

**A LINE-O'-VERSE
OR TWO**

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A Line-o'-Verse Or Two by Bert Leston Taylor

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BERT LESTON TAYLOR

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By

Bert Leston Taylor



The Reilly & Britton Co.
Chicago

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NOTE

FOR the privilege of reprinting the rimes gathered here I am indebted to the courtesy of the *Chicago Tribune* and *Puck*, in whose pages most of them first appeared. "The Lay of St. Ambrose" is new.

One reason for rounding up this fugitive verse and prisoning it between covers was this: Frequently—more or less—I receive a request for a copy of this jingle or that, and it is easier to mention a publishing house than to search through ancient and dusty files.

The other reason was that I wanted to.

B. L. T.

TO MY READERS

N*OT* merely of this book,—but a larger company, with whom, through the medium of the Chicago Tribune, I have been on very pleasant terms for several years,—this handful of rime is joyously dedicated.

THE LAY OF ST. AMBROSE

*"And hard by doth dwell, in St. Catherine's cell,
Ambrose, the anchorite old and grey."*

—THE LAY OF ST. NICHOLAS.

AMBROSE the anchorite old and grey
Larruped himself in his lonely cell,
And many a welt on his pious pelt
The scourge evoked as it rose and fell.

For hours together the flagellant leather
Went whacketty-whack with his groans of pain;
And the lay-brothers said, with a wag of the head,
"Ambrose has been at the bottle again."

And such, in sooth, was the sober truth;
For the single fault of this saintly soul
Was a desert thirst for the cup accurst,—
A quenchless love for the Flowing Bowl.

When he woke at morn with a head forlorn
And a taste like a last-year swallow's nest,
He would kneel and pray, then rise and flay
His sinful body like all possessed.

Frequently tempted, he fell from grace,
And as often he found the devil to pay;
But by diligent scourging and diligent purging
He managed to keep Old Nick at bay.

This was the plight of our anchorite,—
An endless penance condemned to dree,—
When it chanced one day there came his way
A Mystical Book with a golden Key.

This Mystical Book was a guide to health,
That none might follow and go astray;
While a turn of the Key unlocked the wealth
That all unknown in the Scriptures lay.

Disease is sin, the Book defined;
Sickness is error to which men cling;
Pain is merely a state of mind,
And matter a non-existent thing.

If a tooth should ache, or a leg should break,
You simply "affirm" and it's sound again.
Cut and contusion are only delusion,
And indigestion a fancied pain.

For pain is naught if you "hold a thought,"
Fevvers fly at your simple say;
You have but to affirm, and every germ
Will fold up its tent and steal away.

From matin gong to even-song
Ambrose pondered this mystic lore,
Till what had seemed fiction took on a conviction
That words had never possessed before.

"If pain," quoth he, "is a state of mind,
If a rough hair shirt to silk is kin,—
If these things are error, pray where's the terror
In scourging and purging oneself of sin?"

"It certainly seemeth good to me,
By and large, in part and in whole.
I'll put it in practice and find if it fact is,
Or only a mystical rigmarole."

The very next night our anchorite
Of the Flowing Bowl drank long and deep.
He argued this wise: "New Thought applies
No fitter to lamb than it does to sheep."

When he woke at morn with a head forlorn
And a taste akin to a parrot's cage,
He knelt and prayed, then up and flayed
His sinful flesh in a righteous rage.

Whacketty-whack on breast and back,
Whacketty-whack, before, behind;
But he held the thought as he laid it on,
"Pain is merely a state of mind."

Whacketty-whack on breast and back,
Whacketty-whack on calf and shin;
And the lay-brothers said, with a wag of the head,
"*Ain't* he the glutton for discipline!"