

BALLADE OF BOWLING

MANY a man is a dab at Greek,
Latin is easily learnt by some,
Heaps of—Germans—in German speak,
French Verbs yield to the rule of thumb.
Many a man a tune can hum
In a manner distinctly beyond all praise,
Scrape on a fiddle, or beat a drum :—
Not every bowler can break both ways !

Men there have been who would daily seek
Problems in Algebra—trebly glum,
Work at them, groan at them, week by week,
Grind like a matchmaker down in a slum ;
Slave all night, though no answer come,
Smug all day, though the summer blaze,
All may do that till the brain succumb :—
Not every bowler can break both ways !

Vain be the struggle of party clique ! ¹
The ground is iron, the wicket is crumb,

The Oxford match is no time for pique.
The double break says “ Fee-Fo-Fum,
I snick the balls, or go plumb-plumb-plumb
Into the sticks.” No batsman stays
While the ball spins round like a tee-to-tum ;
Not every bowler can break both ways !

¹ In 1896-99, the author was excluded from the Cambridge Eleven, owing to the machinations of his relentless and Machiavellian persecutors. Owing to this disgraceful jobbery, the Oxford team were in no case dismissed without scoring

ENVOI

Prince, if your batting be mild and meek,
Think on the burden of these sweet lays,
So your revenge you may nobly wreak,
And bowl for the Varsity all your days ;
Not every bowler can break both ways !