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TO A BUDDING BARD

Retire into your writing den,
Put beeswax on your easy chair,
Take reams of paper, nib your pen,
And ruffle your poetic hair!

Don't write of love—it's out of date— But try your hand at something new; Work on a subject really great, And make it brilliant, if not true!

And, if you're lacking for some rhymes,
Look up the poets—they'll supply you;
'Tis one of those quite venial crimes,
For which the public won't decry you!

You pause in doubt? A phrase of Greek Will turn your lines in proper meter; Or, if in French a rhyme you seek.

Your verses will appear much sweeter.

And then I think, if I were you,
I wouldn't send them to the papers;
But twist them up—I often do—
Into the neatest smoking tapers.
—La Touche Hancock.