

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF
CLEVERNESS

Manuscripts, to receive prompt attention, should be addressed, "Editor of THE SMART SET."

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DELICATESSEN

By Joyce Kilmer

WHY is that wanton gossip, Fame,
So dumb about this man's affairs?
Why do we titter at his name
Who come to buy his curious wares?

Here is a shop of wonderment;
From every land has come a prize:
Rich spices from the Orient
And fruit that knew Italian skies;

And figs that ripened by the sea
In Smyrna, nuts from hot Brazil,
Strange pungent meats from Germany,
And currants from a Grecian hill.

He is the lord of goodly things
That make the poor man's table gay,
Yet of his worth no minstrel sings
And on his tomb there is no bay.

Well, it is true he has no sword
To dangle at his booted knees.
He leans across a slab of board,
And draws his knife and slices cheese.

He never heard of chivalry,
He longs for no heroic times;
He thinks of pickles, olives, tea,
And dollars, nickels, cents and dimes.

Yet—in a room above the store
There is a woman—and a child
Pattered just now across the floor;
The shopman looked at him and smiled.

For once he thrilled with high romance
And tuned to love his eager voice;
Like any cavalier of France
He wooed the maiden of his choice.

THE SMART SET

And there are those who grasp his hand,
Who drink with him and wish him well.
Oh, in no drear and lonely land
Shall he who honors friendship dwell.

And in his little shop, who knows
What bitter games of war are played?
Why, daily on each corner grows
A foe to rob him of his trade.

He decks his window artfully;
He haggles over paltry sums;
In this strange field his war must be,
And by such blows his triumph comes.

What if no trumpet sounds to call
His armèd legions to his side?
What if to no ancestral hall
He comes in all a victor's pride?

The scene shall never fit the deed,
Grotesquely wonders come to pass:
The fool shall mount an Arab steed,
And Jesus ride upon an ass.

O Carpenter of Nazareth,
Whose Mother was a village maid,
Shall we, Thy children, blow our breath
In scorn on any humble trade?

Have pity on our foolishness
And give us eyes that we may see
Beneath the shopman's clumsy dress
The splendor of Humanity!

