

## *The Mother Lodge*

THERE was Rundle, Station Master,  
An' Beazeley of the Rail,  
An' 'Ackman, Commissariat,  
An' Donkin' o' the Jail;  
An' Blake, Conductor-Sargent,  
Our Master twice was 'e,  
With 'im that kept the Europe-shop,  
Old Framjee Eduljee.

*Outside—"Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam!"*

*Inside—"Brother", an' it doesn't do no 'arm.*

*We met upon the Level an' we parted on the Square,  
An' I was Junior Deacon in my Mother-Lodge out there!*

We'd Bola Nath, Accountant,  
An' Saul the Aden Jew,  
An' Din Mohammed, draughtsman  
Of the Survey Office too;  
There was Babu Chuckerbutty,  
An' Amir Singh the Sikh,  
An' Castro from the fittin'-sheds,  
The Roman Catholick!

We 'adn't good regalia,  
An' our Lodge was old an' bare,  
But we knew the Ancient Landmarks,  
An' we kep' 'em to a hair;  
An' lookin' on it backwards  
It often strikes me thus,  
There ain't such things as infidels,  
Excep', per'aps, it's us.

For monthly, after Labour,  
We'd all sit down and smoke  
(We dursn't give no banquits,  
Lest a Brother's caste were broke),  
An' man on man got talkin'  
Religion an' the rest,  
An' every man comparin'  
Of the God 'e knew the best.

So man on man got talkin',  
n' not a Brother stirred  
Till mornin' waked the parrots  
An' that dam' brain-fever-bird;  
We'd say 'twas 'ighly curious,  
An' we'd all ride 'ome to bed,  
With Mo'ammed, God, an' Shiva  
Changin' pickets in our 'ead.

Full oft on Guv'ment service  
This rovin' foot 'ath pressed,  
An' bore fraternal greetin's  
To the Lodges east an' west,  
Accordin' as commanded  
From Kohat to Singapore,  
But I wish that I might see them  
In my Mother-Lodge once more!

I wish that I might see them,  
My Brethren black an' brown,  
With the trichies smellin' pleasant  
An' the *hog-dam* passin' down;  
An' the old *khansamah* snorin'  
On the *bottle-khana* floor,  
Like a Master in good standing  
With my Mother-Lodge once more!

*Outside—"Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam!"*

*Inside—"Brother", an' it doesn't do no 'arm.*

*We met upon the Level an' we parted on the Square,  
An' I was Junior Deacon in my Mother-Lodge out there!*

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*L'Envoi to The Seven Seas*

When Earth's last picture is painted and the tubes are twisted and dried,  
When the oldest colours have faded, and the youngest critic has died,  
We shall rest, and, faith, we shall need it – lie down for an aeon or two,  
Till the Master of All Good Workmen shall put us to work anew!

And those that were good shall be happy: they shall sit in a golden chair;  
They shall splash at a ten-league canvas with brushes of comets' hair;  
They shall find real saints to draw from – Magdalene, Peter, and Paul;  
They shall work for an age at a sitting and never be tired at all!

And only the Master shall praise us, and only the Master shall blame;  
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work for fame,  
But each for the joy of the working, and each, in his separate star,  
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of Things as They Are!

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*My New Cut Ashlar (L'Envoi to Life's Handicap)*

My new-cut ashlar takes the light  
Where crimson-blank the windows flare.  
By my own work before the night,  
Great Overseer, I make my prayer.

If there be good in that I wrought  
Thy Hand compelled it, Master, Thine~  
Where I have failed to meet Thy Thought  
I know, through Thee, the blame was mine.

One instant's toil to Thee denied  
Stands all Eternity's offence.  
Of that I did with Thee to guide,  
To Thee, through Thee, be excellence.

The depth and dream of my desire,  
The bitter paths wherein I stray~  
Thou knowest Who has made the Fire,  
Thou knowest Who has made the Clay.

Who, lest all thought of Eden fade,  
Bring'st Eden to the craftsman's brain~  
Godlike to muse o'er his own Trade  
And manlike to stand with God again!

One stone the more swings into place  
In that dread Temple of Thy worth.  
It is enough that, through Thy Grace,  
I saw nought common on Thy Earth.

Take not that vision from my ken~  
Oh, whatso'er may spoil or speed,  
Help me to need no aid from men  
That I may help such men as need!

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## *The Derelict*

*I WAS* the staunchest of our fleet  
Till the sea rose beneath our feet  
Unheralded, in hatred past all measure.  
Into his pits he stamped my crew,  
Buffeted, blinded, bound and threw,  
Bidding me eyeless wait upon his pleasure.

Man made me, and my will  
Is to my maker still,  
Whom now the currents con, the rollers steer—  
Lifting forlorn to spy  
Trailed smoke along the sky,  
Falling afraid lest any keel come near!

Wrenched as the lips of thirst,  
Wried, dried, and split and burst,  
Bone-bleached my decks, wind-scoured to the graining;  
And jarred at every roll  
The gear that was my soul  
Answers the anguish of my beams' complaining.

For life that crammed me full,  
Gangs of the prying gull  
That shriek and scabble on the riven hatches!  
For roar that dumbed the gale,  
My hawse-pipes guttering wail,  
Sobbing my heart out through the uncounted watches!

Blind in the hot blue ring  
Through all my points I swing—  
Swing and return to shift the sun anew.  
Blind in my well-known sky  
I hear the stars go by,  
Mocking the prow that cannot hold one true!

White on my wasted path  
Wave after wave in wrath  
Frets 'gainst his fellow, warring where to send me.  
Flung forward, heaved aside,  
Witless and dazed I bide  
The mercy of the comber that shall end me.

North where the bergs careen,  
The spray of seas unseen  
Smokes round my head and freezes in the falling;  
South where the corals breed,  
The footless, floating weed  
Folds me and fouls me, strake on strake upcrawling.

I that was clean to run  
My race against the sun—  
Strength on the deep, am bawd to all disaster—  
Whipped forth by night to meet  
My sister's careless feet,  
And with a kiss betray her to my master!

Man made me, and my will  
Is to my maker still—  
To him and his, our peoples at their pier:  
Lifting in hope to spy  
Trailed smoke along the sky,  
Falling afraid lest any keel come near!

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## *Banquet Night*

'ONCE in so often,' King Solomon said,  
Watching his quarrymen drill the stone,  
'We will club our garlic and wine and bread  
And banquet together beneath my Throne  
And all the Brethren shall come to that mess  
As Fellow-Craftsmen—no more and no less.

'Send a swift shallop to Hiram of Tyre,  
Felling and floating our beautiful trees,  
Say that the Brethren and I desire  
Talk with our Brethren who use the seas.  
And we shall be happy to meet them at mess  
As Fellow-Craftsmen—no more and no less.

'Carry this message to Hiram Abif—  
Excellent Master of forge and mine:—  
I and the Brethren would like it if  
He and the Brethren will come to dine  
(Garments from Bozrah or morning-dress)  
As Fellow-Craftsmen—no more and no less.

'God gave the Hyssop and Cedar their place—  
Also the Bramble, the Fig and the Thorn—  
But that is no reason to black a man's face  
Because he is not what he hasn't been born.  
And, as touching the Temple, I hold and profess  
We are Fellow-Craftsmen—no more and no less.'

So it was ordered and so it was done,  
And the hewers of wood and the Masons of Mark,  
With foc'sle hands of the Sidon run  
And Navy Lords from the *Royal Ark*,  
Came and sat down and were merry at mess  
As Fellow-Craftsmen—no more and no less.

*The Quarries are hotter than Hiram's forge,  
No one is safe from the dog-whips' reach.  
It's mostly snowing up Lebanon gorge,  
And it's always blowing off Joppa beach;  
But once in so often, the messenger brings  
Solomon's mandate: 'Forget these things!  
Brother to Beggars and Fellow to Kings,  
Companion of Princes—forget these things!  
Fellow-Craftsman, forget these things!'*

*If*

IF you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breathe a word about your loss;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
'Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch,  
if neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much;  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!

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## *A Pilgrim's Way*

I do not look for holy saints to guide me on my way,  
Or male and female devilkins to lead my feet astray.  
If these are added, I rejoice--if not, I shall not mind,  
So long as I have leave and choice to meet my fellow-kind.  
For as we come and as we go (and deadly-soon go we!)  
The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!

Thus I will honour pious men whose virtue shines so bright  
(Though none are more amazed than I when I by chance do right),  
And I will pity foolish men for woe their sins have bred  
(Though ninety-nine per cent. of mine I brought on my own head).  
And, Amorite or Eremite, or General Averagee,  
The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!

And when they bore me overmuch, I will not shake mine ears,  
Recalling many thousand such whom I have bored to tears.  
And when they labour to impress, I will not doubt nor scoff;  
Since I myself have done no less and--sometimes pulled it off.  
Yea, as we are and we are not, and we pretend to be,  
The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!

And when they work me random wrong, as oftentimes hath been,  
I will not cherish hate too long (my hands are none too clean).  
And when they do me random good I will not feign surprise.  
No more than those whom I have cheered with wayside charities.  
But, as we give and as we take--whate'er our takings be--  
The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!

But when I meet with frantic folk who sinfully declare  
There is no pardon for their sin, the same I will not spare  
Till I have proved that Heaven and Hell which in our hearts we have  
Show nothing irredeemable on either side of the grave.  
For as we live and as we die--if utter Death there be--  
The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!

Deliver me from every pride--the Middle, High, and Low--  
That bars me from a brother's side, whatever pride he show.  
And purge me from all heresies of thought and speech and pen  
That bid me judge him otherwise than I am judged. Amen!  
That I may sing of Crowd or King or road-borne company,  
That I may labour in my day, vocation and degree,  
To prove the same in deed and name, and hold unshakenly  
(Where'er I go, whate'er I know, whoe'er my neighbor be)  
This single faith in Life and Death and to Eternity:  
"The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me !"

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*Rahere*

RAHERE, King Henry's jester, feared by all the Norman Lords  
For his eye that pierced their bosoms, for his tongue that shamed their swords;  
Feed and flattered by the Churchmen - well they knew how deep he stood  
In dark Henry's crooked counsels - fell upon an evil mood.

Suddenly, his days before him and behind him seemed to stand  
Stripped and barren, fixed and fruitless as those leagues of naked sand  
When St. Michael's ebb slinks outward to the bleak horizon-bound,  
And the trampling wide-mouthed waters are withdrawn from sight and sound.

Then a Horror of Great Darkness sunk his spirit and anon,  
(Who had seen him wince and whiten as he turned to walk alone)  
Followed Gilbert the Physician, and muttered in his ear,  
"Thou hast it, O my brother?" "Yea, I have it," said Rahere.

"So it comes," said Gilbert smoothly, "man's most immanent distress.  
'Tis a humour of the Spirit which abhorreth all excess;  
And, whatever breed the surfeit - Wealth, or Wit, or Power, or Fame  
(And thou hast each) the Spirit laboureth to expel the same.

"Hence the dulled eye's deep self-loathing - hence the loaded leaden brow;  
Hence the burden of Wanhope that aches thy soul and body now.  
Ay, the merriest fool must face it, and the wisest Doctor learn;  
For it comes - it comes," said Gilbert, "as it passes - to return."

But Rahere was in his torment, and he wandered, dumb and far,  
Till he came to reeking Smithfield where the crowded gallows are..  
(Followed Gilbert the Physician) and beneath the wrynecked dead,  
Sat a leper and his woman, very merry, breaking bread.

He was cloaked from chin to ankle - faceless, fingerless, obscene  
Mere corruption swaddled man-wise, but the woman whole and clean;  
And she waited on him crooning, and Rahere beheld the twain,  
Each delighting in the other, and he checked and groaned again.

So it comes, - it comes," said Gilbert, "as it came when Life began.  
'Tis a motion of the Spirit that revealeth God to man.  
In the shape of Love exceeding, which regards not taint or fall,  
Since in perfect Love, saith Scripture, can be no excess at all.

Hence the eye that sees no blemish - hence the hour that holds no shame.  
Hence the Soul assured the Essence and the Substance are the same.  
Nay, the meanest need not miss it, though the mightier pass it by;  
For it comes - it comes," said Gilbert, "and, thou seest, it does not die!"

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