

John Betjeman (1906-84)

3 *Exeter*

The doctor's intellectual wife
Sat under the ilex tree
The Cathedral bells pealed over the wall
But never a bell heard she
And the sun played shadowgraphs on her book 5
Which was writ by A. Huxléy.

Once those bells, those Exeter bells
Called her to praise and pray
By pink, acacia-shaded walls
Several times a day 10
To Wulfric's altar and riddel posts
While the choir sang Stanford in A.

The doctor jumps in his Morris car,
The surgery door goes bang,
Clash and whirr down Colleton Crescent, 15
Other cars all go hang
My little bus is enough for us —
Till a tram-car bell went clang.

They brought him in by the big front door
And a smiling corpse was he; 20
On the dining-room table they laid him out
Where the *Bystanders* used to be —
The Tatler, *The Sketch* and *The Bystander*
For the canons' wives to see.

Now those bells, those Exeter bells 25
Call her to praise and pray
By pink, acacia-shaded walls
Several times a day

To Wulfric's altar and riddel posts
And the choir sings Stanford in A.

30

1937

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