

**WILLIAM
SCHWENCK
GILBERT**

MORE BAB BALLADS

William Schwenck Gilbert

More Bab Ballads

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W. S. Gilbert

More Bab Ballads

Ballad: Mister William

Oh, listen to the tale of MISTER WILLIAM, if you please,
Whom naughty, naughty judges sent away beyond the seas.
He forged a party's will, which caused anxiety and strife,
Resulting in his getting penal servitude for life.

He was a kindly goodly man, and naturally prone,
Instead of taking others' gold, to give away his own.
But he had heard of Vice, and longed for only once to strike—
To plan *one* little wickedness—to see what it was like.

He argued with himself, and said, "A spotless man am I;
I can't be more respectable, however hard I try!
For six and thirty years I've always been as good as gold,
And now for half an hour I'll plan infamy untold!

"A baby who is wicked at the early age of one,
And then reforms—and dies at thirty-six a spotless son,
Is never, never saddled with his babyhood's defect,
But earns from worthy men consideration and respect.

"So one who never revelled in discreditable tricks
Until he reached the comfortable age of thirty-six,
May then for half an hour perpetrate a deed of shame,
Without incurring permanent disgrace, or even blame.

"That babies don't commit such crimes as forgery is true,
But little sins develop, if you leave 'em to accrue;
And he who shuns all vices as successive seasons roll,
Should reap at length the benefit of so much self-control.

"The common sin of babyhood—objecting to be drest—
If you leave it to accumulate at compound interest,
For anything you know, may represent, if you're alive,
A burglary or murder at the age of thirty-five.

"Still, I wouldn't take advantage of this fact, but be content
With some pardonable folly—it's a mere experiment.
The greater the temptation to go wrong, the less the sin;
So with something that's particularly tempting I'll begin.

"I would not steal a penny, for my income's very fair—

I do not want a penny—I have pennies and to spare—
And if I stole a penny from a money-bag or till,
The sin would be enormous—the temptation being *nil*.

“But if I broke asunder all such pettifogging bounds,
And forged a party’s Will for (say) Five Hundred Thousand Pounds,
With such an irresistible temptation to a haul,
Of course the sin must be infinitesimally small.

“There’s WILSON who is dying—he has wealth from Stock and rent—
If I divert his riches from their natural descent,
I’m placed in a position to indulge each little whim.”
So he diverted them—and they, in turn, diverted him.

Unfortunately, though, by some unpardonable flaw,
Temptation isn’t recognized by Britain’s Common Law;
Men found him out by some peculiarity of touch,
And WILLIAM got a “lifer,” which annoyed him very much.

For, ah! he never reconciled himself to life in gaol,
He fretted and he pined, and grew dispirited and pale;
He was numbered like a cabman, too, which told upon him so
That his spirits, once so buoyant, grew uncomfortably low.

And sympathetic gaolers would remark, “It’s very true,
He ain’t been brought up common, like the likes of me and you.”
So they took him into hospital, and gave him mutton chops,
And chocolate, and arrowroot, and buns, and malt and hops.

Kind Clergymen, besides, grew interested in his fate,
Affected by the details of his pitiable state.
They waited on the Secretary, somewhere in Whitehall,
Who said he would receive them any day they liked to call.

“Consider, sir, the hardship of this interesting case:
A prison life brings with it something very like disgrace;
It’s telling on young WILLIAM, who’s reduced to skin and bone—
Remember he’s a gentleman, with money of his own.

“He had an ample income, and of course he stands in need
Of sherry with his dinner, and his customary weed;
No delicacies now can pass his gentlemanly lips—
He misses his sea-bathing and his continental trips.

“He says the other prisoners are commonplace and rude;
He says he cannot relish uncongenial prison food.
When quite a boy they taught him to distinguish Good from Bad,
And other educational advantages he’s had.

“A burglar or garotter, or, indeed, a common thief
Is very glad to batten on potatoes and on beef,
Or anything, in short, that prison kitchens can afford,—
A cut above the diet in a common workhouse ward.

“But beef and mutton-broth don’t seem to suit our WILLIAM’S whim,
A boon to other prisoners—a punishment to him.
It never was intended that the discipline of gaol
Should dash a convict’s spirits, sir, or make him thin or pale.”

“Good Gracious Me!” that sympathetic Secretary cried,
“Suppose in prison fetters MISTER WILLIAM should have died!
Dear me, of course! Imprisonment for *Life* his sentence saith:
I’m very glad you mentioned it—it might have been For Death!

“Release him with a ticket—he’ll be better then, no doubt,
And tell him I apologize.” So MISTER WILLIAM’S out.
I hope he will be careful in his manuscripts, I’m sure,
And not begin experimentalizing any more.

Ballad: The Bumboat Woman's Story

I'm old, my dears, and shrivelled with age, and work, and grief,
My eyes are gone, and my teeth have been drawn by Time, the Thief!
For terrible sights I've seen, and dangers great I've run—
I'm nearly seventy now, and my work is almost done!

Ah! I've been young in my time, and I've played the deuce with men!
I'm speaking of ten years past—I was barely sixty then:
My cheeks were mellow and soft, and my eyes were large and sweet,
POLL PINEAPPLE'S eyes were the standing toast of the Royal Fleet!

A bumboat woman was I, and I faithfully served the ships
With apples and cakes, and fowls, and beer, and halfpenny dips,
And beef for the generous mess, where the officers dine at nights,
And fine fresh peppermint drops for the rollicking midshipmites.

Of all the kind commanders who anchored in Portsmouth Bay,
By far the sweetest of all was kind LIEUTENANT BELAYE.
LIEUTENANT BELAYE commanded the gunboat *Hot Cross Bun*,
She was seven and thirty feet in length, and she carried a gun.

With a laudable view of enhancing his country's naval pride,
When people inquired her size, LIEUTENANT BELAYE replied,
“Oh, my ship, my ship is the first of the Hundred and Seventy-ones!”
Which meant her tonnage, but people imagined it meant her guns.

Whenever I went on board he would beckon me down below,
“Come down, Little Buttercup, come” (for he loved to call me so),
And he'd tell of the fights at sea in which he'd taken a part,
And so LIEUTENANT BELAYE won poor POLL PINEAPPLE'S
heart!

But at length his orders came, and he said one day, said he,
“I'm ordered to sail with the *Hot Cross Bun* to the German Sea.”
And the Portsmouth maidens wept when they learnt the evil day,
For every Portsmouth maid loved good LIEUTENANT BELAYE.

And I went to a back back street, with plenty of cheap cheap shops,
And I bought an oilskin hat and a second-hand suit of slops,
And I went to LIEUTENANT BELAYE (and he never suspected *me!*)
And I entered myself as a chap as wanted to go to sea.

We sailed that afternoon at the mystic hour of one,—
Remarkably nice young men were the crew of the *Hot Cross Bun*,
I'm sorry to say that I've heard that sailors sometimes swear,
But I never yet heard a *Bun* say anything wrong, I declare.

When Jack Tars meet, they meet with a “Messmate, ho! What cheer?”
But here, on the *Hot Cross Bun*, it was “How do you do, my dear?”
When Jack Tars growl, I believe they growl with a big big D-
But the strongest oath of the *Hot Cross Buns* was a mild “Dear me!”

Yet, though they were all well-bred, you could scarcely call them slick:
Whenever a sea was on, they were all extremely sick;
And whenever the weather was calm, and the wind was light and fair,
They spent more time than a sailor should on his back back hair.

They certainly shivered and shook when ordered aloft to run,
And they screamed when LIEUTENANT BELAYE discharged his
only gun.
And as he was proud of his gun—such pride is hardly wrong—
The Lieutenant was blazing away at intervals all day long.

They all agreed very well, though at times you heard it said
That BILL had a way of his own of making his lips look red—
That JOE looked quite his age—or somebody might declare
That BARNACLE’S long pig-tail was never his own own hair.

BELAYE would admit that his men were of no great use to him,
“But, then,” he would say, “there is little to do on a gunboat trim
I can hand, and reef, and steer, and fire my big gun too—
And it *is* such a treat to sail with a gentle well-bred crew.”

I saw him every day. How the happy moments sped!
Reef topsails! Make all taut! There’s dirty weather ahead!
(I do not mean that tempests threatened the *Hot Cross Bun*:
In *that* case, I don’t know whatever we *should* have done!)

After a fortnight’s cruise, we put into port one day,
And off on leave for a week went kind LIEUTENANT BELAYE,
And after a long long week had passed (and it seemed like a life),
LIEUTENANT BELAYE returned to his ship with a fair young wife!

He up, and he says, says he, “O crew of the *Hot Cross Bun*,
Here is the wife of my heart, for the Church has made us one!”
And as he uttered the word, the crew went out of their wits,
And all fell down in so many separate fainting-fits.

And then their hair came down, or off, as the case might be,
And lo! the rest of the crew were simple girls, like me,
Who all had fled from their homes in a sailor’s blue array,
To follow the shifting fate of kind LIEUTENANT BELAYE.

* * * * *

It's strange to think that *I* should ever have loved young men,
But I'm speaking of ten years past—I was barely sixty then,
And now my cheeks are furrowed with grief and age, I trow!
And poor POLL PINEAPPLE'S eyes have lost their lustre now!

Ballad: The Two Ogres

Good children, list, if you're inclined,
And wicked children too—
This pretty ballad is designed
Especially for you.

Two ogres dwelt in Wickham Wold—
Each *traits* distinctive had:
The younger was as good as gold,
The elder was as bad.

A wicked, disobedient son
Was JAMES M'ALPINE, and
A contrast to the elder one,
Good APPLEBODY BLAND.

M'ALPINE—brutes like him are few—
In greediness delights,
A melancholy victim to
Unchastened appetites.

Good, well-bred children every day
He ravenously ate,—
All boys were fish who found their way
Into M'ALPINE'S net:

Boys whose good breeding is innate,
Whose sums are always right;
And boys who don't expostulate
When sent to bed at night;

And kindly boys who never search
The nests of birds of song;
And serious boys for whom, in church,
No sermon is too long.

Contrast with JAMES'S greedy haste
And comprehensive hand,
The nice discriminating taste
Of APPLEBODY BLAND.

BLAND only eats bad boys, who swear—
Who *can* behave, but *don't*—
Disgraceful lads who say "don't care,"
And "shan't," and "can't," and "won't."

Who wet their shoes and learn to box,
And say what isn't true,
Who bite their nails and jam their frocks,
And make long noses too;

Who kick a nurse's aged shin,
And sit in sulky mopes;
And boys who twirl poor kittens in
Distracting zoëtropes.

But JAMES, when he was quite a youth,
Had often been to school,
And though so bad, to tell the truth,
He wasn't quite a fool.

At logic few with him could vie;
To his peculiar sect
He could propose a fallacy
With singular effect.

So, when his Mentors said, "Expound—
Why eat good children—why?"
Upon his Mentors he would round
With this absurd reply:

"I have been taught to love the good—
The pure—the unalloyed—
And wicked boys, I've understood,
I always should avoid.

"Why do I eat good children—why?
Because I love them so!"
(But this was empty sophistry,
As your Papa can show.)

Now, though the learning of his friends
Was truly not immense,
They had a way of fitting ends
By rule of common sense.

"Away, away!" his Mentors cried,
"Thou uncongenial pest!
A quirk's a thing we can't abide,
A quibble we detest!

"A fallacy in your reply
Our intellect descries,
Although we don't pretend to spy
Exactly where it lies.

“In misery and penal woes
Must end a glutton’s joys;
And learn how ogres punish those
Who dare to eat good boys.

“Secured by fetter, cramp, and chain,
And gagged securely—so—
You shall be placed in Drury Lane,
Where only good lads go.

“Surrounded there by virtuous boys,
You’ll suffer torture wus
Than that which constantly annoys
Disgraceful TANTALUS.

(“If you would learn the woes that vex
Poor TANTALUS, down there,
Pray borrow of Papa an ex-
Purgated LEMPRIERE.)

“But as for BLAND who, as it seems,
Eats only naughty boys,
We’ve planned a recompense that teems
With gastronomic joys.

“Where wicked youths in crowds are stowed
He shall unquestioned rule,
And have the run of Hackney Road
Reformatory School!”

Ballad: Little Oliver

EARL JOYCE he was a kind old party
Whom nothing ever could put out,
Though eighty-two, he still was hearty,
Excepting as regarded gout.

He had one unexampled daughter,
The LADY MINNIE-HAHA JOYCE,
Fair MINNIE-HAHA, “Laughing Water,”
So called from her melodious voice.

By Nature planned for lover-capture,
Her beauty every heart assailed;
The good old nobleman with rapture
Observed how widely she prevailed

Aloof from all the lordly flockings
Of titled swells who worshipped her,
There stood, in pumps and cotton stockings,
One humble lover—OLIVER.

He was no peer by Fortune petted,
His name recalled no bygone age;
He was no lordling coronetted—
Alas! he was a simple page!

With vain appeals he never bored her,
But stood in silent sorrow by—
He knew how fondly he adored her,
And knew, alas! how hopelessly!

Well grounded by a village tutor
In languages alive and past,
He’d say unto himself, “Knee-suitor,
Oh, do not go beyond your last!”

But though his name could boast no handle,
He could not every hope resign;
As moths will hover round a candle,
So hovered he about her shrine.

The brilliant candle dazed the moth well:
One day she sang to her Papa
The air that MARIE sings with BOTHWELL
In NEIDERMEYER’S opera.

(Therein a stable boy, it's stated,
Devoutly loved a noble dame,
Who ardently reciprocated
His rather injudicious flame.)

And then, before the piano closing
(He listened coyly at the door),
She sang a song of her composing—
I give one verse from half a score:

BALLAD

Why, pretty page, art ever sighing?
Is sorrow in thy heartlet lying?
Come, set a-ringing
Thy laugh entrancing,
And ever singing
And ever dancing.
Ever singing, Tra! la! la!
Ever dancing, Tra! la! la!
Ever singing, ever dancing,
Ever singing, Tra! la! la!

He skipped for joy like little muttons,
He danced like Esmeralda's kid.
(She did not mean a boy in buttons,
Although he fancied that she did.)

Poor lad! convinced he thus would win her,
He wore out many pairs of soles;
He danced when taking down the dinner—
He danced when bringing up the coals.

He danced and sang (however laden)
With his incessant "Tra! la! la!"
Which much surprised the noble maiden,
And puzzled even her Papa.

He nourished now his flame and fanned it,
He even danced at work below.
The upper servants wouldn't stand it,
And BOWLES the butler told him so.

At length on impulse acting blindly,
His love he laid completely bare;
The gentle Earl received him kindly
And told the lad to take a chair.

"Oh, sir," the suitor uttered sadly,

“Don’t give your indignation vent;
I fear you think I’m acting madly,
Perhaps you think me insolent?”

The kindly Earl repelled the notion;
His noble bosom heaved a sigh,
His fingers trembled with emotion,
A tear stood in his mild blue eye:

For, oh! the scene recalled too plainly
The half-forgotten time when he,
A boy of nine, had worshipped vainly
A governess of forty-three!

“My boy,” he said, in tone consoling,
“Give up this idle fancy—do—
The song you heard my daughter trolling
Did not, indeed, refer to you.

“I feel for you, poor boy, acutely;
I would not wish to give you pain;
Your pangs I estimate minutely,—
I, too, have loved, and loved in vain.

“But still your humble rank and station
For MINNIE surely are not meet”—
He said much more in conversation
Which it were needless to repeat.

Now I’m prepared to bet a guinea,
Were this a mere dramatic case,
The page would have eloped with MINNIE,
But, no—he only left his place.

The simple Truth is my detective,
With me Sensation can’t abide;
The Likely beats the mere Effective,
And Nature is my only guide.

Ballad: Pasha Bailey Ben

A proud Pasha was BAILEY BEN,
His wives were three, his tails were ten;
His form was dignified, but stout,
Men called him “Little Roundabout.”

His Importance

Pale Pilgrims came from o’er the sea
To wait on PASHA BAILEY B.,
All bearing presents in a crowd,
For B. was poor as well as proud.

His Presents

They brought him onions strung on ropes,
And cold boiled beef, and telescopes,
And balls of string, and shrimps, and guns,
And chops, and tacks, and hats, and buns.

More of them

They brought him white kid gloves, and pails,
And candlesticks, and potted quails,
And capstan-bars, and scales and weights,
And ornaments for empty grates.

Why I mention these

My tale is not of these—oh no!
I only mention them to show
The divers gifts that divers men
Brought o’er the sea to BAILEY BEN.

His Confidant

A confidant had BAILEY B.,
A gay Mongolian dog was he;
I am not good at Turkish names,
And so I call him SIMPLE JAMES.

His Confidant’s Countenance

A dreadful legend you might trace
In SIMPLE JAMES'S honest face,
For there you read, in Nature's print,
"A Scoundrel of the Deepest Tint."

His Character

A deed of blood, or fire, or flames,
Was meat and drink to SIMPLE JAMES:
To hide his guilt he did not plan,
But owned himself a bad young man.

The Author to his Reader

And why on earth good BAILEY BEN
(The wisest, noblest, best of men)
Made SIMPLE JAMES his right-hand man
Is quite beyond my mental span.

The same, continued

But there—enough of gruesome deeds!
My heart, in thinking of them, bleeds;
And so let SIMPLE JAMES take wing,—
'Tis not of him I'm going to sing.

The Pasha's Clerk

Good PASHA BAILEY kept a clerk
(For BAILEY only made his mark),
His name was MATTHEW WYCOMBE COO,
A man of nearly forty-two.

His Accomplishments

No person that I ever knew
Could "yödel" half as well as COO,
And Highlanders exclaimed, "Eh, weel!"
When COO began to dance a reel.

His Kindness to the Pasha's Wives

He used to dance and sing and play
In such an unaffected way,

He cheered the unexciting lives
Of PASHA BAILEY'S lovely wives.

The Author to his Reader

But why should I encumber you
With histories of MATTHEW COO?
Let MATTHEW COO at once take wing,—
'Tis not of COO I'm going to sing.

The Author's Muse

Let me recall my wandering Muse;
She *shall* be steady if I choose—
She roves, instead of helping me
To tell the deeds of BAILEY B.

The Pasha's Visitor

One morning knocked, at half-past eight,
A tall Red Indian at his gate.
In Turkey, as you're p'raps aware,
Red Indians are extremely rare.

The Visitor's Outfit

Mocassins decked his graceful legs,
His eyes were black, and round as eggs,
And on his neck, instead of beads,
Hung several Catawampous seeds.

What the Visitor said

“Ho, ho!” he said, “thou pale-faced one,
Poor offspring of an Eastern sun,
You've *never* seen the Red Man skip
Upon the banks of Mississip!”

The Author's Moderation

To say that BAILEY oped his eyes
Would feebly paint his great surprise—
To say it almost made him die
Would be to paint it much too high.

The Author to his Reader

But why should I ransack my head
To tell you all that Indian said;
We'll let the Indian man take wing,—
'Tis not of him I'm going to sing.

The Reader to the Author

Come, come, I say, that's quite enough
Of this absurd disjointed stuff;
Now let's get on to that affair
About LIEUTENANT-COLONEL FLARE.

Ballad: Lieutenant-Colonel Flare

The earth has armies plenty,
And semi-warlike bands,
I dare say there are twenty
In European lands;
But, oh! in no direction
You'd find one to compare
In brotherly affection
With that of COLONEL FLARE.

His soldiers might be rated
As military Pearls.
As unsophisticated
As pretty little girls!
They never smoked or ratted,
Or talked of Sues or Polls;
The Sergeant-Major tatted,
The others nursed their dolls.

He spent his days in teaching
These truly solemn facts;
There's little use in preaching,
Or circulating tracts.
(The vainest plan invented
For stifling other creeds,
Unless it's supplemented
With charitable *deeds*.)

He taught his soldiers kindly
To give at Hunger's call:
"Oh, better far give blindly,
Than never give at all!
Though sympathy be kindled
By Imposition's game,
Oh, better far be swindled
Than smother up its flame!"

His means were far from ample
For pleasure or for dress,
Yet note this bright example
Of single-heartedness:
Though ranking as a Colonel,
His pay was but a groat,
While their reward diurnal
Was—each a five-pound note.

Moreover,—this evinces
His kindness, you'll allow,—
He fed them all like princes,
And lived himself on cow.
He set them all regaling
On curious wines, and dear,
While he would sit pale-ale-ing,
Or quaffing ginger-beer.

Then at his instigation
(A pretty fancy this)
Their daily pay and ration
He'd take in change for his;
They brought it to him weekly,
And he without a groan,
Would take it from them meekly
And give them all his own!

Though not exactly knighted
As knights, of course, should be,
Yet no one so delighted
In harmless chivalry.
If peasant girl or ladye
Beneath misfortunes sank,
Whate'er distinctions made he,
They were not those of rank.

No maiden young and comely
Who wanted good advice
(However poor or homely)
Need ask him for it twice.
He'd wipe away the blindness
That comes of teary dew;
His sympathetic kindness
No sort of limit knew.

He always hated dealing
With men who schemed or planned;
A person harsh—unfeeling—
The Colonel could not stand.
He hated cold, suspecting,
Official men in blue,
Who pass their lives detecting
The crimes that others do.

For men who'd shoot a sparrow,
Or immolate a worm
Beneath a farmer's harrow,
He could not find a term.

Humanely, ay, and knightly
He dealt with such an one;
He took and tied him tightly,
And blew him from a gun.

The earth has armies plenty,
And semi-warlike bands,
I'm certain there are twenty
In European lands;
But, oh! in no direction
You'd find one to compare
In brotherly affection
With that of COLONEL FLARE.

Ballad: Lost Mr. Blake

MR. BLAKE was a regular out-and-out hardened sinner,
Who was quite out of the pale of Christianity, so to speak,
He was in the habit of smoking a long pipe and drinking a glass of grog
on a Sunday after dinner,
And seldom thought of going to church more than twice or—if Good
Friday or Christmas Day happened to come in it—three times a week.

He was quite indifferent as to the particular kinds of dresses
That the clergyman wore at church where he used to go to pray,
And whatever he did in the way of relieving a chap's distresses,
He always did in a nasty, sneaking, underhanded, hole-and-corner sort
of way.

I have known him indulge in profane, ungentlemanly emphatics,
When the Protestant Church has been divided on the subject of the
proper width of a chasuble's hem;
I have even known him to sneer at albs—and as for dalmatics,
Words can't convey an idea of the contempt he expressed for *them*.

He didn't believe in persons who, not being well off themselves, are
obliged to confine their charitable exertions to collecting money from
wealthier people,
And looked upon individuals of the former class as ecclesiastical
hawks;
He used to say that he would no more think of interfering with his
priest's robes than with his church or his steeple,
And that he did not consider his soul imperilled because somebody
over whom he had no influence whatever, chose to dress himself up
like an exaggerated GUY FAWKES.

This shocking old vagabond was so unutterably shameless
That he actually went a-courting a very respectable and pious middle-
aged sister, by the name of BIGGS.
She was a rather attractive widow, whose life as such had always been
particularly blameless;
Her first husband had left her a secure but moderate competence,
owing to some fortunate speculations in the matter of figs.

She was an excellent person in every way—and won the respect even
of MRS. GRUNDY,
She was a good housewife, too, and wouldn't have wasted a penny if
she had owned the Koh-i-noor.
She was just as strict as he was lax in her observance of Sunday,
And being a good economist, and charitable besides, she took all the
bones and cold potatoes and broken pie-crusts and candle-ends (when

she had quite done with them), and made them into an excellent soup for the deserving poor.

I am sorry to say that she rather took to BLAKE—that outcast of society,

And when respectable brothers who were fond of her began to look dubious and to cough,

She would say, “Oh, my friends, it’s because I hope to bring this poor benighted soul back to virtue and propriety,

And besides, the poor benighted soul, with all his faults, was uncommonly well off.

And when MR. BLAKE’S dissipated friends called his attention to the frown or the pout of her,

Whenever he did anything which appeared to her to savour of an unmentionable place,

He would say that “she would be a very decent old girl when all that nonsense was knocked out of her,”

And his method of knocking it out of her is one that covered him with disgrace.

She was fond of going to church services four times every Sunday, and, four or five times in the week, and never seemed to pall of them,

So he hunted out all the churches within a convenient distance that had services at different hours, so to speak;

And when he had married her he positively insisted upon their going to all of them,

So they contrived to do about twelve churches every Sunday, and, if they had luck, from twenty-two to twenty-three in the course of the week.

She was fond of dropping his sovereigns ostentatiously into the plate, and she liked to see them stand out rather conspicuously against the commonplace half-crowns and shillings,

So he took her to all the charity sermons, and if by any extraordinary chance there wasn’t a charity sermon anywhere, he would drop a couple of sovereigns (one for him and one for her) into the poor-box at the door;

And as he always deducted the sums thus given in charity from the housekeeping money, and the money he allowed her for her bonnets and frillings,

She soon began to find that even charity, if you allow it to interfere with your personal luxuries, becomes an intolerable bore.

On Sundays she was always melancholy and anything but good society, For that day in her household was a day of sighings and sobbings and wringing of hands and shaking of heads:

She wouldn’t hear of a button being sewn on a glove, because it was a work neither of necessity nor of piety,

And strictly prohibited her servants from amusing themselves, or indeed doing anything at all except dusting the drawing-rooms, cleaning the boots and shoes, cooking the parlour dinner, waiting generally on the family, and making the beds.

But BLAKE even went further than that, and said that people should do their own works of necessity, and not delegate them to persons in a menial situation,

So he wouldn't allow his servants to do so much as even answer a bell. Here he is making his wife carry up the water for her bath to the second floor, much against her inclination,—

And why in the world the gentleman who illustrates these ballads has put him in a cocked hat is more than I can tell.

After about three months of this sort of thing, taking the smooth with the rough of it,

(Blacking her own boots and peeling her own potatoes was not her notion of connubial bliss),

MRS. BLAKE began to find that she had pretty nearly had enough of it, And came, in course of time, to think that BLAKE'S own original line of conduct wasn't so much amiss.

And now that wicked person—that detestable sinner (“BELIAL BLAKE” his friends and well-wishers call him for his atrocities),

And his poor deluded victim, whom all her Christian brothers dislike and pity so,

Go to the parish church only on Sunday morning and afternoon and occasionally on a week-day, and spend their evenings in connubial fondlings and affectionate reciprocities,

And I should like to know where in the world (or rather, out of it) they expect to go!

Ballad: The Baby's Vengeance

Weary at heart and extremely ill
Was PALEY VOLLAIRE of Bromptonville,
In a dirty lodging, with fever down,
Close to the Polygon, Somers Town.

PALEY VOLLAIRE was an only son
(For why? His mother had had but one),
And PALEY inherited gold and grounds
Worth several hundred thousand pounds.

But he, like many a rich young man,
Through this magnificent fortune ran,
And nothing was left for his daily needs
But duplicate copies of mortgage-deeds.

Shabby and sorry and sorely sick,
He slept, and dreamt that the clock's "tick, tick,"
Was one of the Fates, with a long sharp knife,
Snicking off bits of his shortened life.

He woke and counted the pips on the walls,
The outdoor passengers' loud footfalls,
And reckoned all over, and reckoned again,
The little white tufts on his counterpane.

A medical man to his bedside came.
(I can't remember that doctor's name),
And said, "You'll die in a very short while
If you don't set sail for Madeira's isle."

"Go to Madeira? goodness me!
I haven't the money to pay your fee!"
"Then, PALEY VOLLAIRE," said the leech, "good bye;
I'll come no more, for you're sure to die."

He sighed and he groaned and smote his breast;
"Oh, send," said he, "for FREDERICK WEST,
Ere senses fade or my eyes grow dim:
I've a terrible tale to whisper him!"

Poor was FREDERICK'S lot in life,—
A dustman he with a fair young wife,
A worthy man with a hard-earned store,
A hundred and seventy pounds—or more.

FREDERICK came, and he said, “Maybe
You’ll say what you happened to want with me?”
“Wronged boy,” said PALEY VOLLAIRE, “I will,
But don’t you fidget yourself—sit still.”

THE TERRIBLE TALE.

“Tis now some thirty-seven years ago
Since first began the plot that I’m revealing,
A fine young woman, whom you ought to know,
Lived with her husband down in Drum Lane, Ealing.
Herself by means of mangling reimbursing,
And now and then (at intervals) wet-nursing.

“Two little babes dwelt in their humble cot:
One was her own—the other only lent to her:
Her own she slighted. Tempted by a lot
Of gold and silver regularly sent to her,
She ministered unto the little other
In the capacity of foster-mother.

“*I was her own.* Oh! how I lay and sobbed
In my poor cradle—deeply, deeply cursing
The rich man’s pampered bantling, who had robbed
My only birthright—an attentive nursing!
Sometimes in hatred of my foster-brother,
I gnashed my gums—which terrified my mother.

“One day—it was quite early in the week—
I in *MY cradle having placed the bantling*—
Crept into his! He had not learnt to speak,
But I could see his face with anger mantling.
It was imprudent—well, disgraceful maybe,
For, oh! I was a bad, blackhearted baby!

“So great a luxury was food, I think
No wickedness but I was game to try for it.
Now if I wanted anything to drink
At any time, I only had to cry for it!
Once, if I dared to weep, the bottle lacking,
My blubbering involved a serious smacking!

“We grew up in the usual way—my friend,
My foster-brother, daily growing thinner,
While gradually I began to mend,
And thrived amazingly on double dinner.
And every one, besides my foster-mother,
Believed that either of us was the other.

“I came into *his* wealth—I bore *his* name,
I bear it still—*his* property I squandered—
I mortgaged everything—and now (oh, shame!)
Into a Somers Town shake-down I’ve wandered!
I am no PALEY—no, VOLLAIRE—it’s true, my boy!
The only rightful PALEY V. is *you*, my boy!

“And all I have is yours—and yours is mine.
I still may place you in your true position:
Give me the pounds you’ve saved, and I’ll resign
My noble name, my rank, and my condition.
So far my wickedness in falsely owning
Your vasty wealth, I am at last atoning!”

* * * * *

FREDERICK he was a simple soul,
He pulled from his pocket a bulky roll,
And gave to PALEY his hard-earned store,
A hundred and seventy pounds or more.

PALEY VOLLAIRE, with many a groan,
Gave FREDERICK all that he called his own,—
Two shirts and a sock, and a vest of jean,
A Wellington boot and a bamboo cane.

And FRED (entitled to all things there)
He took the fever from MR. VOLLAIRE,
Which killed poor FREDERICK WEST. Meanwhile
VOLLAIRE sailed off to Madeira’s isle.

Ballad: The Captain And The Mermaids

I sing a legend of the sea,
So hard-a-port upon your lee!
A ship on starboard tack!
She's bound upon a private cruise—
(This is the kind of spice I use
To give a salt-sea smack).

Behold, on every afternoon
(Save in a gale or strong Monsoon)
Great CAPTAIN CAPEL CLEGG'S
(Great morally, though rather short)
Sat at an open weather-port
And aired his shapely legs.

And Mermaids hung around in flocks,
On cable chains and distant rocks,
To gaze upon those limbs;
For legs like those, of flesh and bone,
Are things "not generally known"
To any Merman TIMBS.

But Mermen didn't seem to care
Much time (as far as I'm aware)
With CLEGG'S'S legs to spend;
Though Mermaids swam around all day

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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