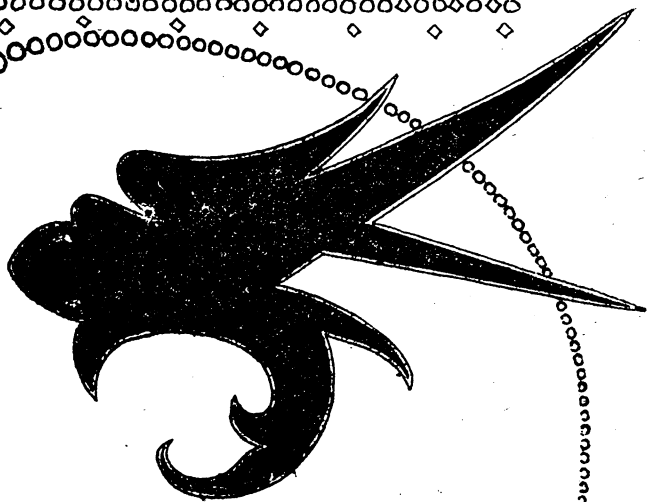
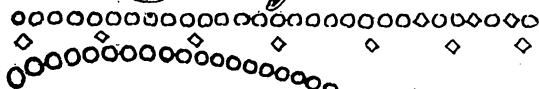


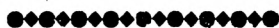
NUMBER 111:::5 CENTS:

THE LARK



"WHAT IS THAT, MOTHER?
"A LARK, my child."

The Lark



BRUCE PORTER

GELETT BURGESS



NUMBER 3

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Villanelle of Things Amusing.



THESE are the things that make
me laugh—

*Life's a preposterous farce, say I!
And I've missed of too many
jokes, by half.*

The high-heeled antics of colt and calf,

*The men who think they can act, and try—
These are the things that make me laugh.*

*The hard-boiled poses in photograph,
The groom still wearing his wedding tie—
And I've missed of too many jokes, by half!*

*These are the bubbles I gayly quaff
With the rank conceit of the new-born fly—
These are the things that make me laugh!*

*For, Heaven help me ! I needs must chaff,
And people will tickle me till I die —
And I've missed of too many jokes, by half !*

*So write me down in my epitaph
As one too fond of his health to cry—
These are the things that make me laugh,
And I've missed of too many jokes, by half!*

Nereia: a Poem of the Shore.



COULD not sleep; the moon was new, and from the sea there came a call of witchery — vague, but irresistible. Up and away I went; my feet did with me what they would; I hurried on and on toward the shore.

And there, amid the shadowy rocks, I found her, with her long hair on her shoulders, and her white arms bare. Before we met she spoke me with a voice full of strange tones and mystic cadences, yet as to one she had been longing, hoping for. So to her swift I ran, on that wild beach, 'neath that wild sky; and there I stayed on that first night, as in a dream.

Far fairer was her face than earth produces anywhere, more exquisite her form than the loveliest dream of Grecian sculptor. There was a magic of the sea itself — a mystery and beauty of the moonlit tide, purring at feet of longing cliffs, or dancing merrily upon the bar. Few are the phrases needed for a night like that; but these she knew in mine own tongue, and smilingly repeated in an old-time way, as if they had been learned and half forgotten years and years ago. But long before I tired of her sweet caresses, she rose and listened for a far-off voice I could not hear, and closely watched the foam upon the shore. Vainly I strove to hold her to my side, but sadly crying that the sea called her and she must go, that the tide had turned and it was death to stay, she gave one parting kiss, and plunged into the heaving surf that howled at me in mocking laughter.

*

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I know not well how many nights since then I met her on the twilight shore, or on the ledge, or drifting on the sea. Many a night the rising tide has washed my tell-tale footsteps from the strand, when late I wandered neath the stars to greet my joyous love. I know not what we said, nor how I learned the secret language of the far, faint sea.

She was a Nymph immortal, and of loveliness divine, beyond the power of words to say; I was a mortal, poor and weak, save in my power of loving her. But me she loved, or seemed to love, yet with a faint reserve at times that cast me down, till, breaking through the spell, she nursed my aching hopes to life again with hurried words of fondest warmth and loving gestures that repaid me all I lost.

Sometimes I reached the starlit shore ere yet the ebb was spent, and cast myself upon the silver sand to wait the flood. Then, as I slept, would Nerea rise from out the foam and steal across the shining floor and wake me with a kiss. Then, 'mid the links and dunes beside the sea, we'd frolic in the witchery of the great white moon, and hide within the cup-shaped holes of shifting sand, fringed by the wiry beach-grass waving in the midnight breeze; to which remote and secret rooms the roar of surf came chastened from the shore, while we reclined upon the sleeping banks of soft warm sand, and watched the slow procession of the stars around the pole and meteors dripping from the August sky.

Continued

Sometimes at midnight I would loose my boat and sail far out into the dark, breasting the creeping tide that rippled up the channel's track and softly swept past point and reef,—beyond the white-capped harbor bar, far out to where the restless waves were heaving to the ocean swing. And there, with anchor down and flapping sail, I'd lie and listen to the lapping, slapping of the ripple on the prow, while chop and tide-rip tossed me forth and back again to the strange rime and eerie music of the sea.

And then, from far away through long black lanes of ocean surges, she would come, with trails of phosphorescent foam behind her as she swam, and with the glory of her shining hair. For hours she'd sit upon the gunnel of my skiff, and we would tell the old, old tale, until the glowing dawn dissevered our embraces; then, still beckoning, she would sink toward her native depths and leave me with a memory—and a hope.

Too long this lasted,—yet not long enough—and I must hurry on to that last night.

Now she had grown more moody (not more cold) as time went on, and oft I waked and found her by my side, too deeply troubled, by I knew not what, to wake me in that most delightful way. So would she gaze upon me longingly and sad, as if I were not there, or, more, as if not I, but some one else were near her—some one she had known, and loved, and lost. Yet, whiles I could, I bore the pain, till that last night my heart had broken could I not have known the worst. So, as we sat beside the sea, I prayed that I might bear what woe she had with her, and if it were that I had erred, or if some cruel fate had led me on to joys that were not mine, that she would give me word and I would go.

Then, slowly, mid her bitter sobs and scorching tears, she told me this: In short, the bitter story of a former love—and he a mortal, too, else had she never suffered from the doom of her who has transgressed the god's decrees,—a man most wondrously like me, in face, in form, in carriage, and in word precise—my very counterpart. Him she had known and loved until he disappeared, she knew not when, for in the sea there are nor hours nor days, but swing of tides when Father Nereus breathes, and the slow march of waters that o'erwhelm the shore. So she had waited, watching for her love's return, till I had come.

In that first glance she saw, or thought she saw, him she had lost; and so, believing, greeted me as I have said. Yet soon she wondered at the change she saw, but dared not speak, or ask me why I seemed so strange. For mortals are so different from them who live beneath the sea! They come and go, and have such fancies, fears, and ways, their lives are far past finding out. And so, as oft we met, though still I spoke and acted like that other one, my words seemed new, my manners not the same. Yet dared she never speak of it till now, for now she knew that he and I were twain.

Yet, for my passing love for her, she plead with me to seek him out and bring him back to her.

And, saying this, she drew from off her hand a ring I had not seen before, and, as the tide had turned and she must haste, bidding me meet her there again, she sadly gave one long, last kiss, and sought the sea.

* * * * *

Continued



How could I tell her of the lapse of years? How could I tell her of decay and death? How could I tell her that her missing love, though I should search the earth, might not be found?

And yet she lived and loved, and still was beautiful. And still was faithful to her ancient lover there, who, years and years ago, upon the shore where we had met, returned her love and worshiped her, like me.

Ah! like to me he was, in word and deed, in truth; and cause had she to see the chance and change.

For, by the name within the ring, I knew she loved one who had owned these shores long, long ago; — *my very ancestor*, by near a score of generations gone!

* * * *

I never saw her more; I could not try to teach her mind such tragedy as this. And when the sea mourns, and far away I see the jeweled moonlight on its throbbing breast, I go not near the shore.

*My Feet they haul me 'round the House;
They hoist me up the Stairs;*



*I only have to steer them and
They ride me everywhere.*

"Tell Me Another," said Vivette:



ALL was disorder in the boudoir of the Princess Pittipums. Pittipums herself was in tears. It was n't so much that the Doll Builder had taken advantage of her—she could forgive that, perhaps,—but *β Orion* and *Polaris* were missing, and however could she find them before night?

For it was Pittipums' duty to polish up the stars every month, and, at the full of the moon, when there was a silver screen before the sky, she stood on Mount Olympus and carefully took them down from their places, and, wrapping each in a woolly cloud, bore them to the seashore and washed them clean and bright.

It was while she was on tiptoe in her high-heeled shoes, reaching up to one of the highest shelves in *Cygnus*, that the bad Doll Builder came up behind and kissed her on her pretty pink cheeks. To be sure, she had heard him coming; but she was so startled that she dropped her apronful of stars tinkling on the floor, and, when she had returned from that corner of the deep sea and spread them all, planets, asteroids, and crawling comets, upon her carpet, two were gone! She dare not tell—how could she explain? So she filched a sparkling sun from its place away back in the sky, in an old system men had never seen; it was just the size of *β Orion*. And she found two others, that, tied together, with a small red meteor, she put back for bright *Polaris*.

But the artful Doll Builder took the two lost stars from his pocket next day, and snapped them into a little foolish head he had just made; then, with a smile, he set the dainty doll upon the earth, and it went walking off toward the West—and me.

The Peculiar History of the Chewing-Gum Man.



WILLIE, an' Wallie, an' Huldy
Ann,

They went an' built a big CHEW-
IN'-GUM MAN:

It was none o' your teenty little dots,
With pinhole eyes an' pencil-spots;
But this was a terribul big one—well,

'Twas a-most as high as the Palace Hotel!

It took 'em a year to chew the gum!!

And Willie he done it all, 'cept some
That Huldy got her ma to chew,
By the time the head was ready to do.

* * * *

Well, Willie he chewed it for days 'n' days;

They brung it to him in gret big drays;

An' fast as he got it good an' soft,

Then Wallie he come and carried it oft.

Then he 'd roll it into a gret big ball,

An' he made a-more'n a million in all!

Then Huldy Ann she spanked 'em flat

An' pinched an' poked, an' the like o' that,

Till she got it inter a gret big hunk—

My! did n't Huldy have the spunk!

And then she sliced one end half-way

To make the laigs ('cause they never stay

When you stick 'em on in a seprit piece—

Seems like the ends was made o' grease);

Then she slit an arm right up each side,—

I could n't a done it if I 'd a tried!

O' course, her brothers they helped her, though,

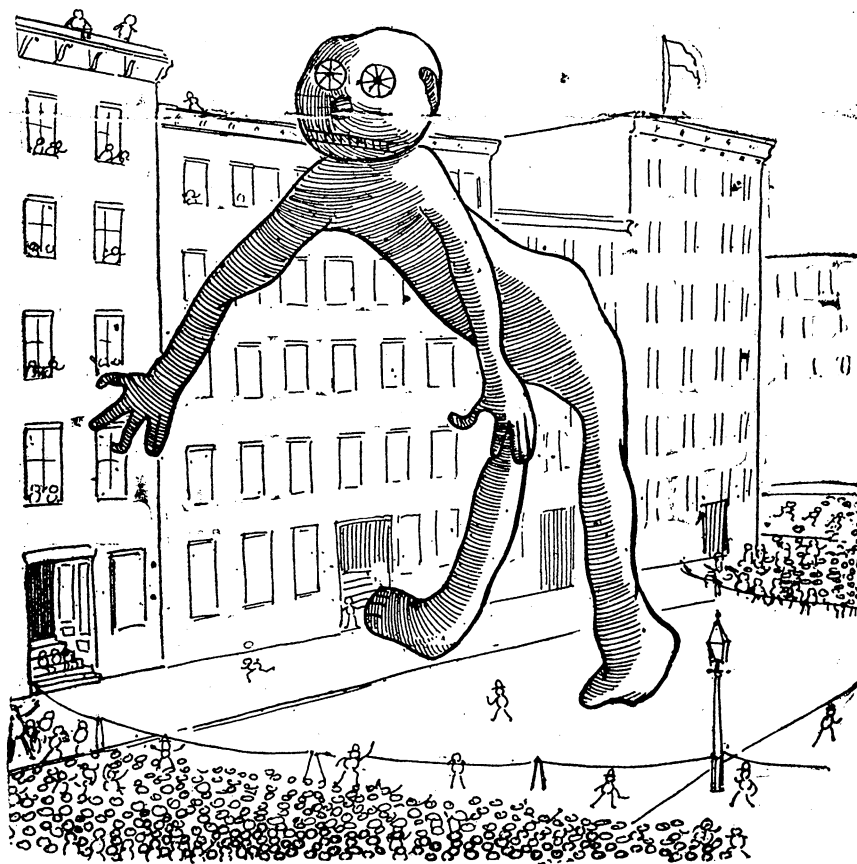
An' rolled the arms an' laigs out, so

They all was smooth with roundin' bends

An' *chopped* the fingers inter the ends!

An' when their mother had chewn the head,

She went an' *stuck* it on, instead!



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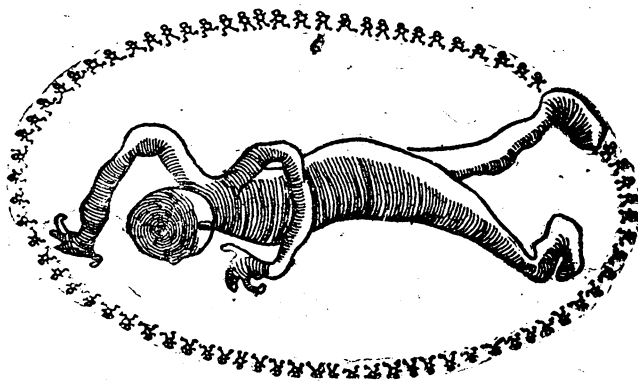
An' then, when the man was almost done,
They had an awful lots o' fun.
A-walkin' down his stummick was best
To make the buttons onter his vest !
They struck big cartwheels in him for eyes;
His ears was both tremendous size;
His nose was a barrel — an' then beneath
They used a ladder, to make his teeth !
An' when he was layin' acrost the street
Along come their daddy, as white 's a sheet,—
He was skeert half outer his wits, I guess,
An' he did n't know whatter make o' the mess,—
But Huldry she up an' begun to coax
To have him down town, to skeer the folks!
So her dad he grabbed him offen the street
An' Willie an' Wallie they took his feet,
An' they dragged him clean down to the Cogswell
fountain,
An' stood him up as big as a mountain!
You 'd orter seen him a-standin' there,
A-straddlin' Market street in the air !

Well, he stood up straight for a week 'n' a half
An' the folks, Gee ! did n't they yell 'n' laff ;
The boys clum up his laigs quite bold —
The gum was so soft they got good hold ;
The cars run under him day an' night,
An' the people come miles to see the sight !
Well, after he 'd stayed as stiff 's a post,
With his head on top o' ther roofsts almost,
The sun come outer the fog one day
An'—well, I guess you can see the way
That gret big feller begun to melt; —
Imagine how Willie and Wallie felt !
For first he cocked his head out some,
An' when the heat got inter the gum

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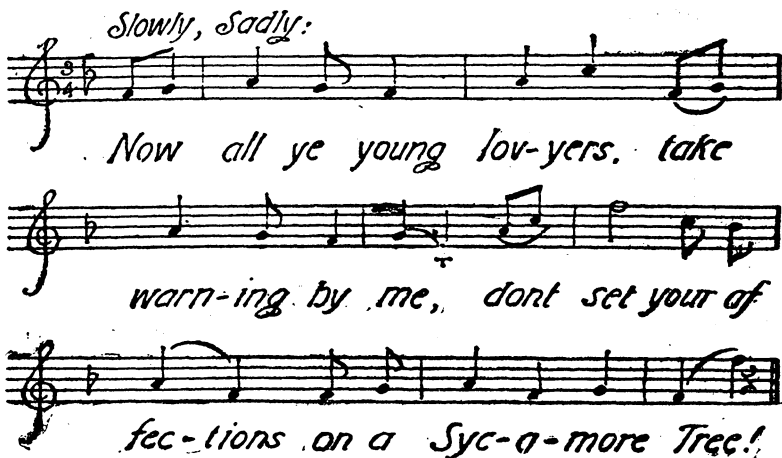
He slowly waved his arms ahead
An' slanted forred, just like he was dead!
An' all day long he leaned an' bent
Till all expected he would have went
An' pitched right over. They roped the street
To keep the crowd away from his feet.
I tell y^er he was a sight; my soul!
Twicet as high as a telegraft pole,
Wavin' his arms an' slumpin' his feet
An' a-starin' away down Market street.
Then, what did I tell y^er — that blame ole head
Their mother had made a-seprit, instead,—
It fell right off an' squashed a horse!
('T was so soft, it did n't *kill* him, o' course.)
When his hands got so they touched the ground
A hundred policemen they come around;
They stuck a cable-car to his feet,
An' one to his head, a-goin' up street,
An' then they pulled him opposite ways,
An' they pulled him for days 'n' days 'n' days,
An' they drored him out so slim an' small
That he reached a mile 'n' a half, in all.

An' that was the end o' the CHEWIN'-GUM MAN
For Willie, an' Wallie, an' Huldy Ann.
They come along with an ax next day,
An' chopped him up, an' guve him away.



The Inconstant Lover.

Slowly, Sadly:



Now all ye young lov-yers. take
warn-ing by me, dont set your af-
fec-tions on a Syc-a-more Tree!

*Now all ye young lovyers
Take warning by me,
Don't set your affections
On a Sycamore Tree!*

*For the leaves they will wither
And the branches decay
But the Inconstant Lover
Is wuss nor all they!*