

Now Dickens—most extraordinary—dealt  
In fiction with what people really felt.  
That proves his genius. Thackeray again  
Is so unequal as to cause me pain.  
And last of all, with History to conclude,  
I've read Macaulay and I've heard of Froude.  
That list, with all deductions, Gentlemen,  
Will show that 'now' is not the same as 'then';  
If you believe the plaintiff you'll declare  
That English writers are not what they were."

Down sits Sir Edward with a glowing breast,  
And some applause is instantly suppressed.  
Now up the nave of that majestic church  
A quick uncertain step is heard to lurch.  
Who is it ? no one knows ; but by his mien  
He's the head verger, if he's not the Dean.

"What fellow's this that dares to treat us so ?  
This is no place for lawyers, out you go !  
He is a brawler, Sir, who here presumes  
To move our laurels and arrange our tombs.  
Suppose that Meredith or Stephen said  
(Or do you think those gentlemen are dead ?)  
This age has borne no advocates of rank,  
Would not your face in turn be rather blank ?  
Come now, I beg you, go without a fuss,  
And leave these high and heavenly things to us ;  
You may perhaps be some one, at the Bar,  
But you are not in Orders, and we are."