

THE SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL  
AND  
OTHER POEMS

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*Free*editorial 

## **The Shakespeare Memorial**

Lord Lilac thought it rather rotten  
That Shakespeare should be quite forgotten,  
And therefore got on a Committee  
With several chaps out of the City,  
And Shorter and Sir Herbert Tree,  
Lord Rothschild and Lord Rosebery,  
And F.C.G. and Comyn Carr  
Two dukes and a dramatic star,  
Also a clergy man now dead;  
And while the vain world careless sped  
Unheeding the heroic name --  
The souls most fed with Shakespeare's flame  
Still sat unconquered in a ring,  
Remembering him like anything.

Lord Lilac did not long remain,  
Lord Lilac did not come again.  
He softly lit a cigarette  
And sought some other social set  
Where, in some other knots or rings,  
People were doing cultured things.  
-- Miss Zwilt's Humane Vivarium  
-- The little men that paint on gum  
-- The exquisite Gorilla Girl . . .  
He sometimes, in this giddy whirl  
(Not being really bad at heart),  
Remembered Shakespeare with a start --  
But not with that grand constancy  
Of Clement Shorter, Herbert Tree,  
Lord Rosebery and Comyn Carr  
And all the other names there are;  
Who stuck like limpets to the spot,  
Lest they forgot, lest they forgot.

Lord Lilac was of slighter stuff;  
Lord Lilac had had quite enough.

## **The Skeleton**

Chattering finch and water-fly  
Are not merrier than I;  
Here among the flowers I lie  
Laughing everlastingly.  
No; I may not tell the best;  
Surely, friends, I might have guessed  
Death was but the good King's jest,  
It was hid so carefully.

## **The Song against Grocers**

God made the wicked Grocer  
For a mystery and a sign,  
That men might shun the awful shops  
And go to inns to dine;  
Where the bacon's on the rafter  
And the wine is in the wood,  
And God that made good laughter  
Has seen that they are good.

The evil-hearted Grocer  
Would call his mother "Ma'am,"  
And bow at her and bob at her,  
Her aged soul to damn,  
And rub his horrid hands and ask  
What article was next  
Though MORTIS IN ARTICULO  
Should be her proper text.

His props are not his children,  
But pert lads underpaid,  
Who call out "Cash!" and bang about  
To work his wicked trade;  
He keeps a lady in a cage  
Most cruelly all day,  
And makes her count and calls her "Miss"  
Until she fades away.

The righteous minds of innkeepers  
Induce them now and then

To crack a bottle with a friend  
Or treat unmoneyed men,  
But who hath seen the Grocer  
Treat housemaids to his teas  
Or crack a bottle of fish sauce  
Or stand a man a cheese?

He sells us sands of Araby  
As sugar for cash down;  
He sweeps his shop and sells the dust  
The purest salt in town,  
He crams with cans of poisoned meat  
Poor subjects of the King,  
And when they die by thousands  
Why, he laughs like anything.

The wicked Grocer groces  
In spirits and in wine,  
Not frankly and in fellowship  
As men in inns do dine;  
But packed with soap and sardines  
And carried off by grooms,  
For to be snatched by Duchesses  
And drunk in dressing-rooms.

The hell-instructed Grocer  
Has a temple made of tin,  
And the ruin of good innkeepers  
Is loudly urged therein;  
But now the sands are running out  
From sugar of a sort,  
The Grocer trembles; for his time,  
Just like his weight, is short.

## **The Song of Education**

III. For the Creche

Form 8277059, Sub-Section K

I remember my mother, the day that we met,  
A thing I shall never entirely forget;  
And I toy with the fancy that, young as I am,

I should know her again if we met in a tram.  
But mother is happy in turning a crank  
That increases the balance in somebody's bank;  
And I feel satisfaction that mother is free  
From the sinister task of attending to me.

They have brightened our room, that is spacious and cool,  
With diagrams used in the Idiot School,  
And Books for the Blind that will teach us to see;  
But mother is happy, for mother is free.  
For mother is dancing up forty-eight floors,  
For love of the Leeds International Stores,  
And the flame of that faith might perhaps have grown cold,  
With the care of a baby of seven weeks old.

For mother is happy in greasing a wheel  
For somebody else, who is cornering Steel;  
And though our one meeting was not very long,  
She took the occasion to sing me this song:  
"O, hush thee, my baby, the time will soon come  
When thy sleep will be broken with hooting and hum;  
There are handles want turning and turning all day,  
And knobs to be pressed in the usual way;

O, hush thee, my baby, take rest while I croon,  
For Progress comes early, and Freedom too soon."

## **The Song of Quoodle**

They haven't got no noses,  
The fallen sons of Eve;  
Even the smell of roses  
Is not what they supposes;  
But more than mind discloses  
And more than men believe.

They haven't got no noses,  
They cannot even tell  
When door and darkness closes  
The park a Jew encloses,  
Where even the law of Moses  
Will let you steal a smell.

The brilliant smell of water,  
The brave smell of a stone,  
The smell of dew and thunder,  
The old bones buried under,  
Are things in which they blunder  
And err, if left alone.

The wind from winter forests,  
The scent of scentless flowers,  
The breath of brides' adorning,  
The smell of snare and warning,  
The smell of Sunday morning,  
God gave to us for ours

And Quoodle here discloses  
All things that Quoodle can,  
They haven't got no noses,  
They haven't got no noses,  
And goodness only knows  
The Noselessness of Man.

## **The Song of Right and Wrong**

Feast on wine or fast on water  
And your honour shall stand sure,  
God Almighty's son and daughter  
He the valiant, she the pure;  
If an angel out of heaven  
Brings you other things to drink,  
Thank him for his kind attentions,  
Go and pour them down the sink.

Tea is like the East he grows in,  
A great yellow Mandarin  
With urbanity of manner  
And unconsciousness of sin;  
All the women, like a harem,  
At his pig-tail troop along;  
And, like all the East he grows in,  
He is Poison when he's strong.

Tea, although an Oriental,  
Is a gentleman at least;  
Cocoa is a cad and coward,

Cocoa is a vulgar beast,  
Cocoa is a dull, disloyal,  
Lying, crawling cad and clown,  
And may very well be grateful  
To the fool that takes him down.

As for all the windy waters,  
They were rained like tempests down  
When good drink had been dishonoured  
By the tipplers of the town;  
When red wine had brought red ruin  
And the death-dance of our times,  
Heaven sent us Soda Water  
As a torment for our crimes.

## **The Song of the Oak**

The Druids waved their golden knives  
And danced around the Oak  
When they had sacrificed a man;  
But though the learned search and scan  
No single modern person can  
Entirely see the joke.  
But though they cut the throats of men  
They cut not down the tree,  
And from the blood the saplings spring  
Of oak-woods yet to be.  
But Ivywood, Lord Ivywood,  
He rots the tree as ivy would,  
He clings and crawls as ivy would  
About the sacred tree.

King Charles he fled from Worcester fight  
And hid him in the Oak;  
In convent schools no man of tact  
Would trace and praise his every act,  
Or argue that he was in fact  
A strict and sainted bloke.  
But not by him the sacred woods  
Have lost their fancies free,  
And though he was extremely big  
He did not break the tree.  
But Ivywood, Lord Ivywood,

He breaks the tree as ivy would,  
And eats the woods as ivy would  
Between us and the sea.

Great Collingwood walked down the glade  
And flung the acorns free,  
That oaks might still be in the grove  
As oaken as the beams above,  
When the great Lover sailors love  
Was kissed by Death at sea.  
But though for him the oak-trees fell  
To build the oaken ships,  
The woodman worshipped what he smote  
And honoured even the chips.  
But Ivywood, Lord Ivywood,  
He hates the tree as ivy would,  
As the dragon of the ivy would  
That has us in his grips.

## **The Song of the Strange Ascetic**

If I had been a Heathen,  
I'd have praised the purple vine,  
My slaves should dig the vineyards,  
And I would drink the wine.  
But Higgins is a Heathen,  
And his slaves grow lean and grey,  
That he may drink some tepid milk  
Exactly twice a day.

If I had been a Heathen,  
I'd have crowned Neaera's curls,  
And filled my life with love affairs,  
My house with dancing girls;  
But Higgins is a Heathen,  
And to lecture rooms is forced,  
Where his aunts, who are not married,  
Demand to be divorced.

If I had been a Heathen,  
I'd have sent my armies forth,  
And dragged behind my chariots  
The Chieftains of the North.

But Higgins is a Heathen,  
And he drives the dreary quill,  
To lend the poor that funny cash  
That makes them poorer still.

If I had been a Heathen,  
I'd have piled my pyre on high,  
And in a great red whirlwind  
Gone roaring to the sky;  
But Higgins is a Heathen,  
And a richer man than I:  
And they put him in an oven,  
Just as if he were a pie.

Now who that runs can read it,  
The riddle that I write,  
Of why this poor old sinner,  
Should sin without delight--  
But I, I cannot read it  
(Although I run and run),  
Of them that do not have the faith,  
And will not have the fun.

## **The Song of the Wheels**

King Dives he was walking in his garden all alone,  
Where his flowers are made of iron and his trees are made of  
stone,  
And his hives are full of thunder and the lightning leaps  
and kills,  
For the mills of God grind slowly; and he works with other  
mills.  
Dives found a mighty silence; and he missed the throb and  
leap,  
The noise of all the sleepless creatures singing him to sleep.  
And he said: 'A screw has fallen--or a bolt has slipped aside--  
Some little thing has shifted': and the little things replied:

'Call upon the wheels, master, call upon the wheels;  
We are taking rest, master, finding how it feels,  
Strict the law of thine and mine: theft we ever shun--  
All the wheels are thine, master--tell the wheels to run!  
Yea, the Wheels are mighty gods--set them going then!

We are only men, master, have you heard of men?

'O, they live on earth like fishes, and a gasp is all their breath.

God for empty honours only gave them death and scorn of death,

And you walk the worms for carpet and you tread a stone that squeals

Only, God that made them worms did not make them wheels.

Man shall shut his heart against you and you shall not find the spring.

Man who wills the thing he wants not, the intolerable thing--  
Once he likes his empty belly better than your empty head  
Earth and heaven are dumb before him: he is stronger than the dead.

'Call upon the wheels, master, call upon the wheels,  
Steel is beneath your hand, stone beneath your heels,  
Steel will never laugh aloud, hearing what we heard,  
Stone will never break its heart, mad with hope deferred--  
Men of tact that arbitrate, slow reform that heals--  
Save the stinking grease, master, save it for the wheels.

'King Dives in the garden, we have naught to give or hold--  
(Even while the baby came alive the rotten sticks were sold.)  
The savage knows a cavern and the peasants keep a plot,  
Of all the things that men have had--lo! we have them not.

Not a scrap of earth where ants could lay their eggs--  
Only this poor lump of earth that walks about on legs--  
Only this poor wandering mansion, only these two walking trees,

Only hands and hearts and stomachs--what have you to do with these?

You have engines big and burnished, tall beyond our fathers' ken,

Why should you make peace and traffic with such feeble folk as men?

'Call upon the wheels, master, call upon the wheels,  
They are deaf to demagogues, deaf to crude appeals;  
Are our hands our own, master?--how the doctors doubt!  
Are our legs our own, master? wheels can run without--  
Prove the points are delicate--they will understand.  
All the wheels are loyal; see how still they stand!'

King Dives he was walking in his garden in the sun,

He shook his hand at heaven, and he called the wheels to  
run,  
And the eyes of him were hateful eyes, the lips of him were  
curled,  
And he called upon his father that is lord below the world,  
Sitting in the Gate of Treason, in the gate of broken seals,  
'Bend and bind them, bend and bind them, bend and bind  
them into wheels,  
Then once more in all my garden there may swing and sound  
and sweep--  
The noise of all the sleepless things that sing the soul to  
sleep.'

Call upon the wheels, master, call upon the wheels,  
Weary grow the holidays when you miss the meals,  
Through the Gate of Treason, through the gate within,  
Cometh fear and greed of fame, cometh deadly sin;  
If a man grow faint, master, take him ere he kneels,  
Take him, break him, rend him, end him, roll him, crush him  
with the wheels.

***Freeditorial*** 