

Ballad: A Discontented Sugar Broker

In "A Discontented Sugar Broker" from **The Bab Ballads**, we are introduced to a prominent figure in the East India broking scene, whose identity remains undisclosed out of respect for privacy. This individual enjoys considerable success in his profession, evidenced by his financial stability, a dedicated spouse, a team consisting of a manager, a few boys, six clerks, and seven porters, and a home free from creditors. Despite this outward prosperity, he harbors a personal dissatisfaction stemming from his considerable girth, which he describes as a significant burden that detracts from his otherwise fortunate existence.

Determined to address his discontent, the broker embarks on a unique regimen to combat his corpulence. He commits to dancing his way from home in the Fulham Road area through Brompton to his workplace in the City, regardless of the weather or the condition of the streets. This unusual method of commuting not only draws the attention and ridicule of bystanding children, nannies, and clerks but also becomes a spectacle that challenges conventional behaviors expected from someone of his stature and profession.

The broker's decision to dance to work is a direct response to his weight, a matter he considers his sole misfortune amidst an otherwise enviable life. Despite the curiosity and bemusement of onlookers and the inability of his acquaintances to comprehend his motivation, he persists in his endeavor. His actions underscore a personal battle against his physical appearance, prioritizing his well-being over societal expectations and the perplexity of his peers.

This chapter whimsically explores themes of personal satisfaction, societal perceptions, and the lengths to which individuals will go to address personal insecurities or discomforts. It juxtaposes the broker's financial and professional success against his personal dissatisfaction with his weight, offering commentary on

the complex nature of happiness and contentment. Through the broker's unorthodox solution to his problem, the narrative also critiques societal norms and the judgment faced by those who deviate from expected behaviors.

