

T. H. Huxley's Admonition to His Son

Survival of the fittest
Occurs at Bennington
Not as strength-test but as wit-test:
Remember this, my son.

For his lease of life to be lengthened
A chap must hit and run;
Thus argument is strengthened:
Remember this, my son.

Adults may be bewildered
Even at Bennington,
But fie on confused children!
Remember this, my son.

The young are pert, depressing,
Tatterdemalion;
We must withhold our blessing.
Remember this, my son.

They're easy to out-argue;
All outdoing is fun,
And ships outweigh their cargoes:
Remember this, my son.

Have them commit their fortunes
To a boatswain titled don:
What do they want, poor urchins?
Remember this, my son.

Do they know, who keep on fretting,
The ship's construction
Or the ghastly reefs that threaten?
Remember this, my son.

Do they know their destination
And the careful course we're on?
Why can't they keep their patience?
Remember this, my son.

Faith in our able skipper
Inspires everyone
But the anarch or the hipster:
Remember this, my son.

As for the latter, keep him
Until the journey's done
Amused with swabbing and sweeping:
Remember this, my son.

