

THE HERMIT

AN ATTACK ON BARBERCRAFT

To Cecil Jones

AT LAST an end of all I hoped and feared!
Muttered the hermit through his elfin beard.

Then what art thou? the evil whisper whirred.
I doubt me sorely if the hermit heard.

To all God's questions never a word he said,
But simply shook his venerable head.

God sent all plagues; he laughed and heeded not,
Till people took him for an idiot.

God sent all joys; he only laughed amain,
Till people certified him as insane.

But somehow all his fellow-lunatics
Began to imitate his silly tricks.

And stranger still, their prospects so enlarged
That one by one the patients were discharged.

God asked him by what right he interfered;
He only laughed into his elfin beard.

When God revealed Himself to mortal prayer
He gave a fatal opening to Voltaire.

Our hermit had dispensed with Sinai's thunder,
But on the other hand he made no blunder;

He knew (no doubt) that *any* axiom
Would furnish bricks to build some Donkeydom.

But!—all who urged that hermit to confess
Caught the infection of his happiness.

I would it were my fate to dree his weird ;
I think that I will grow an elfin beard.