

IN MEMORY OF ELLA COX
WHO DIED DECEMBER 1968

To distant Chatham (fair island or foul?) a fellow
once sailed, by name Frederick von Relleum,
to celebrate the birth of a daughter Mu Ella,
with whiskey and *gin* to make all *gidium*.

In 1867 — now aged three — this unkept,
loutish lass was *ligulate*, *disgusticum*.

By Hooker by crook, by Bent ham or straight, they all wept,
we must change her, make her ere the year be done.

Angelica, angel with soft-textured, leafy limbs.

But alas! her new life left her mis-shapen:
no more than two or three ribs were visible within!

The years slipped by; whatever was to happen?

Well, she grew up unnoticed by man (but not by sheep)
till one day in 1900 minus one

she met an *ass* (*he* went by the name of *Phil*), a creep
hated by children for jabs bodily done.

They were married in Kirk, but Ella was soon in tears:
she did not like this Spaniard, had a fight
and lived alone on a desolate coast. For twelve years
she saw not a soul till a ship came in sight

with Cheese, man, and Hemsley at the helm. The man was Cox,
who'd been hiding six days and nights in a box.

When Ella was rescued she joined our "Jack" all aglow,
lived happily ever This story has no

happy end. We did think she'd live for ever, our Ell,
but the axe came down on Mrs. Cox. To hell
she went — by Dieffen back of course — inside an hour.

From his haven up in the ivy bower

the Dawsome god then spoke, weaving his magical word:

"I'm your assassin — it was for your own good.

Return to Phil whom you so wrongly left to die; gird
up your mericarps — don't trail them in the mud!

"Then Canaan shall be yours, everlasting life." (What a game
they play in heaven!) "Return to Phil? Oh, shame!"

she cried. "First it was *Petriella*, now *Coxella*¹.

Who'll be next? *Bulbinella* or *Drucella*?"

Ella's last words were faint: "Give me—give me back my name.
Save me Michener², save me Cain³!" All in vain.

A. P. DRUCE

1. J. W. Dawson, 1968. *N.Z.Jl Bot.* 6:458.

2. Charles D. Michener, 1964. The possible use of uninominal nomenclature to increase the stability of names in biology. *Syst. Zool.* 15: 182-190.

3. A. J. Cain, 1959. The post-Linnaean development of taxonomy. *Proc. Linn. Soc. Lond.* 170: 234-244.