

Sullivan Sir Arthur

"A Modern Major General"

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I am the very model of a modern major-general,
I've information vegetable, animal and mineral,
I know the kings of England and I quote the fights
historical,
From Marathon to Waterloo in order categorical.
I'm very well acquainted, too, with matters
mathematical,
I understand equations, both the simple and
quadratical,
About binomial theorem, I'm teeming with a lot o' news
--
With many cheerful facts about the square of the
hypotenuse.
[Dolichurus on last line]
I'm very good at integral and differential calculus,
I know the scientific names of beings animalculous,
In short, in matters vegetable, animal and mineral,
I am the very model of a modern major-general.
I know our mythic history, King Arthur's and Sir
Caradoc's,
I answer hard acrostics, I've a pretty taste for paradox,
I quote in elegiacs all the crimes of Heliogabalus,
In conics, I can floor peculiarities parabolous.
I can tell undoubted Rafaels from Gerard Dowes and

Zoffanys,

I know the croaking chorus of the Frogs of
Aristophanes,

Then I can hum a fugue of which I've heard the music's
din afore,

And whistle all the airs to that infernal nonsense
Pinafore;

[Dolichurus on last line]

Then I can write a washing-bill in Babylonian cuneiform

And tell you every detail of Caractacus' uniform.

In short, in matters vegetable, animal and mineral,

I am the very model of a modern major-general.

In fact, when I know what is meant by "mamelon" and
"ravelin",

When I can tell at sight a Mauser* rifle from a javelin,

When such affairs as sorties and surprises I'm more
wary at,

And when I know precisely what is meant by
"Commissariat" --

When I have learnt what progress has been made in
modern gunnery,

When I know more of tactics than a novice in a nunnery,

In short, when I've a smattering of elemental strategy,

You'll say a better major-general has never sat a-gee.

[Dolichurus on last line]

For my military knowledge, though I'm plucky and
adventurous,

Has only been brought down to the beginning of the
century.

But still, in matters vegetable, animal and mineral,

I am the very model of a modern major-general.

*"Chassepot" may be substituted for "Mauser".

ADDITIONAL VERSES (These three stanzas are often included as encores

in modern productions.)

I've knowledge in all areas artistic and didactical,

From the utilitarian to totally impractical;

I know the dates of great events both wonderful and sinister,

I even know how short a time John Turner was prime minister.

I know the laws of motion, theoretic and mechanical,

In many ways I am Encyclopaedia-Britannical,

With knowledge as gratuitous as . . . how an ancient lute is played,

I'm always in demand whenever Trivial Pursuit is played!

[Dolichurus on last line]

The one thing I don't understand in anything Shakespearean,

Except it's played in theaters that I get very weary in.

But, still in matters vegetable, animal and mineral,

I am the very model of a modern major-general.

(Credits to JAMES E. F. LANDAU for the following additional verses.)

I have acquired prowess at communicating verbally,

I know how to personify and blow up with hyperbole,

I've mastered all devices entertaining and rhetorical,

From strict, anaphoristic speech to highly metaphorical;

I form ingenious pangrams, I'm a stickler for
synecdoche,

I understand all accents, matters not how dialecticky,

I know our planet's history, from ammonites and
belemnites,

To hippies, beatniks, and such current-century-type
thelemnites.

[Dolichurus on last line]

The only thing I just don't get is dialects Ebonical,

Except they get debated in the San Francisco
Chronicle,

But still in matters vegetable, animal and mineral.

I am the very model of a modern major-general

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