

Anstey F.

Mr Punch's Model Music Hall Songs and Dramas



F. Anstey

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«Public Domain»

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Anstey F. Mr Punch's Model Music Hall Songs and Dramas / Collected, Improved and Re-arranged from Punch

INTRODUCTION

The day is approaching, and may even now be within measurable distance, when the Music Halls of the Metropolis will find themselves under yet more stringent supervision than is already exercised by those active and intelligent guardians of middle-class morality, the London County Council. The moral microscope which detected latent indecency in the pursuit of a butterfly by a marionette is to be provided with larger powers, and a still more extended field. In other words, our far-sighted and vigilant County Councilmen, perceiving the futility of delaying the inspection of Variety Entertainments until such improprieties as are contained therein have been suffered to contaminate the public mind for a considerable period, are determined to nip these poison-flowers in the bud for the future; and, unless Mr. Punch is misinformed, will apply to Parliament at the earliest opportunity for clauses enabling them to require each item in every forthcoming performance to be previously submitted to a special committee for sanction and approval.

The conscientious rigour with which they will discharge this new and congenial duty may perhaps be better understood after perusing the little prophetic sketch which follows; for Mr. Punch's Poet, when not employed in metrical composition, is a Seer of some pretensions in a small way, and several of his predictions have already been shamelessly plagiarised by the unscrupulous hand of Destiny. It is not improbable that this latest effort of his will receive a similar compliment, although this would be more gratifying if Destiny ever condescended to acknowledge such obligations. However, here is the forecast for what it is worth, a sum of incalculable amount:

—

POETIC LICENCES

A VISION OF THE NEAR FUTURE

Scene — *A Committee-room of the L. C. C.; Sub-Committee of Censors, (appointed, under new regulations, to report on all songs intended to be sung on the Music-hall Stage,) discovered in session.*

Mr. Wheedler (retained for the Ballad-writers). The next licence I have to apply for is for — well, (*with some hesitation*) — a composition which certainly borders on the — er — amorous — but I think, Sir, you will allow that it is treated in a purely pastoral and Arcadian spirit.

The Chairman (gravely). There *are* arcades, Mr. Wheedler, I may remind you, which are by no means pastoral. I cannot too often repeat that we are here to fulfil the mission entrusted to us by the Democracy, which will no longer tolerate in its entertainments anything that is either vulgar, silly, or offensive in the slightest degree. [*Applause.*]

Mr. Wheedler. Quite so. With your permission, Sir, I will read you the Ballad. [*Reads.*]

"MOLLY AND I

"Oh! the day shall be marked in red letter – "

The Chairman. One moment, Mr. Wheedler, (*conferring with his colleagues*). "Marked with red letter" – isn't that a little – eh? liable to – You don't think they'll have read Hawthorne's book? Very well, then. Go on, Mr. Wheedler, please.

Mr. W. "Twas warm, with a heaven so blue."

First Censor. Can't pass those two epithets – you must tone them down, Mr. Wheedler —*much* too suggestive!

Mr. W. That shall be done.

The Chairman. And it ought to be "sky."

Mr. W. "When amid the lush meadows I met her,
My Molly, so modest and true!"

Second Censor. I object to the word "lush" – a direct incitement to intemperance!

Mr. W. I'll strike it out. (*Reads.*)

"Around us the little kids rollicked,
Lighthearted were all the young lambs – "

Second Censor. Surely "kids" is *rather* a vulgar expression, Mr. Wheedler? Make it "children," and I've no objection.

Mr. W. I have made it so. (*Reads.*)

"They kicked up their legs as they frolicked" —

Third Censor. If that is intended to be done on the stage, I protest most strongly – a highly indecorous exhibition! [*Murmurs of approval.*]

Mr. W. But they're only lambs!

Third Censor. Lambs, indeed! We are determined to put down *all* kicking in Music-hall songs, no matter *who* does it! Strike that line out.

Mr. W. (reading). "And frisked by the side of their dams."

First Censor (severely). No profanity, Mr. Wheedler, *if* you please!

Mr. W. Er – I'll read you the Refrain. (*Reads, limply.*)

"Molly and I. With nobody nigh.
Hearts all a-throb with a rapturous bliss,
Molly was shy. And (at first) so was I,
Till I summoned up courage to ask for a kiss!"

The Chairman. "Nobody nigh," Mr. Wheedler? I don't quite like that. The Music Hall ought to set a good example to young persons. "Molly and I —*with her chaperon by,*" is better.

Second Censor. And that last line – "asking for a kiss" – does the song state that they were formally engaged, Mr. Wheedler?

Mr. W. I – I believe it omits to mention the fact. But (*ingeniously*) it does not appear that the request was complied with.

Second Censor. No matter – it should never have been made. Have the goodness to alter that into – well, something of this kind. "And I always addressed her politely as "Miss." Then we *may* pass it.

Mr. W. (reading the next verse).

"She wore but a simple sun-bonnet."

First Censor (shocked). Now really, Mr. Wheedler, *really*, Sir!

Mr. W. "For Molly goes plainly attired."

First Censor (indignantly). I should think so — *Scandalous!*

Mr. W. "Malediction I muttered upon it,
One glimpse of her face I desired."

The Chairman. I think my colleague's exception is perhaps just a *leetle* far-fetched. At all events, if we substitute for the last couplet,

"Her dress is sufficient – though on it
She only spends what is strictly required."

Eh, Mr. Wheedler? Then we work in a moral as well, you see, and avoid malediction, which can only mean bad language.

Mr. W. (doubtfully). With all respect, I submit that it doesn't scan quite so well —

The Chairman (sharply). I venture to think scansion may be sacrificed to propriety, *occasionally*, Mr. Wheedler – but pray go on.

Mr. W. (continuing).

"To a streamlet we rambled together.
I carried her tenderly o'er.
In my arms – she's as light as a feather —
That sweetest of burdens I bore!"

First Censor. I really *must* protest. No properly conducted young woman would ever have permitted such a thing. You must alter that, Mr. Wheedler!

Second C. And I don't know – but I rather fancy there's a "double-intender" in that word "light" – (*to colleague*) – it strikes me – eh? – what do *you* think? —

The Chairman (in a conciliatory manner). I am inclined to agree to some extent – not that I consider the words particularly objectionable in themselves, but we are men of the world, Mr. Wheedler, and as such we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that a Music-hall audience is only too apt to find significance in many apparently innocent expressions and phrases.

Mr. W. But, Sir, I understood from your remarks recently that the Democracy were strongly opposed to anything in the nature of suggestiveness!

The Ch. Exactly so; and therefore we cannot allow their susceptibilities to be shocked. (*With a severe jocosity.*) Molly and you, Mr. Wheedler, must either ford the stream like ordinary persons, or stay where you are.

Mr. W. (depressed). I may as well read the last verse, I suppose:

"Then under the flickering willow
I lay by the rivulet's brink,
With her lap for a sumptuous pillow – "

First Censor. We can't have that. It is really *not* respectable.

The Ch. (pleasantly). Can't we alter it slightly? "I'd brought a small portable pillow." No objection to *that*!

[The other Censors express dissent in undertones.

Mr. W. "Till I owned that I longed for a drink."

Third C. No, no! "A drink"! We all know what *that* means – alcoholic stimulant of some kind. At all events that's how the audience are certain to take it.

Mr. W. (*feebly*).

"So Molly her pretty hands hollowed
Into curves like an exquisite cup,
And draughts so delicious I swallowed,
That rivulet nearly dried up!"

Third C. Well, Mr. Wheedler, you're not going to defend *that*, I hope?

Mr. W. I'm not prepared to deny that it is silly —*very* silly – but hardly – er – vulgar, I should have thought?

Third C. That is a question of taste, which we won't dispute. *I* call it *distinctly* vulgar. Why can't he drink out of his *own* hands?

The Ch. (*blandly*). Allow me. How would *this* do for the second line? "She had a collapsible cup." A good many people *do* carry them. I have one myself. Is that all of your Ballad, Mr. Wheedler?

Mr. W. (*with great relief*.) That *is* all, Sir.

[Censors withdraw, to consider the question.

The Ch. (*after consultation with colleagues*). We have carefully considered this song, and we are all reluctantly of opinion that we cannot, consistently with our duty, recommend the Council to license it – even with the alterations my colleagues and myself have gone somewhat out of our way to suggest. The whole subject is too dangerous for a hall in which young persons of both sexes are likely to be found assembled; and the absence of any distinct assertion that the young couple – Molly and – ah – the gentleman who narrates the experience – are betrothed, or that their attachment is, in any way, sanctioned by their parents or guardians, is quite fatal. If we have another Ballad of a similar character from the same quarter, Mr. Wheedler, I feel bound to warn you that we may possibly consider it necessary to advise that the poet's licence should be cancelled altogether.

Mr. W. I will take care to mention it to my client, Sir. I understand it is his intention to confine himself to writing Gaiety burlesques in future.

The Ch. A very laudable resolution! I hope he will keep it. [*Scene closes in.*

It is hardly possible that any Music-hall Manager or vocalist, irreproachable as he may hitherto have considered himself, can have taken this glimpse into a not very remote futurity without symptoms of uneasiness, if not of positive dismay. He will reflect that the ballad of "Molly and I," however reprehensible it may appear in the fierce light of an L. C. C. Committee Room, is innocuous, and even moral, compared to the ditties in his own *répertoire*. How, then, can he hope, when his hour of trial strikes, to confront the ordeal with an unruffled shirt-front, or a collar that shall retain the inflexibility of conscious innocence? And he will wish then that he had confined himself to the effusions of a bard who could not be blamed by the most censorious moralist.

Here, if he will only accept the warning in time, is his best safeguard. He has only to buy this little volume, and inform his inquisitors that the songs and business with which he proposes to entertain an ingenuous public are derived from the immaculate pages of Mr. Punch. Whereupon censure will be instantly disarmed and criticism give place to congratulation. It is just possible, to be sure, that this somewhat confident prediction smacks rather of the Poet than the Seer, and that even the entertainment supplied by Mr. Punch's Music Hall may, to the Purist's eye, present features as suggestive as a horrid vulgar clown, or as shocking as a butterfly, an insect notorious for its frivolity.

But then, so might the "songs and business" of the performing canary, or the innocent sprightliness of the educated flea, with its superfluity of legs, all absolutely unclad. At all events, the compiler of this collection ventures to hope that, whether it is fortunate enough to find favour or not with Music-hall "artistes," literary critics, and London County Councilmen, it contains nothing particularly objectionable to the rest of the British Public. And very likely, even in this modest aspiration, he is over-sanguine, and his little joke will be taken seriously. Earnestness is so alarmingly on the increase in these days.

MODEL MUSIC HALL SONGS

i.– THE PATRIOTIC

This stirring ditty – so thoroughly sound and practical under all its sentiment – has been specially designed to harmonise with the recently altered tone of Music-hall audiences, in which a spirit of enlightened Radicalism is at last happily discernible. It is hoped that, both in rhyme and metre, the verses will satisfy the requirements of this most elegant form of composition. The song is intended to be shouted through music in the usual manner by a singer in evening dress, who should carry a small Union Jack carelessly thrust inside his waistcoat. The title is short but taking: —

ON THE CHEAP!

First Verse

Of a Navy insufficient cowards croak, deah boys!
If our place among the nations we're to keep.
But with British beef, and beer, and hearts of oak, deah boys! —
(*With enthusiasm.*) We can make a shift to do it – On the Cheap!

Chorus

(*With a common-sense air.*) Let us keep, deah boys! On the Cheap,
While Britannia is the boss upon the deep,
She can wollop an invader, when he comes in his Armada,
If she's let alone to do it – On the Cheap!

Second Verse

(*Affectionately.*) Johnny Bull is just as plucky as he *was*, deah boys!
(*With a knowing wink.*) And he's wide awake – no error! – not asleep;
But he won't stump up for ironclads – becos, deah boys!
He don't see his way to get 'em – On the Cheap!

Chorus

So keep, deah boys! On the Cheap,
(*Gallantly.*) And we'll chance what may happen on the deep!
For we can't be the losers if we save the cost o' cruisers,
And contentedly continue – On the Cheap!

Third Verse

The British Isles are not the Conti-nong, deah boys!
(*Scornfully.*) Where the Johnnies on defences spend a heap.
No! we're Britons, and we're game to jog along, deah boys!
(*With pathos.*) In the old time-honoured fashion – On the Cheap!

Chorus

(*Imploringly.*) Ah! keep, deah boys! On the Cheap;
For the price we're asked to pay is pretty steep.
Let us all unite to dock it, keep the money in our pocket,
And we'll conquer or we'll perish – On the Cheap!

Fourth Verse

If the Tories have the cheek to touch our purse, deah boys!
Their reward at the elections let 'em reap!
They will find a big Conservative reverse, deah boys!
If they can't defend the country – On the Cheap!

Chorus

They must keep, deah boys! On the Cheap,
Or the lot out of office we will sweep!
Bull gets rusty when you tax him, and his patriotic maxim
Is, "I'll trouble you to govern – On the Cheap!"

Fifth Verse (this to be sung shrewdly)

If the Gover'ment ain't mugs they'll take the tip, deah boys!
Just to look a bit ahead before they leap,
And instead of laying down an extry ship, deah boys!

They'll cut down the whole caboodle – On the Cheap!

Chorus (with spirit and fervour)

And keep, deah boys! On the Cheap!
For we ain't like a bloomin' lot o' sheep.
When we want to "parry bellum,"¹

[Union Jack to be waved here.]

You may bet yer boots we'll tell 'em!
But we'll have the "bellum" "parried" – On the Cheap!

This song, if sung with any spirit, should, *Mr. Punch* thinks, cause a positive *furore* in any truly patriotic gathering, and possibly go some way towards influencing the decision of the country, and consequently the fate of the Empire, in the next General Elections. In the meantime it is at the service of any Champion Music Hall Comique who is capable of appreciating it.

¹ Music-hall Latinity – "*Para bellum*."

ii.— THE TOPICAL-POLITICAL

In most respects, no doubt, the present example can boast no superiority to ditties in the same style now commanding the ear of the public. One merit, however, its author does claim for it. Though it deals with most of the burning questions of the hour, it can be sung anywhere with absolute security. This is due to a simple but ingenious method by which the political sentiment has been arranged on the reversible principle. A little alteration here and there will put the singer in close touch with an audience of almost any shade of politics. Should it happen that the title has been already anticipated, *Mr. Punch* begs to explain that the remainder of this sparkling composition is entirely original; any similarity with previous works must be put down entirely to "literary coincidence." Whether the title is new or not, it is a very nice one, viz: —

BETWEEN YOU AND ME – AND THE POST

(To be sung in a raucous voice, and with a confidential air.)

I've dropped in to whisper some secrets I've heard.
Between you and me and the Post!
Picked up on the wing by a 'cute little bird.
We are gentlemen 'ere – so the caution's absurd,
Still, you'll please to remember that every word
Is between you and me and the Post!

Chorus (to which the singer should dance)

Between you and me and the Post! An 'int is sufficient at most.
I'd very much rather this didn't go farther, than 'tween you and me
and the Post!
At Lord Sorsbury's table there's sech a to-do.
Between you and me and the Post!
When he first ketches sight of his dinner *menoo*,
And sees he's set down to good old Irish stoo —
Which he's sick of by this time – now, tell me, ain't you?
Between you and me and the Post!

(This happy and pointed allusion to the Irish Question is sure to provoke loud laughter from an audience of Radical sympathies. For Unionists, the words "Lord Sorsbury's" can be altered by our patent reversible method into "the G. O. M.'s," without at all impairing the satire.) Chorus, as before.

The G. O. M.'s hiding a card up his sleeve.
Between you and me and the Post!
Any ground he has lost he is going to retrieve,
And what *his* little game is, he'll let us perceive,
And he'll pip the whole lot of 'em, so I believe,

Between you and me and the Post! (*Chorus.*)

(The hit will be made quite as palpably for the other side by substituting "Lord Sorlsbury's," &c., at the beginning of the first line, should the majority of the audience be found to hold Conservative views.)

Little Randolph won't long be left out in the cold.
Between you and me and the Post!
If they'll let him inside the Conservative fold,
He has promised no longer he'll swagger and scold,
But to be a good boy, and to do as he's told,
Between you and me and the Post! (*Chorus.*)

(The mere mention of Lord Randolph's name is sufficient to ensure the success of any song.)

Joey Chamberlain's orchid's a bit overblown,
Between you and me and the Post!

(This is rather subtle, perhaps, but an M. – H. audience will see a joke in it somewhere, and laugh.)

'Ow to square a round table I'm sure he has shown.

(Same observation applies here.)

But of late he's been leaving his old friends alone,
And I fancy he's grinding an axe of his own,
Between you and me and the Post! (*Chorus.*)

(We now pass on to Topics of the Day, which we treat in a light but trenchant fashion.)

On the noo County Councils they've too many nobbs,
Between you and me and the Post!
For the swells stick together, and sneer at the mobs;
And it's always the rich man the poor one who robs.
We shall 'ave the old business – all jabber and jobs!
Between you and me and the Post! (*Chorus.*)

(N.B. —This verse should not be read to the L. C. C. who might miss the fun of it.)

There's a new rule for ladies presented at Court,
Between you and me and the Post!
High necks are allowed, so no colds will be cort,
But I went to the droring-room lately, and thort
Some old wimmen had dressed quite as low as they ort!
Between you and me and the Post! (*Chorus.*)

By fussy alarmists we're too much annoyed,
Between you and me and the Post!

If we don't want our neighbours to think we're afroid,
[*M. – H. rhyme.*
Spending dibs on defence we had better avoid.
And give 'em instead to the poor unemployed.
[*M. – H. political economy.*
Between you and me and the Post! (*Chorus.*)

This style of perlitical singing ain't hard,
Between you and me and the Post!
As a "Mammoth Comique" on the bills I am starred,
And, so long as I'm called, and angcored, and hurrar'd,
I can rattle off rubbish like this by the yard,
Between you and me and the Post!

[Chorus, and dance off to sing the same song—with or without alterations—in another place.]

iii.– A DEMOCRATIC DITTY

The following example, although it gives a not wholly inadequate expression to what are understood to be the loftier aspirations of the most advanced and earnest section of the New Democracy, should not be attempted, as *yet*, before a West-End audience. In South or East London, the sentiment and philosophy of the song may possibly excite rapturous enthusiasm; in the West-End, though the tone is daily improving, they are not educated quite up to so exalted a level at present. Still, as an experiment in proselytism, it might be worth risking, even there. The title it bears is: —

GIVEN AWAY – WITH A POUND OF TEA!

Verse I. – (*Introductory.*)

Some Grocers have taken to keeping a stock
Of ornaments – such as a vase, or a clock —
With a ticket on each where the words you may see:
"To be given away – with a Pound of Tea!"

Chorus (in waltz time)

"Given away!"
That's what they say.
Gratis – a present it's offered you free.
Given away.
With nothing to pay,
"Given away – [*tenderly*] – with a Pound of Tea!"

Verse II. – (*Containing the moral reflection.*)

Now, the sight of those tickets gave me an idea.
What it set me a-thinking you're going to 'ear:
I thought there were things that would possibly be
Better given away – with a Pound of Tea!

Chorus– "Given away." So much as to say, &c

Verse III. – (*This, as being rather personal than general in its application, may need some apology. It is really put in as a graceful concession to the taste of an average Music-hall audience,*

who like to be assured that the Artists who amuse them are as unfortunate as they are erratic in their domestic relations.)

Now, there's my old Missus who sits up at 'ome —
And when I sneak *up*-stairs my 'air she will comb, —
I don't think I'd call it bad business if *she*
Could be given away – with a Pound of Tea!

Chorus– "Given away!" That's what they say, &c. [Mutatis mutandis.

Verse IV. – (Flying at higher game. The social satire here is perhaps almost too good-natured, seeing what intolerable pests all Peers are to the truly Democratic mind. But we must walk before we can run. Good-humoured contempt will do very well, for the present.)

Fair Americans snap up the pick of our Lords.
It's a practice a sensible Briton applords.

[This will check any groaning at the mention of Aristocrats.

Far from grudging our Dooks to the pretty Yan-kee, —
(*Magnanimously*) Why, we'd give 'em away – with a Pound of Tea!

Chorus– Give 'em away! So we all say, &c

Verse V. – (More frankly Democratic still.)

To-wards a Republic we're getting on fast;
Many old Institootions are things of the past.
(*Philosophically*) Soon the Crown 'll go, too, as an a-noma-lee,
And be given away – with a Pound of Tea!

Chorus– "Given away!" Some future day, &c

Verse VI. – (Which expresses the peaceful proclivities of the populace with equal eloquence and wisdom. A welcome contrast to the era when Britons had a bellicose and immoral belief in the possibility of being called upon to defend themselves at some time!)

We've made up our minds – though the Jingoës may jor —
Under no provocation to drift into war!
So the best thing to do with our costly Na-vee
Is – Give each ship away, with a Pound of Tea!

Chorus– Give 'em away, &c

Verse VII. – (*We cannot well avoid some reference to the Irish Question in a Music-hall ditty, but observe the logical and statesmanlike method of treating it here. The argument – if crudely stated – is borrowed from some advanced by our foremost politicians.*)

We've also discovered at last that it's crule
To deny the poor Irish their right to 'Ome Rule!
So to give 'em a Parlyment let us agree —
(*Rationally*) Or they may blow us up with a Pound of their "Tea"!

[A euphemism which may possibly be remembered and understood.

Chorus– Give it away, &c

Verse VIII. (*culminating in a glorious prophetic burst of the Coming Dawn*).

Iniquitous burdens and rates we'll relax:
For each "h" that's pronounced we will clap on a tax!

[A very popular measure.

And a house in Belgraveyer, with furniture free,
Shall each Soshalist sit in, a taking his tea!

Chorus, and dance off.– Given away! Ippipooray! Gratis we'll get it for nothing and free!
Given away! Not a penny to pay! Given away! – with a Pound of Tea!

If this Democratic Dream does not appeal favourably to the imagination of the humblest citizen, the popular tone must have been misrepresented by many who claim to act as its chosen interpreters – a supposition *Mr. Punch* must decline to entertain for a single moment.

iv.— THE IDYLLIC

The following ballad will not be found above the heads of an average audience, while it is constructed to suit the capacities of almost any lady *artiste*.

SO SHY!

The singer should, if possible, be of mature age, and incline to a comfortable embonpoint. As soon as the bell has given the signal for the orchestra to attack the prelude, she will step upon the stage with that air of being hung on wires, which seems to come from a consciousness of being a favourite of the public.

I'm a dynety little dysy of the dingle,

[Self-praise is a great recommendation – in Music-hall songs.

So retiring and so timid and so coy.
If you ask me why so long I have lived single,
I will tell you – 'tis because I am so shoy.

[Note the manner in which the rhyme is adapted to meet Arcadian peculiarities of pronunciation.

Spoken— Yes, I am – really, though you wouldn't think it to look at me, would you? But, for all that, —

Chorus— When I'm spoken to, I wriggle,
Going off into a giggle,
And as red as any peony I blush;
Then turn paler than a lily,
For I'm such a little silly,
That I'm always in a flutter or a flush!

[After each chorus an elaborate step-dance, expressive of shrinking maidenly modesty.

I've a cottage far away from other houses,
Which the nybours hardly ever come anoigh;
When they do, I run and hoide among the rouses,
For I *cannot* cure myself of being shoy.

Spoken— A great girl like me, too! But there, it's no use trying, for —

***Chorus*— When I'm spoken to, I wriggle, &c**

Well, the other day I felt my fice was crimson,

Though I stood and fixed my gyze upon the skoy,
For at the gyte was sorcy Chorley Simpson,
And the sight of him's enough to turn me shoy.

Spoken— It's singular, but Chorley always 'as that effect on me.

Chorus— When he speaks to me, I wriggle, &c

Then said Chorley: "My pursuit there's no evyding.
Now I've caught you, I insist on a reploy.
Do you love me? Tell me truly, little myding!"
But how *is* a girl to answer when she's shoy?

Spoken— For even if the conversation happens to be about nothing particular, it's just the same to me.

Chorus— When I'm spoken to, I wriggle, &c

There we stood among the loilac and syringas,
More sweet than any Ess. Bouquet you boy;

[Arcadian for "buy."

And Chorley kept on squeezing of my fingers,
And I couldn't tell him not to, being shoy.

Spoken— For, as I told you before, —

Chorus— When I'm spoken to, I wriggle, &c

Soon my slender wyste he ventured on embrycing,
While I only heaved a gentle little soy;
Though a scream I would have liked to rise my vice in,
It's so difficult to scream when you are shoy!

Spoken— People have such different ways of listening to proposals. As for me, —

Chorus— When they talk of love, I wriggle, &c

So very soon to Church we shall be gowing,
While the bells ring out a merry peal of jy.
If obedience you do not hear me vowing,
It will only be because I am so shy.

[We have brought the rhyme off legitimately at last, it will be observed.

Spoken— Yes, and when I'm passing down the oil, on Chorley's arm, with everybody looking at me, —

Chorus— I am certain I shall wriggle,
And go off into a giggle,
And as red as any peony I'll blush.
Going through the marriage service
Will be sure to make me nervous,

[Note the freedom of the rhyme.

And to put me in a flutter and a flush!

v.— THE AMATORY EPISODIC

The history of a singer's latest love – whether fortunate or otherwise – will always command the interest and attention of a Music-hall audience. Our example, which is founded upon the very best precedents, derives an additional piquancy from the social position of the beloved object. Cultivated readers are requested not to shudder at the rhymes. *Mr. Punch's* Poet does them deliberately and in cold blood, being convinced that without these somewhat daring concords, no ditty would have the slightest chance of satisfying the great ear of the Music-hall public.

The title of the song is: —

MASHED BY A MARCHIONESS

The singer should come on correctly and tastefully attired in a suit of loud dittoes, a startling tie, and a white hat—the orthodox costume (on the Music-hall stage) of a middle-class swain suffering from love-sickness. The air should be of the conventional jog-trot and jingle order, chastened by a sentimental melancholy.

I've lately gone and lost my 'art – and where you'll never guess —
I'm regularly mashed upon a lovely Marchioness!
'Twas at a Fancy Fair we met, inside the Albert 'All;
So affable she smiled at me as I came near her stall!

Chorus— Don't tell me Belgravia is stiff in behaviour!
She'd an Uncle an Earl, and a Dook for her Pa —
Still there was no starchiness in that fair Marchioness,
As she stood at her stall in the Fancy Bazaar!

At titles and distinctions once I'd ignorantly scoff,
As if no bond could be betwixt the tradesman and the toff!
I held with those who'd do away with difference in ranks —
But that was all before I met the Marchioness of Manx!

***Chorus*— Don't tell me Belgravia, &c**

A home was being started by some kind aristo-cràts,
For orphan kittens, born of poor, but well-connected cats;
And of the swells who planned a *Fête* this object to assist,
The Marchioness of Manx's name stood foremost on the list.

***Chorus*— Don't tell me Belgravia, &c**

I never saw a smarter hand at serving in a shop,
For every likely customer she caught upon the 'op!

And from the form her ladyship displayed at that Bazaar,
(*With enthusiasm*) – You might have took your oath she'd been
brought up behind a bar!

Chorus– Don't tell me Belgravia, &c

In vain I tried to kid her that my purse had been forgot,
She spotted me in 'alf a jiff, and chaffed me precious hot!
A sov. for one regaliar she gammoned me to spend.
"You really can't refuse," she said, "I've bitten off the end!"

Chorus– Don't tell me Belgravia, &c

"Do buy my crewel-work," she urged, "it goes across a chair,
You'll find it come in useful, as I see you 'ile your 'air!"
So I 'anded over thirty bob, though not a coiny bloke.
I couldn't tell a Marchioness how nearly I was broke!

Spoken– Though I *did* take the liberty of saying: "Make it fifteen bob, my lady!" But she said, with such a fascinating look – I can see it yet! – "Oh, I'm sure *you're* not a 'aggling kind of a man," she says, "you haven't the face for it. And think of all them pore fatherless kittings," she says; "think what thirty bob means to *them*!" says she, glancing up so pitiful and tender under her long eyelashes at me. Ah, the Radicals may talk as they *like*, but —

Chorus– Don't tell me Belgravia, &c

A raffle was the next concern I put my rhino in:
The prize a talking parrot, which I didn't want to win.
Then her sister, Lady Tabby, shewed a painted milking stool,
And I bought it – though it's not a thing I sit on as a rule.

Spoken– Not but what it was a handsome article in its way, too, – had a snow-scene with a sunset done in oil on it. "It will look lovely in your chambers," says the Marchioness; "it was ever so much admired at Catterwall Castle!" It didn't look so bad in my three-pair back, I must say, though unfortunately the sunset came off on me the very first time I happened to set down on it. Still think of the condescension of painting such a thing at all!

Chorus– Don't tell me Belgravia, &c

The Marquis kept a-fidgeting and frowning at his wife,
For she talked to me as free as if she'd known me all my life!
I felt that I was in the swim, so wasn't over-awed,

But 'ung about and spent my cash as lavish as a lord!

Spoken– It was worth all the money, I can tell you, to be chatting there across the counter with a real live Marchioness for as long as ever my funds would 'old out. They'd have held out much longer, only the Marchioness made it a rule never to give change – she couldn't break it, she said, not even for *me*. I wish I could give you an idea of how she smiled as she made that remark; for the fact is, when an aristocrat *does* unbend – well, —

Chorus– Don't tell me Belgravia, &c

Next time I meet the Marchioness a-riding in the Row,
I'll ketch her eye and raise my 'at, and up to her I'll go,
(*With sentiment*) – And tell her next my 'art I keep the stump of that
cigar
She sold me on the 'appy day we 'ad at her Bazaar!

Spoken– And she'll be pleased to see me again, *I* know! She's not one of your stuck-up sort; don't you make no mistake about it, the aristocracy ain't 'alf as bloated as people imagine who don't *know* 'em. Whenever I hear parties running 'em down, I always say:

Chorus– Don't tell me Belgravia is stiff in behaviour, &c

vi.— THE CHIVALROUS

The singer (who should be a large man, in evening dress, with a crumpled shirt-front) will come on the stage with a bearing intended to convey at first sight that he is a devoted admirer of the fair sex. After removing his crush-hat in an easy manner, and winking airily at the orchestra, he will begin: —

WHY SHOULDN'T THE DARLINGS?

There's enthusiasm brimming in the breasts of all the women,
And they're calling for enfranchisement with clamour eloquent:
When some parties in a huff rage at the plea for Female Suffrage,
I invariably floor them with a simple argu-ment.

Chorus (to be rendered with a winning persuasiveness)

Why *shouldn't* the darlings have votes? de-ar things!
On politics each of 'em dotes, de-ar things!
(*Pathetically.*) Oh it *does* seem so hard
They should all be debarred,
'Cause they happen to wear petticoats, de-ar things!

Nature all the hens to crow meant, I could prove it in a moment,
Though they've selfishly been silenced by the cockadoodle-does.
But no man of sense afraid is of enfranchising the Ladies.
(*Magnanimously.*) Let 'em put their pretty fingers into any pie they
choose!

Spoken— For —

Chorus— Why *shouldn't* the darlings, &c

They would cease to care for dresses, if we made them elec-tresses,
No more time they'd spend on needlework, nor at pianos strum;
Every dainty little Dorcas would be sitting on a Caucus,
Busy wire-pulling to produce the New Millenni-um!

Spoken— Oh! —

Chorus— Why *shouldn't* the darlings, &c

In the House we'll see them sitting soon, it will be only fitting

They should have an opportunity their country's laws to frame.
And the Ladies' legislation will be sure to cause sensation,
For they'll do away with everything that seems to them a shame!

Spoken— Then —

Chorus— Why shouldn't the darlings, &c

They will promptly clap a stopper on whate'er they deem improper,
Put an end to vaccination, landed property, and pubs;
And they'll fine Tom, Dick, and Harry, if they don't look sharp and
marry,
And for Kindergartens confiscate those nasty horrid Clubs!

Spoken— Ah! —

Chorus— Why shouldn't the darlings, &c

They'll declare it's quite immoral to engage in foreign quarrel,
And that Britons never never will be warriors any more!
When our forces are abolished, and defences all demolished,
They will turn upon the Jingo tack, and want to go to war!

Spoken— So —

Chorus— Why shouldn't the darlings, &c

(With a grieved air.) Yet there's some who'd close such vistas to their
poor down-trodden sistars,
And persuade 'em, if they're offered votes, politely to refuse!
Say they do not care about 'em, and would rather be without 'em —
Oh, I haven't common patience with such narrer-minded views!

Spoken— No! —

Chorus— Why shouldn't the darlings, &c

And it's females – that's the puzzle! – who petition for the muzzle,
Which I call it poor and paltry, and I think you'll say so too.
They are not in any danger. Let 'em drop the dog-in-manger!
If they don't require the vote themselves, there's other Ladies do!

Spoken— And —

Chorus— Why shouldn't the darlings, &c

[Here the singer will gradually retreat backwards to the rear of the stage, open his crush-hat, and extend it in an attitude of triumph as the curtain descends.

vii.— THE FRANKLY CANAILLE

Any ditty which accurately reflects the habits and amusements of the people is a valuable human document – a fact that probably accounts for the welcome which songs in the following style invariably receive from Music-hall audiences generally. If —*Mr. Punch* presumes – they conceived such pictures of their manner of spending a holiday to be unjustly or incorrectly drawn in any way, they would protest strongly against being so grossly misrepresented. As they do nothing of the sort, no apology can be needed for the following effusion, which several ladies now adorning the Music-hall stage could be trusted to render with immense effect. The singer should be young and charming, and attired as simply as possible. Simplicity of attire imparts additional piquancy to the words: —

THE POOR OLD 'ORSE

We 'ad a little outing larst Sunday arternoon;
And sech a jolly lark it was, I shan't forget it soon!
We borrered an excursion van to take us down to Kew,
And – oh, we did enjoy ourselves! I don't mind telling *you*.

[This to the Chef d'Orchestre, who will assume a polite interest.

[Here a little spoken interlude is customary. Mr. P. does not venture to do more than indicate this by a synopsis, the details can be filled in according to the taste and fancy of the fair artiste: – "Yes, we did 'ave a time, I can assure yer." The party: "Me and Jimmy 'Opkins;" old "Pa Plapper." Asked because he lent the van. The meanness of his subsequent conduct. "Aunt Snapper;" her imposing appearance in her "cawfy-coloured front." Bill Blazer; his "girl," and his accordion. Mrs. Addick (of the fried-fish emporium round the corner); her gentility – "Never seen out of her mittens, and always the lady, no matter how much she may have taken." From this work round by an easy transition to –

The Chorus– For we 'ad to stop o' course,
Jest to bait the bloomin' 'orse,
So we'd pots of ale and porter
(Or a drop o' something shorter),
While he drunk his pail o' water,
He was sech a whale on water!
That more water than he oughter,
More water than he oughter,
'Ad the poor old 'orse!

Second Stanza

That 'orse he was a rum 'un – a queer old quadru-pèd,
At every public-'ouse he passed he'd cock his artful 'ed!
Sez I: "If he goes on like this, we shan't see Kew to-night!"

Jim 'Opkins winks his eye, and sez – "We'll git along all right!"

*Chorus– Though we 'ave to stop of course, – &c., &c.
[With slight textual modifications.*

Third Stanza

At Kinsington we 'alted, 'Ammersmith, and Turnham Green,
The 'orse 'ad sech a thust on him, its like was never seen!
With every 'arf a mile or so, that animal got blown:
And we was far too well brought-up to let 'im drink alone!

Chorus– As we 'ad to stop, o' course, &c.

Fourth Stanza

We stopped again at Chiswick, till at last we got to Kew,
But when we reached the Gardings – well, there was a fine to-do!
The Keeper, in his gold-laced tile, was shutting-to the gate,
Sez he: "There's no admittance now – you're just arrived too late!"

[Synopsis of spoken Interlude: Spirited passage-at-arms between Mr. Wm. Blazer and the Keeper; singular action of Pa Plapper; "I want to see yer Pagoder – bring out yer old Pagoder as you're so proud on!" Mrs. Addick's disappointment at not being able to see the "Intemperate Plants," and the "Pitcher Shrub," once more. Her subsidence in tears, on the floor of the van. Keeper concludes the dialogue by inquiring why the party did not arrive sooner. An' we sez, "Well, it was like this, ole cock robin – d'yer see?"

Chorus– We've 'ad to stop, o' course, &c.

Fifth Stanza

"Don't fret," I sez, "about it, for they ain't got much to see
Inside their precious Gardings – so let's go and 'ave some tea!
A cup I seem to fancy now – I feel that faint and limp —
With a slice of bread-and-butter, and some creases, and a s'rimp!"

[Description of the tea: – "And the s'rimps – well, I don't want to say anything against the s'rimps – but it did strike me they were feelin' the 'eat a little – s'rimps are liable to it, and you can't prevent 'em." After tea. The only tune Mr. Blazer could play on his accordion. Tragic end of that instrument. How the party had a "little more lush." Scandalous behaviour of "Bill Blazer's girl." The company consume what will be elegantly referred to as "a bit o' booze." Aunt Snapper "gets the 'ump." The outrage to her front. The proposal to start – whereupon, "Mrs. Addick, who was a'-settin' on the geraniums in the winder, smilin' at her boots, which she'd just took off because she said they stopped her breathing," protested that there was no hurry, considering that—

Chorus, as before— We've got to stop, o' course, &c.

Sixth Stanza

But when the van was ordered, we found – what *do* yer think?

[To the Chef d'Orchestre, who will affect complete ignorance.

That miserable 'orse 'ad been an' took too much to drink!
He kep' a reeling round us, like a circus worked by steam,
And, 'stead o' keeping singular, he'd turned into a team!

[Disgust of the party: Pa Plapper proposes to go back to the inn for more refreshment, urging

Chorus— We must wait awhile o' course,
Till they've sobered down the 'orse.
Just another pot o' porter
Or a drop o' something shorter,
While our good landlady's daughter
Takes him out some soda-warter.
For he's 'ad more than he oughter,
He's 'ad more than he oughter,
'As the poor old 'orse!

Seventh Stanza

So, when they brought the 'orse round, we started on our way:
'Twas 'orful 'ow the animal from side to side would sway!
Young 'Opkins took the reins, but soon in slumber he was sunk —
(*Indignantly.*) When a interfering Copper ran us in for being drunk!

[Attitude of various members of the party. Unwarrantable proceeding on the part of the Constable. Remonstrance by Pa Plapper and the company generally in—

Chorus— Why, can't yer shee? o' coursh
Tishn't us – it ish the 'orsh!
He's a whale at swilling water,
We've 'ad only ale and porter,
Or a drop o' something shorter.
You le'mme go, you shnorter!
Don' you tush me till you oughter!
Jus' look 'ere – to cut it shorter —
Take the poor old 'orsh!

[General adjournment to the Police-station. Interview with the Magistrate on the following morning. Mr. Hopkins called upon to state his defence, replies in—

Chorus— Why, your wushup sees, o' course,
It was all the bloomin' 'orse!
He *would* 'ave a pail o' water
Every 'arf a mile (or quarter),
Which is what he didn't oughter!
He shall stick to ale or porter,
With a drop o' something shorter,
I'm my family's supporter —
Fine the poor old 'orse!

[The Magistrate's view of the case. Concluding remark that, notwithstanding the success of the excursion, as a whole — it will be some time before the singer consents to go upon any excursion with a horse of such bibulous tendencies as those of the quadruped they drove to Kew.

viii.— THE DRAMATIC SCENA

This is always a popular form of entertainment, demanding, as it does, even more dramatic than vocal ability on the part of the artist. A song of this kind is nothing if not severely moral, and frequently depicts the downward career of an incipient drunkard with all the lurid logic of a Temperance Tract. *Mr. Punch*, however, is inclined to think that the lesson would be even more appreciated and taken to heart by the audience, if a slightly different line were adopted such as he has endeavoured to indicate in the following example: —

THE DANGER OF MIXED DRINKS

The singer should have a great command of facial expression, which he will find greatly facilitated by employing (as indeed is the usual custom) coloured limelight at the wings.

First Verse (to be sung under pure white light)

He (*these awful examples are usually, and quite properly, anonymous*) was once as nice a fellow as you could desire to meet,
Partial to a pint of porter, always took his spirits neat;
Long ago a careful mother's cautions trained her son to shrink
From the meretricious sparkle of an aërated drink.

Refrain (showing the virtuous youth resisting temptation. N.B. The refrain is intended to be spoken through music. Not sung.)

Here's a pub that's handy.
Liquor up with you?
Thimbleful of brandy?
Don't mind if I do.
Soda-water? No, Sir.
Never touch the stuff.
Promised mother — so, Sir.

(With an upward glance.)

'Tisn't good enough!

Second Verse. (Primrose light for this.)

Ah, how little we suspected, as we saw him in his bloom,
What a demon dogged his footsteps, luring to an awful doom!
Vain his mother's fond monitions; soon a friend, with fiendish laugh,
Tempts him to a quiet tea-garden, plies him there with shandy-gaff!

Refrain (illustrating the first false step)

Why, it's just the mixture
I so long have sought!
Here I'll be a fixture
Till I've drunk the quart!
Just the stuff to suit yer.
Waiter, do you hear?
Make it, for the future,
Three parts ginger-beer!

Third Verse (requiring violet-tinted slide)

By-and-by, the ale discarding, ginger-beer he craves alone.
Undiluted he procures it, buys it bottled up in stone.

*(The earthenware bottles are said by connoisseurs to contain liquor
of superior strength and quality.)*

From his lips the foam he brushes – crimson overspreads his brow.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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