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Songs of a Savoyard

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Ballad: The Darned Mounseer

I shipped, d'ye see, in a Revenue sloop,
And, off Cape Finisteere,
A merchantman we see,
A Frenchman, going free,
So we made for the bold Mounseer,
D'ye see?
We made for the bold Mounseer!
But she proved to be a Frigate - and she up with her ports,
And fires with a thirty-two!
It come uncommon near,
But we answered with a cheer,
Which paralysed the Parley-voo,
D'ye see?
Which paralysed the Parley-voo!

Then our Captain he up and he says, says he,
"That chap we need not fear, -
We can take her, if we like,
She is sartin for to strike,
For she's only a darned Mounseer,
D'ye see?
She's only a darned Mounseer!
But to fight a French fal-lal - it's like hittin' of a gal -
It's a lubberly thing for to do;
For we, with all our faults,
Why, we're sturdy British salts,
While she's but a Parley-voo,
D'ye see?
A miserable Parley-voo!"

So we up with our helm, and we scuds before the breeze,
As we gives a compassionating cheer;

Froggee answers with a shout
As he sees us go about,
Which was grateful of the poor Mounseer,
D'ye see?
Which was grateful of the poor Mounseer!
And I'll wager in their joy they kissed each other's cheek
(Which is what them furriners do),
And they blessed their lucky stars
We were hardy British tars
Who had pity on a poor Parley-voo,
D'ye see?
Who had pity on a poor Parley-voo!

Ballad: The Englishman

He is an Englishman!
For he himself has said it,
And it's greatly to his credit,
That he is an Englishman!
For he might have been a Roosian,
A French, or Turk, or Proosian,
Or perhaps Itali-an!
But in spite of all temptations,
To belong to other nations,
He remains an Englishman!
Hurrah!
For the true-born Englishman!

Ballad: The Disagreeable Man

If you give me your attention, I will tell you what I am:
I'm a genuine philanthropist - all other kinds are sham.
Each little fault of temper and each social defect
In my erring fellow-creatures, I endeavour to correct.
To all their little weaknesses I open people's eyes,
And little plans to snub the self-sufficient I devise;
I love my fellow-creatures - I do all the good I can -
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!
And I can't think why!

To compliments inflated I've a withering reply,
And vanity I always do my best to mortify;
A charitable action I can skilfully dissect;
And interested motives I'm delighted to detect.
I know everybody's income and what everybody earns,
And I carefully compare it with the income-tax returns;
But to benefit humanity, however much I plan,
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!
And I can't think why!

I'm sure I'm no ascetic; I'm as pleasant as can be;
You'll always find me ready with a crushing repartee;
I've an irritating chuckle, I've a celebrated sneer,
I've an entertaining snigger, I've a fascinating leer;
To everybody's prejudice I know a thing or two;
I can tell a woman's age in half a minute - and I do -
But although I try to make myself as pleasant as I can,
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!
And I can't think why!

Ballad: The Coming By-And-By

Sad is that woman's lot who, year by year,
Sees, one by one, her beauties disappear;
As Time, grown weary of her heart-drawn sighs,
Impatiently begins to "dim her eyes"! -
Herself compelled, in life's uncertain gloamings,
To wreath her wrinkled brow with well-saved "combings" -
Reduced, with rouge, lipsalve, and pearly grey,
To "make up" for lost time, as best she may!

Silvered is the raven hair,
Spreading is the parting straight,
Mottled the complexion fair,
Halting is the youthful gait,

Hollow is the laughter free,
Spectacled the limpid eye,
Little will be left of me,
In the coming by-and-by!
Fading is the taper waist -
Shapeless grows the shapely limb,
And although securely laced,
Spreading is the figure trim!
Stouter than I used to be,
Still more corpulent grow I -
There will be too much of me
In the coming by-and-by!

Ballad: The Highly Respectable Gondolier

I stole the Prince, and I brought him here,
And left him, gaily prattling
With a highly respectable Gondolier,
Who promised the Royal babe to rear,
And teach him the trade of a timoneer
With his own beloved bratling.

Both of the babes were strong and stout,
And, considering all things, clever.
Of that there is no manner of doubt -
No probable, possible shadow of doubt -
No possible doubt whatever.

Time sped, and when at the end of a year
I sought that infant cherished,
That highly respectable Gondolier
Was lying a corpse on his humble bier -
I dropped a Grand Inquisitor's tear -
That Gondolier had perished!

A taste for drink, combined with gout,
Had doubled him up for ever.
Of THAT there is no manner of doubt -
No probable, possible shadow of doubt -
No possible doubt whatever.

But owing, I'm much disposed to fear,
To his terrible taste for tipping,
That highly respectable Gondolier
Could never declare with a mind sincere
Which of the two was his offspring dear,

And which the Royal stripling!

Which was which he could never make out,
Despite his best endeavour.
Of THAT there is no manner of doubt -
No probable, possible shadow of doubt -
No possible doubt whatever.

The children followed his old career -
(This statement can't be parried)
Of a highly respectable Gondolier:
Well, one of the two (who will soon be here) -
But WHICH of the two is not quite clear -
Is the Royal Prince you married!

Search in and out and round about
And you'll discover never
A tale so free from every doubt -
All probable, possible shadow of doubt -
All possible doubt whatever!

Ballad: The Fairy Queen's Song

Oh, foolish fay,
Think you because
Man's brave array
My bosom thaws
I'd disobey
Our fairy laws?
Because I fly
In realms above,
In tendency
To fall in love
Resemble I

The amorous dove?

Oh, amorous dove!
Type of Ovidius Naso!
This heart of mine
Is soft as thine,
Although I dare not say so!

On fire that glows
With heat intense
I turn the hose
Of Common Sense,
And out it goes
At small expense!
We must maintain
Our fairy law;
That is the main
On which to draw -
In that we gain
A Captain Shaw.

Oh, Captain Shaw!
Type of true love kept under!
Could thy Brigade
With cold cascade
Quench my great love, I wonder!

Ballad: Is Life A Boon

Is life a boon?
If so, it must befall
That Death, whene'er he call,
Must call too soon.
Though fourscore years he give
Yet one would pray to live
Another moon!
What kind of plaint have I,
Who perish in July?
I might have had to die
Perchance in June!

Is life a thorn?
Then count it not a whit!
Man is well done with it;
Soon as he's born
He should all means essay
To put the plague away;
And I, war-worn,
Poor captured fugitive,
My life most gladly give -
I might have had to live
Another morn!

Ballad: The Modern Major-General

I am the very pattern of a modern Major-General,
I've information vegetable, animal, and mineral;
I know the kings of England, and I quote the fights historical,
From Marathon to Waterloo, in order categorical;
I'm very well acquainted, too, with matters mathematical,
I understand equations, both the simple and quadratical;
About binomial theorem I'm teeming with a lot o' news,
With interesting facts about the square of the hypotenuse,
I'm very good at integral and differential calculus,
I know the scientific names of beings animalculous.
In short, in matters vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I am the very model of a modern Major-General.

I know our mythic history - KING ARTHUR'S and SIR CARAD-
OCS,
I answer hard acrostics, I've a pretty taste for paradox;
I quote in elegiacs all the crimes of HELIOGABALUS,
In conics I can floor peculiarities parabolous.
I tell undoubted RAPHAELS from GERARD DOWS and ZOF-
FANIES,
I know the croaking chorus from the "Frogs" of ARISTOPHANES;
Then I can hum a fugue, of which I've heard the music's din afore,
And whistle all the airs from that confounded nonsense "Pinafore."
Then I can write a washing-bill in Babylonian cuneiform,
And tell you every detail of CARACTACUS'S uniform.
In short, in matters vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I am the very model of a modern Major-General.

In fact, when I know what is meant by "mamelon" and "ravelin,"
When I can tell at sight a Chassepot rifle from a javelin,
When such affairs as SORTIES and surprises I'm more wary at,
And when I know precisely what is meant by Commissariat,

When I have learnt what progress has been made in modern gun-
nery,
When I know more of tactics than a novice in a nunnery,
In short, when I've a smattering of elementary strategy,
You'll say a better Major-GenerAL has never SAT a gee -
For my military knowledge, though I'm plucky and adventury,
Has only been brought down to the beginning of the century.
But still in learning vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I am the very model of a modern Major-Gineral!

Ballad: The Heavy Dragoon

If you want a receipt for that popular mystery,
Known to the world as a Heavy Dragoon,
Take all the remarkable people in history,
Rattle them off to a popular tune!
The pluck of LORD NELSON on board of the VICTORY -
Genius of BISMARCK devising a plan;
The humour of FIELDING (which sounds contradictory) -
Coolness of PAGET about to trepan -
The grace of MOZART, that unparalleled musico -
Wit of MACAULAY, who wrote of QUEEN ANNE -
The pathos of PADDY, as rendered by BOUCICAULT -
Style of the BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN -
The dash of a D'ORSAY, divested of quackery -
Narrative powers of DICKENS and THACKERAY -
VICTOR EMMANUEL - peak-haunting PEVERIL -
THOMAS AQUINAS, and DOCTOR SACHEVERELL -
TUPPER and TENNYSON - DANIEL DEFOE -
ANTHONY TROLLOPE and MISTER GUIZOT!
Take of these elements all that is fusible,
Melt 'em all down in a pipkin or crucible,
Set 'em to simmer and take off the scum,

And a Heavy Dragoon is the residuum!

If you want a receipt for this soldierlike paragon,
Get at the wealth of the CZAR (if you can) -
The family pride of a Spaniard from Arragon -
Force of MEPHISTO pronouncing a ban -
A smack of LORD WATERFORD, reckless and rollicky -
Swagger of RODERICK, heading his clan -
The keen penetration of PADDINGTON POLLAKY -
Grace of an Odalisque on a divan -
The genius strategic of CAESAR or HANNIBAL -
Skill of LORD WOLSELEY in thrashing a cannibal -
Flavour of HAMLET - the STRANGER, a touch of him -
Little of MANFRED (but not very much of him) -
Beadle of Burlington - RICHARDSON'S show -
MR. MICAWBER and MADAME TUSSAUD!
Take of these elements all that is fusible -
Melt 'em all down in a pipkin or crucible -
Set 'em to simmer and take off the scum,
And a Heavy Dragoon is the residuum!

Ballad: Proper Pride

The Sun, whose rays
Are all ablaze
With ever-living glory,
Will not deny
His majesty -
He scorns to tell a story:
He won't exclaim,
"I blush for shame,
So kindly be indulgent,"
But, fierce and bold,
In fiery gold,

He glories all effulgent!

I mean to rule the earth,
As he the sky -
We really know our worth,
The Sun and I!

Observe his flame,
That placid dame,
The Moon's Celestial Highness;
There's not a trace
Upon her face
Of diffidence or shyness:
She borrows light
That, through the night,
Mankind may all acclaim her!
And, truth to tell,
She lights up well,
So I, for one, don't blame her!

Ah, pray make no mistake,
We are not shy;
We're very wide awake,
The Moon and I!

Ballad: The Policeman's Lot

When a felon's not engaged in his employment,
Or maturing his felonious little plans,
His capacity for innocent enjoyment
Is just as great as any honest man's.
Our feelings we with difficulty smother
When constabulary duty's to be done:
Ah, take one consideration with another,