

A SLIM GILT SOUL

To Lord A—

FEW men are given, 'twixt heaven and hell,
To play one part supremely well.
On all time's tablets there are few
Who make a first-rate show of two,
While those who perfectly play three
We knew not, until you were he.

For what were lovelier on the lawn
Than you, pearl-naked to the dawn,
Wrapped in a scarlet dressing-gown
Not thirty miles from London town,
The "observed of all observers"—save
That Scotland Yard, serene and suave,
When trouble came, went tramping by;
Closed one, and winked the other eye.

How pleasantly you must have smiled:
"I left them, and I left them wild":
Though certainly they had abhorred
The task of locking up a lord.
For a more tragic rôle you played
Your master neatly who betrayed.
His shame and torture turned your leer
To a snarl!—your drab's smile to a sneer,
Quickened, when afterwards your help
He needed, to a currish yelp.

Now—so the wheel of Fortune whirls!—
Your kindly love for little girls
And ardour for the fine old faith
Makes all that past a wisp, a wraith.
You patronise our Sunday schools,

Pronounce on Grammar's darkest rules,
Rebuke bad taste, irreverence,
Heresy, humbug, and pretence.
Your tepid verses come like boons
To cheer Suburban afternoons ;
While Asquith, were he only wise,
Would bid a Board of Morals rise ;
Sure no one like yourself can be
Past-Master in Virginity.

Stay! if so well you play the rôles,
Why not enact dramatic scrolls ?
You would be welcome on the stage
To amuse and to instruct the age
—A shining light in Opera-Bouffe :
Giton, and Judas, and Tartufe !