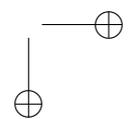
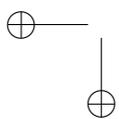
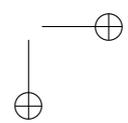
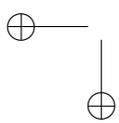
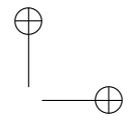
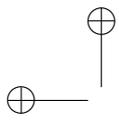
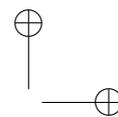
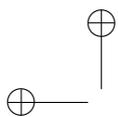


**HUSBANDS  
ARE DIFFICULT**





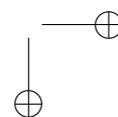
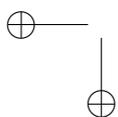


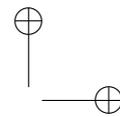
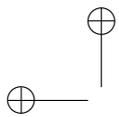
**HUSBANDS  
ARE DIFFICULT**

OR THE BOOK OF OLIVER AMES

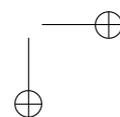
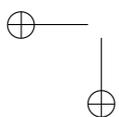
*Phyllis McGinley*

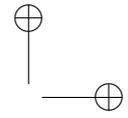
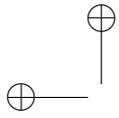
*IWP*



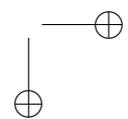
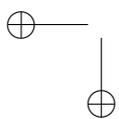


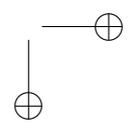
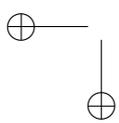
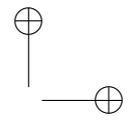
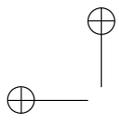
2026  
First Published, 1941

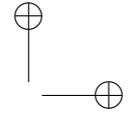
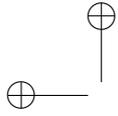




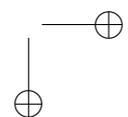
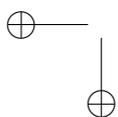
FOR C. L. C.

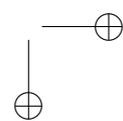
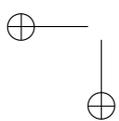
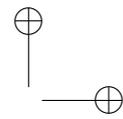
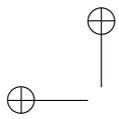


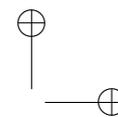
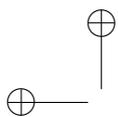




A number of these Oliver Ames poems appeared in earlier books, *ON THE CONTRARY* (Doubleday, Doran), *ONE MORE MANHATAN* (Harcourt, Brace), and *A POCKETFUL OF WHY* (Duell, Sloan and Pearce), and I am grateful to the publishers for permission to include the poems in this collection. Special thanks are also due to the editors of *THE NEW YORKER*, *THE SATURDAY EVENING POST*, and *GOOD HOUSEKEEPING* for permission to reprint poems which first appeared in their pages.

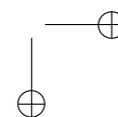
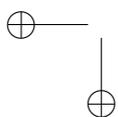


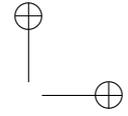
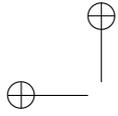




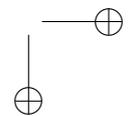
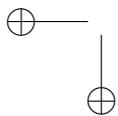
## CONTENTS

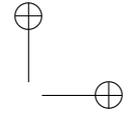
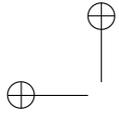
<i>Apology for Husbands</i> . . . . .	1
<i>A Marriage of Convenience</i> . . . . .	3
<i>Oliver Ames Cuts a Swathe</i> . . . . .	5
<i>Every Man Has His Price</i> . . . . .	7
<i>The Difference</i> . . . . .	9
<i>Song for a Brand-New House</i> . . . . .	10
<i>Don't Write, Wire</i> . . . . .	12
<i>Oliver Ames Meets an Emergency</i> . . . . .	15
<i>Oliver Ames at Breakfast</i> . . . . .	17
<i>Trial and Error</i> . . . . .	19
<i>Oliver Shops for Christmas</i> . . . . .	20
<i>Why, Some of My Best Friends Are Women!</i> . . . . .	22
<i>The Weigh of All Flesh</i> . . . . .	24
<i>Ultimatum to Oliver Ames</i> . . . . .	26
<i>Morning'S at Seven-Thirty</i> . . . . .	28
<i>Death at Evening</i> . . . . .	31
<i>Well, Well, Charlie's in Town</i> . . . . .	33
<i>Nursery Rhyme</i> . . . . .	35



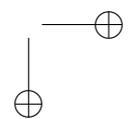
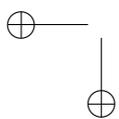


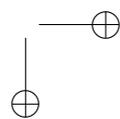
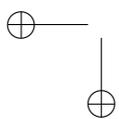
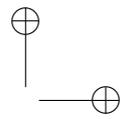
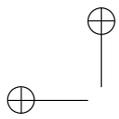
<i>Husbands Are Difficult . . . . .</i>	36
<i>The Prejudices of Oliver Ames . . . . .</i>	38
<i>Letter to Oliver . . . . .</i>	40
<i>The Female of the Species is Hardier . . . . .</i>	42
<i>Elegy From a Country Dooryard . . . . .</i>	44
<i>Much Ado About Nothing . . . . .</i>	46
<i>Daniel Boone Overdid It . . . . .</i>	48
<i>Call for Einstein . . . . .</i>	50
<i>Atavism . . . . .</i>	51
<i>Song for Thursdays . . . . .</i>	52
<i>A Hobby a Day Keeps the Doldrums Away . . . . .</i>	54
<i>Ah, There, Penelope, . . . . .</i>	56
<i>Dissertation on the Bachelor . . . . .</i>	59
<i>View From a Suburban Window . . . . .</i>	61

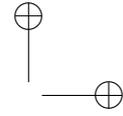
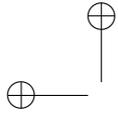




**HUSBANDS  
ARE DIFFICULT**







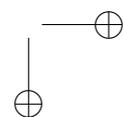
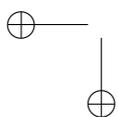
## APOLOGY FOR HUSBANDS

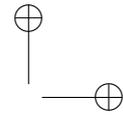
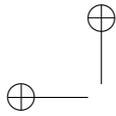
IN ANSWER TO A FRIEND'S OBSERVATION THAT  
THEY'RE "MORE BOTHER THAN THEY'RE WORTH"

Although your major premise, dear,  
Is rather sharp than subtle,  
My honest argument, I fear,  
Can offer scant rebuttal.

I grant the Husband in the Home  
Disrupts its neat machinery.  
His shaving brush, his sorry comb,  
Mar tidy bathroom scenery.

When dinner's prompt upon the plate,  
He labors at the office late;  
Yet stay him while the stew is peppered,  
He rages like a famished leopard.  
He rages like an angry lion  
When urged to put a formal tie on,  
But should festivities grow hearty,  
He is the last to leave the party.  
He lauds your neighbor's giddy bonnet  
But laughs, immoderate, if you don it,  
And loathes your childhood friend, and always  
Bestrews his garments through the hallways.



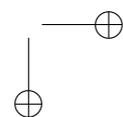
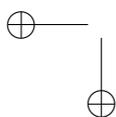


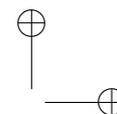
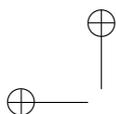
But ere you shun the wedded male,  
Recall his special talents  
For driving firm the picture nail  
And coaxing books to balance.

Regard with unalloyed delight  
That skill, which you were scorning,  
For opening windows up at night  
And closing them at morning.

Though under protest, to be sure,  
He weekly moves the furniture.  
He layeth rugs, he fixeth sockets,  
He payeth bills from both his pockets.  
For invitations you decry  
He furnisheth an alibi.  
He jousts with taxi-men in tourney,  
He guards your luggage when you journey,  
And brings you news and quotes you facts  
And figures out the income tax  
And slaughters spiders when you daren't  
And makes a very handy parent.

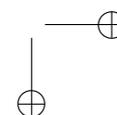
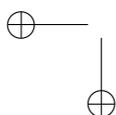
What gadget's useful as a spouse?  
Considering that a minute,  
Confess that every proper house  
Should have a husband in it.

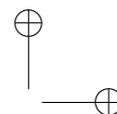
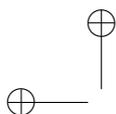




### A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE

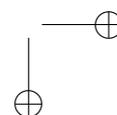
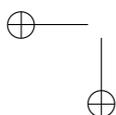
Now whom did Oliver lean on,  
    Before we two were wed,  
To remind him, say,  
On the natal day  
    Of his affluent Uncle Fred?  
Who wrote the news  
    To his friends and folks?  
Who gave him the cues  
    For his favorite jokes?  
Who scribbled his greetings when cards were sent out?  
Who counted his collars before they went out?  
Who hung up his racquets and stored his putter  
And thanked his hosts for their bread and butter?  
  
Whose eagle eye was alert to spy  
    The sag in his trousers' creases?  
With vision and thrift  
Who bought the gift  
    For the nuptials of his nieces?  
Who dusted his satchel,  
    Who packed his cases,  
When he was a bachel-  
    Or, going places?  
For invitations he couldn't condone,  
Who gave his regrets on the telephone?  
And bundled him up for rain or mist  
And checked the names on his Christmas list?

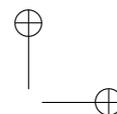
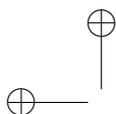




Yes, who ran Oliver's errands,  
    Busily, sun to sun?  
Or gave him warning  
To rise at morning,  
    Before we twain were one?  
Of his kith and kin,  
    He was wary, very.  
And it couldn't have been  
    His secretary,  
And never an angel and not an elf.  
So perhaps it was Oliver Ames, himself.  
But I say it's odd how my legal lord  
Has thrown those worriments overboard.

For it's needles and pins,  
But a fig for father.  
When a man marries  
He just doesn't bother.

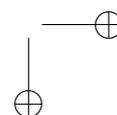
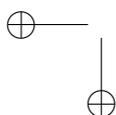


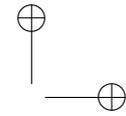
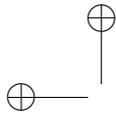


### OLIVER AMES CUTS A SWATHE

Oliver Ames is a Hug-the-Hearth,  
A Sit-by-the-Fire-and-Spinner.  
He calls for his pipe and he calls for his book  
And settles himself in an inglenook  
As soon as it's after dinner.  
When boys and girls run out to play,  
He favors the family scene,  
Content to muse on the shipping news –  
Or most of the time, I mean.

But Oliver is feeling like a lord tonight.  
He longs for the glitter of electric light.  
And maybe it's the sherry  
(Or perhaps it's Pay Day),  
But he's feeling merry  
As the Queen of May Day.  
His step grows lordly and his voice gets bigger.  
He yearns to revel and to cut a figger,  
And a movie won't do him, or a table d'hôte;  
He spurns the Village and a dinner coat.  
He wants to gather where the beau monde's at,  
In a starched white tie and a sleek silk hat,  
And deck his lady with a wreath gardenial  
And scatter largesse to servitor and menial,  
And beam very lordly and sup like a lord  
And spend more money than he can afford.

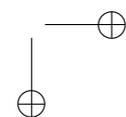
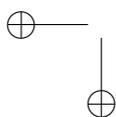


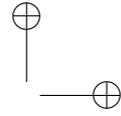
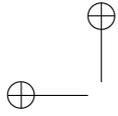


Vor Hug-the-Hearths, at pleasure,  
Set a pace that's heady.  
*Just a minute, Oliver,*  
*And I'll be ready!*

Oliver Ames is a quiet man,  
Not overly fond of capers.  
His wilderness Eden enough would be  
With a loaf of bread, and possibly me,  
And the morning and evening papers.  
The lavish ways of a tinsel world  
He never has claimed for his,  
And, steadfast, clings to the simple things –  
Or most of the time, that is.

But Oliver is feeling like a lord tonight  
With a lordly lustre are his eyes alight.  
He's in fine feather,  
Oh, he's at his heyday!  
And maybe it's the weather  
(Or perhaps it's Pay Day).  
It's the very best table or we will not dine,  
He asks about the vintage of the coffee and the wine,  
And the waiters must wait and the henchmen hench  
And he speaks to them haughtily in Grade B French,  
While his manner with the check girls grows breezier and  
breezier.  
And we must hail a taxicab, though walking would be easier.  
He'll have no seats but the fourth row centre  
(And shouldn't people stand when their worships enter?),  
And we won't start homeward till the dawn grows large  
And the last charge is added to the cover charge.  
When quiet men feel lordly,  
There's a royal oat-sowing!  
*So come on, Oliver,*  
*And let's get going.*

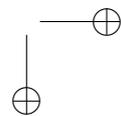
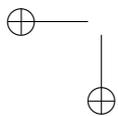


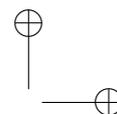
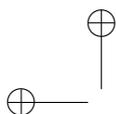


### EVERY MAN HAS HIS PRICE

Oliver Ames has Sales Resistance.  
He says to book agents, "Keep your distance!"  
He looks on ties when the ties are red  
Nor ever loses his handsome head.  
When the oil well murmurs, the gold brick glistens,  
He never sees and he seldom listens,  
And he daunts by dogged and sheer endurance  
The gentlemen sponsoring life insurance.  
But, oh, Oliver Ames  
    Has tendencies I deplore.  
Plop! goes his pride  
When he steps inside  
    A fancy-grocery store.

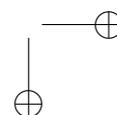
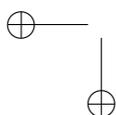
For once in a spirit of careless fun  
I led him merrily into one.  
Our hearts were light and our joy was utter.  
We wanted a fourth of a pound of butter  
And maybe some milk from a union cow.  
But it doesn't matter about it now,  
For there in orderly rank and station  
A hundred eatables winked temptation,  
And, oh, Oliver Ames,  
    The Man Who Walks by Himself,  
Departs from grace  
When he's face to face  
With a fancy-grocery shelf.

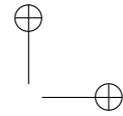
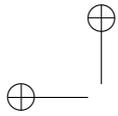




He stared at pickles in bubbling brine  
And straightway his eyes began to shine.  
He gazed at olives, rotund and sleek,  
And a feverish glow came on his check.  
But my spirit failed and my soul was shaken  
When he reached his hand for an Irish bacon,  
A box of biscuits, an Edam cheese,  
And a bottle of insolent anchovies.  
Yes, the moth to the bane, the bee to the clover,  
And cat to catnip the wide world over,  
And never a masculine heart eludes  
The siren call of the Fancy Foods.  
So we staggered out to a trolley car,  
Laden with sweetmeats and caviar,  
With succulent figs from a far-off figgery,  
And sausages brought from an elegant piggery,  
And jellies from many a foreign jellery,  
And antipasto, and hearts of celery,  
And brandied pears, and a cookie cutter;  
And all we'd forgotten was milk and butter.

For, oh, Oliver Ames,  
My tricks-of-the-trade surmounter,  
Goes down for a loss  
When he looks across  
A fancy-grocery counter.

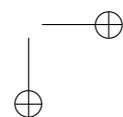
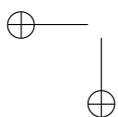


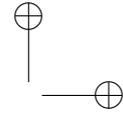
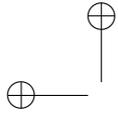


### **THE DIFFERENCE**

When folk with views he does not hold  
Remain unswerved and uncajoled,  
To Oliver, it's nothing less  
Than plain, unvarnished Stubbornness.

How different, on the other hand,  
When he takes up some valiant stand!  
He merely keeps, sans contradictions,  
The Courage of his own Convictions.



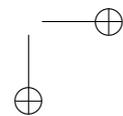
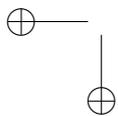


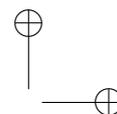
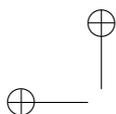
### SONG FOR A BRAND-NEW HOUSE

Our little home is finished,  
A dream that came to birth.  
Before our eyes we saw it rise  
Upon our private earth.  
Unpack the tufted rocker,  
And lay the carpets prone,  
For the gilt is on our knocker  
And the neighbors on our phone.

What if plumbers in bathrooms lurk, yet,  
What if the furnace doesn't work, yet,  
If floors are a tint that I didn't pass on.  
If someone's forgotten to turn the gas on?  
If we have no shades for the bedroom casement,  
If water stands in the waterproof basement,  
If the drains don't drain and the windows stick  
And the mantel's tile when we planned on brick?  
Hang the pictures. Let life begin!  
The painters are out and we are in.

No more the hired apartment,  
No more the rented lair,  
With a landlord chap to take the rap  
When something needs repair.

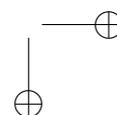
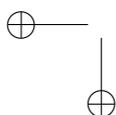


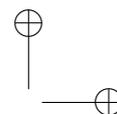
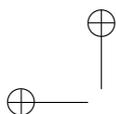


For now, with pleasure reeling,  
Our legal nest we view,  
Complete with sill and ceiling  
And a mortgage shiny-new.

Isn't it cute? It's all our own,  
Save what belongs to the Building-and-Loan.  
These steadfast walls with their clapboards quaint  
Are ours to cherish with love and paint.  
Our own the rooftree above us bending,  
And ours the cost when it cries for mending.  
These rooms are ours and the halls that meet them,  
Likewise the fuel that it takes to heat them.  
All ours, each closet and cunning feature,  
While the wolf at the door is our personal creature.

Behold our dwelling, the spirit's axis.  
God bless it and help us to meet the taxes!



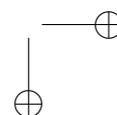
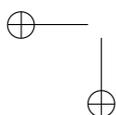


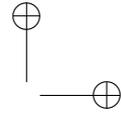
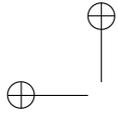
### **DON'T WRITE, WIRE**

Oliver Ames is a gentleman of  
Qualities wise and witty.  
And Oliver Ames, my own true love,  
Has journeyed to Salt Lake City,  
Whence each day (as I swore he'd better)  
He sends me a lyrically worded letter  
That throbs with ardor and pulses with passion  
In somewhat the following fervent fashion:

Darling, I've just  
    A minute or two,  
But I simply must  
    Get off to you  
A dutiful note as I said I would.  
I haven't been feeling so very good.  
The boys, here, threw me a little revel,  
And my head aches now like the very devil.  
The weather is fine and I wish you were  
Here. Love,  
                    Hastily,  
                    Oliver.

For Oliver Ames, my all-in-all,  
    Clever at How and When To,  
Is hardly ever poetical  
    In letters he puts his pen to.

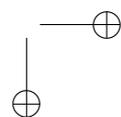
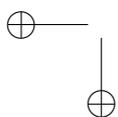


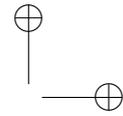
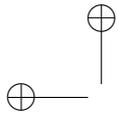


So, disappointed, taking it hard,  
I hurried out with a library card,  
To feast my mind on the missives planned  
By poets, taking their quills in hand.  
Among my betters  
    I sought my wish  
I read the letters  
    Of Percy Bysshe.  
I peeped at Poe in the common mail,  
And Johnson writing to Mrs. Thrale,  
Thackeray, Longfellow, Bobbie Burns –  
All the gentlemen served their turns.  
I stripped the veil from the private lives  
Of bards addressing their loves and wives.  
And these are the amorous works of art  
With whose old sweetness I fed my heart:

Dearest Mary,  
    So Shelley wrote,  
I've time for the very  
    Briefest note.  
But I am well and I hope you're so.  
Here is the coach and I'd better go.  
Love.  
    P. Shelley.

    O, Hail, Blithe Spirit!  
That's what you said, or something near it.  
And Robert Burns when he wrote his dear  
Railed at too many mugs of beer  
For the boys had given a little revel  
And his head ached then like the very devil.  
Boswell cried that his horse was winner,  
Thackeray ardently hymned his dinner,  
And Dr. Johnson with classic phrase

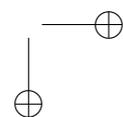
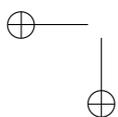


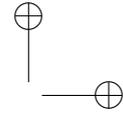
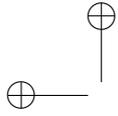


Sighed of nostrums that filled his days.  
He spoke of pains in his legs and back  
And listed the virtues of ipecac.

For Oliver Ames, my bosom's staff,  
Whenever it's his ambition  
To put out a palpitant paragraph,  
Falls heir to a great tradition.  
The hands are wrung and the lips are bitten  
But the sentiment never gets really written.

And he and Shelley and all the others  
Under the skin, in this, are brothers.





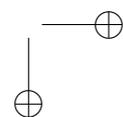
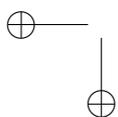
### OLIVER AMES MEETS AN EMERGENCY

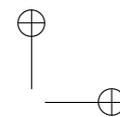
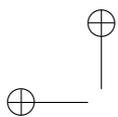
Cry storm, cry stress from every casement.  
There's devastation in the basement;  
There's havoc loose amid the plumbing.  
But hark! Do I hear rescue coming?

Yes, aid we need no further seek, now  
For Oliver will mend that leak, now.  
Rebellious drains that threaten plaster  
Have met for once their lord and master.

Then rally round, you helpers fluttery.  
Rally from kitchen, bath and buttery.  
Ring up your friends, call in the neighbors  
To help our hero at his labors.

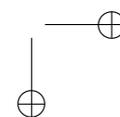
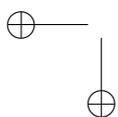
Bring him his gloves and leather jerkin.  
Bring overalls for him to work in.  
Bring hammers, augers, braces, bits.  
Bring nails  
And pails  
And plumbers' kits.  
Bring bulbs to light the murky distance.  
(The handiest man might need assistance.)  
A ladder bring,  
    And tools of price,  
Or anything  
    Except advice.

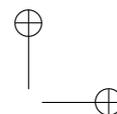
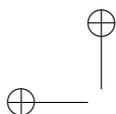




Still flows the flood without rebuff?  
You'd best keep right on bringing stuff.  
Bring coffee (black). Bring milk and sandwiches.  
Bring iodine and sterile bandwiches.  
Bring sympathy. Bring groans and tears.  
Bring cotton wool to stop your ears  
When syllables grow terse and torrid.  
Bring handkerchiefs to wipe his forehead.

Bring someone's thumb to hold the dike.  
Bring brooms, bring mops. And if you'd like  
This pipe repaired before it's summer,  
Perhaps you'd better bring the plumber.

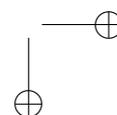
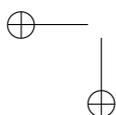


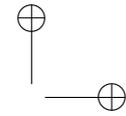
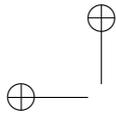


### OLIVER AMES AT BREAKFAST

Oliver, Oliver, yes, my sweet,  
I sympathize with your woes.  
Your favorite necktie is simply gone!  
You're harried, neglected, and put upon.  
You can't get a thing that's fit to eat,  
And no one repairs your hose.  
Yes, my darling, I own to all.  
I'm sure it was I who forgot that call.  
The bacon's soggy, the toast the same,  
The coffee tasteless, and I'm to blame.  
You might as well be a boarding-house boarder,  
The place is constantly out of order.  
And I am the criminal, I'm afraid,  
Who blunted your beautiful razor blade.  
I've purposely hidden your other glove.  
My housekeeping talent's slight.  
But let's take a look at the paper, love,  
To see if I guessed it right.

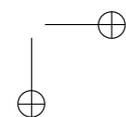
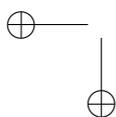
Yes, Static Stocks are down again.  
It's all my fault.  
Static Common closed at ten.  
(I'm hardly worth my salt.)  
Oh, I can see from where I stand  
I've built my castles on the sand.  
For Static Stocks are falling, and  
It's all my fault.

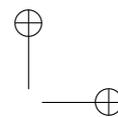
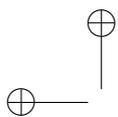




Oliver, Oliver, yes, my dear,  
The day is indeed auspicious.  
And what an excellent new cravat!  
You've made a remarkable choice on that.  
And how delighted I am to hear  
The coffee is so delicious.  
The cook's improving – I think it's due  
To speaking to her as you told me to;  
The lawn, I agree, has begun to grow.  
How clever of you to arrange it so!  
And I could vouch that you had a share  
In supervising this morning air.  
You're a wise, infallible, handsome He,  
And I squirm with joy as you beam on me,  
I coo like an amorous turtledove,  
Fondly, though circumspectly.  
But just let me glance at the paper, love,  
To see if I guessed correctly.

Yes, Static Stocks are up again.  
It's all your doing!  
You held them when they dropped to ten.  
Now look at what's ensuing.  
Oh, I can see from where I stand  
Prosperity is just at hand.  
For Static Stocks are rising, and  
It's all your doing.

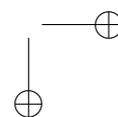
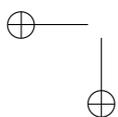


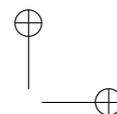
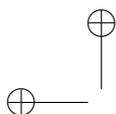


## TRIAL AND ERROR

LAMENT COMPOSED WHILE RETURNING FROM TOWN  
WITH OLIVER ON THE 5:39

A lady is smarter than a gentleman, maybe.  
She can sew a fine seam, she can have a baby.  
She can use her intuition instead of her brain.  
But she can't fold a paper on a crowded train.

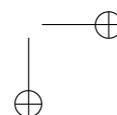
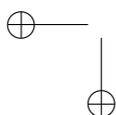


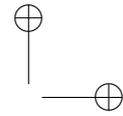
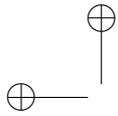


### OLIVER SHOPS FOR CHRISTMAS

How high the Christmas Spirit seethes,  
And how the stores are jolly  
With silver wreaths and gilded wreaths  
And modernistic holly!  
It's Christmas in the Linen Shop,  
And Christmas in the Books.  
"Noel, Noel,"  
Cry all who sell,  
Assuming joyful looks.  
And Madam's soul is lifted up,  
For once again salute her  
The monogram, the Scottie pup,  
And a thousand aisles of pewter.  
And blue and pink the bath salts wink  
Beneath their crystal stoppers,  
But they wink in vain at Oliver,  
My pearl of Christmas Shoppers.

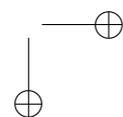
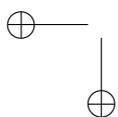
For it's all one  
To Oliver Ames,  
Who treads the pathway lotused.  
That the town is gay in its best array  
He's probably never noticed.  
Since Oliver buys his Christmas gifts  
Where Christmas gifts should be –  
At the jeweller's place and the florist's place  
And the corner pharmacy.

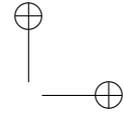
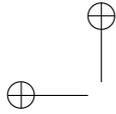




Let lesser men go down before  
    Beguilements and devices  
That clutter every festive store  
    At festive Christmas prices.  
The bookend and the cocktail glass  
    May hide away together,  
And likewise may  
Each brave display  
    Of Florentinish leather.  
For why should Man run to and fro  
    In search of gadgets clever  
When jewelry counters brightly show  
    Their wares the same as ever;  
When one but pops in florists' shops  
    With scarce a moment's warning,  
And the pharmacy will sell you things  
    As late as Christmas morning?

Oh, it's all clear  
To Oliver Ames,  
    Who treads the pathway lotused.  
That stores are traps for credulous chaps  
    He's probably never noticed.  
So, darling, shop wherever you please,  
    Though holiday snares grow crueler.  
Be kind to florists and pharmacies,  
    *And don't forget the jeweller.*





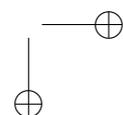
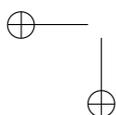
**WHY, SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS  
ARE WOMEN!**

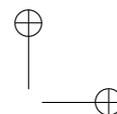
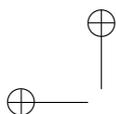
*I learned in my credulous youth  
That women are shallow as fountains.  
Women make lies out of truth  
And out of a molehill their mountains.  
Women are giddy and vain,  
Cold-hearted or tiresomely tender;  
Yet, nevertheless, I maintain  
I dote on the feminine gender.*

For the female of the species may be deadlier than the male,  
But she can make herself a cup of coffee without reducing  
The entire kitchen to a shambles.

*Perverse though their taste in cravats  
Is deemed by their lords and their betters,  
They know the importance of hats  
And they write you the news in their letters.  
Their minds may be lighter than foam,  
Or altered in haste and in hurry,  
But they seldom bring company home  
When you're warming up yesterday's curry.*

And when lovely woman stoops to folly,  
She does not invariably come in at four A.M.  
Singing Sweet Adeline.

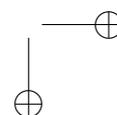
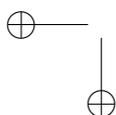


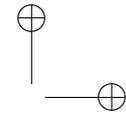
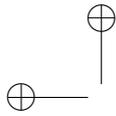


*Oh, women are frail and they weep.  
They are recklessly given to scions.  
But, wakened unduly from sleep,  
They are milder than tigers or lions.  
Women hang clothes on their pegs  
Nor groan at the toil and the trouble.  
Women have rather nice legs  
And chins that are guiltless of stubble.  
Women are restless, uneasy to handle,  
But when they are burning both ends of the scandal,  
They do not insist with a vow that is votive,  
How high are their minds and how noble the motive.*

*As shopping companions they're heroes and saints;  
They meet you in tearooms nor murmur complaints;  
They listen, entranced, to a list of your vapors;  
At breakfast they sometimes emerge from the papers;  
A Brave Little Widow's not apt to sob-story 'em,  
And they keep a cool head in a grocery emporium.  
Yes, I rise to defend  
The quite possible She.  
For the feminine gend-  
Er is O.K. by me.*

Besides, everybody admits it's a Man's World.  
And just look what they've done to it!



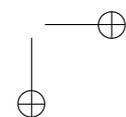
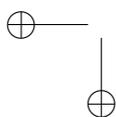


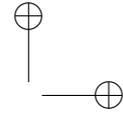
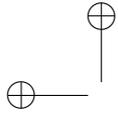
## THE WEIGH OF ALL FLESH

Jack Spratt  
Would eat no fat,  
    At sweets he drew the taste-line,  
His food was butterless and tired.  
For serving pork the chef got fired,  
Since Jack had recently acquired  
    A too-apparent waistline.  
Now what I want to ask  
With ladylike demeanor  
Is how his wife  
Endured her life  
    While Jack was growing leaner.

Did *he* put on the patient phiz  
    That marks a martyred saint,  
And court the comment due to his  
    Unheard-of self-restraint?  
Oh, did he glower, did he gloom  
    And scan the menu, scowling?  
And did he prowl the dining room  
    As Oliver is prowling?

For Oliver's  
Reducing, sirs.  
    (You'd better hush your prattle.)  
Observing those excessive chins,



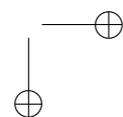
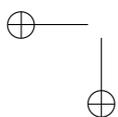


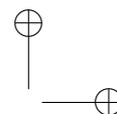
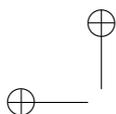
Those bulges where the vest begins,  
With calories and vitamins  
    He's taken up the battle.  
(And how did Mrs. Spratt  
    Enjoy her hearth and house  
When dreams of sole  
En Casserole  
    Were gnawing at her spouse?)

Say, did she pore above the charts  
    That measure pounds and puffage  
To think up half a hundred arts  
    For seasoning his roughage?  
And did he curse the gluten bread  
    She served him for his dinner?  
And damn his fate and hold his head?  
    *And which of them grew thinner?*

And when the pounds  
Were brought in bounds  
    Pray was she daily treated  
To varied and assorted tales  
Of Jack's encounter with the Scales,  
Concocted for his fellow males,  
    And endlessly repeated?

A noble thing  
Is dieting  
    There's no denying that.  
But what the cost  
In tempers lost  
And sullen looks  
From baffled cooks  
And wear and tear  
On a married pair,  
Is fathomed only I would swear  
    By me and Mrs. Spratt.



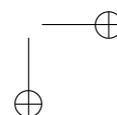
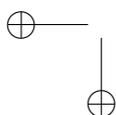


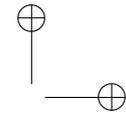
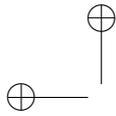
### ULTIMATUM TO OLIVER AMES

I'm numbered among  
    The docile sort,  
With a temperate tongue  
    And a weak retort,  
My dearest enemy must admit  
That I do put up with a goodish bit.  
I creak with kindness at every joint.  
But the meekest worm has a turning point  
Like the longest lane –  
    Or at least he's said to.  
So I tell you plain  
    That I won't be read to.

You needn't try to read aloud to me, dear.  
    Just lay that little treatise on the shelf.  
I'm allergic to the oral  
Recitation, plain or floral.  
    I can spell out all the passages myself.

I'm perfectly sure  
    That your syllabellies are  
Pretty and pure  
    As Orson Welles' are.  
But though my wit is a feeble glimmer,  
I went to school and I passed the primer,  
And given my head and a friendly hint,



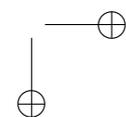
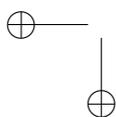


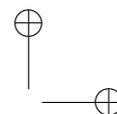
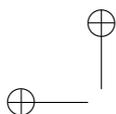
I can decipher the larger print.  
So get this clear,  
    Or the fates defend you:  
I have no ear  
    That I wish to lend you.

I haven't any wish to hear the headlines.  
    The current news I simply can't abide  
If it means the prospect gloomy  
That you're bound to read it to me  
    With editorial comment on the side.

So whether it's poetry, light or solemn,  
Or affable bits from your favorite column,  
Or the piece you wrote  
    For the Brokers' Organ,  
Or a thank-you note  
    From your Uncle Morgan,  
Or a movie review or a suit for libel,  
Or Omar Khayyam or the Holy Bible,  
Or magazine stories in Scottish dialect,  
The auditor's role is not what I elect.  
Declaim aloud  
    Till your forehead glisten!  
I'm not so cowed  
    That I have to listen.

I'm allergic to the oral recitation.  
    And my interest in oratory's slight.  
*But I know you'll get a laugh*  
*From this jolly paragraph*  
    *That I'm saving up to read to you tonight.*



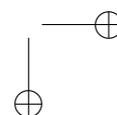
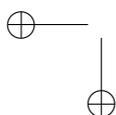


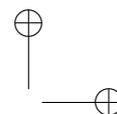
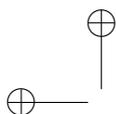
### MORNING'S AT SEVEN-THIRTY

*Come, hymn the heroes if you like,  
Whose golden records linger.  
Sing of the boy that held the dike  
With thumb (or was it finger?)  
Athenian youth and Spartan lad,  
Keep all their laurels green.  
But let me press the prior claims  
Of Oliver Lorenzo Ames  
Who daily dares  
A hundred snares  
To catch the 8:14.*

The 8:14,  
The 8:14,  
    That life's endeavors base on!  
A Fleece of Gold  
No more enrolled  
    The energies of Jason.  
For never on the Eastern rim  
    Suburban morning flames,  
But starts the struggle stern and grim  
    Within the house of Ames.

The covers fly, the faithful clock  
    Shuts off its clamorous dinning,  
And how our firm foundations rock  
    Upon their underpinning.





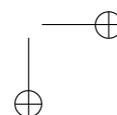
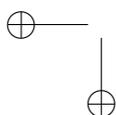
Look out above, look out below.  
Quick, clear the master's path.  
Hand him a towel and let him go,  
A bombshell, to the bath.

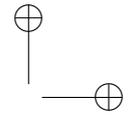
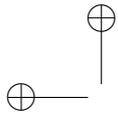
The shower sways within its stall.  
The shaving tools have their way.  
He dons his waistcoat in the hall,  
His coat upon the stairway.  
(He'll tie his necktie while he chews  
Matutinal collation,  
And link his cuffs and lace his shoes  
Most likely in the station.)

Now break the egg upon the plate  
And pour the steaming likker.  
He wouldn't dream of using cream  
If milk can cool it quicker.  
Unfold the paper by his cup  
That, e'er the final deadline,  
He can digest, while standing up,  
A muffin with a headline.

Then bring his briefcase, bring his hat,  
And though it's fair or sloppy,  
Bring round the drive in nothing flat  
The galloping jalopy.  
But keep a silence vast and white,  
While wildly we careen,  
For nothing must impede his flight  
To catch the 8:14.

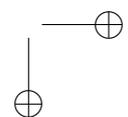
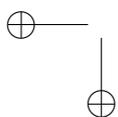
The 8:14,  
The 8:14  
That takes him to the city!

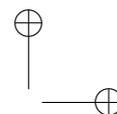
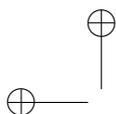




Its seats are lush  
With faded plush,  
    Its corridors are gritty.  
And when they pass the medals round  
    For bravery, nothing less,  
Give Oliver his just reward  
Who every morning climbs aboard  
    That saturnine Express.

*But the shiniest one – oh, let me don it,  
Who, meek and dishevelled, gets him on it.*

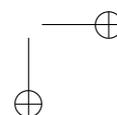
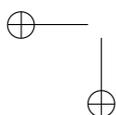


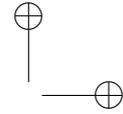
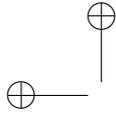


### DEATH AT EVENING

Scatter, O skeptical minions.  
Scoffers, stay far from our roof.  
For Oliver Ames has opinions  
And he's planning to put them to proof.  
He is certain – and then  
He has read it in books –  
That the best cooks are men  
And the best men are cooks,  
So we're going to sup  
For once, if we will,  
On viands served up  
With an amateur's skill.  
Make way for the conqueror!  
Hail to the chief!  
That cooking is difficult passes belief.  
And feminine fuss is a hollow pretense.  
*It's simply a matter of common sense.*

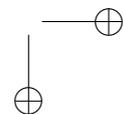
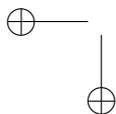
As eager as Old Mother Hubbard,  
Convinced that pure reason prevails,  
Now Oliver's storming the cupboard.  
He's swinging the pots by their tails.  
He's raiding the spice box  
For pepper and clove,  
He's at grips with the icebox,  
At war with the stove.

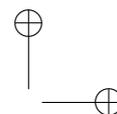
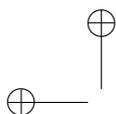




There're pans like a tower  
Stacked up on the shelves;  
The salt and the flour  
Have hidden themselves.  
There's a knife in the garbage,  
There's glass in the sink.  
And Oliver's having his troubles, I think.  
But (presently) food will be issuing hence.  
*It's strictly a matter of common sense.*

Soon plenty is what we'll be rich in.  
We'll feast like Lucullus today.  
But was that a groan from the kitchen?  
And what is this odor, I pray?  
And is that my dear  
Whom I dimly descry  
With a smudge on his ear  
And a glaze in his eye?  
And is that potato  
Supine on the floor,  
With a trace of tomato –  
Or can it be gore?  
And what was that clatter  
That startled the night?  
Was it plate? Was it platter?  
And where did it light?  
And who is it speaking  
In dots and in dashes?  
And was that our dinner? Well, peace to its ashes!  
Come, Oliver, out of the pantry, I beg.  
We'll bind up your wounds and we'll scramble an egg;  
We'll sweep out the kitchen while counting to ten  
And no one will mention it ever again.  
For cooking, my love – and I mean no offense –  
*Is largely a matter of common sense.*





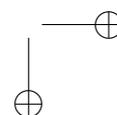
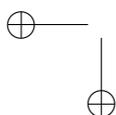
## WELL, WELL, CHARLIE'S IN TOWN

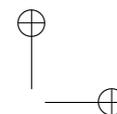
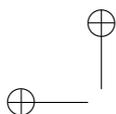
*When I was wed to Oliver  
We swore eternal ties,  
And the marriage vows  
Can still arouse  
My sentimental sighs.  
His lot my very lot shall be,  
But somewhere courage ends.  
For I'll embrace his destiny,  
But not his bachelor friends.*

Find me a burrow! Hide me fast.  
Here comes Oliver's Awful Past.  
Here come the lads he reveled late with  
Ere I was the one he cast his fate with,  
The boon companions, the props and stays  
That comforted him in his single days.

Look! Here's Herbert, the human blotter  
(And Herb was a card at alma mater),  
Who'll drink our liquor and leave us iceless,  
Recalling the pranks that were Simply Priceless.

Lock up the chinaware. Here comes Mac,  
A demon shot with the bric-a-brac.  
Indoor games are his favorite pastime.  
(My Dresden vase was the target last time.)

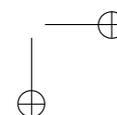
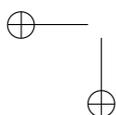


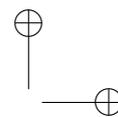
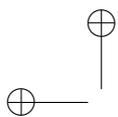


Here comes Artie – he calls me “Missis” –  
And Fred, who gallantly reminisces  
Of madcap Margies and matchless Claires  
Who figured once in my lord’s affairs.

Way for the comrades he knew of old,  
The Salt of the Earth, the Hearts of Gold,  
Who, fresh from cities that lack variety,  
Must see the Stork and Café Society,  
Who fill our ash trays and share our meals  
And borrow ten till they Close those Deals.

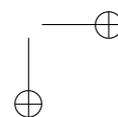
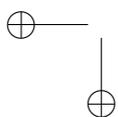
*In health as in the common cold*  
*My lawful spouse I cherish.*  
*Through plump and slim*  
*I cleave to him,*  
*Through markets dull or bearish.*  
*My fondest hopes, my dearest joys*  
*In Oliver are carried.*  
*But save me from the Rover Boys*  
*He knew before we married.*

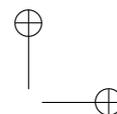
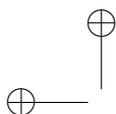




### NURSERY RHYME

Heigh ho,  
This much I know:  
What they say about men  
Is largely so;  
What they've told about women  
From Eve to Ruth  
Is sober counsel,  
Is gospel truth;  
Tabby and Thomas  
Make dubious friends.  
And that's where Wisdom  
Begins and ends.

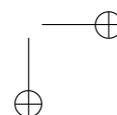
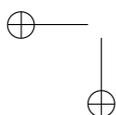


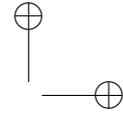
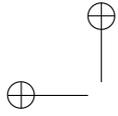


### HUSBANDS ARE DIFFICULT

Give ear to the merriment hearty  
That up from our dwelling ascends.  
The Ameses are having a party.  
The Ameses are feting their friends.  
And where to the jolliest levels  
There rise the quip and the toast,  
Goes Oliver, master of revels,  
Aglow with the pride of the host.

Alert at the entry,  
He welcomes with state  
The earlier gentry,  
The comers-in-late.  
How courtly his speech is, how perfect his poise,  
As he flatters the ladies and rallies the boys –  
From the beam of his smile to the gleam of his jacket,  
The festival spirit done up in a packet.  
He strikes up a ditty  
With strenuous lung.  
The anecdote witty  
Rolls ripe from his tongue,  
While he fills all the glasses  
Before they are downed  
Or ardently passes  
The canapés round.  
And how he protests, how he takes it to heart  
When dully at dawning the stragglers depart.

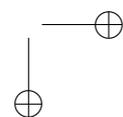
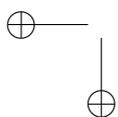


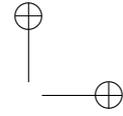
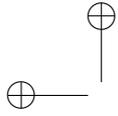


But I from the hostess' section,  
Observing this pomp and this power,  
Recall with acute recollection  
My lord of an earlier hour  
When, waving his wrath like a banner,  
He slandered the imminent guest,  
And swore'that a man in'such manner  
Was never so robbed of his rest.

The house, how it shook  
From veranda to bath.  
How kitten and cook  
Fled away from his path,  
While he stated his views with a libelous name to 'em,  
On folk who gave parties and people who came to 'em.  
(Though bring but a guest in or ring but the bell –  
He'd glow like the ad for a Statler hotel.)  
Oh, he was a slave, then,  
To tyranny born,  
Forced meanly to shave, then,  
Who'd shaved in the morn;  
As, firm in the credo  
He should not have wed,  
He damned the Tuxedo  
With full steam ahead.

*And Adam, I think, thus his garden grew loud in,  
Reminded by Eve they were Having the Crowd In.*

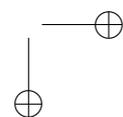
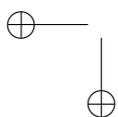


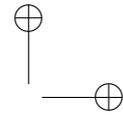
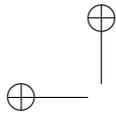


### THE PREJUDICES OF OLIVER AMES

Oliver Ames is a man of parts,  
With a mild and an open viewpoint.  
He does not think that we Face the Brink  
When somebody makes a new point.  
His mind is rich and his fancy strange  
And no one could term him Tory,  
But let me whisper of household change  
And that is a separate story. ,  
For the only answer he knows to give  
Is a loud, a thunderous negative.

It's "Oliver, Oliver, tell me true.  
The library walls grow duller –  
Shall we paint them coral instead of blue?  
Is coral a proper color?  
And wouldn't the cook feel kind and coddled  
If maybe the kitchen could be remodeled  
With a sink in the corner – so?  
Lend me your ear. Shall we build a bar in?  
Shall we drive to the shore? Shall we turn the car in?  
Shall we plant a tree? Shall we see a play?  
Shall we take up the dance in a serious way?  
Tell me, Oliver, what do you say?"  
And Oliver Ames says "No!"

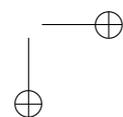
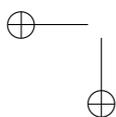


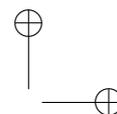
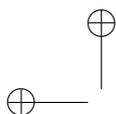


I proffer a plan for a garden grill  
Or mention a terrace, merely,  
Yet Oliver A.  
Cries “No” and “Nay”  
And beetles his brows austerely.  
And grim were my fate and bleak my life  
If this were the story’s ending.  
But the way of a man with his bosom’s wife  
Surpasseth my comprehending.  
Some night, my lord, at the dinner table  
Will put on an attitude reasonable.

“Look, Penelope,” he will muse,  
Regarding me with devotion,  
“Our library walls grow gray from use,  
And I have a novel notion.  
Although with azure I pick no quarrel,  
How do you fancy them painted coral?  
Do you think that it’s good advice?  
And while we’re talking of progress forward,  
Let’s buy us a car and drive it shoreward.  
Let’s build a grill, and a nook to drink in.  
Let’s learn the rhumba. Let’s box the sink in,  
Come, Penelope, what are you thinkin’?”  
And I remark, “How nice!”

For love birds all in their nests agree, a  
Prosperous plan must be His Idea.





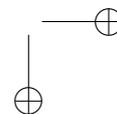
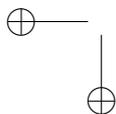
## LETTER TO OLIVER

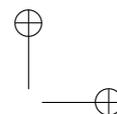
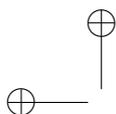
WRITTEN FROM A WINTER RESORT

The breeze is soft, the sky is blue,  
The sun's a gold persimmon;  
But how dismaying to the view,  
This wilderness of women!  
Upon the porches, ladies knit  
With small, well-practiced motion,  
And ladies on the beaches sit,  
And ladies fill the ocean.

Brown-limbed, the little children play  
Beside the rolling waters,  
Or loudly dabble in the spray –  
And all of them are daughters.  
Soprano voices cleave the air  
Or mingle in the houses.  
It's women, women everywhere  
Except for furtive spouses.

Oh, tell me – for I half forget –  
Are somewhere men surviving yet?  
Not myth nor tale nor ancient fable,  
Still do they lean across the table  
In clubs and grills and automats,

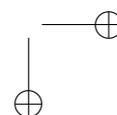
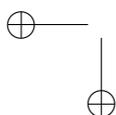


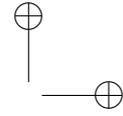
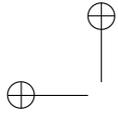


And practice law and furnish flats  
And work and play and take up hobbies  
And meet you in predestined lobbies  
And boast about their season's sales 5m  
And criticize your fingernails  
And telephone from Frank-and-Gus's  
And jostle you on "El's" and buses  
And stand at bars with other hearties  
And bring you drinks at cocktail parties  
And tip their hats and swing their sticks  
And argue over politics?  
Oh, is it true, I ask again,  
The world's still full of single men,

Ubiquitous as Cellophane,  
As commonplace as slumber,  
Who hail you taxis in the rain  
And ask you for your number?  
For what avails this winter rose,  
This January greenery,  
Where nothing in profusion grows  
Save womankind and scenery?

This sky is blue, this air is sweet  
And soothing to the sinus,  
But any Eden's incomplete  
With Adam wholly minus.  
Give me, instead, the frozen town  
And some alert defender.  
For Holiday's no proper noun  
When feminine's the gender.



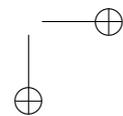
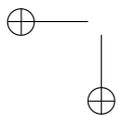


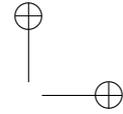
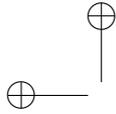
**THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES IS HARDIER  
THAN THE MALE**

Oliver Ames is a stalwart man,  
Whose strength is a gushing fountain,  
With a nonchalant smile he swims his mile  
Or conquers the savage mountain.  
Girded for sport, he holds the fort  
When rivals are round him dropping.  
But clear the deck  
For a Total Wreck  
Whenever I take him shopping.

Oliver is winded, Oliver's awry.  
He clutches at the counters and he plucks at his tie.  
On his overheated face  
There's a weary sort of frown,  
And he's looking for a place  
Where he can just sit down.  
And he mops at his brow  
And he tugs at his cuff,  
And vows a mighty vow  
That he's had about enough.

Now, a sturdy oak is Oliver Ames,  
While I am the ivy, twining.  
I make no claims for my skill at games  
And I exercise best, reclining.



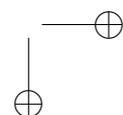
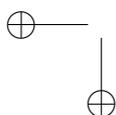


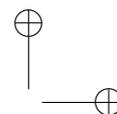
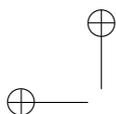
But when I'm out on a shopping bout  
Where the glittering price tags leer up,  
Stouter and bolder,  
It's always my shoulder  
That bolsters my frazzled dear up.

Saturday is young yet; I'm going like a breeze.  
But Oliver is glassy-eyed and sagging at the knees.  
We've only looked at draperies,  
We've only stormed the lifts  
For silverware and naperies  
And half a dozen gifts;  
We've only searched the basements  
For underwear and rugs  
And curtains for our casements,  
And copper water jugs.

And still the time is ample  
For doing this and that.  
I want to match a sample,  
I want to buy a hat.  
I want to see the furniture that decks the Model House.  
But Oliver is muttering the mutters of a spouse,  
And his temper goes a-soaring  
While his metatarsals sink,  
And he totters homeward, roaring  
For a pillow and a drink.

Oh, Delilah might have saved herself that legendary cropping  
If she'd only taken Samson on a Saturday of shopping.

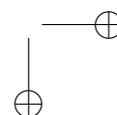
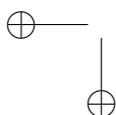


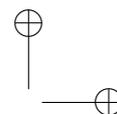
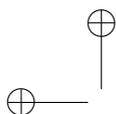


### ELEGY FROM A COUNTRY DOORYARD

When blizzards around us rejoice  
    And week-enders think up excuses,  
How kind seems the alien voice,  
    How sweet, hospitality's uses.  
But once in the summertime's clutch  
    With lilies and lawns to affirm it,  
I often reflect there is much  
    To be said for the lot of the hermit.  
For scarcely on porches and pickets  
    The paint of the season is dry  
But hitherward, swarming like crickets,  
    The Visitors hie.

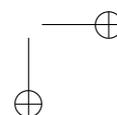
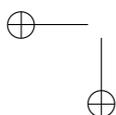
They hie here, they fly here,  
    The tide never ceases.  
And as they draw nigh here  
    They open valises.  
By steamer, by clipper,  
    By train they arrive here.  
Youth, granny and nipper,  
    They walk or they drive here  
To share in our rations  
    Or stay for a night  
And some are relations  
    (Though some we invite).

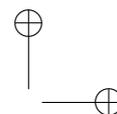
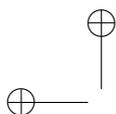




They haste for a glimpse of our acres  
    En route to conventions they stop in.  
Or lustily bound for the breakers  
    They feel it their duty to drop in.  
As gaily as amorous larks Hs  
    They bring us their brides when they marry.  
They pause on their way to the Parks.  
    Returning from mountains they tarry.  
We never sit down to our pottage,  
    We never go calm to our rest,  
But lo! at the door of our cottage,  
    The knock of the Guest.

Oh, look to the plumbing  
    And bring down the cots.  
The Campbells are coming  
    And so are the Potts.  
The cook's given notice,  
    The car's on vacation,  
But dear cousin Otis  
    Just phoned from the station.  
It's dear Otis, is it?  
    Well, tell him, the elf,  
I've gone on a visit  
    To someone myself.

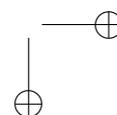
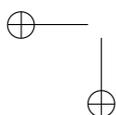


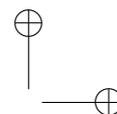
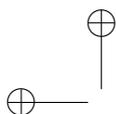


## MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Hippety hop  
To the tailor's shop,  
    And summon the clothing vendor,  
For Oliver Ames  
This morn proclaims  
    He lacks sartorial splendor.  
The gray is shiny, the blue is frayed,  
And far too long has he gone arrayed  
In sober suitings devoutly cut on  
Patterns alike to the final button.  
This is the season  
    Of flux and change,  
Away with reason,  
    Let fancy range.  
While Oliver Ames, discarding navies,  
Shall set more fashions than Mr. Davies.

Hurry, hurry to Tailor Scholtz.  
Quick, from the shelves lift out the bolts.  
Hide the serge  
    With the Sunday tone.  
Give him an urge  
    For a herringbone.  
Show him pin stripes  
    And Heather-flecks,  
The broad and the thin stripes,  
    The plaids and checks,



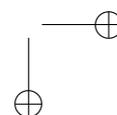
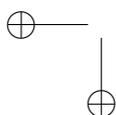


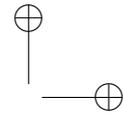
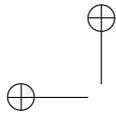
Show him worsted of noble breed,  
Show him cheviot, show him tweed,  
Bring him everything on display  
Save a classic blue or a somber gray.

And now the scissors and now the tape!  
Measure and mark him, cut and drape.  
Woo him with waistcoats, promise him treats  
Like extra pockets and trouser pleats,  
For folk must flutter and talk must stir  
At the brave new wardrobe of Oliver.

Hippety hop  
From the tailor shop,  
    From clothier and from draper,  
The suits come back  
In a tidy stack  
    And nestled in tissue paper.  
I lift them forth. But my fingers chilly are.  
These have a look that is too familiar.  
The cloth is fresh and the label's new  
But one is gray and the other is blue  
And soberly, soberly, both are cut on  
Patterns alike to the final button.  
Here is the end of the toil and trouble  
*He's ordered the old ones copied double.*

For on this doctrine Oliver thrives:  
Variety is the vice of wives.





### DANIEL BOONE OVERDID IT

I know that it's summer as well as the swallow.

I'm sure of the summer as grasses or sod.

For honey bees labor in garden and hollow,

And Oliver's buying a fishing rod.

Yes, this is the season arboreal,

For Oliver's testing a fly.

He's dreaming of feats piscatorial

And raiding the Angler's Supply.

Now papa trout hide in the rivers

And little trout leap in the brooks.

And Oliver patently quivers

To meddle with tackle and hooks.

On Wednesday he sorts out his Coachmen.

On Thursday he flexes his pole,

But Saturday morning he's off without warning

To play through the thirty-sixth hole.

For fishing is a fine sport, of all sports the flower,

But at the Country Club a man can get a decent shower.

When maples grow drunken, the staid and the sober,

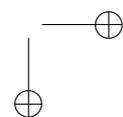
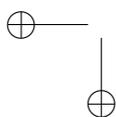
When geese straggle southward, pursuing the sun,

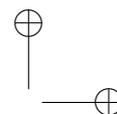
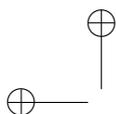
How Oliver pants for the trails of October,

And fondles the stock of his hunting gun!

Then it's hey for the song of the cartridge,

And ho, for the murderous steel!



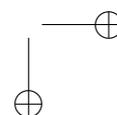
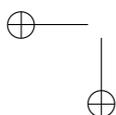


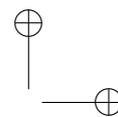
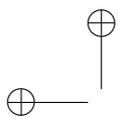
For the woodlands are shrill with the partridge  
And swamps are alive with the teal,  
And Oliver, gayly emphatic,  
Must follow the far-away flutes,  
Disrupting the peace of the attic  
In a purposeful search for his boots.  
His finger is keen for the trigger.  
The hunt is his goal and his star.  
But caddie' behind him, on Friday you'll find him  
Attempting to make it in par.

For hunting is a grand sport, an excellent, a winner.  
But when you knock a ball around you're home in time for  
dinner.

A sportsman is Oliver – nothing can cure him.  
If reckless the pastime, he woos it the harder.  
In winter the skiing to Placid would lure him.  
In spring it's the bridle path kindles his ardor.  
But Boreal breezes are cutting,  
And cantering stiffens the joint.  
So practising up on his putting  
Seems frequently more to the point.  
And no matter how urgent or pressing  
The other things issue their call,  
Each season will find him addressing  
A mutely intractable ball.  
On Monday it's, "Hand me my racquet."  
On Tuesday, "One creel is enough."  
But Sunday my darling is up with the starling  
To scramble around in the rough,

To blessed old Saint Andrew, let Oliver give praise.  
For every sport delights a man, but golf's the game he plays.

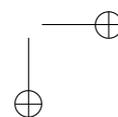
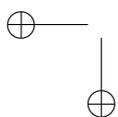


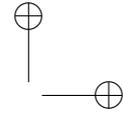
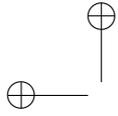


### CALL FOR EINSTEIN

Pythagoras proved what the centuries rue:  
One added to one is infallibly two.

But something's gone wrong in our personal heavens.  
Our sum adds to nothing but sixes and sevens.





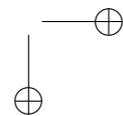
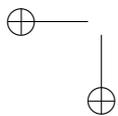
## ATAVISM

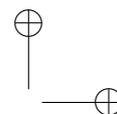
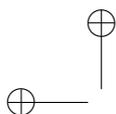
Eve came to Adam, weeping through the clearing  
(This was out of Eden when the gate was shut and sealed),  
“Adam, I have hurt me, and badly, I am fearing;  
Fallen on a sharp stone beside the barley field.”

But Adam did not heed her, weary from his toiling  
And homesick for the Garden where had never been a stone.  
So Eve gathered nettles and set the pot to boiling  
And comforted and kissed him and bore her pain alone.

Adam came to Eve, once, when the day was pressing  
Heavy on her spirit that remembered other days;  
And “Eve,” cried Adam, “quick! This cut wants dressing;  
And see the ugly blister that my sandals always raise!

“Is this a wifely welcome to hearten my returning?”  
So Eve took her sorrow off and into strips she tore it  
To make her man a bandage for his bruises and his yearning.  
And thus she trained her daughters – and the Devil take her  
for it!



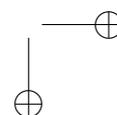
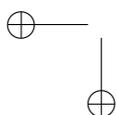


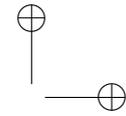
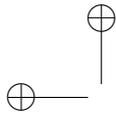
### SONG FOR THURSDAYS

Monday is blue of complexion,  
Monday's a serious day,  
When laundry cries out for inspection,  
And milkmen come round for their pay.  
On Tuesday my leisure goes fleeting,  
With Oliver's mending about.  
And Wednesday the Bridge Club is meeting,  
But Thursday's the maid's day out!

Then it's ho for Thursday, day of my delight!  
Call me early, Oliver; we're faring forth tonight.  
The tearoom on the corner is the place where we will dine,  
And if the lamb is stringy, why, it's never fault of mine.  
Yes, say the salad's limp, my love, but let the waiter care.  
It's Thursday, it's Thursday, and I am free as air.

On Friday our casual dinners  
Begin for a seasonal term.  
And Saturday's saved for the Skinners –  
He's something in Oliver's firm.  
On Sunday we squander our free time  
Surrounded by papers and doubt  
And callers who linger till teatime.  
But Thursday's the maid's day out.

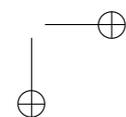
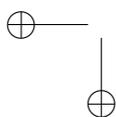


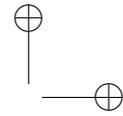
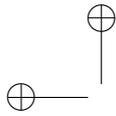


Disconnect the telephone, stir me if you can.  
It's Thursday, it's Thursday, with never a meal to plan.  
Ah, not today the furrowed brow, the shopping list, the sob  
About the cost of broccoli, the ruinous price of squab,  
The shudder lest the Robinsons should look askance at gin.  
The maid is going out today and no one's coming in.

Let grocers in idleness languish  
While goods gather dust on their shelves.  
Let butchers, to stifle their anguish,  
Devour their muttons themselves.  
I've cheese in the icebox to munch on,  
But nothing much else in the tray.  
For it's Thursday, and right after luncheon,  
The maid's going out for the day.

Then it's ho for Thursday, day of my delight.  
Take your wallet, Oliver, we're faring forth tonight.  
We're dining at the tearoom on the corner of the street,  
And I won't know till I get there what we're going to have  
to eat.  
And my ardor won't be dampened, nor I'll find myself at  
fault,  
Though the soup may be but barley and you cannot shake  
the salt;  
Though you're fretted by the doilies and the way the candles  
gutter,  
And your pampered taste's insulted by the vintage of the  
butter.  
I haven't any household, domesticity I flout,  
For the maid is at the movies, and it's My Night Out.





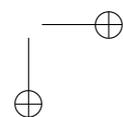
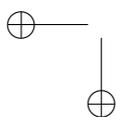
### **A HOBBY A DAY KEEPS THE DOLDRUMS AWAY**

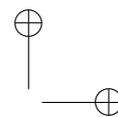
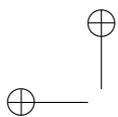
*This is Oliver's garden...*

Here is the earth we watched him splinter  
When spring was baying the tracks of winter.  
Here are the bountiful beds he laid out  
The earliest day he could get his spade out.  
These are the plots where he put his signs up,  
Yonder his trellis to lure the vines up,  
And here are the flowers he let go their ways  
When "Fore" resounded along the fairways;  
The blooms I reared in the sweat of my brow.  
For it's my garden now.

*This is Oliver's workshop...*

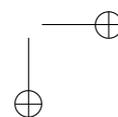
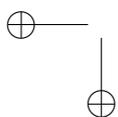
Behold the nook where my hero planned to  
Build whatever he set his hand to.  
Observe his hammers and saws and wrenches,  
His braces and bits, his drawers and benches.  
These are his cupboards – a costly come-on.  
This is the tool that he cut his thumb on,  
And here is the table he almost finished  
Before his masculine zeal diminished,  
While here are the cobwebs that coil and cluster  
For my broom and duster.

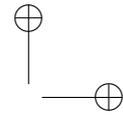
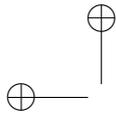




*Sing hey for Oliver's playthings...*  
For the wireless set that he cannot send with,  
For the tropical fish that I contend with,  
For the faithful hound of a dotting master  
That I take out to avoid disaster;  
The trays and acids in which I traffic  
When palls the interlude photographic;  
The grain he buys for the snowbound starlings  
That I distribute – they're all my darling's,  
Each for the moment his one, his true love,  
And mine to store when he takes a new love.

For Man proposes the Fuller Life,  
But the debris's disposed of by his wife.



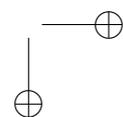
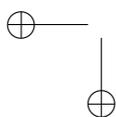


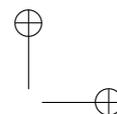
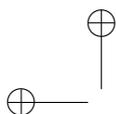
## **AH, THERE, PENELOPE,**

OR THE HOMECOMING OF OLIVER AMES

Oliver Ames has gone away,  
    To a fairly distant shore,  
And Oliver thinks that he will stay  
    A couple of weeks or more.  
Farewell, my love, I shall miss you sorely,  
    And probably weep tomorrow.  
But I won't deny that your absence I  
    Regard with a tempered sorrow.  
And I must allow that I watch your going  
With grief that is less than overflowing.  
For once in a while, there isn't a doubt of it,  
A house is nice with a gentleman out of it.

Yes, the house shall be mine,  
    And the shower my own.  
I'll read as I dine,  
    I'll hang on the phone.  
I'll tiddle on Mocha,  
    I'll smoke to my hurt,  
I'll have tapioca  
    For every dessert.

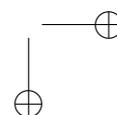
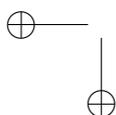


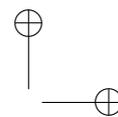
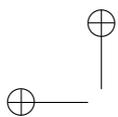


For singular bliss shall my moments be plotted,  
With clothes on their hangers and guest towels unspotted.  
The people who bore you I'll have in to call.  
I won't put the top on the toothpaste at all.  
I'll sit by the fire  
    And say "Pooh" to fresh air.  
At my whim and desire  
    Shall the radio blare.  
And Sundays, ah, Sundays, without fear or trembling,  
I'll scatter the papers beyond reassembling.  
For once in a while a lady likes  
    (There isn't the slightest doubt of it)  
A quiet house, a spinsterish house,  
    With a gentleman well out of it.

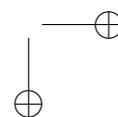
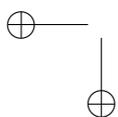
Oliver Ames has been away  
    A couple of weeks, or nearly,  
But Oliver's coming home today,  
    His telegram told me clearly.  
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,  
    From strange hotels, the rover,  
And there's nothing to do but confess it's true  
    That my own vacation's over.  
The whirlwind hour approaches when  
The top must stay on the tube again,  
And the shelf make way for an alien comb,  
For Oliver Ames is coming home.

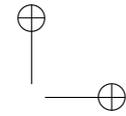
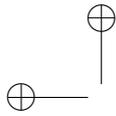
It's pleasant to say,  
    It's nice to be humming,  
Today is the day  
    That Oliver's coming,  
In glory and power,  
    To claim for his own  
The house and the shower,  
    The cook and the phone.





How perfectly splendid again to deplore  
The smudge on the towel and the track on the floor;  
To fold up the Times with decorum and haste,  
To twiddle the dials to a masculine taste;  
A lover, a giver,  
    To vacate his chair;  
In silence to shiver  
    That he may have air!  
And how sweet to look on in a spurious gloom,  
While ashes invade my immaculate room.  
Oh, Oliver's coming home today,  
    And I sing like an earnest linnnet,  
For a lady's house is a pleasanter house  
    When her favorite gentleman's in it.





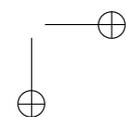
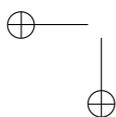
## DISSERTATION ON THE BACHELOR

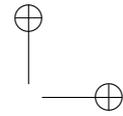
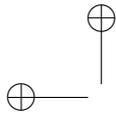
(HIS HABITS, HAUNTS, PROTECTIVE COLORING,  
AND ULTIMATE DESTINATION)

A lordly beast is the manéd lion,  
And maketh a lordly prey;  
While huntsmen thrill to be in at the kill  
When the stag has turned at bay.  
Crafty the fox in the coverts brown,  
And fierce the wolf at the door.  
But the merriest game that roves the town  
Is the frolicsome bachelor.

*The bachelor, the bachelor,  
His ways are the ways of guile.  
But soon or late,  
He takes the bait  
And Lohengrins up the aisle.*

By the light in his eye can you mark him out –  
A confident, wary one;  
While his gait divides between arrogant strides  
And an air of ready-to-run.  
Bold is the stripe in his striped cravat,  
His trousers are creaséd well.  
The furnished flat is his habitat,  
Or the moderate-priced hotel.

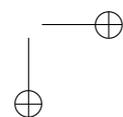
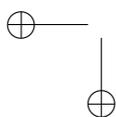


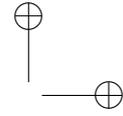
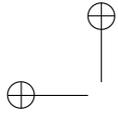


*The bachelor, the bachelor –  
Though free as a questing seagull,  
Some Frail-and-Fair  
Will spot him there  
To be her husband lee-gul.*

By day he skulks in a bachelor world  
That womenkind seldom swoop on.  
He argues in courts or files reports  
Or cheerfully clips a coupon;  
But when the evening draweth nigh,  
Emerges the bachelor clan –  
From the beardless buck in his first white tie  
To the battle-scarred veteran.  
They saunter forth with the evening star,  
To nibble the nut and the caviar,  
To sip the Scotch and the soda water,  
And ogle their hostess's youngest daughter.  
And some are handsome and some are horrid  
And some are getting a hairless forehead,  
And some bound lightly out of their thickets,  
With fruits and flowers and theatre tickets;  
And some run willingly off to dance,  
And some creep softly, with sidewise glance,  
And some stand stiffly, aloof, apart,  
But each is marked for the marriage mart.  
Though cunning or flect as a desert pony,  
They'll fall in the toils of matrimony.  
They'll learn to fetch and they'll learn to carry  
And have no peace till their comrades marry.

*For the bachelor, the bachelor,  
Though freedom is his proclivity,  
He'll end a trophy  
To Sally or Sophie,  
And flourish in captivity.*





### VIEW FROM A SUBURBAN WINDOW

When I consider how my light is spent,  
Also my sweetness, ditto all my power,  
Papering shelves or saving for the rent  
Or prodding grapefruit while the grocers glower,  
Or dulcetly persuading to the dentist  
The wailing young, or fitting them for shoes,  
Beset by menus and my days apprenticed  
Forever to a grinning household muse;

And how I might, in some tall town instead,  
From nine to five be furthering a Career,  
Dwelling unfettered in my single flat,  
My life my own, likewise my daily bread –  
When I consider this, 'tis very clear  
I might have done much worse. I might, at that.

