THE HELL OF THE GOOD
THE HELL OF THE GOOD

A Theological Epic in Six Books

by

Edouard de Verb

Twenty-two Copies Privately Printed
Not to be Sold
"O the darke myndes of men. O the blynde hertes!"
Sir Thomas More (1478-1535 A.D.)

"The visible creation shall be apprehended as a revelation of the Glory of God."
Johannes Scotus Erigena (815-877 A.D.)

"Occupation with the idea of immortality is suitable for persons of rank—and especially ladies—who have nothing to do."
Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe (1749-1832 A.D.)

"I have never considered the practical results of my works. I am inclined to believe that they have done good, but I never aimed at that. The artist is called on in his writings only to realize his ideas. He takes on what aspect he may in the imagination of men; it is for them to extract the good and reject the evil."
Ibid.

"Logic, or the spirit of totality, is the clue to reality, value and freedom."
Bernard Bosanquet (1848-1923 A.D.)
FOREWORD

To a much larger extent than is commonly realized, very reputable writers and painters have in the past amused themselves with occasional erotic productions of a far from respectable or dignified nature. The list, if it could be made complete, would surprise the professors of art and literature. Among laymen, only a few know even the story of how that venerable ass Ruskin, strong in the perfection of conscious virtue, betrayed a sacred trust and destroyed hundreds of priceless erotic drawings which were included in Turner's bequest to the National Gallery. Instances of frolicsome on the part of artists could be multiplied indefinitely; but the most striking ones are to be found in Japanese art, where of it may be said that the greatest of the print-designers invariably produced shameless and very diverting erotic pictures side by side with their most delicate or severe works.

While it may be wise to keep such publications out of the hands of very young and confused persons, they are demonstrably harmless in the hands of the really wise and virtuous—for if the latter clause of this statement were not true, we should see the sleuths of the various Watch-and-Ward Societies turned instantly into nymphomaniacs—and surely no one would go so far in flattery as to call them that. The truth is that works of an unconventional nature hold no perils for sane adults; and they may even produce a beneficial effect by correcting, with an occasional involuntary laugh, the atmosphere of extreme stuffiness and solemnity with which these essentially gay and happy matters are too often surrounded. Let us say about sex what the poet Victor Plarr said
about a beautiful dead lady:

"She was wild, and sweet, and witty—
Let's not say dull things about her."

Certainly it was with no desire to soil what is fair or sully what is pure that this poem was written, but rather as a light attempt to banish a few not-overclean ghosts and boggles of sinister awe and darkness from a region where natural fun and sunshine should prevail. Sex is indeed, as our grandfathers said, "sacred"; but no more so than anything else in this mysterious universe. We no longer think that it is necessary to subscribe to some cruel and false mythology about the sun and the moon before counting ourselves among their most sincere worshipers.

Unfortunately, few people today except writers and sculptors and painters are sufficiently free from private terrors to approach such a poem as this with frankness and sanity. For this reason, and for this only, the author has not permitted it to be published by one of the many underground agencies that gladly undertake such projects, with huge profits, but has had only a few copies printed for the possible entertainment of his very personal friends. It is hoped that these persons will realize that this pamphlet is to be regarded as if it were a confidential manuscript, and that it is not to be sold or put into circulation in any way.

As to the poem itself, the author has no moral apologies to make.
PROLOGUE

In spite of all the ancient prophets said,
It is not known what happens to the dead—
Whether they prosper in a world of bliss
Or puzzle in a world resembling this.
But on a happy morning fresh in May
A solemn soothsayer, venerable and grey,
Received a sudden revelation
Out of the eye and center of the sun;
And wrote it down, that future years may spell
Out of his words the vision he saw well.
BOOK ONE

The Book of the Dead

A certain citizen of high renown
For works of worth and justice in this town—
A man of unrelenting rectitude,
A pattern and a parable for the good—
Died; and what then he did and where he went
Supplies the theme of this High Argument.

His life had been a model for the throng.
He had hated sin and sinners his life long,
And most especially that entangling mesh
That has to do with errors of the flesh.
He had married, once, a cold and stupid dame
Who viewed the loves of even the birds with shame;
And of the horrors of their mutual bed,
The better for mankind the less is said.
He, finding intercourse thus a sorry evil,
Believed it a concoction of the Devil;
And with right honest will used tongue and pen
To make sex loathsome to his fellow-men.
One night as he lay sleepless on his bed
A sudden fearful pain shot through his head,
And thought flashed black into a thunder-stroke... Out of this darkness he at last awoke
And heard a Voice speak, ominous and slow:
"Awake, arise, and walk; for we must go."

"Whither do you take me?" he with wondering eyes
Asked the invisible Speaker,—"To the skies
Where Heaven awaits me?" Coldly the Voice said:
"Dismiss that foolish nonsense from your head.
The Heavenly Courts of which your Prophets sung
Are dwelt in by the beautiful and young,
Who wander among Fields of Asphodel
And lovely amorous secrets share and tell.
But for the old-and-ugly-spirited
Quite other fate is all they merited
In this world or the next. Soon you shall know.
Awake, arise, and walk; for we must go."

The Good Man bowed his head resignedly
And followed to the street. There he could see
The first cold grey of dawn across the sky.
He heard the early milk-trucks bumping by;
He saw the windows where his neighbors slept
The sleep of just men, wise and law-adept.
He—so it seemed to him—he, he alone
In this vast city built of steel and stone,
Where once as honored citizen he had lived,
Prowled now—helpless, ghostly, and fugitive—
Aimless and homeless, without power of choice,
Guided but by a stern implacable Voice.

At last the Voice said: “Enter at this door!”
Bewildered he looked up, and saw it bore
The name of a world-famed and vast hotel
Within whose halls he often, and right well,
Had lunched on steaks or ducks or subtle stews
Of pigeon while he read the daily news
Of marts and politics and wars and vice.
He murmured: “Well, it certainly is nice
To see this, once again!” With confident pace
He entered to the wide bright-lighted place
Where bell-boys flitting active to and fro
Made the activity that he used to know.
“No luggage, sir?” He in lugubrious tone
Answered: “I left in haste; I could bring none.”
“Very well, sir. Please register.” He stood
Before the desk. The ink was red as blood.
He wrote his name. The clerk smiled: “Let me see—
I’ll give you Room Eight-million. Here’s your key.”

Glancing around him as he moved away
He saw the lobby packed as at a play.
The Voice said: “Do not marvel at this sight:
Did you think that you alone have died tonight?
The heaviest registrations are at dawn.
Many have come, more coming. Hasten on.”
The elevator shot up. At some floor
It stopped. He walked the corridor to a door
That opened to his key. Entering, his view
Was charmed by furniture completely new
And just like all the furniture which a rover
Finds in all good hotels, the whole world over;
Neat, bright, and tasteful; nothing worn or shoddy;
An apartment for a prince, or anybody.

The Voice said: "We have come where we have come.
This is your lodging; make yourself at home."

He looked around him. Certainly his worth
Had been well-judged by Him Who Rules The Earth:
This good apartment lacked no luxury
Needed to please the body or the eye.
Here was a sitting-room of spacious size,
Neat bed-room, bath—all of the privacies
And comforts for an honest gentleman
Who shall not lodge in earth's hotels again.

He thought: "On earth, much vice in all such places
Went on: adultery, blackmail, vile disgraces.
But of such things there is no more to fear,
Thanks to my Savior, now at last I'm here."

He strolled into the bath-room and there saw
That, due to an inexorable law
Governing dead-men in the grave,
His mirrored face needed a morning shave.
Opening the little mirror-door, he found
A razor, brush, and soap, all by renowned
American manufacturers. On this treasure
He seized; and shaved, with hearty morning pleasure.

The towel was still drying his countenance
When through the window something caught his glance
Not of good portent. 'Twas a coppery smoke
That flared and wavered, fluctuated, broke
Into thin tendrils of snake-forking fire,
While sheets of flame below leaped ever higher.

He reached the door, much pleased with the composure
With which he faced this perilous disclosure.
He turned the handle, but it would not turn.
He kicked the door: 'twas steel.... "And must I burn
Here like a trapped rat on this upper floor
Because some fool has locked this cursed door?"
And suddenly he was no more a man,
But panic blood that through wild arteries ran.
He shrieked, he caterwauled, he swore, he wailed,
While, thick outside the windows, fire-sparks hailed.
He cursed his God, he cursed the city's mayor,
He called for firemen's aid, he knelt in prayer;
He saw the billowing coppery smoke soar by,
And almost knew what twice it is to die.

He flung the window open: far below
He saw the curious crowd surge to and fro
As clanging trucks and engines, hideous red,
Swept up; minute policemen, stationed ahead,
Forced back the rabble who impeded ever
The stupid slow incompetent endeavor
Of firemen small as ants to stay this terror
Of leaping flame that surged momentarily nearer.
He was looking into a canyon, not his city.
This was a gulf of horror, without pity
For a poor wretch who drew his frightened breath.
While chaos-waves of fire flickered beneath.

Despairing, he looked up to where, across
The street, no farther than a penny-toss,
Were rows on rows of windows from which peered
Hundreds of faces. And it seemed they leered
At him, poor soul. They stood there, safe from harm,
Excited, curious, while the fire-alarm
That marked his doom was sounding far and wide—
And they safe, smiling, on the other side
Of that small distance that meant life or death...
He closed the window, and drew choking breath.

Then the Voice spoke: “Yield not to trivial fears.
Thus shall it be through all the future years:
Through all Eternity this fire shall rage;
Through all Eternity you in this cage
Shall lodge in comfort, and fare very well
In this your due variety of Hell.
The flames shall leap, but never come too near.
It is not that which you have most to fear.

"But let the terror of Eternities
Unseal the savage blindness of your eyes
That viewed My Living World with such distrust
And loved not even my lovely gift of Lust.
You shall look out across the street, and see
What in those windows shall be presently
Made manifest. There in each window shown
Shall be some Lust which you have once forgone—
Some secret wish, some bitter lost regret
For which your mortal life still owes you debt.
And countless thousands of delighted Devils
Shall there enact your unaccomplished evils.
Awake, arise, and to the window go!
Open your eyes and look: now you shall know."

- - - - -
BOOK TWO

The Book of Revelation

The Good Man heard the iron in that Voice
And knew he had no answer and no choice.

He peered across the street. Gone were the faces
Crowding of late the windows,—in whose places
Were wide and lighted sheets of crystal glass
Like shop-fronts showing to all eyes that pass
The tempting wares that glisten bright within.
But ah what emblems of disturbing sin
Were here displayed in shameless panoply
Before the astonished horror of his eye!

Behind him roared the vast hotel on fire;
Before him, the worse Hell-flames of desire!

In one large window, through the crystal panes,
He saw a sight that froze his virtuous veins.

He saw, in long procession, through the glass
Girl after girl in varied beauty pass—
Each girl a monument to some time and place,
Some once-impassioned conduit of the race,
A scent in apple-trees, a whirl in dust,
A reprehensible magnet to men's lust.

Each girl slowly as in an ether-trance
Came forward with calm paces of advance.
Each paused, and let her long robe, fold by fold
Drop from her—till the Good Man could behold
All that she had of bare voluptuous charms,
Her legs, her thighs, her crotch, her breasts, her arms.
Each girl revealed herself, as if alone,
Or as if she were a statue made of stone.
There were fat and lean; there were slender-hipped and stout;
There were some with monstrous breasts, and some without;
There were bellies like a quiet curving wave
And bellies fit to be an elephant's grave;
There were thighs that could be hitched to any plough
And thighs as delicate as a virgin's vow;
There were legs smooth-rounded and divinely long;
There were arms as white as a moonlighted song;
Some girls had triangles of neat pretty fur,
Black, brown, or mauve, or gold; some did prefer
The classic mode, and had removed all trace
Of shadow from the smoothly sloping place
Where, disappearing in between their thighs,
Two little lips hinted at mysteries.
Girl after girl, in long succession, came
To open wide her robe, devoid of shame,
Without so much as fluttering hand to hide
Her body’s secrets from the lustful-eyed:
Thousands and thousands passing slowly by
In a procession of eternity.

Suddenly in that window the light went out.
The Good Man gave an almost-pious shout
Of gratitude. Mopping his sweating brow
He said: “Thank Heaven, that thing is ended now!”

In the next window then a sudden light
Revealed a further wonder to his sight.

A vast and monstrous Instrument there uprose
As unpredictable as an elephant’s nose
An idiot Thing, like a portion of a body,
But raw, uncouth as a tumor removed bloody
By surgeons from its natural hiding-place
Inside the flesh: an infamy! a disgrace!
Yet here it was, erect in shameless passion
As if it had a right, in its own fashion,
To make its way in its peculiar world.
About its base in gentle groves were curled
Profuse forests of hairs. And there it stood
In the proud arrogance of its boastful blood,
Sole in its own sphere, doubtful of rivals any,
And glad to spend its all for queen or zany.
Beside this wonder presently appeared
A most engaging Monster, elephant-eared—
A puzzling Monster, like a garden-flower
That opens lewdly in its secret hour—
A flower that has its private ecstasies
When hither come the honey-seeking bees
Who clasp their bodies to her colored shelf
Delighting thus themselves, also herself.
This Monster opened wide her deep recesses
As if recipient of profound caresses—
Disclosing thus to the Good Man such horrors
As would, he thought, haunt him through all tomorrows.

He shuddered: “That such things should ever be!
And why, and why, are they now shown to me?”

And in another window then he saw
A sight unknown to decency and law.

There in a window, naked to his eye,
Stood a young girl, slim, delicate, and shy,
Clad but in slippers and long black-silk hose
And for her dark hair a red glowing rose.
Her body had the beauty of the young—
A flower just blossomed—a song not yet sung—
An ecstasy not yet fully informed
Of why its pulses and its breasts are warmed.
A young boy knelt before her, wondering
In passionate awe of this delicious thing
Which now, real, live, before him lovelier gleamed
Than all his virgin hopes had ever dreamed.
He touched with fingers tremulous and tender
Her deep firm navel, her smooth sides, her slender
Breasts, shoulders, and the furry nooks thereunder—
With incredulity of youthful wonder
That a girl's actual nakedness should be
Ever revealed for him to love and see.
He touched with gentleness the Dusky Bower
That hid in shade her delicate central Flower;
And she smiled down upon him, almost sad
To be so much adored by her nice lad.
Then suddenly courageous, she undressed
The quivering youth, and clasped him to her breast,
And taught him, in her gentle Depths below
What virgins, male and female, hope to know.

The Good Man cried: "This younger generation
Is doomed to an eternity of damnation!"

Another window opened—a bath-room.
A girl stood there, in pleasant health abloom,
Under a shower-bath with a tall young man,
Prancing and laughing as the water ran
Over her breasts and shoulders, slipping down
Across her little belly, there to drown
With wetness, like a mouse, the sleek dark fur
That marked the pretty forking-point of her.
He, with importuning hands, busy did grope
All up and down her body, the white soap
Making more smooth the roundness of her form.
He played with each cool breast, and with the warm
Soft quivering slopes between her silken thighs,
Delighting his bold hands and his bold eyes.
She stood there laughing, shameless, in the tub,
Enjoying, on her part, this pagan rub;
And watching with no little merriment
How, where his Flesh at first droopingly bent
In seemly modest unaspiring fashion,
It gradually was roused to playful passion.
With soap-white hand she seized this friendly Tool
And rubbed it up and down, the merry fool;
And teased its Shaft between her dripping thighs
With conscious wriggles and ecstatic cries.
But now their eager breath came thick and fast.
The moment for their watery play was past.
They both jumped out; each swiftly dried the other,
Then leaped upon a bed, where he could smother
Her whole fresh body with his kisses burning
While all her blood awoke to passionate yearning.
And then no longer could this play be borne;
And with a greedy hand she seized his Horn
And thrust it into her moist Mossy Dell
Where in the warmth of bliss it rose and fell
And plunged and stirred in amorous argument
Till both in sudden gush of joy lay spent.

The Good Man writhed in anguish of desire
As though his very trousers were on fire.
Then in another window there was shown
A shameless spectacle of Flesh and Bone.

Two naked lovers lay so close embraced
It seemed their bodies must be interlaced
Inextricably. Both were tall and strong
And white as gods and goddesses of old song—
She, soft and smooth, yet firm, like a ripe plum;
He, tense as runners' muscles can become.
Her tapering shapely legs spread wide apart,
Giving free access to her tenderest Part.
He lay upon her, and his arms embraced
Her prostrate shoulders and her yielding waist,
The while he plied his long and mighty Blade
Deep-buried underneath her downy Shade.
There in the softness in between her thighs
The great Prong plunged. Her little grateful sighs,
Her opened Depths, her blissful attitude
Assured him that she shared his lusty mood.
From time to time a sudden storm would shake them,
Yet not suffice to satisfy or slake them.
Nine times they trembled thus, but still went on
To try if other victories could be won.

The Pious Gentleman looked on askance,
With feverish fingers clutching at his pants;
While in another window came to view
Another spectacle obscene and new.

A young man entered an enormous room.
His was an athlete-shape, in the full bloom
Of lusty twenties. And before him, thick
And upright as a pine-tree, walked his Prick.
It overturned a heavy morris-chair;
It broke a table-top; but debonair,
Unconscious of such trifles, on it went
Sedate and serious in its good intent,
Toward a plump naked girl with bright red hair
Who lay upon the floor, awaiting there
His coming, in an attitude of proffer
To his bright eyes all that she had to offer.
With wriggling joy she watched the young man coming,
His Tube with one small drop already running.
She shrieked with joy; she seized him, threw him under,
And leaped upon him like a storm of thunder.
He lay upon his back and gladly raddled
Her open Crease as she his Post bestradled
With all the eagerness of her Straddling Place,
And, bending over, pressed against his face
Her long pink-pointed breasts, to which his kisses
Brought stiffening ecstasies of carnal blisses.
Deeply impaled, she writhed and quivered on
The hard shaft of his Phallic Paragon,
While he drove upward into her rich Charms
The Fear and Hope of ladies' sweet alarms.
Until at last a storm within her woke;
Some great convulsion on her senses broke;
And down on him, in utter overthrow,
She fell, her small toes twitching far below.
He now, upon his own last pleasure bent,
Removing not his mighty Instrument
From her soft Sheath, suddenly turned her over,
And down into her, like a demon lover,
He plunged his eager Piston strong and fast
Into her innermost depths; until at last
A tremor shook him. And collapsing down
Flat on her like an earthquake-shattered town,
He deep into her body shot the flood
And spouting cataract of his lustihood.
She, wide, received all torrents he could pour,
And joyfully cried out for more and more,
And gripped him to her as if she would drain
Into herself the drops of every vein.

"How vile!" the Good Man thought. "A public scandal!"
Trying to calm his Pump’s rebellious Handle.

Another window showed another couple
Engaged in antics intricate and supple.
A naked girl is crouched on knees and hands;
A young man kneels behind; his Member stands
Upright, an arc of proud voluptuous pleasure
Ready to give some lady all its treasure.
The youth bends forward and attacks his Dear
Suavely and smoothly at her buxom rear
Where nicely gaping, sweetly unafeared,
Between her thighs her Pussie is displayed.
Into this soft and neatly-fitting Hole
He thrusts the round head of his naked Pole,
And with slow gradual urgings shoves inside
The long Shaft till there's nothing left to hide,
And his large hanging Duck's-eggs come to rest
Against the warmth of this convenient Nest.
Then sliding in and out, he much admires
His revealed Part, and hers; she never tires
Of this deliciously caressing game,
But cries to him for more, and knows no shame,
And watches, in between her spreading thighs,
The red and lustful Male-tool as it plies.
One little drop of her own moisture drips
From the warm Valley of her Nether Lips.
And he, feeling this essence, suddenly
Cannot restrain himself—and pours with glee
Into her opened loins that boiling Spray
Which marks the climax of their holiday.

The Good Man watched the scene in savage mood,
While Hades-bells rang madness through his blood.

And then appeared to his astonished eyes
An endless train of girls in nature's guise
Who every one produced a rubber diddle
With which she squirted water up her Middle,
Eradicating thus, with artful tricks,
The juices late shot into her from Pricks—
Abolishing with thoughtful certitude
The chance that she might bear another brood
Of bawling brats to crowd the universe
With morons, imbeciles, churchmen, or worse.

No less astonished presently was he
As through another window he could see
A long procession of young vigorous males,
Whose sturdy Members shone like fatted whales,
Encase their glory of erected Blubber
In delicate and dainty sheaths of rubber—
That, when they entered to some Grotto warm,
They could spout and spout, and do the girl no harm.

The Good Man fell exhausted on his bed.
"O Lord of Hosts! O Lord of Hosts!" he said.
BOOK THREE

The Book of the Thousand Sacred Names

Out of a feverish trance the Good Man woke.
"I now admonish you," the cold Voice spoke,
"That what you saw is scarcely the beginning
Of your researches in the realm of sinning.
Strengthen your courage, fortify your soul
To view sin steadily and view it whole.
On earth you thought so constantly of virtue
That now excess of lust can scarcely hurt you:
'Twill make a proper balance of it all.
Rise, and look out again—lest worse befall!"

The Good Man lifted up his anguished head,
And rose from the safe refuge of his bed,
And staggered to the window, there to follow
Events whose horror made his bones feel hollow.

In a huge window, blazing in his view,
A thousand couples did what they did do—
Put it in such terms as you may prefer,
Each He did something curious to some Her.
And as each couple did its act of shame
They called what they were doing by its name.
The Good Man watched and listened, knowing well
These words were garnered from the sewers of Hell.

One youth lay flat; on him, a husky wench
Straddled his Vent-pipe with her Monkey-wrench.
One brawny youth stuck out his Rolling-pin
Toward a girl’s Doughnut-hole, and thrust it in.
Another turned his Rod in a girl’s Vice
With mutual sensations very nice.

One plied his Night-stick up a girl’s Dark Alley;
Another’s Plough worked in a lady’s Valley;
Another raised his Mushroom in her Moss;
Another took his Profit in her Loss;
One filled her empty Purse with his Bank-roll;
One almost burst her Furnace with his Coal.

One measured up her Well with his Foot-rule;
One sealed her Gutter with his Soldering-tool;
One with his Bow scraped nicely at her Fiddle;
One drove his Sporting-model to her Middle;
One pushed his Leg-of-lamb between her Capers;
One put his Want-ad in her Evening Papers.

One sent his Fire-boat chugging up her Bay;
One fed his Donkey in her Bale-of-hay;
One in the shadows of her Sacred Mount
Gave demonstration of his Holy Fount;
One thrust his Johnnie Long into her Shorts;
One brought his Maypole to her Indoor-sports.

One rocked his Rocker on her Bare-skin Rug;
One shot his Bug-spray at her Lady-bug;
One put his Light-bulb in her Pantry-closet;
One added to her Bank his Bank-deposit;
One stirred his Poker in her Fire-place;
One's Bishop in her Virgin-shrine said grace.

One baked his Beef-stake in her Fireless Cooker;
One with his Furnace-shaker nicely shook her;
One burglarized her Backdoor with his Jimmy;
One in her Dance-hall did an agile Shimmy;
One's Roman-candle whizzed into her Park;
One housed his whole Menagerie in her Ark.

One pacified his Mad-dog with her Muzzle;
One lost his Monkey in her Monkey-puzzle;
One thawed his Icicle in her Little Muff;
One warmed her Ice-box with his own Hot-stuff;
One stirred her Cocktail with his active Swizzle;
One pried her Soap-box open with his Chisel.

Another cooled her Hot-box with his Hose;
One clothed his Savage in her Underclothes;
One sent his Badger scurrying down her Burrow;
Another drove his Plowshare up her Furrow;
One raised his Obelisk in her Union Square;
One hid his Baldness underneath her Hair.

One showed his Trained Seal in her Circus-ring;
One probed her Honey with his Hornet's Sting;
One with his full Cement-tube plugged her Leak;
One with his Oil-can oiled her Little Squeak;
One at her Cheese went nibbling with his Mouse;
One stowed his Dolly in her Dolly-house.

One cried Hosanna up her Glory-hole;
One put some Jelly in her Jelly-roll;
One parked in her Garage his Pleasure-car;
One pushed his Pickle in her Pickle-jar;
One whirled his Egg-beater in her Egg-basket;
One laid his Stiff out in her Funeral-casket.

One his Asparagus reared in her Hot-bed;
One let his Priest absolve her Maidenhead;
One stuck his Bullrush in her Parlor Vase;
One with his Tickler found her Ticklish-place;
One rang his Alarm-clock in her Sitting-room;
One swept her Vestibule with his firm Broom.

One's Dog was kenneled in her cosy Manger;
One in her Safe-box stored his Jewel from danger;
One hitched between her Shafts his snorting Horse;
One played his Balls upon her neat Golf-course;
One plumbed her Mine with his Divining-rod;
One’s Patent Sprinkler much refreshed her Sod.

One dipped his Sausage in her Mustard-jar;
One took a Joy-ride in her Kiddie-car;
One closed her Champagne-bottle with his Cork;
One in her Basement made his Plumber work;
One with his Trench-tool opened up her Trench;
One rolled his Radish on her Garden-bench.

One sent his Dry-goods home in her neat Packet;
One let his Sailor don her warm Pea-jacket;
One in her Furbelow hid his Nakedness;
One bent his Iron in her Hydraulic Press;
One slid his Foot into her Party-shoe;
One blessed her Meadows with his Morning-dew.

One twisted his smooth Key inside her Keyhole;
Another drenched, but not with pee, her Pee-hole;
One plunged his Deep-sea-diver down her Pool;
One sent his Bad Boy to her Grammar-school
One filled her Cider-barrel with his Funnel;
One drove his Engine puffing through her Tunnel.

Another comforted her Maid-forlorn;
Another fed her Ass his Cob-of-corn;
One up her Chimney smoked his long Church-warden;
One checked his Baby in her Kindergarten;
One buzzed his Busy-Bee into her Honey;
One hid in her smooth Rabbit-hole his Bunny.

One let his Tomcat yowl inside her Kitty;  
One matched her Epigram with Line as witty;  
One screwed his Light-globe into her Lamp-holder;  
One filed his Correspondence in her Folder;  
One warmed himself inside her pretty Fur;  
One killed his Hero in her Sepulchre.

Thus they proceeded, without let or shame,  
Doing a thousand things, and all the same.  
And each pair, when at last the act was done,  
Then did the whole thing over, just for fun.

The Good Man cried: “Oh what a parable  
Of sin! Why, this is simply terrible!  
To think of all the evil they are doing,  
And all the Vials of Wrath that must be brewing  
To punish them for their lascivious play  
When there shall come the dreadful Judgment Day!”  
He sank in weakened terror on his bed.  
“Would I were dead!... But, Jesus, I am dead!”...
BOOK FOUR

The Book of Odd Numbers

He was startled by the sudden telephone,
Yet cheered by its familiar busy tone.
He answered: "This is Room Eight-million." "Oh!"
A voice said, "It's your voice! I'm glad to know
That I was not mistaken when I thought
I saw you in the lobby. I just caught
A glimpse of you, too far away for greeting.
Well, isn't this a very curious meeting?"

He recognized the firm and soulful voice,
But was not wholly given to rejoice;
For this was Mrs. Marcus Higginbotham,
One of the saintliest ladies of all Gotham,
Whose much-respected name had been a terror
To Fallen Girls, and others caught in error.
Once caught, no hope; the lady, swooping down,
Would drive the sinner weeping out of town
With floods of kindly spiritual advice.
You did not have to hear her speaking twice
To know that there, sublime in virtue, stood
One of the most implacable of the Good.

"Dear Mrs. Higginbotham, I am charmed,"
He said, to hide how much he was alarmed.
"What can I do for you?"

The voice replied:
"I've never been so shocked as since I died!
Those windows! That immoral public show!
What can we do about it? Do you know?
There they display, with wholly shameless arts,
All of their most unnecessary parts!
You, living, always were a mighty force
For righteousness; so now I turn, of course,
To you for strength in this predicament.
Can't you call up the Mayor, and have them sent
To jail at once, for life?"

Sadly he said:
"Dear lady, don't you know that we are dead,
And that by living ears there would be heard
Of all of our complaints no single word?"

"It must be stopped!" she snapped. Just then the bell
Buzzed, and the Central said: "Oh, what the hell!
You're talking overtime." The voice was gone;
He jiggled at the silent telephone,
Rather relieved to find his efforts vain;
Then, sighing, to his window turned again.

A dozen spectacles blazed with mercury-lights.
And Oh what sights! what most appalling sights!

There lounged a girl displaying to the air
The delicate forest of her maiden-hair.
Around her in admired disorder strewn
Lay multitudinous objects;—a half-moon
Cut from a melon-rind; a good fat candle;
An ivory dildo with a carven handle;
A shoe-horn; a banana; a golf-putter;
A rubber doll as smooth and soft as butter;
A foot of broomstick, and a garden-hose.
And what these things were for, nobody knows.

Nearby, a dark-skinned negro, athlete-shaped,
Just raped and raped and raped and raped and raped
Slim palid virgins who in endless file
Flocked to his tireless Tool and gold-toothed smile—
Protesting with faint fluttering hands of shame,
Concealing Parts which authors blush to name—
Yet in an instant yielding to a Force
Which they were powerless to resist, of course.
Their slender bodies wilted in his grasp.
Their delicate spirits could no more than gasp
“Mercy!” But there was mercy for them none;
And the smooth Copper Rod did what was done.
Two modest maidens, bloomed like half a peach,
Cuddled together, each half next to each,
Making a perfect and well-rounded fruit
Of symmetry as amiable as cute.
Their soft young breasts, their wanton flowing curls,
Their slender hips, marked them as lovely girls.
Reclining in their mutual overthrow
Each pressed her lips to other's Lips below—
The mouth of speech fond on the Mouth of Bliss
In whispering ecstasies of kiss snd kiss.
Each small pink Slit grew soft and sweetly moist
As the young bodies quivered and rejoiced
Unceasingly with delicate shameless shame
In endless variants of their pretty game.
Hands amorously on little buttocks pressed,
And little belly played with little breast,
And little feet would lift to get their share
Of joy by dabbling amid tangled hair.

Two young men, shaped like Greeks of classic days,
Lay clasped together; they, in sundry ways
Of warmth and pressure such as Plato knew,
With waves of pleasure trembled through and through.
Their glance and touch, affectionate and burning,
Kindled and quenched each other's lustful yearning—
Then they discussed with like-impassioned breath
The immortal hour of Socrates' calm death;
Then turned again with eager amorous chatter
To a more prominent and more pressing matter.
A naked Nymph lay stretched in summery shade,
The while a bad young Satyr with her played.
He had a furry tail and a gay smile
Sufficient any nice Nymph to beguile.
She had perhaps the loveliest-curved young breast
That ever stirred a spectator’s unrest.
Laughing, she hid it with her long dark hair,
Then showed it free again, alive and bare,
And with caressing fingers stroked its neat
Rondure that curved in two fruits firm and sweet,
Calling it pretty names, saying that none
Should have this pet which was for her alone—
That it was for no Satyr’s bad delight
And quite too good for even his shameless sight.
She lay laughing still more while she saw stir
Out of the Satyr’s shaggy middle-fur
A pink-tipped point which momently grew longer—
A curious Prong, waxing each instant stronger
Till it stood out with little quivering airs
Of independence from his belly-hairs—
A funny curving shaft, naked as bone,
That seemed to have a free life of its own
And sought its pleasure of its own accord
Without much guidance from its ruling lord.
It seemed to wink at her with wantonness,
While she, in feigned indifference, gave caress
To her own white breast, looking all the while
At this emerging Monster; and her smile
Was enigmatic, and suggested only
That she was very sorry if 'twas lonely,
But that however much the world might doubt it
She did not know what she could do about it.
With virgin looks, with little pitiful sighs,
She studied the poor Thing with serious eyes,
And said she thought it really was too bad
None took an interest in the promising Lad.
Until at last she stopped her wicked teasing
And suddenly with gesture very pleasing
Spread her white legs and soft warm thighs apart
And drew the Satyr close, till his stiff Dart
Deliciously went in beneath her Shade
Which doubtless for that purpose had been made.
And he with gentle hungry passion pressed
His body to her belly and her breast,
And made her one with him, in happy play
Most suitable for a summer holiday.

A fat young man was jiggling at a stocking
In manner which the godly would find shocking.
One stood, in front of him the lewd projection
Shameless displayed of a tall bare Erection;
And with encircling fingers moved the sheath
Slow up and down upon the shaft beneath.
One young man was encouraging his Zipper
Inside a lady's velvet evening-slipper.
Another young man tremulously stood
Thrusting his Object through a knot of wood.
While still another a banana-skin
Employed to wrap his Baby-bunting in.
And yet a sixth, the unregenerate felon,
Was having intercourse with a young melon
In whose soft rounded side he had cut a hole,
To the most sure damnation of his soul.

Two slender, innocent-eyed young naked girls,
Their short blond hair a mass of little curls,
Crouched on each side of a recumbent man
And with light fingers tried in vain to span
His stiff ungainly Member there revealed,
This wicked mystery which most men concealed.
With delicate curiosity, they played
Upon this monstrous Organ, unafraid.
Delighted with their toy, they strove to win
New fun by slipping up and down the skin,
As it stood up ferocious, raw and bare
Out of the darkness of surrounding hair.
Till suddenly, with an ecstatic quiver,
It shot up spouting its Sacred River,
To the amazement of the gentle girls
Who laughed and shook their heads of golden curls.

One girl was lifting up her petticoat
To be bestraddled by an ancient goat
Whose jerk on jerk of poorly aimed advance
At last arrived where should have been her pants,
And with loin-movements powerful and quick
Accomplished, to her joy, his little trick.
Two men lay on a bed with a gay girl,
All three of them in ever-changing whirl.
She'd turn to one man, and he for a minute
Would find her Cave and play his Dragon in it—
And then relinquish with the utmost fairness
The exploration of their charmer's Bareness
To his companion—thus for hours delaying
The final crisis of their naughty playing.

There were displayed, among far lesser sins,
The antics of the famous Siamese Twins.
They lay upon a bed; one of the two
Was being given a most thorough Screw
By a big lubber who upon her lay.
The other twin turned not her eyes away
As deep and deep the struggling Tool did bore,
But merely cried: "Oh, do it one time more!"

One lady had a large athletic snake,
Trained very naughty liberties to take.
As she lay sprawling nude upon her bed
It would crawl down until its pointed head
Could gently nuzzle through her Middle-fur
And writhe itself most subtly into her—
Its rippling muscles and smooth-gliding skin
Waking delicious thrills as, deep within,
Its slender tongue licked flamelike at those parts
Too inaccessible for human arts.
Nor did this dear pet for one moment fail
To vibrate vigorously its protruding tail,
While the moist lady's natural fountains streamed
In gush of joy no honest wife has dreamed.

A statue of Priapus chastely stood
Extending half a yard its Prong of wood
Up-curving, firm, in all the lewd perfection
And strenuous energy of fierce erection.
Enchanted by this sight, a naked woman,
Amorous of this Nozzle more-than-human,
Had climbed the statue and enraptured clung
To it; between her thighs the rigid Prong
Plunged deep into her; though the lustful Hole
Could not quite take all the heroic Pole,
It did its greedy best; while she, with giggles,
Squirmed on it with incessant thrusts and wriggles.

A naked lady with enormous rump
Was crouching like a cow about to jump,
Exposing thus her plump posterior parts
To a tall Demon skilled in all the arts.
His Staff was of enormous length, and thin;
And he inserted it so far within
That to the lady's manifest surprise
Its head stuck through her mouth, before her eyes;
While she with amiable and silly smile
Enjoyed what he was doing all the while.

The Thing with which one Devil had been born
Was long and curving as a hunting-horn.
Once in full-circle did the tube go round
And half-way more, so that its end was found
Just opposite his mouth. Thus, with much pleasure
He could employ his hours of useless leisure.

Another's stood a yard in front of him.
He was a musical Imp; it was his whim
To have at hand a trusty fiddle-bow;
And when his Yard erect and hard did grow
And stuck out strong and vibrant from his middle
He would play upon it as upon a fiddle,
Producing for himself such ecstasies
As are not known in other symphonies.

Another had a single watchful eye
Just at the end of his long Do-and-die.
Ladies would pay him generously to stick
Into their Secrets this observant Prick,
And while he took his pleasure frankly tell them
If accident of pregnancy befell them.

A Chinese Devil, used to village muck,
Was busy in amour with a fat duck.
A suave old Arab Devil was intent
Upon a boy's posterior as he bent
To scrutinize with hopeful smiling face
The youngster's smooth well-rounded sitting-place,
And finding there the Hole, with wicked grin
Exposed his Prick and forced it deep within.
A Demon who was obviously Persian
Between a fat-girl's breasts took his diversion,
Pressing the globes together, in whose crease
He rubbed until his Instrument found ease.
A sour Cambodian Devil from the south
Carefully looked an urchin in the mouth
To see if toothy injury might befall
Should he entrust this catamite with his All;
But finding no teeth sharply-edged or broken
Between the grinning lips he thrust his Token.

A swarthy Devil, with blows fast and thick,
Was hammering near a red-hot forge his Prick—
A subtle, reprehensible old Devil,
Tempering his Ancient Evil on an anvil—
Deliberately and quietly shaping it
To a harpoon of steel—someday to hit
Some obstinate lady firmly in the middle.
(Hence the old nursery-rhyme: "High, diddle-diddle.")

These were the chastest things the Good Man saw
As, doomed by Heaven's inexorable Law,
He peered out of the window. Many a sight
Was there, too vile for mortal hand to write.
Somewhere the veil of modesty should be drawn.
No pen could picture the lascivious dawn
Of two amebas snuggling close together;
Or frogs, who copulate in any weather
And for two weeks, clasped, with a silly smile
Until that moist and shining Thing of Shame
Spurts in the sight of some inquisitive dame
And gives her as she leaves the monkey-pen
More fun from monkeys than she got from men.

No, howsoever wild some poets sing,
There should be decency in everything.
And sin, for all this chronicle can unfold,
Must be a song unsung, a tale untold.

The Good Man, seeing all this and much more,
Slipped from the window-sill onto the floor,
And cried: "They could not fool me! Well I knew
That all those terrible things I've read were true!"
Contrive life's duller moments to beguile;
Or fish, who publicly display their art
Of fornicating half a mile apart;
Or how the virile hippopotamus
Without creating any local fuss
Delights his lady-friend, his portly dear,
With ponderous ecstasy for half a year.
It would be unbecoming to repeat
What happens to two dogs who, when in heat,
Get stuck in such humiliating fashion
That they repent their erstwhile burst of passion;
And their embarrassed owners find, with wonder,
That what dogs joined, man shall not put asunder.
It would be reprehensible or worse
To mention how the snorting stallion-horse,
With long indecent Dangler, red and bare
And raw and worm-like, leaps upon the mare;
Or how the massive bull can wield so slender
And frail a Symbol of his masculine gender
Conjoined to such huge weight of pendulous Balls.
How write the truth about midnight cat-calls,
When Pussy learns, without the slightest doubt,
Some things go in more easily than out;
Or how the earthworm has a double treasure,
Being two ways equipped, and takes its pleasure
In duplex, as its cunning boy-girl friend
And it lie snugly joined at either end;
Or how the monkey in its cage all day
Sits rubbing its pink Tube in pleasant play
In the lone silence of the little room
The telephone rang like the crack of doom.
The Good Man answered. In shrill frightened tones
Good Mrs. Higginbotham spoke, with groans:
"Oh, what about this dreadful dreadful fire?
I see the flames come leaping high and higher—
I hear the hammering of the firemen stout—
When will this conflagration be put out?
It's dangerous! You big upstanding man,
Do something quickly! For I know you can!"

His mind, still haunted by late views obscene,
Wondered exactly what the dame might mean,
And if she knew the dream behind one word
Which he across the telephone had heard.
He thought: "But I must not become like Freud!"
And in a voice he often had employed
At Rotary Meetings, spoke most soothingly.
"Dear lady, we are helpless; don't you see
That we can reach no human fire-alarm?
Besides, I doubt if we shall suffer harm,
For the Dear Shepherd will preserve us still
To be the servants of His Gracious Will.”

“I'm not so sure of that!” the lady snapped.
“I think that in this damn hotel we're trapped!
Outside my window there's wild flame and smoke!
I feel that any minute I may choke
Or be cremated to a bit cinder!
This hotel’s just a fire-trap, going like tinder!”

In thought, he saw the lady's sagging charms,
And was relieved: “Well, not in my arms
Can she now throw herself?” he meditated.
But she went on with fury unabated.

“This worry now is driving me distracted!
And certainly it's time you up and acted.
I'm getting every minute more afraid.
Why don't you call the Demon Fire-brigade?”

He answered shortly: “If you care to, do.
The matter is entirely up to you.”

She rang off quickly; he sat grimly down
To watch with a small apprehensive frown
How out beyond his window a fierce glow
Shot up from flames roaring not far below,
And saw that clouds low-hanging in the sky
Were tinged with red of evil augury.
He rose and tried the door again; 'twas stone.
Yes, he was friendless, helpless, and alone.

Then in the silence there came to his ears
The clamor of resounding lusty cheers.
He flung the window open and looked out,
And gave an answering and encouraged shout
As peering down into the canyon-street
He saw, in uniforms gaudy yet neat,
Mustering swiftly, handsome, unafraid,
The world-renowned Demon Fire-brigade.
Clang-clanging down the street with raucous bells
Came sundry Imps released from many Hells
To add one more to many triumphs won
And show the humans how this thing is done.

The Hook-and-ladder, first arriving, shook
The earth. The ladders had a funny look,
Being completely studded with cats-eyes
That sort which on descending ankles spies
And gives an anxious moment to some dame
Who dreads immodesty more than the flame.
The Hook— it was a most amazing thing
Which could elongate as if by a spring
And snatch out of some nook of imminent burning
A threatened lady desperate and yearning.
Of its appearance there is naught to tell
Save that it looked like Something known quite well.

The engines next arrived, with terrible clatter
That well befitted such a weighty matter.
Their monstrous-shapen Smokestacks were so tall
That lustiest man's, beside, were pitiful.
(A sickening envy on one's senses steals!)
And each great Engine rolled upon two wheels
Of obloid-spheroid shape, resembling something
Unmentionable, as they came galumphing
Down through the street where the crowd opened wide
To give them entrance in their pomp and pride.
Marvellous Engines! whose supremacy
Showed Hell surpassing earth in potency.
There is no man who would not shrink afraid
From competition with Hell's Fire-brigade.

There now arrived, with many a clang and shout,
The Trucks, with Firemen jumping briskly out
And rushing here and yon, with honest mirth,
And doing nothing much—just as on earth.

And then drove up the magnificent Fire-chief.
He gave a speech, more eloquent than brief,
In which he made it most distinctly clear
That this, by law, was Fire-prevention Year;
And hence, with handsome oratorical manner,
He urged the burning inmates to be calmer;
And said, in ending: "Since the danger's slight,
I think that I will bid you folks good-night."
And tooting on his siren, off he drove
To go to bed with his cute light-of-love.

Meanwhile the Demon-firemen sturdily
Strove at their tasks with glad futility.
One Fiend, whose Tube was marvelously long,
Delivered its firm Nozzle to a throng
Of lesser Demons who as helmets wore
Discarded Rubber Things; they swiftly bore
The lengthening Hose onward against the fire
While the strong stream kept jetting high and higher,
And all the welkin with lewd laughter rang
As merrily the pumping Demon sang.

One Fiend, with Organ flexible and fine,
Tossed it nine stories high as a life-line.
Another, with less flexible but stout,
Used his as ladder for dames getting out
Of lower windows. They slid gently down,
Embracing it as something dearly known,
And lingering just a little at the end
To give a nice pat to this trusty friend.

Another Demon, with terrific whacks
Was using his own Person as an axe
To batter down certain most obdurate doors
And release ladies from their upper floors.
Thus one and all, noble and unafraid,
They labored on, the Demon Fire-brigade.
Until some silly fellow gave a shout,
And cried: "The fire's out! The fire's out!"
Whereupon all the Firemen stopped, and went
Off through the streets without more argument.
The cheerful crowd murmured: "There was no fire!"—
And strolled away; while the stern flames rose higher.

The Good Man watched in helpless mute despair,
As smoke soared upward through the somber air.

Suddenly on his window-sill he saw
A touselled lady with determined jaw
Who raised the sash and through the opening flew
Crying: "I climbed up, just to burn with you!"

'Twas Mrs. Higginbotham. She embraced
The Good Man wildly. Swiftly she unlaced
Her corsets, kicked her shoes off, pulled her dress
Over her head, and in fat nakedness
Of over-eating stood before his view
Smiling: "I came, I came to burn with you!"

And at that instant he beheld his fate,
And knew that for retreat it was too late.

She laughed: "Come on, we might as well be friends;
This is the place where all the lying ends.
You're a good fellow when you aren't too good!"
And what we've seen just puts me in the mood
For friendly nonsense, frivolous and nice;
Now we'll pretend that we're in Paradise!"

She pulled him, helpless, toward the spacious bed.
His clothes in whirlwinds round the room she shed.
She clasped his skinny body to her breast
And panted: "Now, beloved, do your best!"
But ah, alas! his Best could merely quail.
In shrunken impotence like a tadpole's tail,
However much the kindly dame exhorted
And stroked and kissed and wriggled and cavorted.
A wide abyss of wasted passion lay
Between him and the early Primrose Way
Of human youth—a canyon seared with fires
Of once-volcanic but now vain desires.

Emerging sadly from this private deep
He pushed the dame, and said: "Oh, go to sleep!"

She glared at him with glances like a knife.
Then he said: "You remind me of my wife!"
She answered: "If you must be nasty, do.
My husband was an idiot just like you,
Not half a man, and nothing for a woman
Who, though she is refined, likes to be human.
Oh, all you Good Men are a sorry lot
Who use your lustiness in nasty thought,
And when you come to your connubial bed
Make a good honest wife wish she were dead!"
"But Mrs. Higginbotham!" he exclaimed,
"I did not dream that you, so highly famed
For your good-works, believed in things of sex
And its lascivious cravings. You perplex
My judgment."

"Huh! my good-works! I'd undo them!
It was you imbecile men who drove me to them.
You preached of virtue in and out of season!
I always knew there was no rhyme or reason
In making such a fool Ungodly fuss
About a matter so innocuous.
And seeing that, I thought we'd have some fun
In Hell here. But, poor fish, I judged you wrong.
On earth, in Hell, you are no use to me.
You're just ridiculous! And I feel free
From all of you!"

And at these words, a change
Came over her, a transformation strange
Beyond belief: instantly, like a swan,
She spread wide soaring wings—and she was gone.
Up through the ceiling in a sudden flight
She disappeared from his bewildered sight,
And back to him her laughter drifted: "Well!
God help you! For you are indeed in Hell."

And looking upward in bewildered awe
Of such a miracle, the Good Man saw
That great reformer Mrs. Higginbotham,
The saintliest of all saintly dames of Gotham,
Grow beautiful and slender and a woman
Who angel-bright was yet divinely human
As upward to the Fields of Happy Things
She drifted on defiant careless wings.
BOOK SIX

The Book of the Last Judgment

Flames roared outside the room; silent, inside,
Lay the Good Man who had but lately died.

At length he spoke.

"O Lord, consume me wholly
If that be the deserts of all my folly.
Yet, Oh believe, not even now I guess
Where lies the source of my unworthiness."

The stern Voice answered: "You had little trust,
And loved not even my lovely gift of lust.
Your doom continues for Eternity,
Unless at last you smile. Then you are free."

Back to the window then the Good Man crept
And in the ominous silence there, he wept.