



LIBRARIES

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Sonnets of a freshman. 1904

Braley, Berton

Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin State Journal, 1904

<https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/RCKEPXUZGBJWT9E>

Based on date of publication, this material is presumed to be in the public domain.

For information on re-use, see

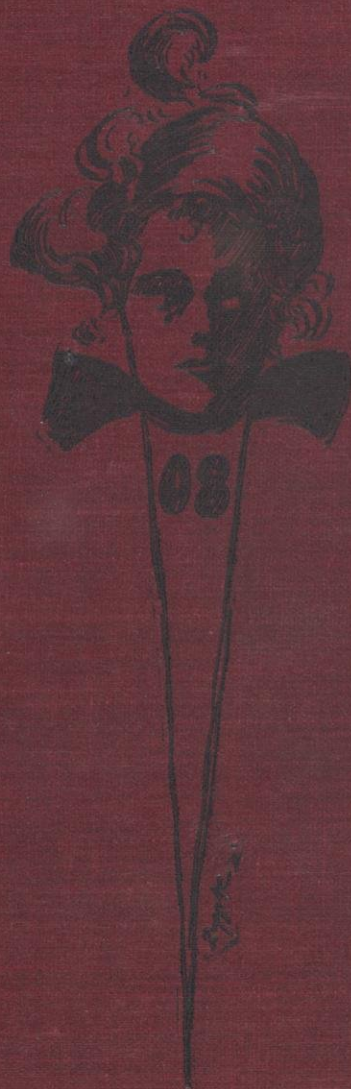
<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/Copyright>

The libraries provide public access to a wide range of material, including online exhibits, digitized collections, archival finding aids, our catalog, online articles, and a growing range of materials in many media.

When possible, we provide rights information in catalog records, finding aids, and other metadata that accompanies collections or items. However, it is always the user's obligation to evaluate copyright and rights issues in light of their own use.

IWVP
.B73

Sonnets of
A Freshman



Library
of the
University of Wisconsin
PRESENTED BY
Mrs. D. B. Frankenburg

SONNETS OF A FRESHMAN



BY

BERTON BRALEY

(Wisconsin, '05)

Illustrations by

C. R. FREEMAN

(Wisconsin, '05)

SONNETS
OF A FRESHMAN

COPYRIGHTED, 1904,
BY
BERTON BRALEY.

172558

MAR 25 1913

IWVP

B73

TO

HORATIO WINSLOW

(Collegically known as "Raia.")

HUMORIST, WRITIST, DRAWIST, PLAYIST,

TRAMP ROYAL

AND

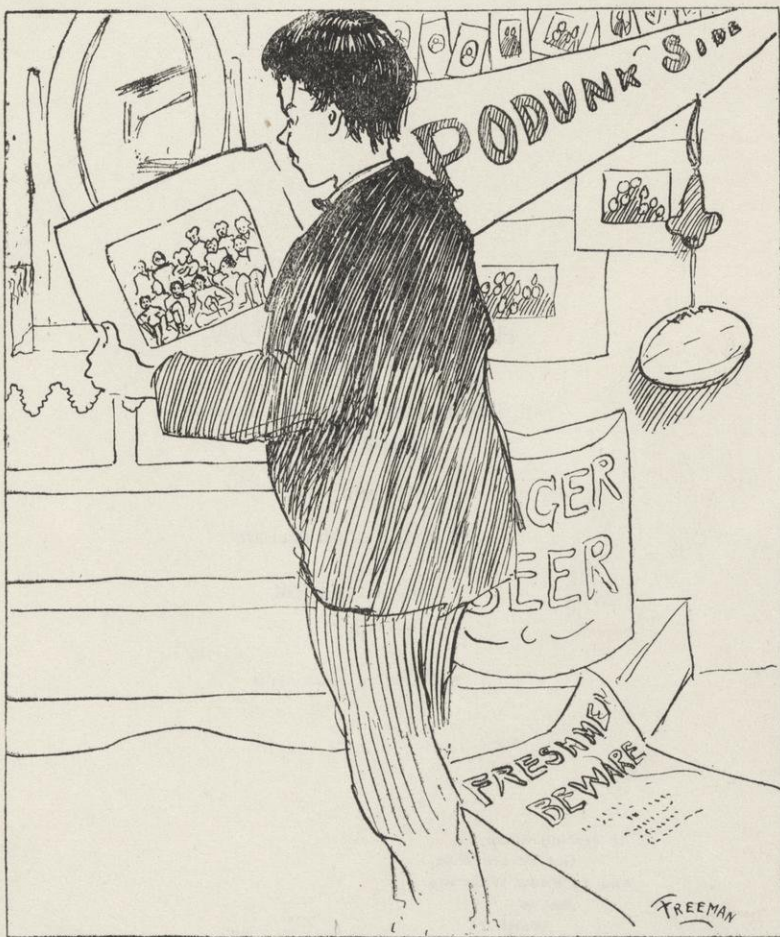
ALL ROUND GOOD FELLOW,

THIS LITTLE BOOK

IS

RIOTOUSLY DEDICATED

("In Jestng Guise,
But Ye are Wise,
And Ye Know What the
Jest is
Worth.")



SONNETS OF A FRESHMAN

I.

Valedictorian, quar-
ter on the team,
class president, and
holy smoke! what
wasn't I?—back at
high school.

It seems so strange to find myself down here,
Away from pa and ma and all the rest,
But then you see I was the very best
Of all the high school class I left last year;
I used to cut a lot of ice, but dear,
Dear me—it makes me very much depressed
The way the Soph'mores treat me as a jest,
And at my aspirations merely jeer.

They do not know how great I was at home;
Or how I won a big three dollar prize
For elocution. Yes, and for my size,
Folks said no better quarter trod the loam.
They scorn me now and mock my good intent,
But they'll be sorry when I'm president.

I tell you I was
proud, then.

They will be, too.



"I took a fall"

II.

I always go past on
Tuesdays and
Thursdays on my
way to laboratory.

Today when I was going past the Hall,

Away up at the top I saw a girl,

So pretty that my head began to whirl,

And I could hardly even think at all.

I waved my hand (for I'm just full of gall,

Yes, I'm an awful flirt) but such a pearl

She was. She gave her handkerchief a twirl,

I was so flustered that I took a fall,

That's where the
co-eds live, you
know.

"Pearl" is kind of
old but it fits here.

And spoiled my new two dollar pants. But she,

She only smiled and shook her pretty head.

I'll make these Soph'mores here feel mighty
dead,

'Taint every day the girls see men like me.

The Sophs laugh now—Gee! how they'll

"Fawn and whine"
is pretty nifty talk.
I've been reading
the poets.

fawn and whine

When every co-ed's heart is wholly mine.



"And shook my hand"

III.

And me only a
freshman. You should have seen me in my class today,
I told that Prof. a lot of things, I guess.

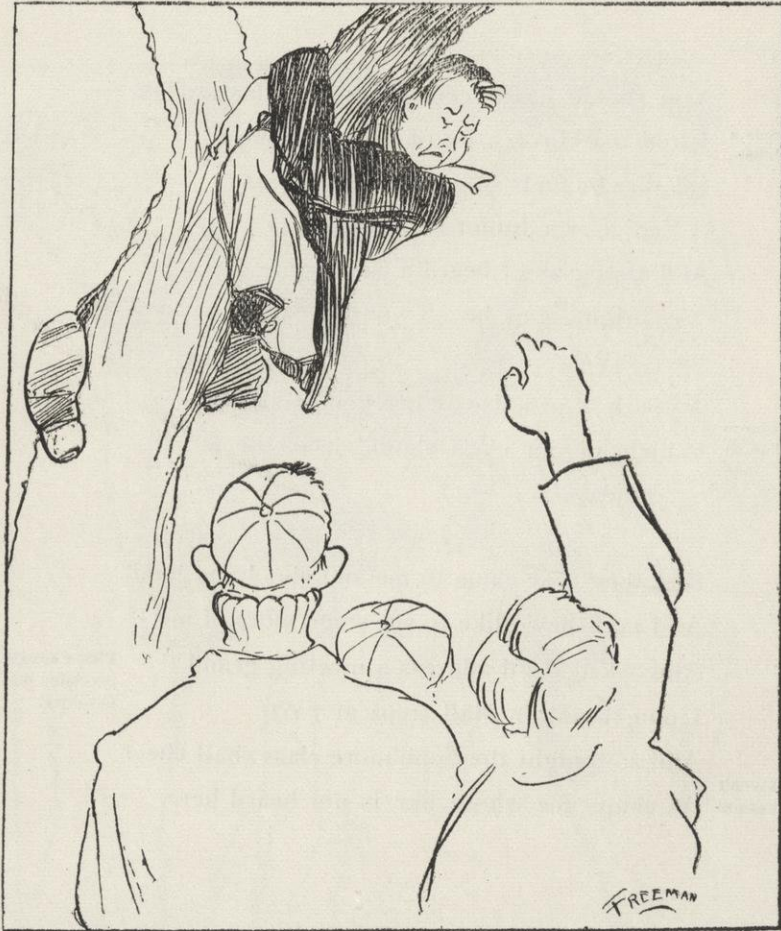
It's rare he finds so good a man unless
A Senior or a Junior comes his way,
And after class I heard a Soph'more say
"So bright, and he so young," and one said
"Yes,

They all seem to
have heard about
me. A youth of promise and of good address
Which all our class should hear the lad display,"

And then they came to me and shook my hand
And said they'd like to see some more of me,
And asked if I'd address a meeting grand
Upon the Main Hall steps at 7:03.

Please excuse this
inversion but I had
to rhyme.

Maybe I won't
thrill them some! And so tonight the Soph'more class shall cheer
At eloquence whose like is not heard here.



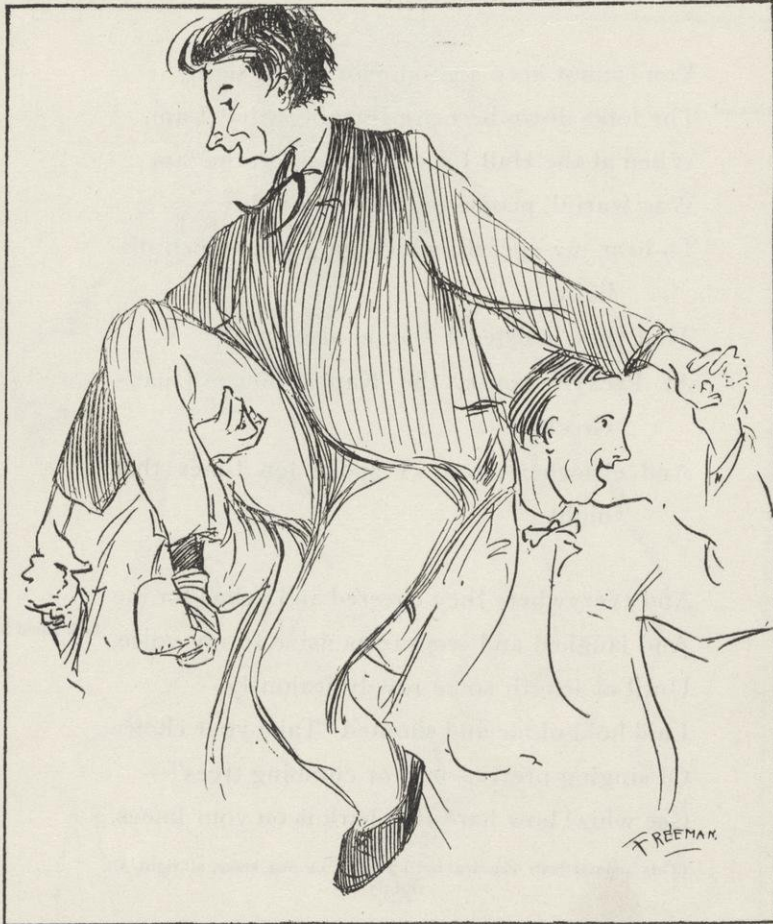
"How hard that bark is"

IV.

You cannot keep a good man out of sight,
Lots of girls too! The folks down here are learning what I am,
When at the Hall I spoke last night, the jam
Was fearful, people even had to fight
To hear my speech, which gave them such de-
light,
That they insisted I should also speak
At Prexy's house, the Kappa house (that's
Greek)
And elsewhere, too. I spoke ten times that
night

And everywhere they cheered and yelled for me
And laughed and wept responsive to my voice, Talk about fun!
Until at length some rowdy jealously
Laid hold of me and shouted "Take your choice
Of singing pretty songs or climbing trees"—
Gee whiz! how hard that bark is on your knees.

(This sonnett isn't classical but I guess it's going some, all right, all
right.)



"Their worship of me"

V.

Once more my worth has triumphed; when I
I'm bound to win, went

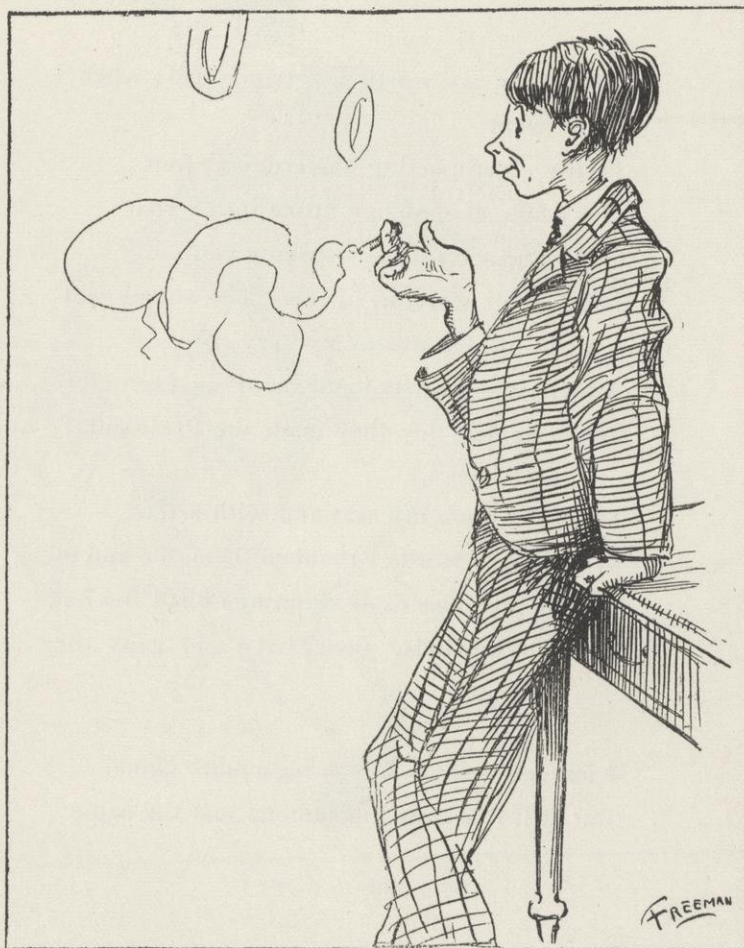
To my class meeting yesterday at four
The whole assemblage broke into a roar
Of frantic acclamation—giving vent
To all their worship of me. The sound sent
A thrill of pleasure to my very core,
A thrill which stirred and shook me even more,
When in their joy they made me President.

You see I've been
president before
(of our graduating
class) so I wasn't
particularly embar-
rassed.

Proudly I took my seat and with a few
Well chosen words I thanked them one and all,
And at the close their shoutings filled the hall,
And skywardwise their hats and caps they
threw.

* * * * * * *

I learned today it was a Soph'more game,
But still it shows I'm famous just the same.



"I wish my folks could see me"

VI.

I wish my folks could only see me now,
Say but they'd cringe. And learn how old and worldlywise I've grown,
And see me in these clothes for which I've
blown

The last lone cent the family allow.
If they could see—I guess perhaps the tone,
That papa writes me in, would change some—
how,

Maybe they won't
be stunned when
they get the bill.

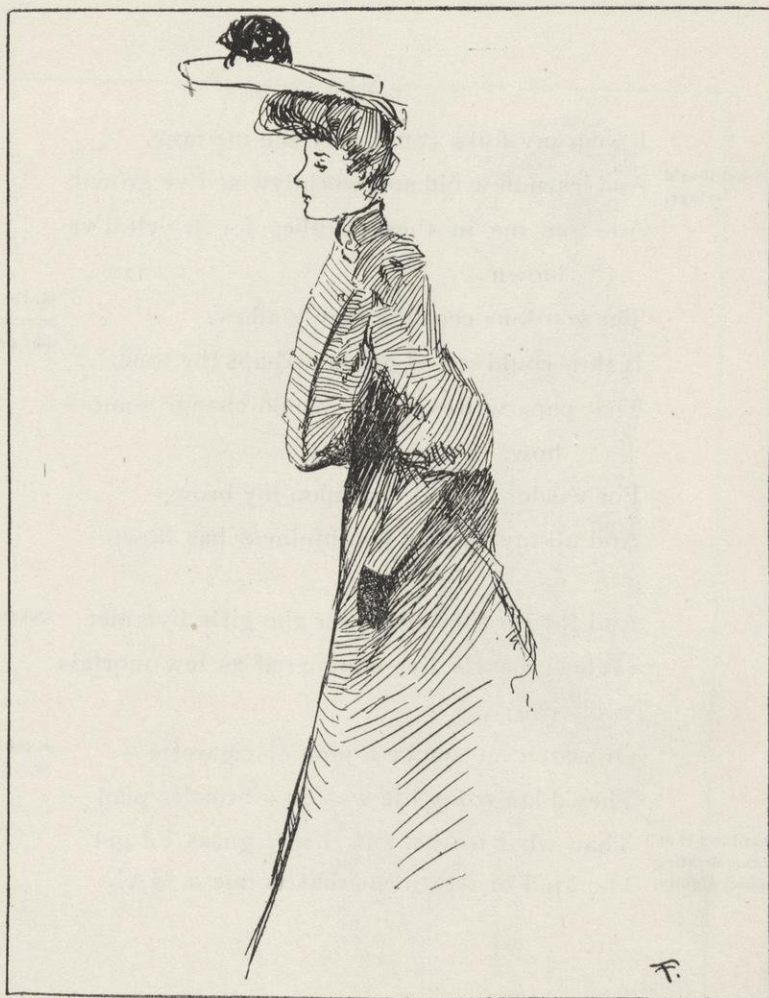
For wisdom sits at last upon my brow,
And all my former youthfulness has flown.

And then if they could see the girls I've met Queens!
(Whose hearts I've conquered as few mortals
can)

Or watch me smoke a pipe or cigarette—
They'd know my life was on a broader plan—

It made me sick at
first, but now!

It's hard to get at-
tention befitting
one's dignity. Than what it was, and then I guess I'd get
The kind of treatment that is due a MAN.



"A girl demure"

VII.

I guess I wrote
pretty fine here. I
can when I try.

Today—oh, I have seen the fairest maid,
A queen—yet modest as a girl demure,
And though Her glowing orbs scarce ever
strayed

Or left the path before Her, I am sure
She noticed me—because there barely played
A little flush across Her visage pure—
A rosy flush—the tribute Her heart paid
To my magnetic and unconscious lure.

I wish I were a king and She my wife,
Then folks would say—"A truly royal pair."
Or else I wish I were a millionaire,
Or just myself and She my own for life.

Oh, I will win Her and my heart's athirst—
But come to think—I'll have to meet her first.

"Heart's athirst"
tha.'s a very pretty
expression, I think.



"The God and Hero"

VIII.

I met Her at a party and she smiled,

Regular boiler
shop.

It made my heart throb awful. Gracious sakes

It's funny what a little bit it takes

To make a man feel bashful as a child.

But I braced up and said some funny things

I rose to the occa-
sion, as usual,—
usual result.

And then She laughed—she is SO bright and
quick,

I made a fine impression—She's a brick—

Another victim to MY conquerings.

* * * * *

Today She passed me by but didn't speak

Or even bow, but I who know Her mind—

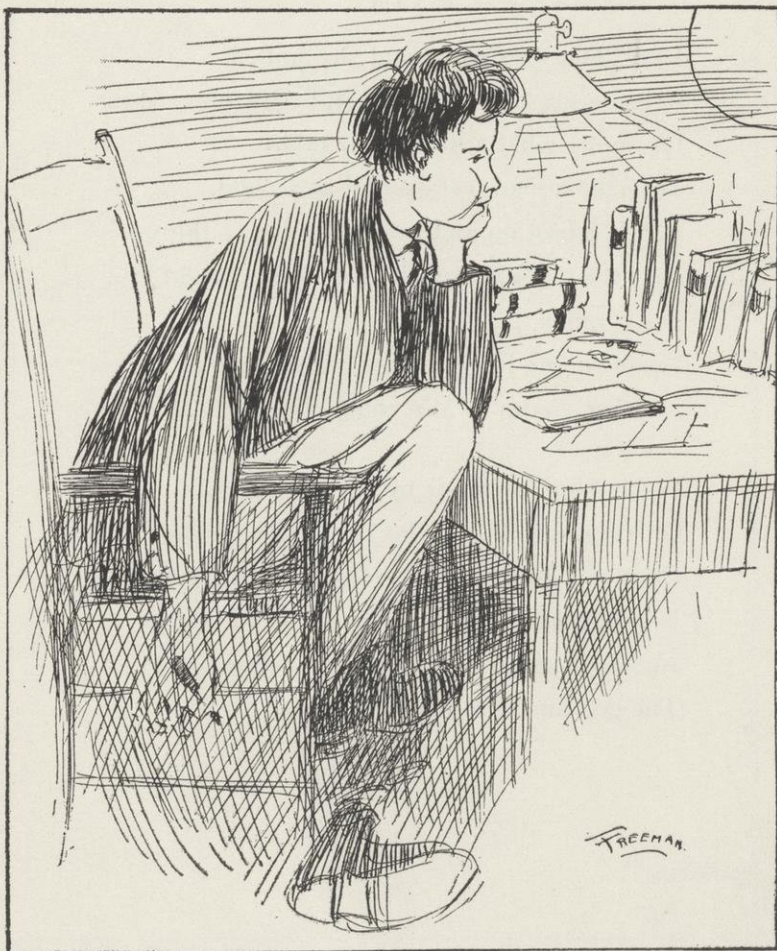
Have not gone far the reason why to seek—

It looked queer
but it's easy to
explain.

It is because Her thoughts are all of me,

And so I seemed as in a glow defined—

The god and hero of her fantasy!

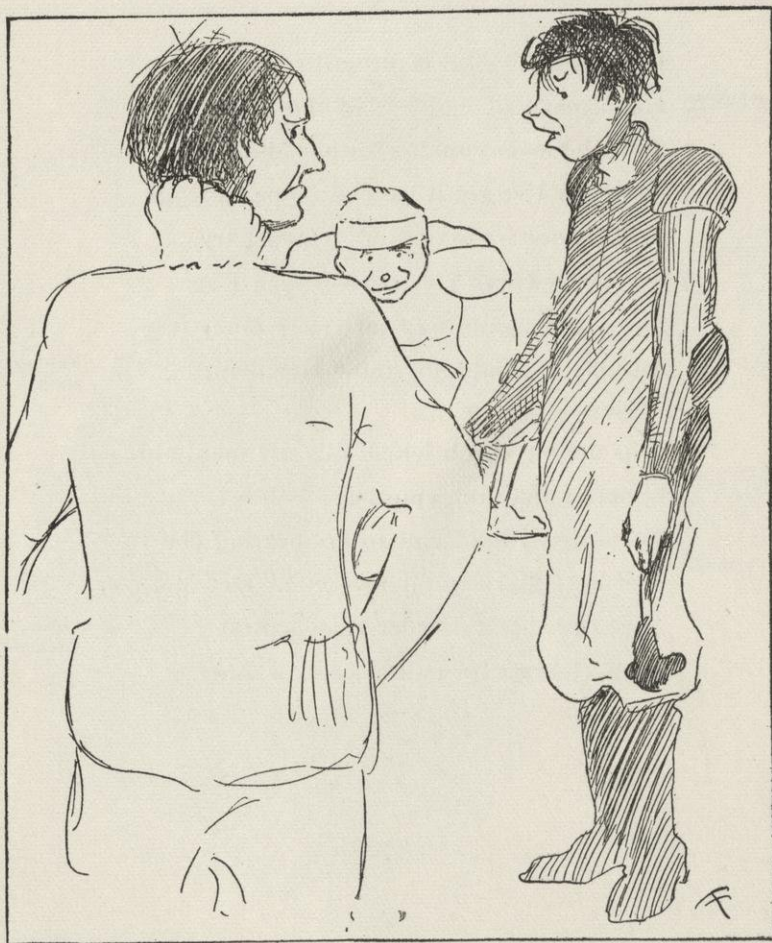


"I'm in love"

IX.

I'm in love I guess. For weeks I've been recounting conquests I
Have made of maidens in the 'Varsity,
As if the fever couldn't bother ME
And now I've got it bad. I mope and sigh
And cannot write or study when I try,
For everywhere Her perfect face I see;
Ah, would again my heart were fancy free—
But nay, I would not know Her then, I cry. This would be too
much.

This aching throb which fills my manly breast
Is better than the emptiness before;
But might I hold Her to my beating chest
And hear Her say, "I love you," o'er and o'er,
Ah, after that I'd order Blatz's Best
And celebrate for half a week or more. "Blatz," is beer
you know.



"My name is J. F. Wintergreen"

X.

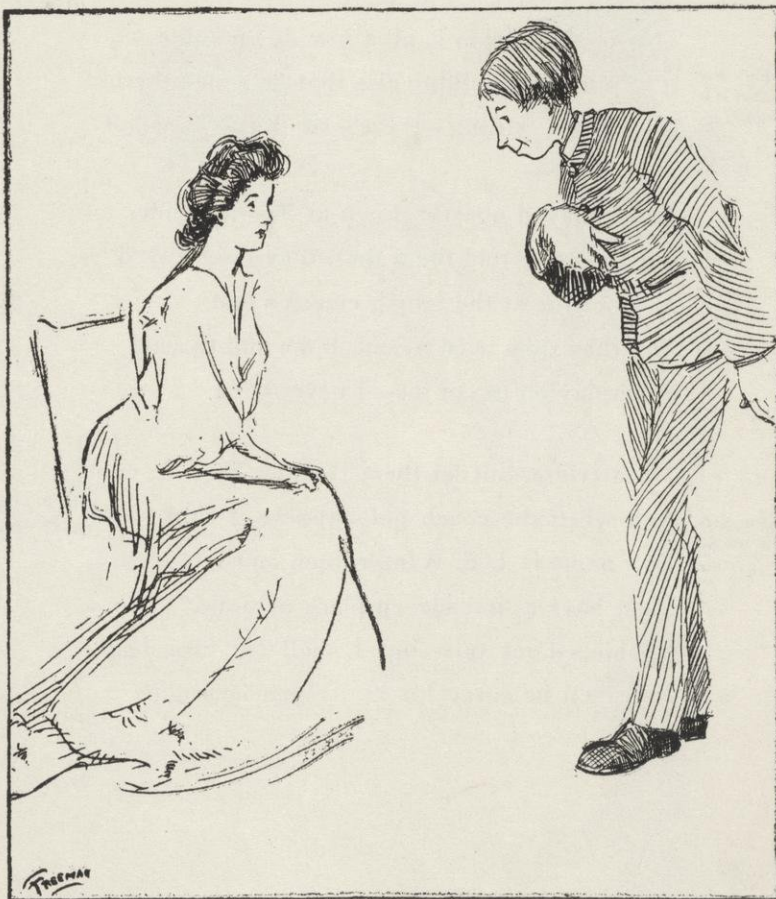
And I wouldn't say
that either if it
wasn't so. This football team is all a low down snide—
It's "pull" and nothing else that gets men there,
Now I am strong—there's nothing I won't
dare—

And I played quarter down at Podunk Side.
But though I told them that, they only guyed
And put me at the fourth eleven's end,
And then they tried to smash me and to send
Each play on top of me—I never tried

He was uncivil,
earfully so, almost
rude. To interfere, but let them thunder by,
And when the coach got impolite, I said
"My name is J. F. Wintergreen and I
Must have a first eleven place or none."

He kicked me out—but I shall cut him dead
And he'll be sorry for the things he's done.

I was'nt angry
merely vexed.



"I danced with her"

XI.

They all gravitate
my way.

I danced with Her tonight—and She—oh my!

I fear She's got an awful crush on me.

I'm seventeen and She is twenty-three,

But I look twenty-five and that's no lie.

I seem to fascinate—I don't know why,

I've "seen life"
some, you see.

Of course there are
good reasons.

Although of course I'm bright—and as you

see—

A man of striking personality,

And dance divinely—so She said and I—

Could but believe Her—for She understands

My worth as few down here do, and her heart

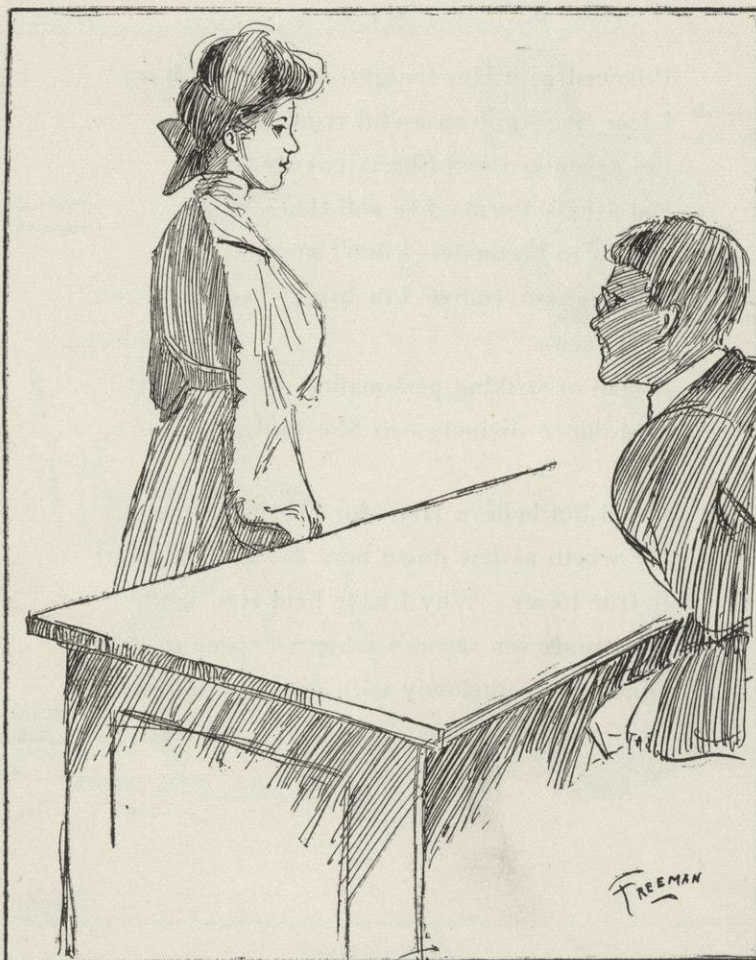
Is true to me. Why I have held Her hands

Sometimes ten seconds when we came to part.

Oh, Time, run slowly with your crystal sands,

I've captured one more maiden at the start.

This Lothario busi-
ness is killing me.



"The way instructors act"

XII.

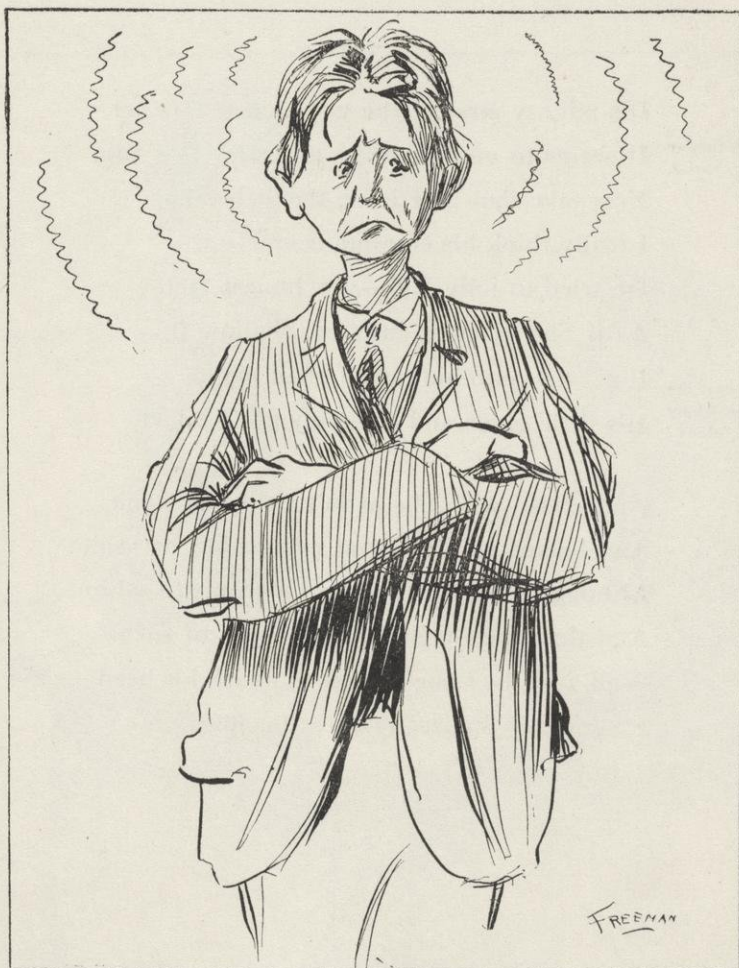
They think they're
regular Lotharios.
It's mighty strange the way instructors act
It seems to me that some are MIGHTY flip,
Now take that Mortimer, the little snip,
I really think his cranium is cracked.
He tried to jolly Her—yes, honest fact,
As if She cared to hear his shallow lip.
But I am onto him and I shall nip
His little game and leave my graft intact.

Nerve!

Do you sense the
sparkle of my
slang?

And yet—I wish She hadn't smiled so much,
And looked so pleased at everything he said,
Although I know 'twas just a woman's whim,
And that She's true to me in spite of such.
Well, just the same I'd like to punch his head—
I wonder if She really cares for him?

You never can tell.



"The Nerve of him."

XIII.

This writing sonnets is a measly job ;

I'm pretty good at
it, however!

It gives me pain exceedingly at times

To rack my brain in search of fitting rhymes,

When troubles crowd around me in a mob.

——! ——! That mucker, Bangs, has butted in—the slob.

He makes me feel like three defective dimes,

That's 30 cents,
you know.

He asked Her to the Hop—of all the crimes!—

It makes me bubble cuss-words by the gob.

The nerve of him! the cheek! the brass! the
gall!

He must have seen how strong I was with Her,

And yet he marches, waddles, up the hall,

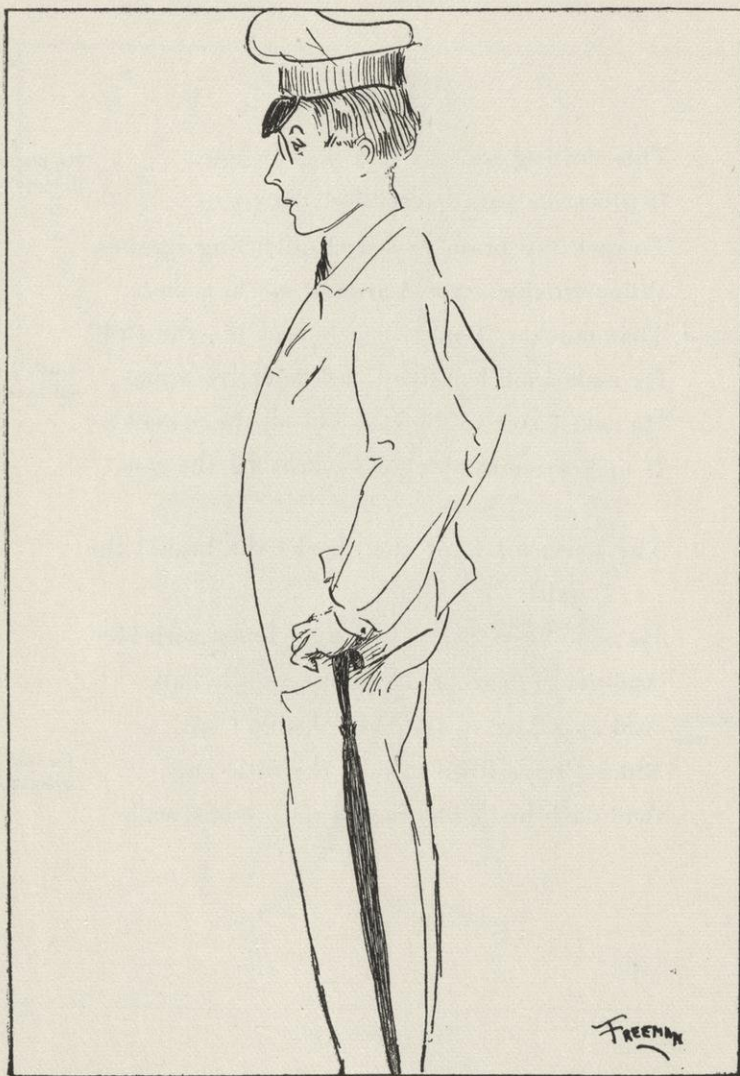
And me a wise boy,
too.

And asks Her to the Hop! I didn't stir.

But I'd have liked to take the little cur

I'm real savage
when aroused.

And dash his flabby brains out on the wall.



"That lobster Bliss."

XIV.

I hated to, but she
forced me to it.

Say, do you know that girl I chased around?

Well, I have dropped her hard, it's just like
this:

I asked her to the Prom, and then I found
That she is going with that lobster Bliss.
Well, if 'twas someone else I wouldn't care,
In fact I don't care, but it makes me mad
To see her going with that saphead cad,
Who has no thoughts except of things to wear.

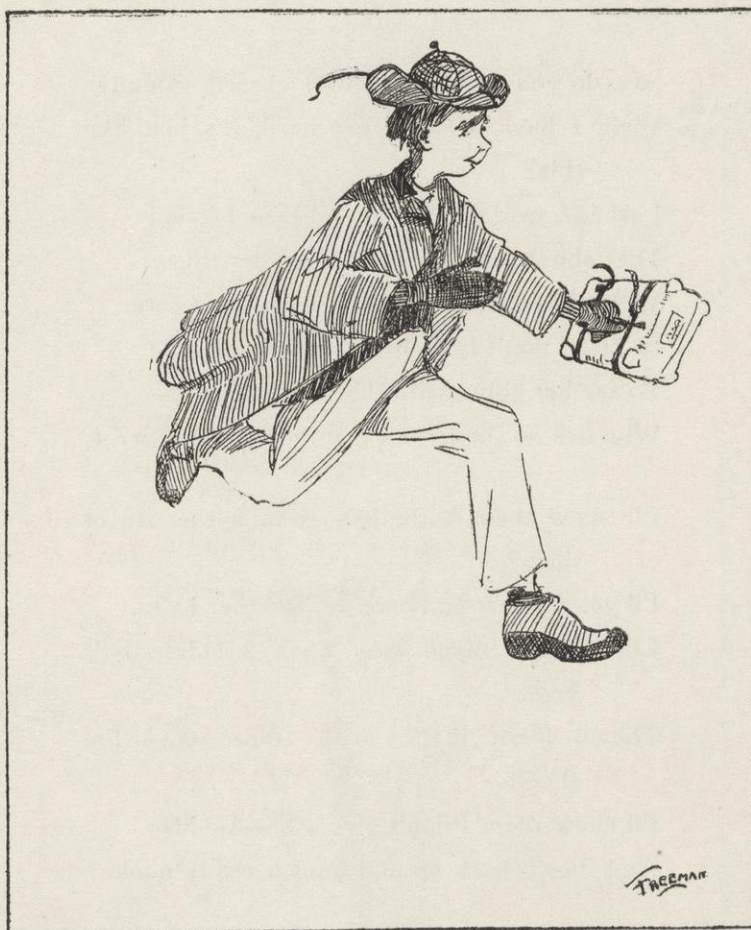
I'll show them both, bah—what's the use of
them?

I'll get a girl from home to make her look
Like cheap, frayed lace upon a shirtwaist's
hem.

That's the latest in
slang, I made it up

They'll learn that I'm a terror when I'm
shook—

I'll show them I don't give a D—A—M—
And they'll back up and hunt a shady nook.



"I'm going home."

XV.

(Thank Gawd!) I'm going home, for Xmas's coming fast,
I'm going home to show them what I've
learned;
The stir I've made here and the heads I've
turned—

The hearts I've broken as the time went past.

Mary's my girl at
home. A Sailor has
a sweetheart in
every port, you
know.

Ah, how I'll dazzle Mary—how she'll cast
Adoring glances at me. Unconcerned,
I'll let her worship, for I'VE vainly yearned
To win her, days gone by, and now I'll blast

Her hopes in sweet revenge. I'll turn to Jane,
And lead her captive to my new found charms.
'Tis brains that win the women—my heart
warms

With thoughts of all the conquests I shall gain.

Don't this last line
give you an idea of
vastness? Huh!

I'm going home to triumph with my brain
O'er all the people of the towns and farms.



"Young man, I have bad news."

XVI.

I got a con, I got a con, Hoo roo!

I'm getting to be a
regular Gol Darn.

I am a College Man to beat the band,

My Prof. just grasped me sadly by the hand

And said "Young man, I have bad news for
you.

Your Latin standings will not let you
through—

And you're conditioned. Where you're going
to land

I do not know, unless you brace up, and

Do somewhat better than the way you do."

I'll have to dig
some, I think.

Ah, how I'll make Her say, "You naughty
child,

I fear they're spoiling you, you must be good."

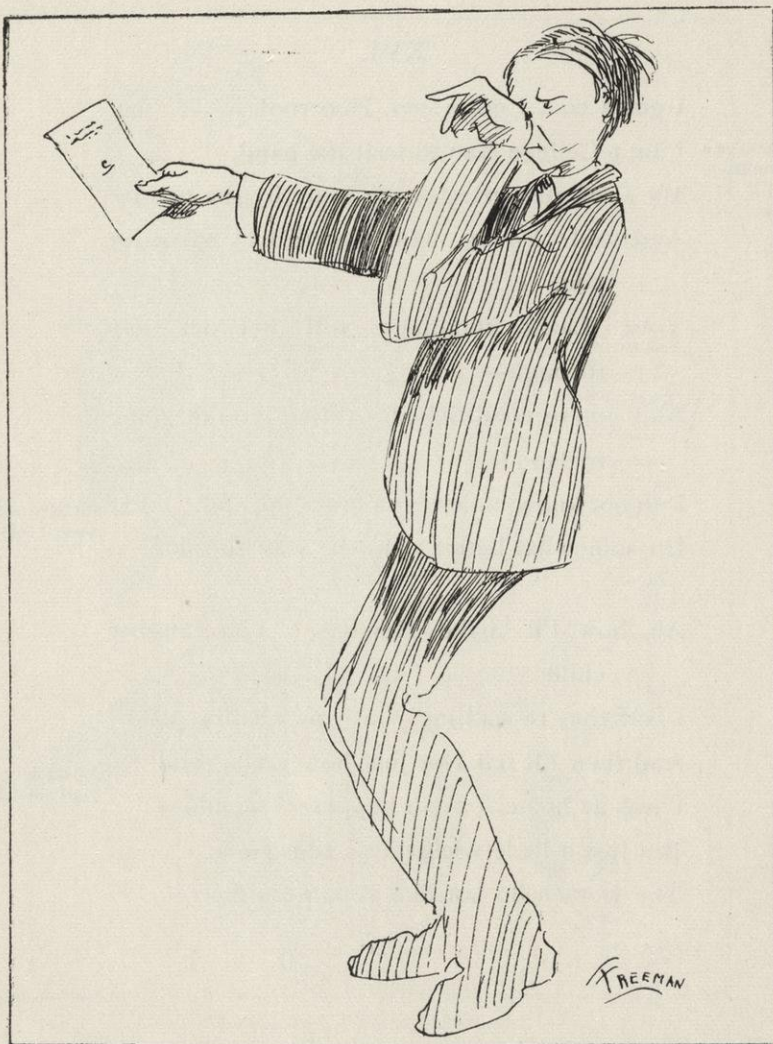
And then I'll tell Her just how awful wild

I was at home, I don't suppose I should—

But just a little wickedness adds spice,

The women do not like a man too nice.

Well really, I'm
pretty dissipated.



"I got a 'C' "

XVII.

This shows I'm
learning fast.

"Midnight, and I sit here and deeply think

Of nature and the vastness of the earth,

And space which laughs in silent Titon mirth

At all our aspirations towards the brink

Of the Immutable"—Great Hinky Dink!

How's that for language? Well, I guess that's

worth

An "A" at least—I'll show 'em there's no

dearth

Of genius here, you watch me make 'em blink.

That's another one
of my own crea-
tions in colloquil-
ism, pretty good I
guess!

That measly Prof's a lobster, that is all;

I got a "C" on that great theme of mine.

He has less feeling than a common wall,

Or he'd have seen and felt it to be fine;

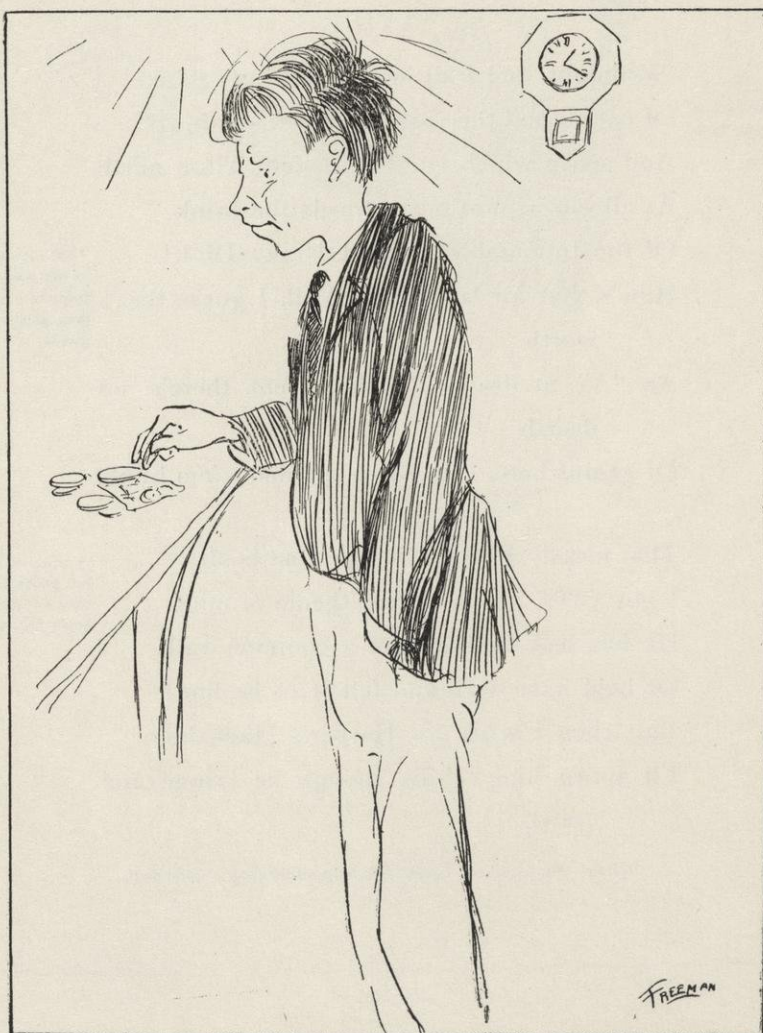
But when I write for Harper's Magazine,

I'll spurn him coldly, though he cringe and

crawl.

A prophet is with-
out profit in his
own country. (I
made that up.)

"Cringe and crawl,—" I just can't help alliterating a good deal.



"I paid."

XVIII.

Each day I'm here my fame grows wider still. That's no jolloly
either.

I joined a speaking club a day ago,

They seemed to realize how much I know

Because they cheered and called for me until

I spoke to them—and then as if to fill

My cup of joy with “worship’s overflow”

That's true appre-
ciation.

They made me head debater—doing so

Because they wanted me to move and thrill

Men's hearts—and plead with “Logic ab-
solute.”

And then they said “The custom is full old

For those elected to the grand debate

To stand for stews and steaks and beer to

boot,”

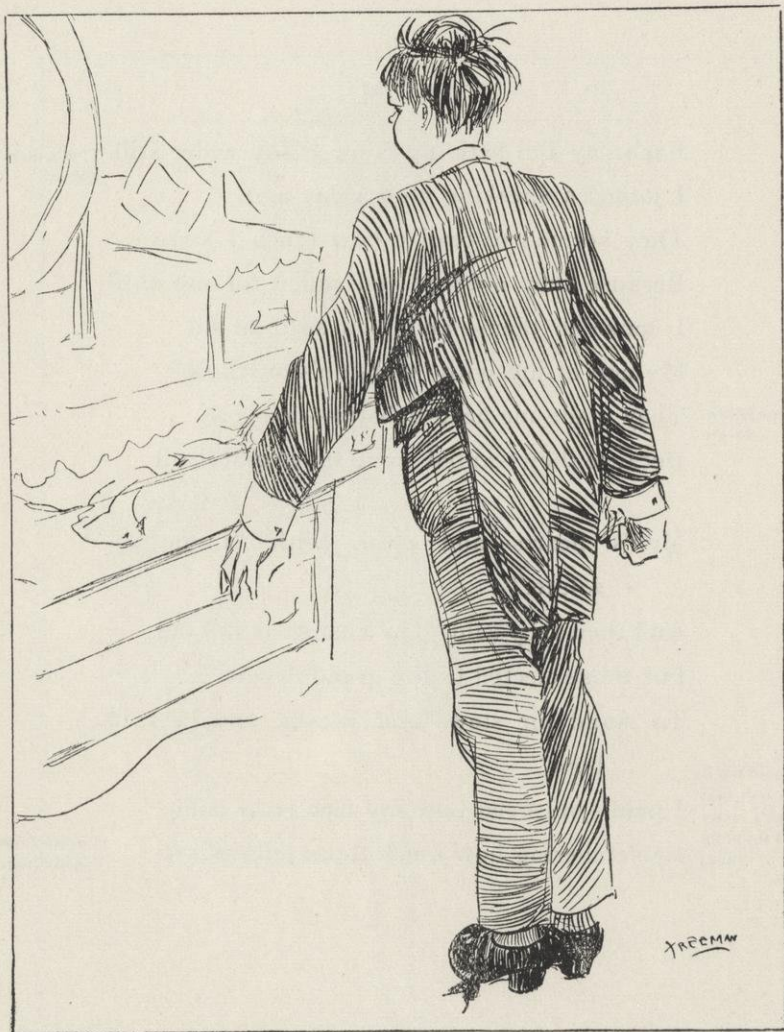
A Senior told me it
was a fake and that

I wasn't really
elected. I think he
lied.

I paid—but even now my feet grow cold,

Remembering how much those fellows ate.

I mean I remember,
not my feet.



"A swallow-tail...."

XIX.

I guess perhaps I'm not among the swells—
I'm going to the Prom, just watch my smoke,
A swallow-tail, and pats, and silk-lined cloak
And then the girl—say—talk about your belles!
Another conquest—oh, it's brain that tells
But I'm a true sport now—my watch in soak
And bills galore, and father nearly broke.
But then a fellow's got to have the shells

To treat his maiden right! You'll note my slang
Like me it's swagger and it's up to date,
Gee, won't I cut a figure with the gang
Of girls which gathers here,—just watch and
wait—

More broken hearts upon my string to hang,
It's wicked, but I seem to be their Fate.

No comments here
I reckon!



"She's joined the Physics class....."

XX.

She's joined the Physics class that I am in,
And I'm so glad because She has the seat
Beside my own, and oh, it's awful sweet,
To watch Her face and scan Her dimpled
chin,—

I think that is a
very nice expres-
sion.

And talk to Her before the Profs. begin—

Excuse my slang
here, there are
times I can't help
using it, you know.

I bet I get a graft that can't be beat,

I bet I freeze the others out complete.

Why, it's so easy it's almost a sin.

* * * * *

When I came in today I found a Soph.

Nerve! Had swiped my seat and sat there by Her side,

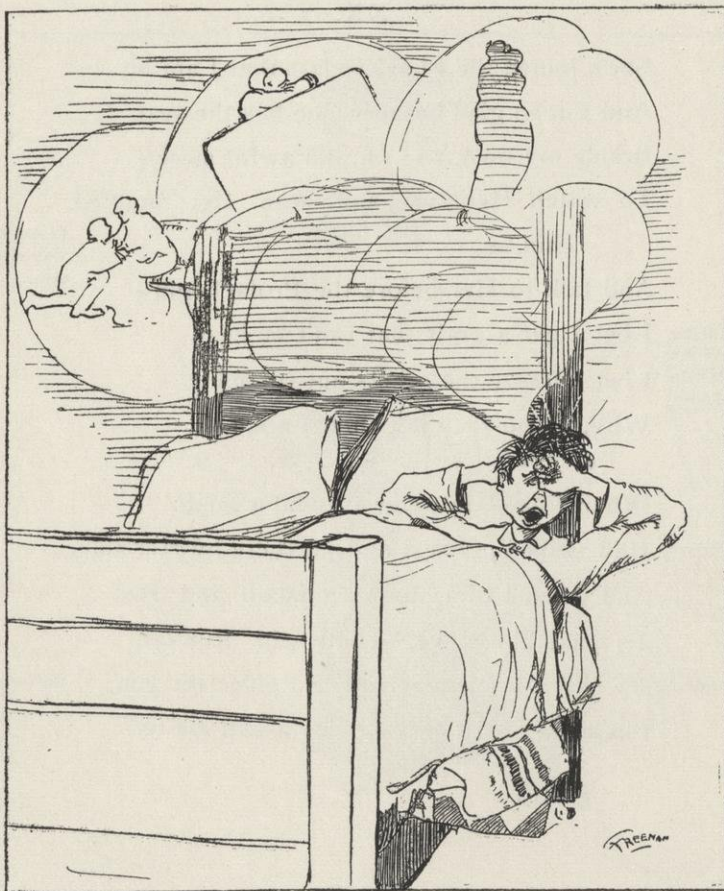
And when I told him his mistake and tried

To make him move, he only said "Run off,

I wonder? My childish friend, this is no place for you,

But no!

I'm sitting here because She asked me to."



"I bumped my head."

XXI.

It was just "hunky
boy."

I went to see Her and She was so nice

I fell in love still deeper than I was.

She sat down close to me,—Ah Paradise

Can hold no joy like that you see—because

I whispered—"Dear, I scarce had seen you
twice

Before I knew I loved you, can you care

For one like me, unworthy, steeped in vice?"—

And then She said my life She'd gladly share—

And oh, but I was happy—She was mine,

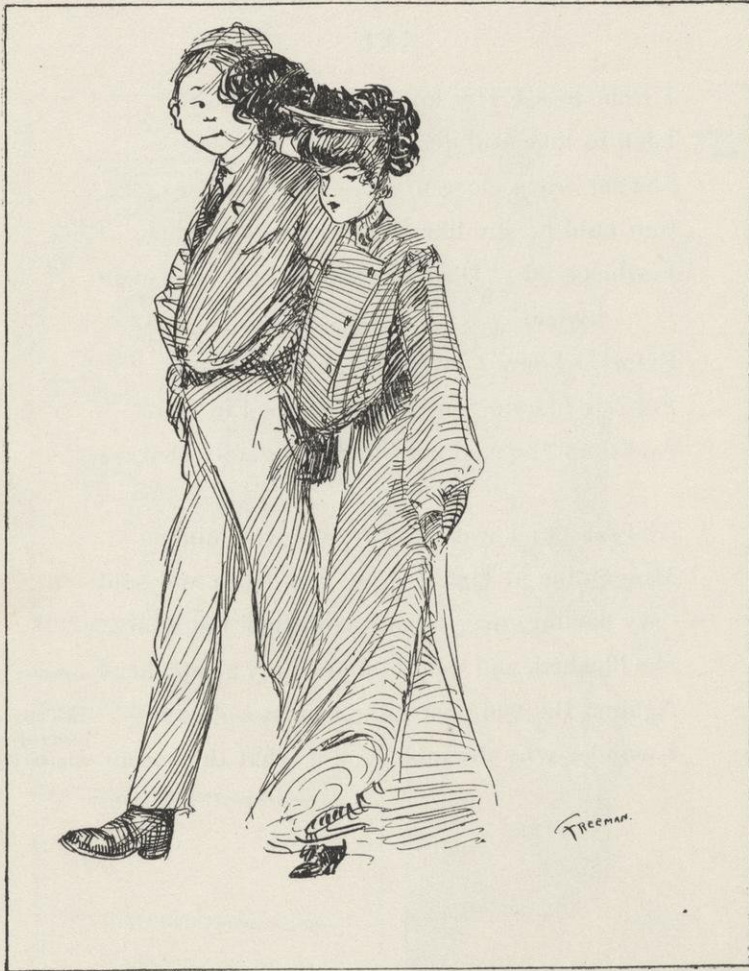
Mine, mine at last, I drew Her close and said

"My darling, may I taste your lips' red wine?"

She blushed, and then I bumped my sleepy head Torture!

Against the bed-post—it was just a dream—

I wonder why dreams are not what they seem. That is a very
pretty and entirely
original thought.



"Girls are the biggest puzzles."

XXII.

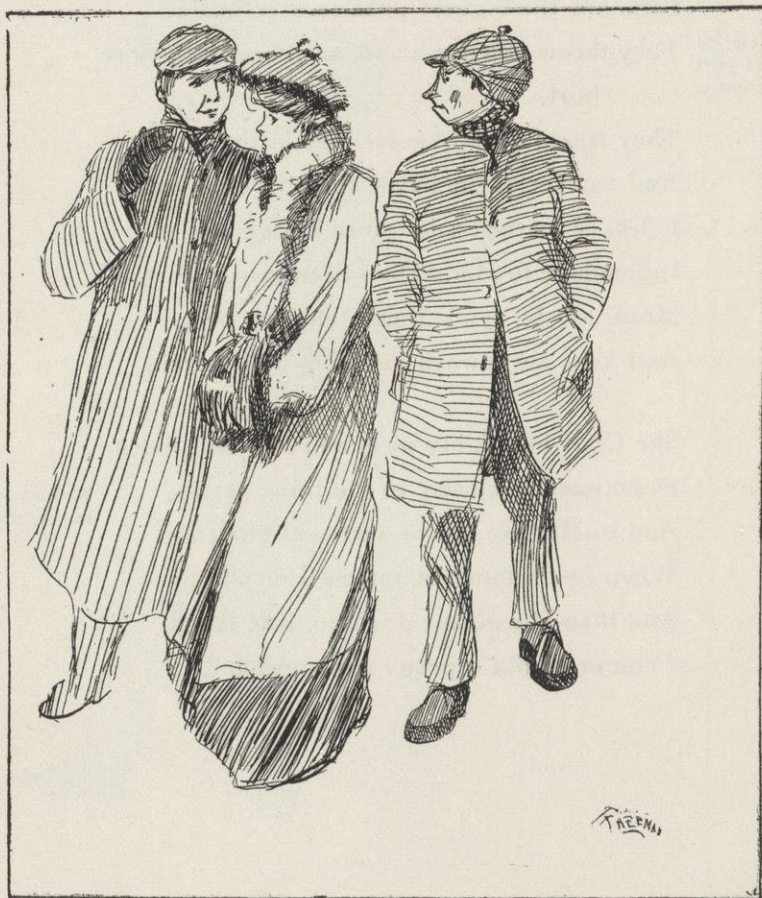
This is an old, old
story, but I put it
pretty neatly.

Girls are the biggest puzzles ever made;
They throw you down and weep because you're
hurt,

They trample all your feelings in the dirt
And wonder at the havoc they have played.
I, I have learned a lot since I have stayed
In bondage to Her—She's been gentle, curt,
Mean, lovely, sympathetic, modest, pert,
And kept me always guessing and—afraid.

She CAN be mighty nice, and She will listen
Sometimes so closely to the things I say,
And in Her eye a little tear will glisten
When just a touch of sorrow I display;
And then She pipes up with a little laugh,
"You orate like a penny phonograph."

Now what do you
think of this?

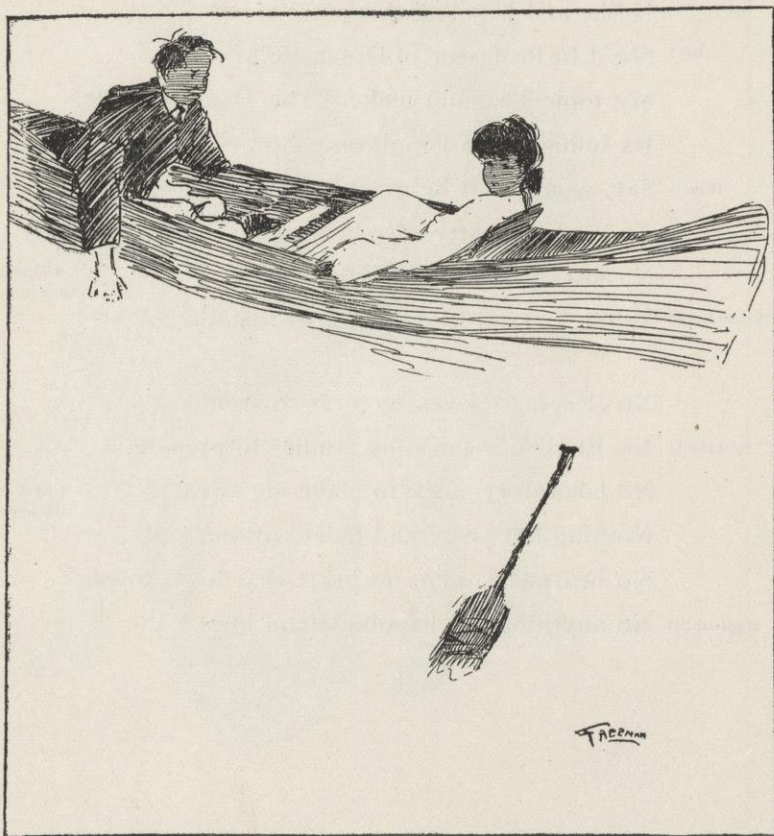


"As silent as a stone"

XXIII.

If She and I had all this place alone
Joy! She'd be Professor of Domestic Science,
My topic I should make, "The Dual Alliance,
Its influence on happiness,—how shown?"
Bliss!! Say, wouldn't it be great?—She all my own, But yes!
And not a lobster ever butting in,
No nifty talker giving Her his chin,
Nevermore! While I stand by as silent as a stone. Although I'm quite
a joshier myself.

No classes, quizzes, lectures to attend,
Ecstasy!!! No English themes, no studies to prepare,
No laboratory work to make me swear, I shall never say
"Fudge" again!
Nothing but peace and quiet without end,
No heartache then, no heart that loves amiss,
Rapture!!!! No anything but happiness and bliss.



"To paddle with my hands."

XXIV.

I rented the boat.
I do that lots of
times. It costs 25
cents an hour, too.

I took Her out canoeing Wednesday night—

How fair She looked in that white dress She
wore

She glimmered like the moonlight on the shore

Until my heart leapt, throbbing at the sight,

(I guess I'm pretty strong with Her all right,

And every day I see She loves me more)

And as we swiftly swept the waters o'er,

With love for me I watched Her deep eyes

light.

"Swiftly Swept"—
that's alliterating
some.

I knew Her heart was wholly, freely mine,

And in my joy my paddle slipped from me

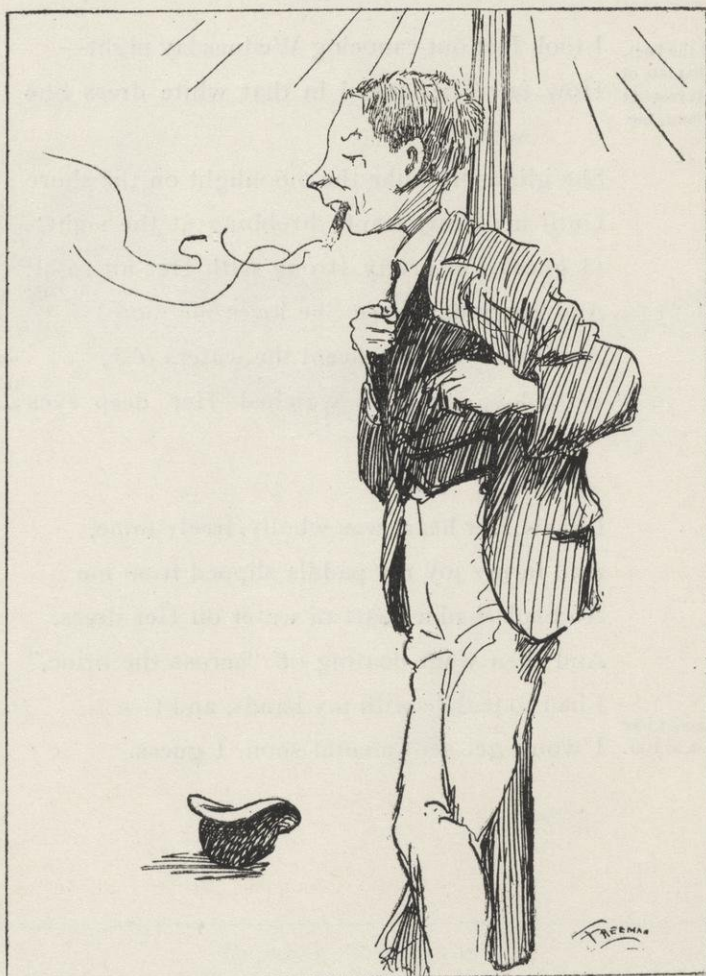
And splashed a quart of water on Her dress,

And then went floating off "across the brine,"

I had to paddle with my hands, and Gee

Just the same I like
to look at Her.

I won't get sentimental soon, I guess.



"I know I'm drunk."

XXV.

I wrote this afterwards. Really, I wasn't quite this bad, but I had a good many pops and two beers.

I—hic—'m shelebratin', drownin' out,
Zhe shorrow whish my leaden heartsh—
strin's feel,—

She turned me down—hic—trod me under heel.
Show now—hic—I hafhs shtarted on zhe
shout.

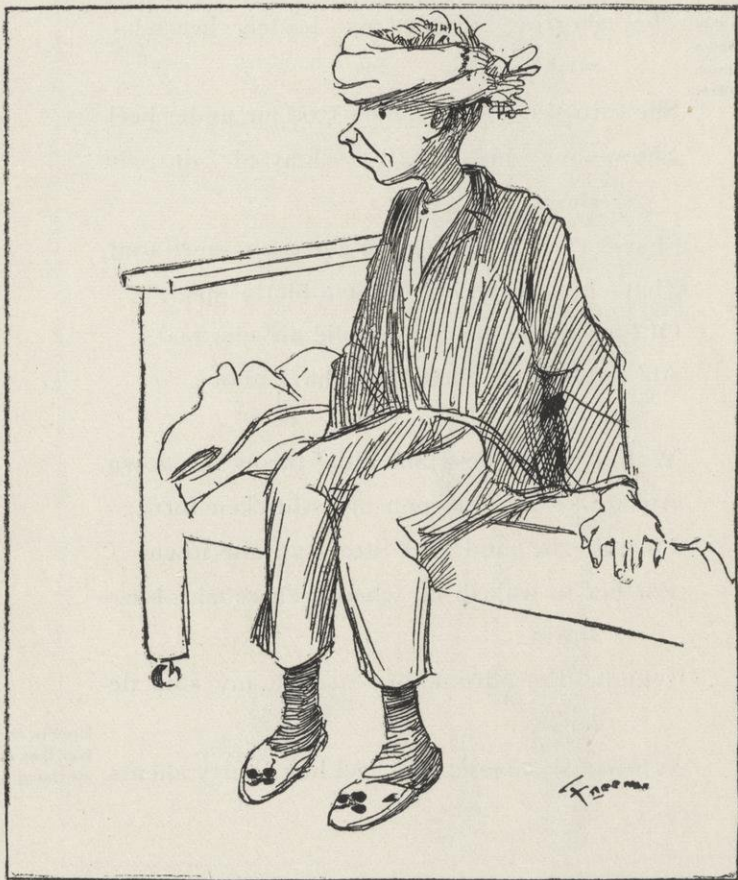
Shay. Have annuzher on zhe cock—sure tout,
Zhat—hic—wash blattin, in a blatin' spiel,
Of how he wash—hic—sholid an' zhe real,
An' only steady zhat She'd have about.

Well shay, I guess She didn' throw me down,
An' walk—hic—ri' 'pon my sthricken form
I'm jus' zhe mud zhat litters up zhe town,
For her to walksh in, whensh zhere ish—hic—
storm.

I know I'm—drunk but here'sh my sole de-
fense,

Whensh shobbered up I feel like shurty shents.

Prob'ly she doesn't
feel that way about
me though.



"Oh Lord, oh Lord!"

XXVI.

Oh, Lord! Oh! Lord! the aching head I've got,
My tongue is furred, and, oh, its burning fire
That makes me feel as if I might require

Never again! Niagara Falls to quench my thirst. No sot

I'm meant to be; the water cart is what
I'm going to mount and nevermore retire.

Pretty sporty slang
here. What?

The drink no more for Willie, I aspire,
No more for "one small bird and one large
bot."

Old R. E. Morse has got me, got me bad,
I've surely hit the awful pace that kills,
I wonder how I'll square myself with dad
I must have run three dollars' worth of bills!

A girl could keep a
hunch-back
straight. And She?—perhaps She'll call me back to save
My tortured soul from drink's engulfing wave!



"To try my luck."

XXVII.

I'm a little scared
though.

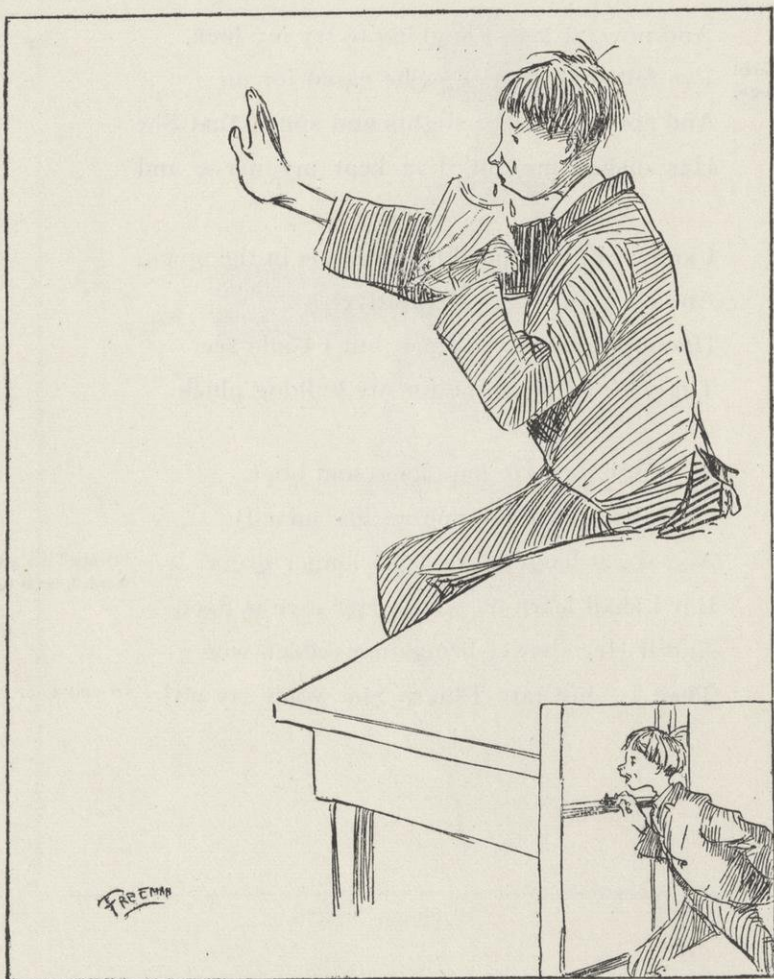
And now, at last, I'm going to try my luck,
I've felt that all along She cared for me
And spite of all the slights and spurns that She
Has dished me out, I've kept my nerve and
stuck.

I know She's dropped me, trod me in the muck,
And chanted dirges (figuratively)
Upon my prostrate corpse, but I could see
That She admired me for my bulldog pluck

In clinging to my happiness and hope.
(I realize these metaphors are mixed)
And so, at length I shall no longer grope
But I shall learn on whom Her love is fixed
And if Her answer brings me sodden woe
Then I— but rats, I know She won't say no!

"Grove" is a good
word, I use it lots.

Of course not!



XXVIII.

After all I've done
for her too.

She's turned me down and left me to my doom
To days of sadness and of bitter woe
She said that I'd recover, but I know
That Life holds nothing more for me but gloom.
Ah, nevermore will Love's glad light illumine
The darksome days that I must undergo;
Unceasingly my bitter tears shall flow
Forever on a dead hope's barren tomb.

This is like Poe,
kind of. He was
sad too.

Henceforth from womankind I turn away.
Their charms can never stir me, I must wend
Uncomforted the path of worldly strife,
And—Who's the peacherine that's passing,—
say,
If you are in the census as my friend,
Just knock me down to her and save my life!

THE END.

IWRP

. B73

Brady

Sonnets of Festivals

