

A. D. GODLEY



***THE CASUAL
WARD:
ACADEMIC
AND OTHER
ODDMENTS***

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IN MEMORIAM EXAMINATORIS CUIUSDAM

Nearly all the flights in this book have been first taken in the *Cornhill Magazine*, the *Oxford Magazine*, or the *Saturday Review*. They are reproduced by the kind permission of the Editors of these periodicals. I am allowed also to reprint a set of verses published by Messrs. Constable & Co.

A. D. G.

November, 1912

M. T. CICERONIS DE LEGE BODLEIANA ORATIO

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[LITERALLY TRANSLATED BY A BALLIOL FIRST-CLASS MAN]

[On a Proposal to place Bicycles within the precincts of the Bodleian Library]

I. Not concerning a thing of no moment, O Conscript Fathers, you are now called upon to decide: whether to one man by the counsel and advice of Curators it is to be permitted that he should take away from you the power of placing in the Proscholium the instruments of celerity, the assistances of (your) feet, the machines appointed by a certain natural providence for the performance of your duties: whether, in which place our ancestors sold pigs with the greatest consent and indeed applause of the Roman people, from that (place) bicycles are to be ejected by one guardian of books. O singular impudence of the man! For be unwilling, Conscript Fathers, be unwilling to believe that in this pretence of consulting for (the interests of) a public building something more is not also being aimed at and sought to be obtained: in such a way (*lit.* so) he attacks bicycles that in reality he endeavours to oppress the liberty of each one of you: that by this example and as it were by the thin end of a certain wedge he may lay the foundation of a royal power over all these things, which I (as) consul preserved. Concerning which matter I could say much, if time allowed me: now behold and examine the miserable condition of

those whom a man devoid of constancy and gravity overturns from (their) fortunes.

II. What! shall the Masters of Arts, what! shall the Doctors, what! shall the Proctors themselves (than which kind of men nothing can exist more holy, nothing more upright, nothing more auspiciously established) be compelled to come on foot that they may consult those most sacred volumes in which the Roman people have wished that all learning should be included? The Hypobibliothecarii, what men! what citizens! will, I believe, walk, especially considering that it is to be contended by them against the lengthiness of a journey: and then, if, as (usually) happens, some sudden tempest should arise, they must suffer (their) bicycles lacking shelter to be most miserably corrupted by rain. It has been handed down to memory, Conscript Fathers, that Caius Duilius was permitted by the republic, which he had saved by (his) incredible fortitude, to be borne by an elephant whenever he had been invited to a dinner. Therefore, did he use a most luxurious quadruped that he might by so much the more quickly arrive at a banquet: shall we, who desire to hasten not for the sake of lust and the belly, but for the sake of this learning and books, be forbidden to employ bicycles? I pray and entreat you, Conscript Fathers, do not allow this disgrace to be branded upon the heart itself and entrails of the commonwealth.

III. But for(sooth) the College of All Souls (which I name; for the sake of honour) is near, in which machines may be sheltered. O thing before unheard (of)! From which place even undergraduates have been excluded by a certain divine will: into that shall bicycles be thrown? O times, O manners! It is not fitting, Conscript Fathers, that the studies of most learned men, Fellows, should be interrupted in this way. Moreover, they also have a library, that to them also it may be possible to say that wheels should be kept afar off:

they have keys, bolts, bars, a gate, a porter: they will exclude, reject, excommunicate them. Which act I blame in such a way that I confess and acknowledge that it will be done with the greatest legality.

IV. If the Founder of the Library, if Sir Thomas Bodley himself, I say, should stand forth from the Elysian fields, it is not necessary that I should remind you with what ancient severity he would inveigh against this new power, against the Bibliothecarius, nay rather, against the Curators themselves: for you can calculate (it) in (your) minds. He would say to them, "Did I give you authority over books, that you should use it against bicycles? did I place you in an upper part of a most convenient building, that you should also rule the lower? did I endow you with huge wealth and an enormosity of stipend, that you should therefore the more exercise a kingly dominion over the common utility, and the necks, heads, lives, fortunes of the poorer citizens?" To which interrogation and most stern reproach I do not think they, although they are of a remarkable audacity, could answer anything: for neither is there (anything) that can be replied.

V. Although I wish to say more things, I am deterred by the will of the editor of that most known Magazine (than which paper I do not think that anything is more conjoined with the safety of the republic): nor am I not also prevented by tears and weeping itself. Conscript Fathers, if there is anything in you of constancy, if of gravity, if of fortitude, if of humanity (which that there is I most certainly know), fortify this common citadel of the good: open the Pig Market, closed by the intolerable influence of bad men: be unwilling, be unwilling that the seat of the Muses, the School of Divinity, the most delightful meeting-places of Boards of Faculties, should be stained by royal power and polluted by cruelty. Which that it will certainly happen if you do not

prevent it by your votes, I most confidently predict and vaticinate.

THE EIGHTS IN FICTION

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I. OLD STYLE

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“There’s nothing that emphasizes the *amari aliquid* of life like one’s tobacconist,” mused Fane Trevyllyan as he flung a box of eighteenpenny Emeticos into the fire and lit a Latakia cigarette.

It was a lovely August morning in the Eights of 18--; and the stroke of the Charsley Hall boat reclined wearily in his luxuriously furnished apartments within that venerable College and watched the midday sun gilding the pinnacles of the Martyr’s Memorial. It had been a fast and furious night, and Trevyllyan had lost more I.O.U.s than even he cared to remember: and now he was very weary of it all. Had it not been for one thing, he would have thrown it all up—sent dons, deans, duns, and dice to the devil, and gone down by the afternoon train: as it was, there was nothing for it but to recline on his tiger-skins and smoke countless cigars. He never would train.

“Going to row to-day, Fane?” It was little Bagley Wood, the cox. Trevyllyan sanctioned his presence as if he had been a cat or a lapdog: to all others he was stern and unapproachable—a true representative of his Order.

“Don’t know, *caro mio*,” was the reply. “It’s such a bore, you know: and then I half think I promised to take La Montmorenci of the Frivolity up the Cherwell to Trumpington in the University Barge.”

“What! when the Lady Gwendolen de St. Emilion has come down on purpose to see us catch Christ Church! why, *sapristi*, where can your eyes be?” The stroke hissed something between his clenched teeth, and Bagley Wood found himself flying through an unopened window.

“*Cherchez la femme!* it’s always the way with the Trevyllyans,” muttered the lad, as he picked himself up from the grass plot in the quadrangle and strolled off to quiet his nerves with a glass of *aguardiente* at the Mitre.

* * * * *

An August moon shone brightly on the last night of the great aquatic contest: the starter had fired his pistol, and all the boats but one were off.

“Hadn’t you better think about starting, Trevyllyan?” asked the coach of the Charsley Hall Eight, a trifle pale and anxious. “See, they are all under way. Glanville Ferrers, the Christ Church stroke, swears you shan’t bump him as you did last week. He must be past the Soapworks by this time.”

“*Caramba!* then I suppose we ought to get in,” replied the other; and as he spoke he divested himself of the academical garb that scarcely concealed his sky-blue tights, and stood, a model of manly beauty, on the banks of the rushing river. Then, throwing away a half-finished cigar, Trevyllyan strode into the boat. *Per Bacco!* ’twas a magnificent sight. As the crack Eight of the river sped swiftly after her rival, cheers arose from the bank, and odds on both boats were freely taken and offered by the *cognoscenti*.

You and I, *amigo mio!* have seen many a race in our day. We have seen the 'Varsity crews flash neck and neck past Lillie Bridge: we have held our breath while Orme ran a dead heat with Eclipse for the Grand National: we have read how the victor of the *pancratium* panted to the *meta* amid the *Io Triumphes* of Attica's vine-clad Acropolis. But we did not see the great Christ Church and Charsley's race—that great contest which is still the talk of many a learned lecture-room. They say the pace was tremendous. Four men fainted in the Christ Church boat, and Trevyllyan's crew repeatedly entreated him to stop. But he held on, inexorable as the Erinnyes.

Fair as Pallas Anadyomene—fair as the Venus whom Milo fashioned *pour se désennuyer* in his exile at Marseilles—the Lady Gwendolen de St. Emilion sat throned on the University Barge, and watched the heroes as their bare arms flashed in the moonlight. And now they were through the Gut, and the nose of the Charsley's boat pressed hard on its rival: yet Fane Trevyllyan did not make his final effort. Would he spare Glanville Ferrers? *Quien sabe?* They had been friends—once. But the die was cast. As the boats sped past her the Lady Gwendolen stooped from her pride of place and threw a rose—just one—into the painted poop of the Christ Church wherry. That was all: but it was enough. Trevyllyan saw the action where he sat: one final, magnificent, unswerving stroke—those who saw it thought it would never end!—and with a muttered “Habet!” he sent the brazen beak of his Eight crashing in among the shattered oars of his helpless competitor.

Galeotto fu il libro, e chi lo scrisse.

II. NEW OR KODAK STYLE (From the French)