



In the
Bay of
Biscay, O!

*The Pendennis
Castle dips into the
swell.*

Cry on the South Wind

(To 36-25-37)

DR. JNO. CRAWFORD, former Union-Castle Line Surgeon, declares that great poetry blooms only in the light of great inspiration. This particular blossoming, he adds, was occasioned by a letter which came to hand almost at the moment of departure from Cape Town for home; amidst the headline news was the information that the new costume measured 36-25-37.

The god of love should have "as large a charter as the wind."

And little heed, as heretofore, of length, or breadth, or shape;

Nor should his instant arrow, with its blessing, be confined

Or ousted by the cold computer and the measuring tape.

Now, when the substance of a dream shall sail within his ken,

To fill his callow heart with joy and wondering adoration,

The modish youth will spread his wings for the cerulean, but then

Demand an accurate, numerical, specification.

Pity the doubting stricken wight; his "first fine careless rapture"

Must surely sadly suffer some frustrational abatement

The while that Eros squanders time, with baser tools, to capture

Statistical enchantments, and compile his public statement.

Of Helen, and her 1,000 ships, the classic poet sings;

La Polaire built her fortunes round a 13 inches waist;

Some later maidens flaunt the count of busty offerings
To gain in superhumanhood what they have lost in taste.

But, must we put the gauge of Beauty's power on such a basis,

The bald assessment of an aggregate, or of a girth?

Fain would I keep Her rare imponderables an oasis

Amidst the tares and arid sands of this too factual earth.

A poem I would sing, but that my lack of words encumbers,

And those that come inevitably soar to the ecstatic;

How can I think of you, my love, in terms of simple numbers,

The sum of all your subtle charms as merely mathematic?

We, of this other, Trojan one, nor know nor care the tally

That might have sung the glories of her girdle, bust, or hips;

So, must an ardent lover learn to tot, mechanically,

A balance sheet—to boast so many inches, so many ships?

As this appears the model, to conform I've sadly striven;

Here, making home from o'er the tropics' rim, there drive to you,

To You, my 36 and 25 and 37,
Leaping 500 miles a day in soul-inspiring runs,
With heightened beat, and eager thrust of piston, shaft,
and screw,
My heart—my life—and 27,000 tons.