

## DIARY OF A CHURCH MOUSE

Here among long-discarded cassocks,  
Damp stools, and half-split open hassocks,  
Here where the Vicar never looks  
I nibble through old service books.  
Lean and alone I spend my days  
Behind this Church of England baize.  
I share my dark forgotten room  
With two oil-lamps and half a broom.  
The cleaner never bothers me,  
So here I eat my frugal tea.  
My bread is sawdust mixed with straw;  
My jam is polish for the floor.

Christmas and Easter may be feasts  
For congregations and for priests,  
And so may Whitsun. All the same,  
They do not fill my meagre frame.  
For me the only feast at all  
Is Autumn's Harvest Festival,  
When I can satisfy my want  
With ears of corn around the font.  
I climb the eagle's brazen head  
To burrow through a loaf of bread.  
I scramble up the pulpit stair  
And gnaw the marrows hanging there.

It is enjoyable to taste  
These items ere they go to waste,  
But how annoying when one finds  
That other mice with pagan minds  
Come into church my food to share  
Who have no proper business there.  
Two field mice who have no desire  
To be baptized, invade the choir.  
A large and most unfriendly rat  
Comes in to see what we are at.  
He says he thinks there is no God

And yet he comes ... it's rather odd.  
This year he stole a sheaf of wheat  
(It screened our special preacher's seat),  
And prosperous mice from fields away  
Come in to hear the organ play;  
And under cover of its notes  
Eat through the altar's sheaf of oats.  
A Low Church mouse, who thinks that I  
Am too papistical, and High,  
Yet somehow doesn't think it wrong  
To munch through Harvest Evensong,  
While I, who starve the whole year through,  
Must share my food with rodents who  
Except at this time of the year  
Not once inside the church appear.

Within the human world I know  
Such goings-on could not be so,  
For human beings only do  
What their religion tells them to.  
They read the Bible every day  
And always, night and morning, pray,  
And just like me, the good church mouse,  
Worship each week in God's own house,  
But all the same it's strange to me  
How very full the church can be  
With people I don't see at all  
Except at Harvest Festival.