

Henry Lawson



*Humorous
Verses*

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Published by Good Press, 2022

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EAN 4066338090263

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My Literary Friend

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Oncel wrote a little poem which I thought was very fine,
And I showed the printer's copy to a critic friend of mine,
First he praised the thing a little, then he found a little fault;
'The ideas are good,' he muttered, 'but the rhythm seems to
halt.'

So I straighten'd up the rhythm where he marked it with
his pen,
And I copied it and showed it to my clever friend again.
'You've improved the metre greatly, but the rhymes are
bad,' he said,
As he read it slowly, scratching surplus wisdom from his
head.

So I worked as he suggested (I believe in taking time),
And I burnt the 'midnight taper' while I straightened up the
rhyme.
'It is better now,' he muttered, 'you go on and you'll
succeed,
'It has got a ring about it—the ideas are what you need.'

So I worked for hours upon it (I go on when I commence),
And I kept in view the rhythm and the jingle and the sense,
And I copied it and took it to my solemn friend once more—
It reminded him of something he had somewhere read
before.

* * * * *

Now the people say I'd never put such horrors into print
If I wasn't too conceited to accept a friendly hint,

And my dearest friends are certain that I'd profit in the end
If I'd always show my copy to a literary friend.

Mary Called Him 'Mister'

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They'd parted but a year before—she never thought he'd come,

She stammer'd, blushed, held out her hand, and called him '*MisterGum.*'

How could he know that all the while she longed to murmur 'John.'

He called her 'Miss le Brook,' and asked how she was getting on.

They'd parted but a year before; they'd loved each other well,

But he'd been to the city, and he came back such a swell.

They longed to meet in fond embrace, they hungered for a kiss—

But Mary called him 'Mister,' and the idiot called her 'Miss.'

He stood and lean'd against the door—a stupid chap was he—

And, when she asked if he'd come in and have a cup of tea,

He looked to left, he looked to right, and then he glanced behind,

And slowly doffed his cabbage-tree, and said he 'didn't mind.'

She made a shy apology because the meat was tough,

And then she asked if he was sure his tea was sweet enough;

He stirred the tea and sipped it twice, and answer'd 'plenty, quite;'

And cut the smallest piece of beef and said that it was
'right.'

She glanced at him at times and cough'd an awkward
little cough;

He stared at anything but her and said, 'I must be off.'

That evening he went riding north—a sad and lonely ride—

She locked herself inside her room, and there sat down and
cried.

They'd parted but a year before, they loved each other
well—

But she was such a country girl and he was such a swell;

They longed to meet in fond embrace, they hungered for a
kiss—

But Mary called him 'Mister' and the idiot called her 'Miss.'

Rejected

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Shesays she's very sorry, as she sees you to the gate;
You calmly say 'Good-bye' to her while standing off a yard,
Then you lift your hat and leave her, walking mighty stiff
and straight—

But you're hit, old man—hit hard.

In your brain the words are burning of the answer that
she gave,

As you turn the nearest corner and you stagger just a bit;
But you pull yourself together, for a man's strong heart is
brave

When it's hit, old man—hard hit.

You might try to drown the sorrow, but the drink has no
effect;

You cannot stand the barmaid with her coarse and vulgar
wit;

And so you seek the street again, and start for home direct,
When you're hit, old man—hard hit.

You see the face of her you lost, the pity in her smile—

Ah! she is to the barmaid as is snow to chimney grit;

You're a better man and nobler in your sorrow, for a while,

When you're hit, old man—hard hit.

And, arriving at your lodgings, with a face of deepest
gloom,

You shun the other boarders and your manly brow you knit;

You take a light and go upstairs directly to your room—

But the whole house knows you're hit.