

He died: and she, the Church that bade him go,  
Yon dim Enchantress with her mystic claim,  
Has ringed his forehead with her aureole-glow,  
And monkish myths, and all the whispered fame  
Of miracle, has clung about his name:  
So Rome has said: but we, what answer we  
Who in grim Indian gods and rites of shame  
O'er all the East the teacher's failure see,  
His Eastern Church a dream, his toil a vanity.

This then we say: as Time's dark face at last  
Moveth its lips of thunder to decree  
The doom that grew through all the murmuring past  
To be the canon of the times to be:

No child of truth or priest of progress he,  
Yet not the less a hero of his wars  
Striving to quench the light he could not see,  
And God, who knoweth all that makes and mars,  
Judges his soul unseen which throbs among the stars.

God only knows, man failing in his choice,  
How far apparent failure may succeed,  
God only knows what echo of His voice  
Lives in the cant of many a fallen creed,  
God only gives the labourer his meed  
For all the lingering influence widely spread,  
Broad branching into many a word and deed  
When dim oblivion veils the fountain-head;  
So lives and lingers on the spirit of the dead.

This then we say: let all things further rest  
And this brave life, with many thousands more,  
Be gathered up in the eternal's breast  
In that dim past his Love is bending o'er:  
Healing all shattered hopes and failure sore:  
Since he had bravely looked on death and pain  
For what he chose to worship and adore,  
Cast boldly down his life for loss or gain  
In the eternal lottery: not to be in vain.

## **Rotarians**

### **The Symbol**

The speaking at the Rotary is Praise devoid of Proof  
The talking at the Rotary turns mostly on the oof  
But both require an Emblem; and a Wheel is just the thing  
When you argue in a circle and do business in a Ring.

### **At a Rotarian Lunch**

Broken on another wheel than Rotary  
St. Catherine's body set her spirit free  
Here rests the body that the soul may squirm  
In all joints broken to a jointless worm.

A Declaration of Dependence  
The Jeffersonian justice which  
Degenerate hucksters quote  
Republicans have had by right  
Rotarians by rote

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