

A BIRTHDAY BALLADE

(TO CHARLIE)

By ALFRED GORDON

"I SHALL never, never grow old!"
Have your way, my lad, have your way!
'Tis only old fogies that hold
We crumble to dust, and decay.
In vain I cry out to you, "Stay!
Remember the years and their rue!
The world was not made for mere play!"—
For I once had the same visions too!

"All I touch shall turn into gold!"
Well, it may, my lad, well it may!
'Tis a tale that's so often been told,
It surely must happen some day!
And, indeed, if you think of it, pray,
Why shouldn't it happen to you?
To such logic 'tis hard to cry nay—
For I once had the same visions too!

"My fame round the world shall be rolled!"
So you say, my lad, so you say!
"Though the sun and the stars shall grow cold,
It shall echo for ever and aye!"
Ah, yes! Though perpetual gray
Has clouded me half my life through,
In vain on such dreams I inveigh—
For I once had the same visions too!

Envoi

Health and wealth and fame, then, undoled,
Be yours, lad, whatever you do!
Ah, what though I crumble to mould—
For I once had the same visions too!