

Metaphysics¹

by Oliver Herford

Why and Wherefore set out one day
To hunt for a wild Negation.²
They agreed to meet at a cool retreat
On the Point of Interrogation.

5 But the night was dark and they missed their mark,
And, driven well-nigh to distraction,
They lost their ways in a murky maze
Of utter abstruse³ abstraction.⁴

10 Then they took a boat and were soon afloat
On a Sea of Speculation,
But the sea grew rough, and their boat, though tough,
Was split into an Equation.

15 As they floundered about in the Waves of Doubt
Rose a fearful Hypothesis,
Who gibbered with glee as they sank in the sea,
And the last they saw was this:

20 On a rock-bound Reef of Unbelief
There sat the wild Negation;
Then they sank once more and were washed ashore
At the Point of Interrogation.

¹ branch of philosophy that examines the nature of reality

² the absence or opposite of something real, positive, or affirmative

³ hard to understand; secret

⁴ absent-mindedness; an unrealistic or impractical notion