

***CHARLES
L. GRAVES***



***LAUDS
AND
LIBELS***

Charles L. Graves

Lauds and libels

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NOTE

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C. L. G.

MEN, WOMEN, AND BOOKS

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PICCADILLY

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Gay shops, stately palaces, bustle and breeze,
The whirring of wheels and the murmur of trees;
By night or by day, whether noisy or stilly,
Whatever my mood is—I love Piccadilly.

Thus carolled FRED LOCKER, just sixty years back,
In a year ('57) when the outlook was black,
And even to-day the war-weariest Willie
Recovers his spirits in dear Piccadilly.

We haven't the belles with their Gainsborough hats,
Or the Regency bucks with their wondrous cravats,
But now that the weather no longer is chilly
There's much to enchant us in New Piccadilly.

As I sit in my club and partake of my “ration,”

No longer I'm vexed by the follies of fashion;
The dandified Johnnies so precious and silly—
You seek them in vain in the New Piccadilly.

The men are alert and upstanding and fit,
They've most of them done or they're doing their bit;
With the eye of a hawk and the stride of a gillie
They add a new lustre to Old Piccadilly.

And the crippled but gay-hearted heroes in blue
Are a far finer product than wicked "old Q,"
Who ought to have lived in a prison on skilly
Instead of a palace in mid Piccadilly.

The women are splendid, so quiet and strong,
As with resolute purpose they hurry along—
Excepting the flappers, who chatter as shrilly
As parrots let loose to distract Piccadilly.

Thus I muse as I watch with a reverent eye
The New Generation sweep steadily by,
And judge him an ass or a born Silly Billy
Who'd barter the New for the Old Piccadilly.

TO "MARTIN ROSS"

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(After reading "Irish Memories.")

Two Irish cousins greet us here
From BUSHE "the silver-tongued" descended,
Whose lives for close on thirty year

Were indistinguishably blended;
Scorning the rule that holds for cooks,
They pooled their brains and joined their forces,
And wrote a dozen gorgeous books
On men and women, hounds and horses.

They superseded *Handley Cross*;
They glorified the “hunting fever”;
They purged their pages of the dross,
While bettering the fun, of LEVER;
With many a priceless turn of phrase
They stirred us to Homeric laughter,
When painting Ireland in the days
Before Sinn Fein bewitched and “strafed” her.

With them we watched good *Major Yeates*
Contending with litigious peasants,
With “hidden hands” within his gates,
With claims for foxes and for pheasants;
We saw *Leigh Kelway* drop his chin—
That precious English super-tripper—
In shocked amazement drinking in
The lurid narrative of *Slipper*.

Philippa's piercing peacock squeals,
Uttered in moments of expansion;
The grime and splendour of the meals
Of *Mrs. Knox* and of her mansion;
The secrets of horse-coping lore,
The loves of *Sally* and of *Flurry*—
All these delights and hundreds more