

**THE "BAB" BALLADS;  
MUCH SOUND AND  
LITTLE SENSE**

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The "Bab" ballads; much sound and little sense by W. S. Gilbert

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**W. S. GILBERT**

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LITTLE SENSE**



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# *The "Bab" Ballads*

MUCH SOUND &  
LITTLE SENSE

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*By* W. S. GILBERT

*With ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR*

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## P R E F A C E

*I*T appears nowadays to be an absolute necessity that the subject-matter of even the most insignificant books should be heralded by a Preface; and I believe that there are on record instances of authors who have experienced no difficulty whatever in spinning very slender materials into a three-volume novel, and yet have found themselves terribly perplexed when called upon by their publishers to fill two or three pages with a vindication of their motives in writing it: just as busy people find it very easy to be guilty of an impertinence, but very difficult indeed to apologize satisfactorily for it.

I have some reason to believe that the Ballads, which now appear for the first time in a collected form, have achieved a certain whimsical popularity among a special class of readers. I hope to gather, from their publication in a separate volume, whether that popularity (such as it is) is a thing to be gratified with. With respect to the Ballads themselves, I do not know that I have anything very definite to say about them, except that they are not, as a rule, founded upon fact.

I have ventured to publish the illustrations

*with them because, while they are certainly quite as bad as the Ballads, I suppose they are not much worse. If, therefore, the Ballads are worthy of publication in a collected form, the little pictures would have a right to complain if they were omitted. I do not know that they would avail themselves of that right, but I should, nevertheless, have it on my conscience that I had been guilty of partiality. If, on the other hand, the Ballads should unfortunately be condemned as wholly unworthy of the dignity with which the Publishers have invested them, they will have the satisfaction of feeling that they have companions in misfortune in the rather clumsy sketches that accompany them.*

W. S. G.



## C O N T E N T S

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| CAPTAIN REECE . . . . .                | 1    |
| THE RIVAL CURATES . . . . .            | 6    |
| ONLY A DANCING GIRL . . . . .          | 10   |
| GENERAL JOHN . . . . .                 | 12   |
| TO A LITTLE MAID . . . . .             | 15   |
| JOHN AND FREDDY . . . . .              | 17   |
| SIR GUY THE CRUSADER . . . . .         | 20   |
| HAUNTED . . . . .                      | 24   |
| THE BISHOP AND THE BUSMAN . . . . .    | 27   |
| THE TROUBADOUR . . . . .               | 31   |
| FERDINANDO AND ELVIRA . . . . .        | 35   |
| LORENZO DE LARDY . . . . .             | 41   |
| DISILLUSIONED . . . . .                | 45   |
| BABETTE'S LOVE . . . . .               | 48   |
| TO MY BRIDE . . . . .                  | 52   |
| THE FOLLY OF BROWN . . . . .           | 54   |
| SIR MACKLIN . . . . .                  | 59   |
| THE YARN OF THE "NANCY BELL" . . . . . | 63   |
| THE BISHOP OF RUM-TI-FOO . . . . .     | 68   |
| THE PRECOCIOUS BABY . . . . .          | 73   |
| TO PHOEBE . . . . .                    | 77   |
| BAINES CAREW, GENTLEMAN . . . . .      | 78   |
| THOMAS WINTERBOTTOM HANCE . . . . .    | 83   |
| THE REVEREND MICAH SOWLS . . . . .     | 88   |

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| A DISCONTENTED SUGAR BROKER . . .                             | 92   |
| THE PANTOMIME "SUPER" TO HIS MASK                             | 97   |
| THE FORCE OF ARGUMENT . . . . .                               | 99   |
| THE GHOST, THE GALLANT, THE GAEL,<br>AND THE GOBLIN . . . . . | 103  |
| THE PHANTOM CURATE . . . . .                                  | 108  |
| THE SENSATION CAPTAIN . . . . .                               | 112  |
| TEMPORA MUTANTUR . . . . .                                    | 117  |
| AT A PANTOMIME . . . . .                                      | 120  |
| KING BORRIA BUNGALÉE BOO . . . . .                            | 124  |
| THE PERIWINKLE GIRL . . . . .                                 | 129  |
| THOMSON GREEN AND HARRIET HALE . .                            | 134  |
| BOB POLTER . . . . .  | 138  |
| THE STORY OF PRINCE AGIB . . . . .                            | 143  |
| ELLEN McJONES ABERDEEN . . . . .                              | 147  |
| PETER THE WAG . . . . .                                       | 153  |
| BEN ALLAH ACHMET . . . . .                                    | 158  |
| THE THREE KINGS OF CHICKERABOO . .                            | 162  |
| JOE GOLIGHTLY . . . . .                                       | 166  |
| TO THE TERRESTRIAL GLOBE . . . . .                            | 171  |
| GENTLE ALICE BROWN . . . . .                                  | 172  |
| THE BUMBOAT WOMAN'S STORY . . . .                             | 178  |

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