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Bells and Hobbles
Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane
George Robinson and Co.
1911
For Your Birthday.

Buds of the Summer Roses,
Crimson, and gold, and white,
Bells of the splendid Lilies,
Freshened with dews of night;
Blooms of old-fashioned gardens,
Blooms of the Open Way
Woven in perfumed garlands —
These — for your natal day!

Gold of the Sunlit Beaches,
Green of the hills divine,
Bushland, and all her glories —
Glamor of these be thine!
Yea, and the silver starshine,
Flashing the skies along,
Yea, and the mornings golden —
Be in your birthday song!

Blush of the maiden Morning,
Blood of the wounded Sun
Staining the West with carmine,
Dying when day is done;
Blue of the Sky unfathomed,
Sapphire of shining Sea;
Each in its turn shall color
Words of my wish, for thee.

Flashing with rose-red rubies,
Sparkling with brilliants rare,
Glinting with changing opal,
Glowing with topaz fair;
Turquoise and em'rald burning,
Sard and chalcedony —
Thus, in a shower of jewels,
Falleth my song to thee.

Filled with the meadow's kindness,
Filled with the orchard's bloom,
Sweetened with hay and clover —
So, from a golden loom
Falleth my woof of Fancy
Fashioned in fabric true,
Woven in wishes tender —
Out of my love, for you.
All that is rich in Nature,
All that in Art is fine;
All that the wide world offers,
Be, Oh Beloved, thine!
Sunlight and silver water,
Moonlight and dancing spray;
These, from a Poet's fancy,
Take, for your natal day!
Acknowledgment.

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Bells And Hobbies.
Bells and Hobbles.

When our feet are in the stirrups,
    And our hands are to the reins,
When the cities lie behind us
    And before us spread the plains,
There's a song of night and morning
    That in minor music swells,
'Tis the jangle of the hobbles
    And the jingle of the bells —
    Bells and hobbles,
    Hobbles and bells.

With a dull, metallic tinkle
    Of the muffled hobble-chain;
And an echo, as we canter,
    Of the horse-bells in refrain,
Weaves the wizard of the Westland
    Round our willing hearts his spells;
Makes us helots of the hobbles;
    Makes us vassals of the bells.
    Bells and hobbles,
    Hobbles and bells.

Will you miss me, miss me, Mary,
    In your suburb by the sea?
Will you kiss me, kiss me, Katie
    When we meet at old Moree?
Sing the frail, unfaithful hobbles,
    And with cynic voice outswells
From the Mitchell grass the answer
    Of the frail and faithless bells.
    Bells and hobbles,
    Hobbles and bells:

Oh Love it is a funny thing;
    It makes a man a fool
And teaches maids a lesson that
    They never learnt at school.
Thus the brazen tongue in chorus
   With the iron link dispels,
In a rhythm gay, the gossip
   Of the hobbles and the bells,
   Bells and hobbles,
   Hobbles and bells.

With a bush brunette awaiting
   Who may fickle be, or fond,
And the picture yet before him
   Of a plaintive city blonde,
In a cynic cachinnation,
   So the sinful minor swells.
Of the optimistic hobbles
   And the pessimistic bells,
   Bells and hobbles,
   Hobbles and bells.

But the good tobacco burneth,
   And a silver saltbush gleams,
And 'tis cool beneath the shadows
   By the sluggish western streams;
And the sunlit ridges echo
   From their stony citadels
   To the jingle of the hobbles
   And the tinkle of the bells,
   Bells and hobbles,
   Hobbles and bells.

Let the farmer to his tillage
   All his skill and effort bring;
Let the blacksmith in the village
   Make his homely anvil ring;
Let the sounds of labor thunder
   Where the city worker dwells,
But our songs are of the Bushland
   And the hobbles and the bells,
   Bells and hobbles,
   Hobbles and bells.

And our blankets shall be spreaded
   Over grasses dry and brown,
By the yellow western waters
   When the sun is going down;
By the lonely soaks and gilgas
And the clear artesian wells,
And we'll listen in the gloaming
To the hobbles and the bells.
    Bells and hobbles,
    Hobbles and bells.

Oh, the Sun shall rouse us early,
    As he swings into the blue;
And we'll boil the old black billy
    While our world is wet with dew,
While the working world a-hurry
    Seeks its stuffy office cells,
We'll be slipping off the hobbles,
    And be strapping up the bells,
    Bells and hobbles,
    Hobbles and bells.

And the breezy tracks we travel
    From the sunrise to his set,
They will aid us to remember,
    They will help us to forget;
For the song of Night and Morning
    Shall be with us as it knells
In the message of the hobbles
    And the answer of the bells.
    Bells and hobbles,
    Hobbles and bells.
Green Gravel.

Green gravel, green gravel, the grass is so green
The fairest young lady that ever I've seen

— Children's Rhyme.

Oh Molly, when the grass was green,
When I was King and you were Queen;
When underneath the gumtree's shade,
As children of the Bush we played —
“Green gravel, oh, the grass is green,"
And I was King and you were Queen!

*      *      *      *      *

Oft, through the smoke of my cigar,
I see the schoolhouse stand afar;
And, through the mists of long-ago,
The hats and bonnets in a row,
While sits beside me on our stool
My sweetheart of the old bush-school.

The years, with all their burdens, seem
But mourning echoes of a dream;
The cares of life, its loss and pain,
Are yet unlearnt; again, again
On buoyant feet I tread the cool
Bush track that turns towards the school.

Though climbs the sun above the hill,
The grass is hung with jewels still;
And fresh as youth the morning glows
With clover and with briar rose;
While sweet as music falls the chime
Of all the birds of summertime.

High overhead, where branches meet,
Loud screams the busy parrakeet;
The bright rosellas onward pass,
With diving flight across the grass;
The scarlet lories, two by two,
Their rubies flash along the blue;

And Molly with her schoolbag stands
Awaiting at the fallow lands,
Where, seated on a log we'll share,
In “bite for bite,” the plundered pear;
And dare, as comrades should, again
For “coming late” the stinging cane.

“She loved me true!” “I loved her best.”
But one goes East and one goes West;
And nevermore, amid thy brown
And glossy hair, the bluebell crown
In azure stars I'll weave and twine
Beneath the sun, O sweetheart mine.

In after years, to manhood sprung,
With step still light and heart yet young
I came, unrecognised, alone,
To read her name upon a stone
That stood among the grasses green,
For . . . Molly died at seventeen!

And though the air was sweet in chime
Of all the bells of summertime;
And though the briar roses red
Their well-remembered fragrance shed,
I only saw, I only knew,
That at her feet the bluebells grew;

Like angels' eyes to me they shone,
With some kind knowledge of their own,
Of other lives, in other spheres,
That haply lie beyond the tears
And all the tragic grief and mirth
Of this fantasia of earth.

Their slender stems, as innocent
As childhood's love, above her bent;
And as the murmur of the school
Still drifted o'er the paddocks cool,
They swayed and shook from out their blue
Pathetic eyes the tears of dew.
All on a sudden rose the chime
Of all the bells of summertime;
And once again, upon my ear,
I heard a chorus rising clear:
“Green gravel, oh, the grass is green,
The fairest lady that I’ve seen.”

Had I but dreamed? The years between
Seemed then as they had never been.
I, half-expectant, turned to see
If by the hills she waited me.
Alas, ’twas but, at morning play,
The children of another day.

Long, long ago her lampless Flame
Re-found the realm from whence it came;
And still my feeble light is whirled
And eddied with the living world.
Green gravel, oh, the grass is green.
But . . . Molly died at seventeen!
Outposts.

Beyond the noisy railway; outside the postal roads,  
Where swing no swaying coaches, no coaster wharfs her loads;  
Where brood dark-gullied ranges, where brown plains meet the sky —  
In scrub and bush and jungle the lone bush Outposts lie.

The vanguard lags behind them; the rearguard rests at ease;  
The city-fed battalion doth bivouac in peace;  
But constant is their vigil, their duty long and keen  
Who keep the distant Outposts through fatted years and lean.

They read no current cables; no inky herald brings  
To them each morning early the news of men and things.  
The policies of nations; the world, both grave and gay,  
Is but a formless shadow — an echo far away.

They face the raging summer and pray a cooling change —  
Dust-reddened in the desert; fire-haunted on the range:  
They nurse the stock to water, fly-estered through the haze  
And heat and desolation of dry, drought-devilled days.

They toil through trying winters, foregoing present needs,  
For misty future chances — for tools, or stock, or seeds.  
They walk in homely raiment; coarse fare the cupboard fills  
Of those who keep the Outposts along the plains and hills.

Blazed tracks through forests gloomy — steep, stony trails they know;  
By flooded fords and marshes, and gullies white with snow,  
The thunder on the hillside, the loud tornado's flight;  
Bruised flesh and strong limbs shattered, and sickness in the night.

Aye, doubts and dreads uncertain, child-bearings, fevers, chills,  
Long, sleepless nights of watching, all human griefs and ills,  
Are theirs to bear and battle when hard the burdens press,  
Of solitary trouble and pain in loneliness.

Their dead lie buried near them; the loved they might not save,  
A panel and a paling to mark the quiet grave,  
White stars their tapers burning, the wind among the trees  
To sing above the sleepers its soft bush melodies.
The creaking of the saddles, the stockwhips sounding clear
And gaily in the morning, the gallant Outposts hear;
The bell-birds in the bloodwoods, or, from the pale lagoon,
Green frogs in rain-time croaking hoarse greetings to the moon.

Great pictures spread before them; the sky's unfathomed arch;
Dark clouds like feudal ramparts, white clouds upon the march,
Red mornings on the mountain, red sunsets o'er the plain,
The moonlit river windings, the paddocks wet with rain;

The Canvas of Creation, whose thousand tints and shades
On endless prairies linger and dwell in everglades,
With all its form and colour, its desert and its dew —
While pass the changing seasons — is ever theirs to view.

Bare, ring-barked patches standing like white bones far away;
Bark walls and roofs that mirage to castles 'neath the play
Of mocking suns down-pouring their heat-waves o'er the land;
The flats below the gullies, the sweet soaks in the sand —
These mark in turn the Outposts. By lonesome trail and track
Ye may, so suited, seek them by Far and Farthest Back.
Warm hearts will give ye greeting, strong hands will freely grasp
Your hands in hearty welcome with honest, friendly clasp.

Through sunshine and through starshine, through failure and success,
In fair and flowing seasons, in seasons of distress;
Beyond the touch of culture, without the ways of ease,
These soldiers of the Outposts their vigils never cease.

Lank heroes clothed in moleskin, brown heroines in print;
Although you gain no medals nor in the social mint
Are stamped with high approval, not all that silken crew
Of snobs and city loafers can boast the worth of you.

Ye have your faults and failings; the pressure of your need
Forbids angelic sweetness and bars the saintly breed;
But ye are Men and Women and fit and worthy peers
Of them who hold the Outposts through all the fighting years.
Riverine.

Its level lands are spread away
   To meet the setting sun;
Fierce summers o'er them scorch and slay
   The grass blades, one by one;
Long, wicked droughts have dried their breasts,
   These virgin lands and clean;
But still a fertile promise rests
   Upon the Riverine,
   The fecund Riverine.
It rises, and its worth attests
   The Phoenix Riverine.

It breeds no wasters on its lands —
   The grim, defiant plains
Are held by strong Australian hands
   That firmly grasp the reins;
Wild horsemen these, who race and wheel
   The clustered gums between;
They keep the stirrup to the heel,
   Way down in Riverine,
   Far out in Riverine;
Undaunted souls and hearts of steel,
   Are found in Riverine.

No green palms in the sunlight sway;
   Nor doth the wild, red rose,
In dewy fragrance to the Day
   Uncultured charms disclose:
But here and there a garden smiles;
   And when the Spring falls green,
She puts her feet a thousand miles
   Across the Riverine,
   Along the Riverine.
She wooes, with Amazonian wiles,
   Her Lord the Riverine!

Then gluttoned ewes beside their lambs
Know well the season’s “good.”
To billabongs and creeks and dams
   Flocks down a feathered brood;
Unto a rotund beast hath grown
   The packhorse lank and lean;
The squatter comes unto his own
   Along the Riverine,
   Across the Riverine.
The stock are fat and sleek and blown
   Throughout the Riverine.

A wool-barge, in her steamer's track,
   Swings slowly round the bends;
Her hawser may not fitly slack
   Until the journey ends.
The flood is over reef and sand,
   The channel's wide and clean;
There's water in the rivers, and
   There's joy in Riverine,
   Hurrah for Riverine!
The shearer and the steamboat hand
   Find work thro' Riverine.

White snows upon Monaro die
   Beneath October suns;
Warm tropic rains in cowals lie
   Along far Queensland runs;
The 'Bidgee and the Lachlan swell
   Their crumbling banks between —
They'll have a record clip to tell
   This year in Riverine,
   For once in Riverine.
They're pulling round; they're doing well
   At last, in Riverine.

I walk dull streets; and in mine ear
   A city's tumult rings;
But through my heart a river clear
   Beyond the ranges sings,
And visions of the plains come down
   The by-ways drab, unclean.
I see the trackless prairies brown
   Of dear old Riverine.
   God bless the Riverine!
I would that I might shed the town
For you, old Riverine!

There's strength and effort in the West,
    There's mateship staunch and true;
(And, sweetheart of my one-time quest,
    'Twas there I courted you!)
A blight be on these city ways!
    The wastrel and the quean
Can find no place where Manhood lays
    Its grip on Riverine,
    Its hand on Riverine.
No “pocket Venus” loud displays
    Her charms in Riverine.

*      *      *      *      *

The chiming horse-bells clink and ring
    From Bourke to Tocumwal!
Around their fires the drovers sing,
    The old bush Voices call.
And I must rise and get me gone
    To ease my longings keen;
I'll saddle up and journey on
    Across the Riverine,
    And down the Riverine.
I'm sure of welcome warm from One
    Who waits in Riverine.
Coasts Of Dream.

The window of my sick room fronts
A screw-tormented bay,
Where porcine Commerce squeals and grunts,
And wallows day by day.

Fat, vulgar tramps, in moving cloud
Of smoke, encircled round,
With bull-voiced sirens bellow loud
For pilots — outward bound.

Gay liners, sleek with paint and brass,
Like youths in evening-dress,
Between the looming headlands pass
In patent haughtiness.

The lusts of travel, like a net,
My sick-bed fancies snare;
My thoughts on outward currents set
To glories otherwhere.

The liner's but a huge hotel;
She holds no charm for me;
My Soul demands the heave and swell
Of decks that lip the Sea.

I lie and muse a while, and so,
Like pictures in a dream,
Australian coasts I love and know
Through mist and sunburst gleam.

Palm-clad and fringed by sleepy hills,
With snuggled towns between,
Where aye the horn of Plenty fills,
The Illawarra green

Throws out her curving arms of sand;
From garden slopes, recline
She calls, a Queen of Fairyland,
A Bride of fern and vine.
'Twas here in Youth's deep-buried day,
   With all the World a song,
Beside me on the headland lay
   My maid of Gerringong.

So blue were then the seas and skies,
   So red the heart of Spring,
So gay the painted butterflies,
   And swallows all a-wing!

(Oh take, dear heart, the golden bowl,
   And drink while yet you may.
Time's river will not backward roll,
   Nor Youth nor Love delay!)

My Memory Ship is sailing slow —
   A magic coast it seems,
Where I have idled to and fro,
   And dreamed my idle dreams. . . .

Good, fighting, red fat schnapper strain
   The dripping lines to-day
Where lately was the cow-whale slain
   And towed to Twofold Bay.

On Mallacoota pipes the swan,
   And calls the mating teal,
And black-finned mullet shoals dart on
   Before the coming keel.

Come South'ard where the lobsters spawn
   In green Cape Conran weed!
Come South and watch, on seas of Dawn,
   The whale calf play and feed!

The Gippsland Lakes are deep and wide,
   The Gippsland trees are tall;
And on the long, lone beach the tide
   For ninety miles doth call.

But south of “Wilson's” rolls the swell
   Of greyer, colder seas;
And fronting for'ard you may smell
   A sharp Antarctic breeze.

* * * * *
I close my eyes, and lo! the room
   Is heavy with the scent
Of lemon and magnolia bloom,
   And odors orient.

Now sweet as lovers' words there falls —
   And softly as the leaf,
A hymn of Capricorn that calls
   The sunlight o'er the Reef.

Cape Byron lifts his drowsy head;
   The Yamba lights burn low;
And gaily grows the morning red
   Along Don Dorrigo.

With tropic dews are wet the tall,
   Green fields of cane and corn;
The jack snipe and the ibis call
   A welcome to the Morn.

From brush and scrub and wide lagoons,
   From reed beds, swamps, and brakes,
On shoreward slopes and seaward dunes
   The fertile North awakes.

This young sultana from her bed
   Of sandal, pearl, and gold,
Steps forth to meet the Day with tread
   Imperious and bold.

The mango and guava send
   A fruity fragrance forth;
A hundred scents, commingled, blend
   The attar of the North.

Who breathes its subtleness a time,
   Shall walk divorced from peace;
And pine in ev'ry alien clime
   Until his life days cease. . . .

Alas! a lotos-eater, I
   Its opiate sweetness knew,
And to my sickroom, as I lie,
   It steals the window through.

Aye! surely as all flesh is grass,
   The far lands fairer seem,
So roving hearts for e'er must pass
Adown the Coasts of Dream.
Snowy River.

The proud hills' peerless daughter,
A-singing as she goes
The natal songs they taught her,
Old Kosciusko knows
She bears the Great Salt Water
His message from the snows.

Where, piled in high disorder,
Monaro's mountains rise,
She puts her house in order
And says her first good-byes;
Then, timid, to the Border
She turns expectant eyes.

By lichen-covered granite,
And boulders, waterworn
In ages when the Planet
By primal storms was torn,
When all the winds that fan it
In hurricanes were born;

Through gullies dark where, whitely,
The bones of lost men lie,
And evil voices nightly
Like tortured spirits cry,
This pilgrim River, lightly,
Slips, hushed and silent, by.

But when, anon, the plover
To haunts more open hies,
And to his loyal lover
The painted parrot flies —
An opal flashing over
Deep, turquoise picture-skies —

Along the sedgy reaches,
By myrtles overhung,
Where far the flood-made beaches
Their pebbled freight have flung,
To all the Bush she teaches
The songs Monaro's sung.

She takes, for her adorning,
All glories that she needs —
The jewels of the Morning
To deck her water meads;
The stars of Night suborning
To diamond her reeds.

Unwed by any Doria
Of rough Australian drought,
She sings her pagan Gloria;
And, sweeping gaily South,
She stoops to kiss Victoria
Upon awaiting mouth.

Wild Gippsland's forest altars,
Titanic, sombre, grand,
Re-echo to her psalters,
Poured out o'er rock and sand;
And no rude range that falters
The tribute of his hand.

Aye, creek and spring and fountain
Unto her leap and roll;
Each vassal hill or mountain
Pours down its liquid soul,
To swell the grand amount in
Her widely-gathered toll.

And, so with stories laden
Of Bushland, Day and Night,
She comes, a royal maiden
Hellenic, in delight,
To find her long-sought Aidenn
Below the Marlo light.

From Buchan's white cliffs sweeping
She treads her homeward way;
By lone selections sleeping
In stillness, far away;
By Orbost farm lands, keeping
Star-vigil for the day.
She hears afar the calling
   Of her high lord the Sea;
She hears the strong surge falling,
   World-old, unceasingly,
And all the Voice enthralling
   Of Love and Mystery.

Then, with the quick, glad sobbing
   Of some long-willing Bride —
Her Sea-Love rudely robbing
   The last white robe of pride —
She throws her warm heart, throbbing,
   On his triumphant tide.
The Black-Soil Teams.

For God hath made the Black-soil; and spread it near and far,  
From down the sweeping Namoi bends, away to Talbragar:  
Its richness no man questions, its wealth no man denies,  
But Sheol 'tis in rain time; and Tophet when it dries.

The drought hath cracked and torn it; the rain hath lent it seams.  
God help the Black-soil teamster! God help the Black-soil teams!  
God grace the toiling teamster! God give him strength and hope!  
Spare swingle-bars and traces, spare curses, chains and rope!

A-ploughing down the gilgas — the mud as close as glue —  
A-plunging past the myall, the squatter's wool goes through!  
A-plunging through the gilgas, a-ploughing up the track,  
With four and twenty horses, the squatter's stores come back.

New saddles for the stockmen, new dresses for the girls —  
And round the straining leader the wicked whipthong curls.  
Their flanks are all a-lather, the black mud axle-high,  
But trust the Black-soil teamster; he'll take her through or die.

Who sees the trace-chains snapping, who sees the harness fly,  
May kneel and pray for weather; may kneel and ask it dry.  
But when the starved team staggers across a sun-scorched plain,  
He'll change his plea, mayhappen and kneel and pray for rain.

But rain or draught, whatever, all flood or dry reverse,  
The teamster's duty's patent — Pull out, pull through and curse.  
Ay, pull her down the rivers: drag through the clinging loam,  
Then turn-about, my brother, curse hard, and crawl her home!

God grant him grace hereafter; of grace, aye hath he dearth, —  
Though fearing no hereafter — whose Hell is all on Earth.  
Sun-tanned, mud-caked and hairy; morose and most profane,  
God grace the Lean Lost Legion who plod the Black-soil plain!
Rain In The West.

The “second class” is gay to-night,
   As down the gleaming rail
She thunders by, a line of light,
   The roaring Western Mail.

The “first” enjoys a fresh cigar, —
   Contented by the glass,
He sees the rainwet plains afar
   In misty shadows pass.

Within the cab two figures peer
   A clouded night and black;
The shadow of the Engineer
   Keeps dancing on the track.

But gladly do these worthies meet
   The damp indriven wind;
They know its welcome glint is sweet
   To those who ride behind.

The white steam hisses her delight.
   The brake alone complains,
For extra work is his to-night
   Along the Western plains.

A settler waves, in joy of heart,
   His ancient, dripping hat,
His huddled stock in terror start
   Across the darkened flat.

He’s done at last with starving sheep
   And flies, and heat, and dust, —
To-night, a-weary, let him sleep,
   The sound sleep of the just.

Now every publican to Bourke
   And every sinner too,
To-morrow surely will not shirk
   The strong potato brew.
The squatter in his pride and glee
  Will shout all hands for joy,
And thro' the huts will echo free
  “The Wild Colonial Boy.”

What cares the drover now where dim
  And sodden fails his fire?
This steady downpour is to him
  A boon of long desire.

By next week-end a dreary waste
  Will all be green and lush;
His soul again will joyful taste
  The manna of the Bush.

For grass and water make the bliss,
  His fancy most regards.
And there's a waiting girl to kiss
  Behind the trucking yards.

The operator like a horse
  Must graft the morrow day,
To carry, in the tongue of Morse,
  The rapid wires away.

The coming hours with toil are fraught;
  There's lots of graft to do: —
He would not worry if he got
  A yard of rain, or two.

Aye, no-one growls and no-one grieves,
  Tho' tracks be seas of mud,
And one prophetic wight believes
  “The thing will end in flood.”

There's joy on every flat and bend;
  The blessed, timely rains,
To care and worry put an end,
  Across the patient plains.

For now a stricken land a-curse,
  Becomes an Eden blest;
They've done with hunger, heat, and thirst —
  “'Tis raining in the West.”
Deserted.

No welcome smoke uprearing
   Blue spirals in the sun,
No axes down the clearing
   Announce a day begun.
The noontide shadows find it
   In wearing silence still;
Dark fall at eve behind it
   The shadows of the hill.

A rosebush, vainly seeking
   Some presence evermore,
Has clambered round the creaking,
   Half-opened, low front door:
And from the straggling creepers
   The falling dew appears
To mourn departed keepers
   With ever-constant tears.

Like fleshless bones unburied,
   Grey sundered trunks lie low,
Their dead leaves swept and harried
   By sere winds to and fro.
Its roof-bark slipped and rotten
   'Mid weeds and fallow lands,
Unkempt, decayed, forgotten,
   The lone selection stands.

Yet here were hopes, ambitions,
   And efforts freely shed,
To win from harsh conditions
   A household meed of bread.
Here love and labor mated;
   Here children's laughter rang;
And in dead days undated
   A Woman worked and sang.

Here winter firelight brightened
   Rough walls and fixtures rude;
And cares increased, or lightened,  
    With summer's wayward mood;  
Here Bushland charm and glory —  
    The wealth of wood and sky —  
Brought pictures, song and story  
    To human ear and eye.

The Spring her bount'ry showered,  
    On paddocks fresh with rain;  
The climbing rose-bush flowered  
    Across the window pane.  
Glad days with wings extended  
    In blue procession sped;  
Glad nights came clear and splendid  
    With cloudless stars o'erhead.

But here Misfortune tarried  
    Amid the ricks and sheaves,  
Until their hopes were harried  
    And driven like the leaves;  
They fought their fight ill-fated  
    In that heroic past,  
With courage unabated  
    Unto the bitter last.

Grim Failure for their guerdon,  
    Who might have known success,  
They bore the heavy burden  
    Of drought and red distress;  
They fared as many others, —  
    The brave defeated band,  
Of Southern sires and mothers  
    Who pioneered the land.

No more, by morn or noontime,  
    Here Joy and Sorrow walk.  
No more a longed-for boontime  
    With ripe grain bends the stalk.  
No more with songs of Labor  
    The lonely hills resound;  
The winds with flute and tabor  
    Their forest marches sound.

When now the veil asunder  
    Of Night is loudly torn,
Amid a city's thunder
    They meet a city morn.
In dreams they hear it calling,
    Their Bushland fresh with dew;
They see cloud-shadows falling
    Along the hills of blue.

And clear in recollection,
    And fair in Fancy's eyes
Outstands the old selection
    Beneath the morning skies;
While in their hearts, half-broken,
    The restless mem'ries roam
In treasured thought and token
    Of this deserted home.
Daly's Threshing.

It was “threshing” down at Daly's, and the bearded bushmen rode
Over mountain gorge and gully, where the creeks, clear-watered, flowed:
From the slopes, and through the ranges, past the broad'ning river bends,
Round the spurs and o'er the flat-lands came the host of Daly's friends;
Came to reap the yellow harvest, waving in the summer sun;
Came to dance with Daly's daughter 'neath the moon when day was done.

As the long day's labor ended, and the horses munched their feed,
Far was borne upon the breezes faint aroma of the “weed,”
Sound of song and year-old waltzes, new enough for rustic feet,
When the honest hearts above them with the joy of living beat.
On the hard earth floor together, youth and maiden, flushed and gay,
To the gasping concertina danced those charméd hours away.

'Mid the band of blushing beauty Mary Daly yet I see,
Brown, bewitching, soft, blithe-hearted, laughing roguishly.
There are girls on Northern moorlands, there are dark-browed angels where
Spain's blue heaven spans the radiance of a radiant land and fair.
There are houris in the harems of proud sultans in the East
On whose classic forms and features long the eye of Art might feast,
But they thought that Daly's daughter, straight, freshmoulded, strong and tall,
'Mid the world of wond'rous women, far the fairest of them all.

You may dwell among the shadows in the valley of the pen;
You may fight the Fight of Living in the pits with other men;
You may feel the Law's injustice, or the hatred of your kind;
You may rail at social errors or beliefs untrue and blind;
You may be a mighty genius or a man of common clay,
But for one dear, foolish woman you would sell your soul away.

So for Mary, roguish Mary, with her dazzling eyes and hair,
Was it strange to find him paying humble court among them there?
He, the son of Daly's neighbor, Raymond Phair, the bronzed and strong,
Pride of all the fearless horsemen, and the hero of my song.
Though the Phairs and Dalys quarrelled in the very early days,
Still the Spring had brought its moisture and the sun had lent his rays,
And their crops had grown and ripened, and their herds had multiplied
Till their rural reputation spread o'er all the countryside.

But if Phair and Daly hated with a hate as sternly set
As a Montague might cherish for a haughty Capulet,
There was still no human reason, as these contradictions go,
Why our Austral Julietta should not love her Romeo.

*       *       *       *       *

Nearly done was Daly's threshing, as the passing trav'ller saw
Bags of grain and heaps of huskings, stacks of new, sweet-smelling straw;
Saw the tired, slow, patient horses, at the mill since early morn,
In the dusk of evening treading out the last of Daly's corn.

Luck had smiled upon the harvest, higher grew the heaps of grain,
Till his barns were overflowing, and his store-rooms filled amain,
And the heart of William Daly filled and fluttered in his breast,
As he smiled towards the sunset that lay smiling in the west,
Then he though of pretty Mary, and a great round oath swore he,
That the child of his dead 'Liza should a rich-wed lady be.

So they “finished” down at Daly's, and they drank with right good will
“To the health of Daly's daughter and the wealth of bluff old Bill.”
And when o'er the frowning mountain rose the moon her silver light,
Once again the girls and fellows fell to dancing with delight.
Once again from out the shadows, Raymond Phair, the bronzed and strong,
Came to clasp the waist of Mary, and to lead her through the throng.

*       *       *       *       *

Hard the face of William Daly, stern the voice of “bluff old Bill” —
Some sharp tongue had done the mischief, some kind friend had whispered ill. —
“Get your horse and leave my place, sir, and remember as you do,
If you pay another visit I will put the dogs on you”.
Then to trembling, tearful Mary: “Go inside and dry your eyes,
Till I've seen him crossing safely over there beyond the rise.”

That was all they heard from Daly in the sudden silence there,
As he stood before his daughter and the son of Amos Phair.
“Don't be rude and cruel father.” — Raymond blessed her gentle voice,
And his heart leapt up and told him, “Yes, she loves you, now rejoice!”
To her ear he bent and whispered, “Be at Leland's bridge by nine
If you love me, Mary Daly, if you dare, dear girl, be mine.”

Then to Daly bowed young Raymond, as some olden cavalier,
Whom those brown and bearded bushmen felt impelled, man-like, to cheer.

“Sir,” said he, “I beg your pardon, though you be my father's foe;
I'd forget the feud between us, will you shake, or must I go?”

“Shure 'tis Christmas Eve, now, Daly, can't you let the matter end?
Take the hand that's held in friendship,” muttered some well-meaning friend.

But the fire of Celtic hatred glowed and flashed in Daly's eye,
“Let a Phair have Daly's daughter? And a Sassenach? Not I.”

One quick clasp of fervid fingers, one swift look that lit the skies,
One faint smile from Mary Daly, one glad glimpse of tear-wet eyes;

They were dancing still at Daly's, making love beneath the trees —
For the course of youth and pleasure runs in spite of things like these —
But the Queen of all the revel with the rest had ceased to glide,

And the girls and fellows whispered, “she will cry it out inside;”

To her saddle vaulting lightly, underneath that melting sky,
Mary bade her father's homestead just one quiet, long, good-bye.

Down the road by Wilson's paddock, up again by Brown's big hill,
She has left the farm behind her, let them follow if they will;

So it chanced that Daly's threshing, as such great events will do,
Brought romance among the mountains, and a taste of bliss for two;
And the house of Phair and Daly ceased their factions long ago; 
And our Austral Julietta had her own dear Romeo.
When Watts Went Out To Yugilbar.

The summer days, through heat and haze,
    Had browned the meadow lands,
And in its flow sang soft and and low
    The river on its sands —
The river wide that once in pride
    Poured out its high commands.

And so we went, on peace intent,
    That golden Eastertide,
With ample store of “providore,”
    And liquid stock beside;
And, trotting free, 'twas good to see
    The pack-horse in his stride.

God gave us hills to cure our ills;
    And where the river rolls
His splendid length of mountain strength
    Along the pebbled shoals,
Long leagues from town, we sat us down
    To rest our weary souls.

The dweller in the streets, whose thin,
    White ghosts of pleasures pall —
He little deems what halcyon dreams,
    What visions fair and tall,
From leaf and vine with songs divine,
    In Bushland shadows call.

The spoil hard won by rod and gun,
    Abroad in Nature's ways;
The kind surcease from toil, and peace
    Beside the camp fire's blaze;
The Dawn's young rose, the Evening's close,
    Made perfect all our days.

Then in the late, dim dusk my mate
    (As Orpheus long ago)
The strings would sweep and clear and deep,
In joy — perchance in woe —
Love, Peace and War — all things that are
Fell out beneath the bow.

I've heard the grand massed fun'ral band
   Behind a warrior's pall,
In weird notes roll through heart and soul
   The slow “Dead March in Saul;”
In youth's wild days The Marseillaise
   To arms all peoples call;

But when I dream by slope and stream,
   Where upland glories are;
Or, if my feet tread alien street
   In alien lands afar,
Still will I hold those hours of gold
   'Way out on Yugilbar.

First night went by; but, bearded, shy,
   Unskilled of tongue or pen;
Next night from camp, a starlit tramp,
   They came, rough miner men.
The fiddler knew, and slyly drew
   The music of their ken.

My Bushland fair, let fools declare
   Thee barren of sweet things;
Deep in thy heart there throbs apart
   A harp of golden strings;
And to its chords, in wondrous words,
   A wooing siren sings.

The dark range o'er, with wondrous store
   Of silver from the moon
Was slowly filled, while ached and thrilled
   Those kind bush hearts in tune
To Love and War — all things that are
   Within the player's boon.

Of “Home, Sweet Home” 'neath star-spread dome,
   The dark hills heard the story;
“St. Patrick's Day” once more away
   The wild Celt called to glory;
Or sweet and sad the raw Scots lad
   Dreamed of his “Annie Laurie.”
Brave, simple souls; as backward rolls
    Time's curtain, from afar
That scene I dream of hill and stream
    'Neath cloudless moon and star;
In fancy hear the echoes clear —
    'Way out on Yugilbar.

And, Watts, when you are passing through
    That Vale the preachers tell,
Just lift your bow and he will know
    The song-lord Israfel.
And loud and clear, “Musicians here!”
    He'll cry — and 'twill be well.
Collar And Yoke.

"'Twas 'bullicks' made the country,"
The man from Jindabayne,
Red-whiskered, lean and hairy,
    Asserted once again.

The chap from Rocky River,
    Squint-eyed and squat and strong —
One eye upon the ridge pole
    'And one upon the throng;
Declaimed with frantic jestures
    His views to reinforce —
"It wasn't blanky bullicks,
    It was the blanky 'orse."

The day was hot and dusty
    The roads were tough and dry,
A brazen sun went blazing
    Across a copper sky.
They'd met with friendly greeting
    At noontide near the Bend,
But now the day unheeded
    Was burning to an end.

While yet, within the shanty,
    Those loyal drivers woke
Loud echoes with the merits
    Of collar, or of yoke.

The argument from heated
    Grew to a yell in course
Confused, of “bullicks, bullicks,”
    And “'Orse, and 'orse, and 'orse.”

Now as of old Knights errant
    Upon the highways met
Would throw the gage of combat,
    And straight to business get,
To prove the charms of Isold
 'Gainst those of Guinevere,
Those teamsters just at sunset
 Abandoned each his beer,
And on the dusty roadway —
 By partisans about
Ringed fairly and encouraged —
 Began to fight it out.

The man from Rocky River
 A Burns in sooth was he,
In all but skill and training
 And build and hittery.

A Johnson — lacking color
 Strength, stamina and brain
And scientific teaching —
 The man from Jindabayne.

* * * * * *

The betting on the combat
 Was even; for of course
One crowd was laying “bullicks,”
 The other backing “ 'orse.”

Oh, 'twas a famous battle:
 Still, in their camps at night
They tell along the ranges
 The story of that fight.

So even were they mated,
 So blessed, with lack of skill,
They struck, and missed and stumbled
 Through forty rounds until

The shanty keeper, acting
 As arbiter of law
Relating to the combat,
 Declared the fight a draw.

* * * * *

Each combatant exhausted
 Prone lying, battered, hoarse,
Could only glare defiance
And whisper "Bullicks!" — "Orse!"

Nor could they come to corners,
But squatted vis-a-vis
Supine, but still unconquered
Before the referee.

And when — with inward wisdom
Born of the life he led —
He saw from indications
That fight about to spread,

He cried, "This 'ere decision
Is fair an' just an' right,
You've 'eard the blanky barney
You've seen the blanky fight.

Now, some's for Rocky River,
An' some's for Jindabayne,
An' some's for 'oof an' 'orns 'ere,
An' some's for 'oof an' mane.

Since ever I remember,
This argument between
The Bullockys and Teamsters
On all the roads has been.

Now 'ere, I'm bound to settle
Disputes as Referee,
The fight 'as simply ended,
A draw, as you kin see."

A light of inspiration
Flashed o'er his features coarse —
"Which shows what makes the country is
The bullick, AND the 'orse!"

Now this was sound in logic,
In judgment, and in law,
They called off all the wagers,
Declared the fight a draw;

And o'er replenished glasses,
The wreck from Jindabayne,
The ruin from the River,
Shook hands in peace again.
Settlers On The Rise.

The monarch hills above it
   Are crowned by sombre trees,
That billow to the skyline
   Like dark, Titanic seas.

At eventime, the shadow
   Of one great giant lies
Across a pleasant homestead
   That stands upon the rise.

Here came — to wage with Nature,
   The old uncertain strife —
A stalwart, young selector
   And his new-wedded wife.

That low-roofed, three-roomed shanty
   Of slabs and bark and scrim,
Long years ago, she whispered,
   A palace was — with him.

Five miles from any neighbor,
   Full forty from the town —
And so our lion-hearted
   Bush exiles “settle down.”

With no applause to cheer them,
   No banquets and no band,
Their days are yet heroic
   With effort through the land.

They wear no tailored raiment,
   These bush-folk hard and brown;
They know not city dainties,
   Nor luxuries of town.

Hard beef and heavy damper,
   And suet-strengthened dough,
And “spuds” boiled in their jackets
   Full well and oft they know.
Miladi's sleeping soundly,
    Milord in slumber lies,
When he and she are toiling
    At sun-up on the rise.
Their acres, won in travail
    For tilth, are trebly dear;
The laughter of their children
    Is sweet and good to hear.
The palinged garden, bearing
    Its kitchen growth in rows,
The earthen stoop, bark-shaded,
    Whereon a creeper grows;
The dog-leg fences, marking
    Each year, another field,
A hope of better seasons,
    And still a greater yield —
The spring rains softly falling;
    The stainless Southern skies,
Hold golden compensation
    For dwellers on the rise.
Long years from now may find them
    Still hoping, brave, and fond,
Still wooing fickle Fortune;
    Still looking out — beyond.
Tall, stalwart sons beside them;
    Strong daughters in their 'teens,
The simple household comforts
    That come with ways and means.

   *   *   *   *   *

No great, heroic ending,
    No palace and no prize;
But rest and recollection
    At sunset on the rise.
And courage on his face is,
    And love is in her eyes —
Some city folks might envy
    The dwellers on the rise.
Where The Saltbush Grows.

I am sitting in a garden, by a harbor prospect fair,
And a green world glows around me into distance ev'ry-where;
   And the petals fall in showers
   Like a snowstorm of dead flowers,
Where a young Spring trips the orchards with the south wind in her hair.

Here glad buttercups unfold burnished cups of floral gold;
To the nectars of the morning, and the pine trees, tall and old,
   Lift their heads to greet September —
   Like knights errant, who remember
Courts and tournaments of Nature, in the ancient years untold.

Now the florists' windows gleaming are bedecked with spoil of Spring,
Now the maiden waiteth blushing for a lover — and a ring.
   Now the matron, laughing gaily,
   Treads her path of pleasure daily,
While our city sparrows twitter, and our caged canaries sing.

But a rude, uncultured longing through my inward fancy flows;
I am restless and uneasy; far too well my spirit knows
   That the wizard West is calling,
   With a siren voice enthralling,
From her free, unpastured places, where the stunted salt-bush grows!

From her plains, outspreading lonely under cloudless skies away,
Comes a summons to my garden by the hill-surrounded bay:
   “Come, oh come again, my rover;
   Come, oh come again, my lover;
Come out and see the glory and the grandeur of the day.”

“Well your city give nepenthe?” cries the spirit of the West —
“Will its markets fill the chalice of the longings in your breast?
   Is the traffic in its thunder
   Like that still and quiet wonder
Of the moon above the mulga where the weary riders rest?”

Then my garden in the suburbs grows as narrow as a tomb,
Then the woof and warp of Commerce on its ever-whirling loom,
Like a web of evil fairies,
Like a garment of despair is,
Like a cerement swiftly woven by the cogs and wheels of Doom.

We can never rest in cities, as our wise Bush Mother knows;
Let the merchant to his markets where the golden current flows;
   But the bushman's feet must wander
In the open over yonder,
Where old myall droops his branches and the silver salt-bush grows.

Not in crowded squares or highways; not in terraces in rows,
Not in tiled suburban cages shall our life days surely close,
   When the old Bush voices woo us,
   When the West-land whispers to us,
From her free and trackless places where the silver salt-bush grows.
**The Call Of London.**

I have heard the Call of London,
   Yea, the savor rising sweet
Of its fleshpots, down in Fleet-street
   When success is at your feet.

Now the mail hath brought a missive,
   And its writer's pen of grace
Bids me hasten to the struggle
   Ere I'm “distanced in the race.”

“There's a wider field in Britain,
   Or in Boston or New York;
Better chances for your effort,
   Better payment for your work.

“Sell your socks and sling Australia
   There is nothing in the game.
I am doing well in London,
   You can surely do the same.

“Look at other scribes and artists —
   All the clever chaps we know,
Who have left their blithered country,
   Where they never got a show!

“Raise the money for a passage,
   Let Australia go to — Hay.”
So he puts the matter to me
   From his fleshpot far away.

* * * * *

As I wrestle with temptation
   On this clear October morn,
I can hear the bell-birds chiming
   Through the bush, where I was born.

I can see the old gums waving
   To the pressure of the wild,
Warm winds of golden summer
That I longed for as a child.

And the spirit of Australia —
They must suffer who would love —
In my heart has found a nesting;
Now she coos, a Cushat dove: —

“For a mess of foreign pottage
Would you sell to feed your mouth,
All the golden dreams I bring you
From my Love-land in the South?

“Go! and hunger in a suburb
'Grimed with sooty London rain,
For the splashing of the showers
Through the clover and the cane!

“Though your years were richly gilded —
If by Chance your Fortune smiles,
You will languish for your Bushland
And her free, unfettered miles.

“Like dry mud upon her gilgas
Will your thirsty spirit gape,
For the haze along the mountain,
For the spindrift on the cape.

“You have watched the blue wave shoreward,
You have tramped the yellow sand,
You have wandered, you have gloried
By Australian Sea and Land.

“Will a passing Fame content you,
Or a little wealth repay
All this heritage of Freedom
That your hand would cast away?”

*   *   *   *   *

Now the Soul within me sickens
As old Illawarra green
And the meadows of Shoalhaven,
With her blue hills in between;

From their films of sunlit Fancy
On a screen of Mem'ry gleam;
And a train of glowing pictures
   Lies before me in a dream: —

Lo! high Gippsland ranges greet me,
   Where the young creeks at their play
Give the dripping ferns in passing
   Saucy greeting and Good-day.

Lo! the level Plains unended
   Of a wondrous Riverine
Roll before me to the sunset;
   And by magic strange, unseen,

I behold a wide Monaro,
   With her mountains in the snow;
And her shadow-haunted gorges,
   Where the fearless riders go.

And the rivers! Oh, my rivers,
   How ye call me from afar,
Where the sugar-cane is waving,
   And the mammoth melons are!

I am back in sunny Queensland,
   Where the custard-apples fruit;
I am driving down the Logan,
   Where they grow the arrowroot.

All my tracks of travel glamor,
   All my camp-fires fondly glow —
As Temptation waits an answer;
   And my answer shall be, “No!”

So — I fling his missive fire-ward,
   And I make reply in verse:
“I am married . . . to Australia,
   Friend, for better or for worse.

“Yea, the call of mine ain country
   Is a louder call to me
Than the lure of any far-land
   Where the flesh-pots smoking be.

“You may hunt your golden guineas
   In the gloom of London town . . .
I am staying in the sunlight,
   And I turn temptation down.”
Gerringong.

I wonder if the red blood dances through some young heart like wine
As, in the green Shoalhaven springtime it pulsed a-fire through mine?
I wonder if, when Morning marches his cohorts brave along
The purple hills of Cambewarra, they echo to the song
Of some gay lad whose “love lies dreaming” down there in Gerringong?

Oh, I have wandered o'er the borders, and many lands I've seen —
The valleys of New England shining, the Queensland canefields green,
The black-soil plains in brown leagues rolling, the plains of Riverine.
But though in visions, wide and splendid, Australian pictures throng,
The fairest star of all my dreaming still burns o'er Gerringong.

Yea, I have answered to the longing. It lured me far and wide,
Where dusty swagmen plod the Distance, where bearded bushmen ride.
I've heard, along the Gippsland ranges, the magpie's morning song;
I've seen the sunset shadows lengthen through woods of Dandenong —
But ah, the dew upon the clover that shines by Gerringong!

And now in dreams I see the palm trees, high waving to the breeze,
And hear, on curved Shoalhaven beaches, a surf-song of the seas,
The creeks, from silver harps outpouring their constant symphonies;
And all the glory of the southland and all her fervid song
Of love and youth, in recollection, come back from Gerringong.

I wonder if some boy is yearning beneath the fig trees brown,
As Fancy paints in pictures tempting the pleasures of the town,
If in his soul the distant bugles with onward marches strong
Of Glory and Achievement call him to join the city throng,
While Love and Faith, alas, lie dreaming in drowsy Gerringong!

I wonder if a girl is waiting beneath the coral red,
That like a wounded heart is bleeding in flowers overhead;
While all the marvel of the morning, before her eyes outspread
The green delight of pastures gleaming, the picture and the song
Have grown to her but ghosts of Fancies — that died in Gerringong.

No more — though summer follow summer, and spring trip after spring,
Though clear among the scented lilies the joyous blue-caps sing,
Though from the little painted chapel a cynic shrill ding-dong
Of wedding bells at last may gladden the gossips in the throng —
That Coral Tree shall be their trysting in green, old Gerringong.

*      *      *      *      *

I wonder if, when Life's rich dishes pall one by one on him,
Among the aloes and the ashes, in day-dreams faint and dim,
That boy will watch the sun uprising across the water's rim;
And in the clear Shoalhaven morning, heart-wearied, hear the song
Of Youth that long ago lay buried for aye in Gerringong.
Northern Night.

The blistered roof, 'neath which we dwell,
   Blazed out across the Bay
When Night in cooling quiet fell
   With Sunset, gold and gay;
But now the breeze will freshen 'till
   An hour before the Day.

Mimosa San in Chinatown,
   Fresh-powdered, plump and tan,
Inveigles wooers — white or brown —
   With eyes, and teeth, and fan;
Mimosa San of Chinatown,
   But erstwhile of Japan.

Here British virtue takes a slight
   Ly Asiatic hue;
In theory remaining white,
   In practice turning blue.
A tinted state of things which might
   Be somewhat weird to view,

Were not the click of chopsticks and
   Strange odors drifting down
The streets from lanes on either hand
   Of this Australian town,
Proclaiming, louder than the band,
   " 'Tis merely White-and-Brown."

In "crash," "Assam," or "duck," or "drill,"
   The veteran and the cub
Come out beneath the stars to kill
   Thirst longings at the club;
The shirt-and-trousered plebeians will
   Foregather in the pub.

Harmonic is the Night with strange
   New songs of old desire —
The Northern Life-notes surely range
An impulse octave higher
Within the heart, (the gods arrange
   Fit music to each lyre).

On coral harps, with pearl inlaid,
   And strings of Coen gold,
Beneath the palms is nightly played
   A love-song warm and bold;
The song young Eros told the maid
   In Paphian days of old.

A Queensland beach its silver wealth
   Is holding to the Moon!
Anon, in Youth and Hope and Health —
   That fade, alas, so soon —
Comes hopeful Romeo, in stealth,
   To crave his Juliet's boon.

While frangipani scents divine
   Across the coral flow,
While sundered paw-paws, soaked in wine,
   Their fruity bouquet throw,
While white magnolias, moonlit, shine
   And fire-flies flitting glow;

While Care is but a blunted sword
   In silken scabbard laid,
And Death a mere remembered word
   That makes no soul afraid,
Mimosa San shall find reward,
   And Romeo his maid.

So walks the Night, all-topic, bare
   And naked to the skies,
In pleasure's burning roseway where
   The Land of Plenty lies,
So walks the Night with fragrant hair
   And Asiatic eyes.
Northern Morning.

Cool dews lie on the lilies yet that ride in purple ranks,
Like galleys from the Isles of Sleep, along the river banks.
As lifted souls from Earth set free, pale swamp-mists slowly rise
To white-winged clouds of mystery, and vanish in the skies.

Their soft out-going stainless leaves those blue-robed skies to hold
A sun that lifts above the green his glowing disc of gold:
But ere his banner in the East proclaims this pleasant strife
Of tropic day begun anew, all Nature wakes to life.

Fat dusky coots swim through the reeds; the red-bills from the maize —
Crop-heavy debauches — stalk home. Now blithe a reed birds plays,
In notes like feathers by young winds on airy dances borne,
Mock matins to a stooping crane, phlegmatic and forlorn.

A spurwing patters through the grass, a sleek white ibis frees
His priestly wing in leisureed flight, and from the ring barked trees
A magpie yodels forth his joy; while, weary from their night —
Long journey towards the pleasant south, migrating snipe alight.

Brown eyes alert, wing feathers preened, self-conscious as she feeds,
The black duck like a widow plump floats gaily through the weeds.
High-poised upon his bending rush, a bluecap warbles clear,
A song of corn and sugarcane and Summer all the year.

From farmyards near and farmyards far, in promise loud is plied,
The axe that heralds morning tea and later breakfast-tide.
Till standing in their paddocks green, or clustered in the town,
A pleasant smoke of promise waves from each tall chimney crown.

Loud milk carts rattle down the lanes; their sleepy drivers sway
With swollen eyelids blinking yet owl-fashion at the Day,
Till at the puffing creamery, with gleaming cans they stand,
To yield as tribute, each in turn, the Fatness of the Land.

With parted waters at her bow and curling waves astern,
A river steamboat, trailing smoke, comes churning round the turn;
Her wash breaks loudly on the banks. Slim reeds their tassels shake,
And nod in saucy petulance along her noisy wake.
Now glossy gleams the sunlit maize, and on the jointed cane
A Northern sun, rich profligate, pours down his golden rain;
Enrichens thus, the fruitful gourd with benefaction kind;
And reds the melon’s ripening heart beneath its mottled rind.

In umbrage cool of tree and vine the rambling houses doze.
Magnolias at their porches bloom and by their gates the rose,
Guavas in their gardens grow; the smooth banana spreads
Its tropic shade and bunched delight above the milking-sheds.

The farmer in his hammock smokes a morning pipe at ease:
The farmer's son his stomach gluts beneath the mango trees;
The farmer's daughter, whitely frocked, with patience labors on
The wailing keys that mourn aghast the griefs of Mendelssohn.

So, through this land of wealth and tilth comes Morning like a bird
Of Paradise in plumage rare. From jungle depths, unstirred,
Night's ling'ring coolness flies at length, and o'er the maize and cane
The Sun, despotic overlord, triumphant reigns again.
Wild Cattle.

Wild cattle from the Wingen,
   Two hundred head of stores,
On hills and ranges mustered,
   And by the lone, salt shores;

Through sunlit forests stringing,
   Along a Gippsland trail,
The mob is slowly headed
   Towards Bruthen, on to Sale.

On far and open pasture
   They lifted startled eyes,
To see strange horsemen waking
   The morn with whips and cries.

Some, Nemesis accepted,
   But one, with spirit free,
Charged hillward through the timber
   For life and liberty.

Then cracked the stockwhips louder;
   Then yapped the sharp-tongued dogs;
The rotten bark in powder
   Flew from the fallen logs.

Bruised ferns and sword-grass trampled,
   Torn boughs and saplings bent,
Marked plain across the ridges
   What way the wild chase went.

With muzzle dripping freely
   The frantic, long-horned steer
Left horse and rider striving
   Three times upon his rear.

To blue hills of the Wingen
   'Twas hard to bid good-bye;
In some red shambles driven
   Far from their peace to die.
Now as the mob is nearing
    The black lands of Orbost,
Perchance in bovine yearning
    He pines for freedom lost.

He hears a night-tide pouring
    Across the shallow bars,
When all the Bush is sleeping,
    Dew-freshened, 'neath the stars.

He sees, in silver gleaming,
    The lakes, lit by the moon,
Cape Everard, in shadow,
    The marshes of Tamboon.

Long forelands, flower-emblazoned,
    Deep gullies and dark streams
Through fern and dogwood gliding
    Still linger in his dreams.

And all that coastland lonely
    From Nadji to the Bemm,
Where grows a sweet bush herbage,
    Calls softly unto him.

To-night along the Wingen
    A warrigal bewails
Calf quarry — in perspective —
    Gone south'ard to the sales.

The loved hills of the Wingen,
    A long-horned steer desires,
Who sees his human captors
    Out-stretched before their fires.

But all his pride lies humbled,
    And all his hope is gone.
With lowered head, dejected,
    Lean-flanked, he stumbles on.

He knows the wild, free forelands,
    And open miles are lost
To him whose Fate is waiting,
Red-handed, by Orbost.
Night In The Bush.

Now, like a curtain through the trees,
   By Nubian fingers drawn,
Dusk closes in. And by degrees,
   On hillward slope and lawn,
The shadows lengthen, spread, and fade
   In silent, phantom play,
Until a darkened cloth is laid
   Upon the face of Day.

Their vesper songs, with folded wings,
   The magpies cease to pour;
Above the cow'ring feathered things
   The brown hawks poise no more;
And, as the last reflections die,
   Night-conquered in the West —
All daylight Nature finds its high
   Leaf-hidden place of Rest.

But prim-gowned Eve hath brought a bright,
   A far, resplendent boon, —
The Bush is Elfland fair and white
   A-glimmer in the moon!
In marble columns straight upstand
   Its smooth trunks one by one,
To roof, o'er silver archways grand,
   A forest Parthenon.

And first a furred phalanger screams;
   Then shrill the 'possums squeal.
Deluded, in their avian dreams,
   As cheating moonbeams steal,
In night groups, lifting tail and bill,
   The kookaburras wake,
To laugh at intervals, until
   The morn begins to break.

Nocturnal birds, with eerie sounds,
   Pursue their hidden prey;
And far and wide the air abounds
   With courtship, chase and play.
Marsupials bounding, thud the dark
   Close undergrowth in flight;
On sloughing trunks the hanging bark
   Is rustled by the Night.

Loud snorts a stock-horse scenting harm;
   Pursued by formless fear
He gallops forward to alarm
   A grazing equine peer;
Then wild hoofs clatter in his wake,
   The swishing saplings fly,
And trodden sticks and branches break
   As on the scared brutes hie.

Where o'er the clearing far away
   A ground fog slowly floats,
Chained watchdogs, dreaming, wake to bay
   All things with strident throats.
Disturbed by varied mongrel howls
   And yelps and struggles vain,
The wakened settler rudely growls
   Disgust, and sleeps again.

Daft morepokes swop across the ridge
   Some everlasting joke;
Beneath the cranky homestead bridge
   Fat frogs, persistent, croak,
Until the wild ducks, where the reeds
   Their slim, dark shadows throw,
Forsake their night haunts by the weeds,
   Protesting as they go.

As dusk to midnight softly trails
   With slowly-certain pace,
Afar the prowling dingo wails
   Of failure in the chase;
And sudden sounds, that alternate
   With silence, still prevail, —
The coarse koala scolds his mate;
   On green flats pipe the quail.

A lone, belated, horseman trolls
   A catch for company;
And down the track an echo rolls,
   In clear-toned mockery;
Then fur and feather, hushed, await
   Until the clamour dies,
To slow resume an inchoate
   Refrain of calls and cries.

My camp-fire, damped by falling dews,
   Still lower burns, and low;
A puzzled paddymelon views
   Its red, unwonted glow;
A bandicoot in quest of yams
   Goes grunting sourly thence —
From habitat repelled, he damns
   Such human impudence.

Now, greely through the shadowed trees
   A new light, wan and strange,
Falls faintly, with a herald breeze
   That whispers from the range;
And o'er the cool and quiet Bush —
   Grown wondrous still and free
From sounds of Life — there falls a hush
   Of calm expectancy.

So pale the lower stars in turn
   Have grown along the East;
The morning star alone doth burn
   With radiance increased.
As tea-rose petals swiftly blown
   Along a spacious lawn,
The fields of sky are freely sown
   With blossoms of the Dawn.

And now the queenly Bush aside
   Has thrown her garb of gloom;
The East is burning like a bride
   With roses all in bloom.
Gay morning clouds, hibiscus red,
   Adoring hearts unfold
Before a caliph sun whose head
   Is diademmed with gold.

The Land awakes in scent and song;
   And far and near is heard
In concert from the creeks along,
   The call of bird to bird.
With color, gladness, and delight
   In all her bright array,
Refreshed by dews of cloudless Night,
   The Bush salutes her Day!
The Day The Mailman Comes.

When Mabel puts her hair in trim,
   And Sis her brooches wears;
When Emma, in the firelight dim,
   The floury scone prepares;
And at the sliprails brother Jim
   Across the gloaming stares —

These signs and portents knowledge bring
   To all the Bush — and you,
That Expectation, bright of wing,
   The farmhouse flutters through —
For — as the kettle seems to sing —
   “To-night the mailman's due.”

In slop-made suit of dusty brown,
   And greasy, wide-brimmed hat,
He comes, a welcome guest from town,
   Each week to Reedy Flat,
And brings the latest cables down —
   A fortnight old at that.

A cheerful, slow, bucolic wight,
   Bowlegged and saddle-bred,
With lank, oiled hair an auburn bright,
   And nose a blistered red,
He smokes and gossips thro' the night
   Till long past “time for bed.”

The cables and the market news
   The Old Man in his chair
Absorbs, and ventilates his views
   On irresponsive air —
They have no precious time to lose
   On Balkan troubles there;

When Sandy Scott, his local store
   Of current scandal, chat,
In-gathered eighty bush miles o'er,
Unloads to glad the Flat,
And fills his briar pipe once more,
And spits across the cat.

His tale of marriage, death and birth,
   The district happ'nings small;
Those things of tragedy or mirth
   That tears or laughter call,
The human things from o'er the Earth,
   Long Sandy stocks them all.

The pen-scrawled words of love and trade;
   The missives honey-sweet,
In seal across his saddle laid,
   He bears with air discreet;
Why should the pathway not be made
   More pleasant to his feet?

Why should he not the best beds get;
   His plate the tit-bits hold?
And by his knife a serviette
   Be placed in careful fold,
With something special “for the wet,”
   Or else to “cure his cold”? 

A golden link he makes between
   The world and Reedy Flat.
In dusty suit, and necktie green,
   And greasy, soft, felt hat —
But Emma, turning seventeen,
   Could tell you more of that.

No wonder Mabel curls her hair,
   And Sis a ditty hums,
And Bill, with neither ear nor air,
   The old piano strums —
Romance is in the clear bush air
   The day the mailman comes.
The Book.

Before me gleams a Volume, rare,
   And radiant to behold;
With picture-poems painted, fair,
   In lines of green and gold.

That Great Raphael, who moulds the flower,
   And stains the sunset skies
Its Author is. No critic dour
   His workmanship decries.

Homeric is his theme, and this
   No halting rhythm mars —
What bard-song ever soared like His
   Whose harp-strings reach the stars?

With Art sublime the Great Book glows;
   And magic minstrelsies;
And Music from its pages flows,
   In chords that never cease.

On each fresh page this endless tome
   Some new delight doth hold;
Its readers may for ever roam
   By wonder-ways untold.

Aye, he who cares, may turn at will
   Rare treasure-leaves, to learn
Of cool cloud shadows o'er the hill
   Or sunlight on the fern.

Slow may he follow — all his soul
   A-thrill with long delight —
The changing Seasons, as they roll;
   The path of Day and Night.

His eye may wander in the Spring
   O'er dewy lands, a-sheen;
Where fairy martins sweeping wing
   Across the paddocks green;
Or scarlet lories, in their flight
   Among the wattles, fold
Their turquoise wings; to drop like bright,
   Red rubies flung on gold.

Oh! he may gloat the hillsides clear,
   That em'rald with the vine;
The waving wheatfields just in ear,
   The silken-coated kine;

When from her green the briar breaks,
   A sweet rose-sister shy,
Or proud, the lordly gymea shakes
   His crimson banners high.

A serial of the seasons, he
   Who loves the Book may read —
The tale of summer, joyous see
   Imprinted on the mead

In yellow heads of ripened wheat,
   Or purple clusters, hung;
In orchards, breathing forth the sweet
   Of ripened fruit downflung.

Beneath the ti-tree down the creeks
   Is writ a chapter cool,
Wherein the tongue of Nature speaks
   From shaded reach and pool.

Brown Autumn, like a dairy lass
   With rain-wet cheeks of health,
A rosy gleaner, too, will pass —
   Her apron full of wealth.

When sloughed, curled bark, the silver trees,
   From shining trunks unswathe,
Like nymphs by singing, summer seas
   Disrobing ere they bathe.

When lines the dasyure lean his lair;
   When moult the wild black swan;
And shifting snipe are otherwhere;
   And covey quail are gone.

When wine and must, and yellow gourd;
   Fat sacks of spilling grain,
In rick and loft and cellar stored,  
    Bespeak the garnered gain.

So Winter steals, with soft warm rains,  
    To soak the canefields all;  
So Southern snow, knee-deep remains  
    Along the ranges tall.

So Winter in her fur-lined gown  
    And hood and muff of grey,  
Goes tripping o'er the farmlands brown,  
    Frost-jewelled on her way.

Aye, from this Book the Bards-to-be,  
    The Painters yet unborn,  
Their songs will glean in ecstasy:  
    Their pictures clothe with Morn.

The shades of those, in Austral rhyme  
    Who wrote, as pioneers,  
Will surely hail that full, sublime,  
    Rich culture of the years.

When I have turned the Puzzle Key,  
    That opes the Low Black Door;  
And from this human entity  
    Go forth, to sing no more.

On some Australian hill, that greens  
    With bourgeonage of grass;  
Where down the Morning's cool demesnes  
    The glowing day-winds pass;

Low lay me down. Nor wet in grief  
    The Old Earth-Book with tears;  
Remembering that line and leaf  
    Were mine through many years.
Red River.

Here wave and rock their conflict fine
For ever loudly wage:
Here writes the Ocean, line by line
Along a plastic page,
His lyric of a mood divine,
Then blots it out in rage.

Here young suns, rising in the clear,
Cool mornings, deftly gild
With leaf-of-gold the ti-tree near;
And, with fresh vigor filled,
From restful darkness re-appear
The ranges many-hilled.

Here, from a dying sun at eve,
The red blood freely flows
In westward wounds. Rich doth he leave
Endowered as he goes,
A widowed Bush, to briefly grieve
In weeds of pink and rose.

Here spreads the Night a slumber sheet,
With jewels thickly strewed,
And lays soft carpets for the feet
Of Rest and Quietude;
Nor at her door shall Fashion beat
Or flaunting Vice intrude.

Here from a silver lamp of light,
And from a golden bowl,
The Moon outpours her bounty white;
Until her lunar soul,
A-waning, turns in fading flight
Unto another goal.

Here tramp patrolling seasons four:
In floral chevrons gay,
Spring lords the conquered coastlands o'er,
And laughing, goes his way.
His sleepless tramp along the shore,
    In capote long and grey,
Stern Winter keeps. Red River sees
    Imperial Summer throw
His fiery banners to the breeze;
    And — treading soft below
The shadows of the sloughing trees —
    Regretful Autumn go.

In matted scrubs along its edge
    The prowling dingo hides;
The snake around the granite ledge,
    Fork-tongued and cautious glides;
And in the shallows by the sedge
    The preening black-duck bides.

Like wind among the reeds by shores
    Where ancient cities shone,
Where once, with royal sweep of oars,
    Tall galleys thundered on,
A paean of regret outpours
    At dusk the sable swan.

As those old masters of the quaint
    East, lost in Aryan night,
Once outlined on rice-paper faint
    His slow and drooping flight —
The blue crane, shrilling harsh complaint,
    Lifts upward in affright.

On silent horses, Night and Day,
    Along Red River ride.
December suns and moons of May
    Above it softly glide;
And rare intruders, passing, stray
    An hour its stream beside.

Strong stallion springtides caracole
    In white-maned Arab bands
Full-chested on the forward roll;
    And, o'er the banking sands,
Unto Red River bear the scroll
    Of Ocean's high commands;
But when, in turn, a yearning neap
   Grieves by the naked shore,
The seaward sands their cordon keep
   From point to point once more;
And drifted weed and kelp in heap
   A noisome protest pour.

Like bleached, unburied bones among
   The rank grass, rotting lie
The spars of some great vessel, flung
   On this hard coast to die,
While wind and storm her death-knell rung
   In that dark night gone by.

Since when these broken remnants, trailed
   In token drear, were found,
No man hath learned from whence she hailed,
   Nor whither was she bound;
What company with her outsailed,
   What luckless crew was drowned.

How drove she on the rocks, that sealed
   Her dread fate long ago;
What waiting hearts at length were healed
   Or broken in their woe,
Shall ne'er be riddled or revealed
   While live ships come and go.

For these, and all its secrets lone,
   Of Tempest, Tide and Sea —
Remote, afar, and aye alone
   Through all the years that be —
Red River keepeth in its own
   Deep heart of mystery.
O'meara's Well.

Twenty miles from any township, twenty miles on either track,
Lay the holding of O'Meara, in the myall, 'way out back;
Five and fifty hundred acres “dogleg” fenced and partly rung,
With a blazing sun above it in it's cloudless Heaven hung.

Fighting Fate lived Con O'Meara, fighting drought and pests, and so
Cursed his luck; and oftentimes threatened that he'd “shling it up and go.”
Gave the place another trial; tried to mortgage, tried to sell;
Laid his blessings on the country, cursed the Government as well.

Ye who know but pleasant places where the winding waters be,
Know not ye their pining stintage when the earth gapes thirstily.
Year on year the lean selector saw his shallow dams go dry,
Saw his stock fall poor and perish, saw his ewes and wethers die.

Long he puzzled, prayed, and reasoned — Con was thoughtful and devout —
And at last from seas of problems fished one firm conclusion out: —
“God,” he cried, “is full of mercy; ne'er He sint a curse on earth
But he sint a cure beside it, since the world of Man had birth.

“Rain enough of Hivin's mercy falls to wet the Western land,
“Wor it not for waste and soakage, waste and soakage in the sand.”
In his hut of pine and shingle Con O'Meara reasoned so;
Thumped his knee with this conundrum, “Where the dickins does it go?”

Thinking deep, and thinking deeper, drew analogy from sheath,
Waved the sword of Sense and Logic, found it must go underneath!
“I will dig!” cried then O'Meara; “I will start and sink a shaft,
“And I'll thrack and find that wather if I thrack till I am daft!”

Took he straightway pick and shovel, bucket, windlass, length of rope;
Found a spot of pleasing promise, dug with courage, strength and hope.
And when failure faced him leering, he'd re-elevate his pick,
Swear to find the hidden water if he burrowed to Old Nick.

“There's a ‘rayseevoyer' for sartin,” he would mumble, delving deep,
“I must strike the same this winther, if I mane to save me sheep.
“Sick am I of shallow sinking, 'tis a fact beyant a doubt
“That this 'rayseevoyer' lies deeper, and I've got to find it out.”

Down he went in treble figures, dug and picked and wound away,
Till his back was bent from labor, till his beard was streaked with grey.
Then, his spirit all but broken, then, his last dam all but done,
Con O'Meara came to water one hot eve at setting sun!

Up it flowed in joyous bubbles, warm and sparkling, white and clear;
And O'Meara, at the bottom, rose a hoarse and thankful cheer;
Bade young Con to man the windlass, filled his billy to the brim —
He had struck the rock like Moses, and the rock had answered him.

Oh! the red head of O'Meara rose the excavation o'er;
And, in pride, his brimming billy towards the hut aloft he bore
“From the 'rayseevoyer!' he shouted, “and 'tis risin' fresh and free —
Glory to the Western Country; Judy darlint, come and see!”

Faithful Judy, patient partner, mother of O'Meara's boys,
Sharer of his toil and sorrow, shure she rushed to share his joys;
And the sprigs of Con O'Meara mustered up in eager haste
Round their sire, the law announcing, “She must be the first to taste!”

Hither now Australian painters, students of the wondrous bush,
Here is light and color fitting, here is subject for the brush;
See the sunset in the distance; see the spreading plain and sere;
Group your figures in the foreground, with the windlass standing near!

“Drink deep health to Ballyvannan,” proud O'Meara filled the lid,
And with hand that shook and trembled shure the cray-thur tuk and did!—— —
(Here some dashes, kind Sir Printer, for the Muse in sorrow halts.)
“Howly Saints!” poor Judy spluttered, “Howly Saints, it's Ipsom salts!”

Fell the head of Con O'Meara, and the sprigs in grief withdrew,
As they sampled each the water, as they sampled, spat, and knew;
And that night on Ballyvannan rose no laugh or joyous sound,
Rose no song of Celtic triumph the exultant welkin round.

Grief lay heavy on O'Meara, stern and set his furrowed face,
Nor a-seeking 'rayseevoyers' sank he shafts about the place.
One by one the ribbed stock perished; ten by ten the ewes went down;
Day by day the hot sun glinted on the dried-up grass and brown.

Autumn fell, and with it biding came a kinsman overseas,
Full of Dublin wit and larnin'; full of wisdom and degrees,
He had sped a-seeking knowledge, and mayhap to gather gold,
Wooing wealth in foreign places, as our fathers did of old.
Blood it thicker is than water, though the water West away
It was thick as glue that summer, as unwritten records say;
So he sought his Irish kinsfolk, found them, yea, in evil case,
Where the hand of Drought had written DESOLATION on the place.

“Welcome to my sisther's first-born,” spake O'Meara at the rails.
“Welcome, welcome, Dinny darlint, to the land of New South Wales.
Poor the fare we have to offer, poor the cover, poor the bed,
But the Irish heart is open, and the Irish blood is red.”

* * * * *

They foregathered, they foregathered, in their eyes were smiles and tears,
As they spake beneath the rafters, as they talked beyant the years,
This and that one, Pat and Mary, stream and mountain, bog and hill;
Rest the dead! Their sowls to glory. God be wid ould Ireland still.

In the morn they walked together, and O'Meara told his grief,
How his faith had turned to ashes, how his fortune proved a thief.
By the fatal shaft they lingered, where the rotting rope was wound,
Where the earth hard-heaved and lifted lay in mullock heaps around.

By the shaft was still the billy — long discarded, red with rust —
Where the grieved selector hurled it, with his curses, in the dust,
On the hook O'Meara hung it, careless, listless, let it drop,
Wound it up to prove his statements, leaking slowly, to the top.

“Taste it for yerself, alannah, ye have thravelled here an' there,
But ye niver dhrank say wather up the counthry, that I'll swear.”
Dinny took and Dinny tasted, he had journeyed near and far,
As my Lord of Cashel's tutor he had onetime been to Spa.

“By my sowl! my honest uncle!” cried this youth of books and wit,
" 'Tis a first-class min'ral water — there should be a call for it,
Salts, magnesia, yes, and iron. Why I should not be surprised,
But the Faculty would boom it if you had it analysed!”

Loud and hearty laughed O'Meara: “Shure 'tis larning drives ye mad,
Ye are but a new chum, Dinny, that ye are my honest lad.
Ye are welcome to the wather, take an dhrink it if ye can,
An' I wish ye joy an' pleasure of your physic, Nephew Dan.”

“Done!” said Dan. “We'll strike a bargain. Bring the bottle. Patrick's Day
Shall not pass without rejoicing in Australia far away.”
It was good potheen my brothers. Where it came from know not I,
But I know no Celtic homestead on this day of days goes dry.
And I swear that Irish whisky and Australian Spa — (with Dan) Taken — well, in moderation, never hurt an Irishman. E'en O'Meara scorning, tasted, and he turned and said, “Bedad, When ye thrate it with the liquor, be me sowl it isn't bad.”

They signed a pledge, a contract pledge, and deeply washed it down, That they should stand in equal shares. Next day into the town, Some samples at his saddle bow, the hopeful Daniel went To see the Chemist of the place, with business-like intent.

The Chemist and the Doctor both considered and agreed, Dan's specimens of min'ral wealth were very rich indeed. Then Daniel (who had two degrees), he tipped the Doc. the wink, And took the “paper man” across to Cleary's for a drink.

They made him try the waters too. Enlisted his support (The Press is mighty, and 'tis wise to have a friend at Court). A month went by, young Dan worked hard, a man of parts was he, And with the Doctor and the Priest, he formed a Company.

They asked the local magnates out. And with a case or two, A barrel, and O'Meara's well, they made a special brew, The picnic proved a huge success. The district to a man Soon swore by Con O'Meara's Well, and by his nephew Dan.

And, by the post! before a year from when the “Co.” was floated The shares in Con. O'Meara's Well were at a premium quoted. Ere eighteen month, two stories high, beside the Min'ral Well, All in its painted glory stood “O'Meara's Grand Hotel.”

Now at the door stands honest Con, whilst Judy minds the bar, Aud custom comes in buggy loads to drink the Famous Spa. Promoting appetite and health, enriching Con and Dan; The first is now a live Jay Pee, the last an Alderman!

And waggons piled with bottled Spa go to the Railway down, Promoting appetite and health as far as Sydney town. But when St. Patrick's Day comes round O'Meara from the shelf A rusty billy taketh down and fills the same himself.

And round the grand piano stands O'Meara's household all, While Con for “Soilence in the coort!” in legal voice doth call. They stand and toast O'Meara's Well, an Irish cheer between, While little Judy thumps and bangs “The Wearing of the Green.”
Far And Wide.

_I'll call you to the Beaches,
    And you shall bide with me,
Along the river reaches
    And by the open Sea._

Far and wide I have to wander,
    Far and wide and to and fro;
'Cross the Seas and o'er and under
    Everywhere the Rovers go.

“Rolling stones no mosses gather,”
    Let the careful critic moan;
In my heart I know, I'd rather
    Be a restless rolling stone.

When I feel the soul-relieving
    Comfort of the cradling sea,
When the giant hills upheaving
    Into God's blue sky I see;

When the brown plains spread before me,
    And I slacken out the rein,
With a noon sun burning o'er me,
    Then I _know_ my loss is gain.

Let me watch the sea-rain falling,
    Smell the salt, deck-driven spray;
Let me hear the bush-birds calling
    At the dawning of the day.

Let me see the sun-bars streaming
    Down the valleys, ere the night
Fills the world with pleasant dreaming,
    Love and coolness and delight.

Inland creeks and shoreward rivers,
    How they beckon and they croon;
Ah, the long dry grass that quivers
    Ere the grey clouds cast their boon.
E'er the forests tall and splendid
    Lure me with their light and shade,
And the rolling downs unended
    Like a bridal carpet laid.

Gypsy come! The golden beaches
    Hold their arms to you and me.
Gypsy come! The water reaches
    Call us to them lovingly!

In the North green palm glades keep their
    Vigils 'neath the cloudless moon;
Glutted pigeons safely sleep there,
    Freely filled with fruited boon.

In the South a cold wind, singing,
    Sways the high limbs to and fro,
And the Magpie homeward winging
    Carols of the coming snow.

Gypsy come! the wide bush waits us
    Gypsy come! the wide seas call,
Near and far the world awaits us,
    We are wild hearts after all.

Far and wide we twain will wander,
    All the world, the world to know,
Far and wide and o'er and under,
    By the roads the Rovers go.
Ringy Ringy Rosy.

“Ringy ringy rosy,” the morning skies are blue,
And yonder by the slip-rails your sweetheart waits for you.
The lizards on the fences are basking in the sun,
The Wintertime is over, the Summertime's begun.
“Ringy ringy rosy,” round and round they go,
The glad and happy children of thirty years ago.

Those cool and frosty mornings, oh, I remember well
The wattles by the wayside, the warnings of the bell,
The manna 'neath the gumtrees that showered overnight
From Nature's secret sources, to make a child's delight;
The yams for which we rooted, the quinces hard and tart
We swapped for tops and marbles, a fallen log our mart!

“Ringy ringy rosy” — across the years I hear
The voices from the schoolyard uprising strong and clear;
And all the proud achievement, the failure and the strife,
That make the sordid total of this our mortal life;
The pomp and human splendor, the Future and the Past,
When weighed within the balance seem little things at last.

To be a World's Immortal, to be a world's unknown,
Win monument of marble, or simple slab of stone —
How little matters either, when every foe and friend
Must come to lie together in quiet at the end!
When pays each generation, of high or humble birth,
Its tribute unto Caesar, its dust unto the Earth!

“Ringy ringy rosy” — beyond the lands and seas
We carry our delusions, we bear our memories.
The world is full of pleasure, the world is full of pain —
Alas, the golden morning that never comes again!
“Ringy ringy rosy,” round and round they go,
The blithe and merry children of thirty years ago.

“Ringy ringy rosy,” a requiem it seems,
In saddened notes recalling my boyhood hopes and dreams.
The silver song of Childhood! Who would not give to be
A child again, the harvest of all the land and sea?
“Ringy ringy rosy!” I hear the sweet refrain
Re-echoed in the morning across the years again.

“Ringy ringy rosy,” the fields are wet with dew,
And yonder by the slip-rails your sweetheart waits for you;
The briar by the wayside is turning to the sun,
The Wintertime is over, the Summertime's begun.
“Ringy ringy rosy,” round and round we'll sing,
Our simple songs of Childhood, the children of the Spring.
Same As You.

If your luck is out with women; if you've looked too long on wine,
Do not sit and nurse the anger of your anguish, brother mine,
For the sun will rise to-morrow, and the skies be just as blue,
And you'll find that other fellows have their troubles — same as you.

There's a gun for you to carry; there's an oar for you to pull;
There's a saddle and a stockwhip, and the earth is bountiful;
There's a corner for you somewhere; there's another girl to woo;
And you'll meet a mate out yonder, who has suffered, same as you.

Though your aching heart be empty, and your pockets much the same,
Though the dice of Fate ARE loaded, be a man and play the game!
There is something left to live for — to your own strong soul be true.
And we'll take your hand and grip it, who have battled, same as you.

You may never back the winner, you may never win the maid;
You may never find a nugget, make a fortune out of trade;
But you'll always find your manhood, if you keep the fact in view,
That some other chaps are trying to be honest — same as you.

When they come to add up figures, and to total you and me,
When the Game of Life is over, and all things as nothing be,
It may chance — who knoweth brother — that the old beliefs were true?
And His voice across the Shadow, shall re-echo through and through —
“Peace be with ye, Sons of Sorrow! I have suffered — same as you!”
The Flame Tree.

Drab-feathered birds of sorrow
   Droop no dull wings of Care;
Nor doth a sere To-morrow,
   Red droughts, malign, prepare
When Spring with Illawarra
   Makes compact green and fair.

The sun, in harness splendid,
   His chariot of gold
Through azure fields unended,
   Drives forth; a hero bold,
As when o'er Hellas bended
   Idyllic skies of old.

Its ringed, round, column Doric
   The slender palm tree sways,
Though no wild wood-nymphs choric
   A-down green shaded ways
Of tree-fern unhistoric,
   Give Dionysius praise.

With shoreward sapphires laden,
   And landward leaf and vine,
The vestal South arrayed in
   Bejewelled raiment fine,
Burns forth a fire-eyed maiden
   Of Roses, Love and Wine.

And, where her mountains yearning,
   Turn eastward towards the seas —
Their coal-seams darklyurning
   Dead forest mysteries —
Out-stands in vesture burning
   This Cardinal of Trees.

Flame-capped, in scarlet glory;
   With fiery plumes, upflung,
Like some Rose Knight of story
By courtly minstrels sung,
A proud Conquistadore
He shines his peers among.

Where sounds his clear reveille
The whip-bird in the morn;
Where cradled by the valley
Triumphant day is born,
And on the hillsides rally
The clouds of Night forlorn;

'Mid green-robed rivals, claiming
The rapt beholder's view,
In scarlet pride outflaming
Against the skyline blue,
Afar he stands, proclaiming
The royal Richelieu.

With parasitic clinging,
To him no servile vine —
Its trailing minions bringing —
Be-mirks his royal line,
In leafless pride upspringing,
A king by right divine.

But loyal ferns, unflowered,
That kiss his feet of state,
With benisons are dowered
From his o'er-rich estate,
In red abundance showered
From high pontificate.

Nor do they homage falter
Bird choristers a-wing,
But high a fluted psalter
O'er festooned transepts sing,
When red before her altar
He lights the Torch of Spring.

The glory of Australia,
This floral hierarch cries.
In sunlit rose regalia
Beneath her summer skies,
The Genius of Australia,
Full-bloomed, he typifies.
Mordialloc.

The haze along the hillsides, the sparkle on the Bay
Marconi forth the message of Spring's advance to-day.
Now all the fields are blazoned with epaulettes of gold;
Now all the trees their standards of Victory uphold.
In gallant cohorts riding, white gloves upon their hands,
The soldier seas are marshalled along Port Phillip's sands.
So dream we here together of all sweet things that be,
By drowsy Mordialloc, a-facing to the sea.

To-day no red-robed Angel of Discontent shall mar
Our peace with drums of discord or clash of social war;
To-day this land Aegean of roses, love and wine,
In all its lotus splendor is wholly yours and mine,
While Commerce, coarsely strident, plays out her vulgar part,
Romance shall be our handmaid, with Poesy and Art.
We left the mart behind us, in Flinders-street, that we
Might find at Mordialloc a temple by the sea.

Your hair hath meshed the sunbeams; your voice is low and sweet
(French heels enhance, 'tis certain, the play of pretty feet).
This Southern land that gave you your roses and your pearl
Is maiden yet to conquest; like you — a careless girl.
These meadows all around us, to me they but enfold
Your daintiness — a ruby, set in Australian gold:
The spirit of my own land, vivacious, young and free,
To-day at Mordialloc, expression finds in thee.

So falls your voice in rhythm; so beats my heart in tune;
While by a velvet stairway creeps down the Afternoon,
Till lo! at Evening's doorway she standeth soft and shy
To wave in sunset blushes duenna Day good-bye. . .
Now creeps the slow sail shoreward across the darkening Bay;
Now close in silent thousands, the blossoms of the Day;
The haze hath left the foreland, the light hath left the sea;
White stars, by Mordialloc, burn over you and me.
L'envoi.

But when the wheels of Action once more around me whirl,
I'll think of Mordialloc, a sunset and a girl;
And where upon his service — the red-robed Angel — I
Go forth his will proclaiming, all days, until I die,
Though Duties stern command me, though proud ambitions call
The waves by Mordialloc shall sing beyond them all!
And, golden as thy tresses, with inward sight I'll see
The sun on Mordialloc go down — in memory.
Incentive.

Let lean Ambition seek its goal; fat Wealth its hoard increase,
Sour Vanity achieve its gauds, and social triumphs please
Dyspeptic dames and feline fops; — beneath the aching sky
The living hosts, all graveward bound, with groan and laugh go by.

I do not enter for the prize. The gold for which men stint,
Cheat, lie and perjure, rob and kill, fresh sovereigned from the Mint,
Is not more precious in itself, more perfect in the scale
Supreme of earthly loveliness than any simple, frail,

Sweet, yellow buttercup that lifts for any ploughman's eye,
Its burnished coin of floral gold from Earth's unerring die.
Nor doth the stamped, white silver seem a fairer thing to me
Than scales upon the salmon's side or moonlight on the sea.

Write not my name upon the lists! Will any glory save —
Though I grow great as Buonaparte — my body from the grave?
For where is Artaxerxes now? He shareth with the hound
That licked his royal feet in fear, a common couch of ground.

The flesh of fossil beasts and birds; the mouse and mastodon,
The flesh that quivered under-claw in primal forests gone;
The hearts that gloried with the gods, or cowered 'mid the swine,
A heritage of sure decay at birth received — like mine.

Let others to the Strident Way! The proud inventor feeds
With each discordant, new machine but new-created needs;
Each fresh philosophy in turn the last entire disproves,
And further from the searcher's grasp Life's hidden truth removes.

All such is waste and emptiness. My son, but small per cent.
Of what men strive and sicken for repays the effort spent.
This spiral whorl that man calls “Life,” this hurry that we boast
As “Modern Progress” in our pride, is tinsel at the most.

I will not caper in the dance; too well the tune I know;
'Twas old when Nineveh was young; amid pre-glacial snow
They played it on the boulevards; millennia ago
When Paris yet a village was of hungry Eskimo.
I will not stumble in the race, with ever-failing feet,
When conquest ends in slavery, and triumph spells defeat.
My house is on the hilltops reared; the paths that glamor me
Lie out across the level land and by the level sea.

As Esau have I sold my place; but yet, a millionaire,
I draw entail my heritage of life and love and air;
Red health at riot in the veins, the flesh-pot on the fire,
Full larder and a covering — what more shall man desire?

Green Nature's coffers, spilling wealth, red draperies of Morn
That richen o'er the east when Day, another prince, is born;
The noontide shadows falling cool through forests darkly fair,
The star tiaras that the Night sets in her raven hair,

These dower rich my pleasured eyes; and in my ears the strong,
Majestic music of the winds that dog white flocks along
Blue parks celestial, till the rain, their shepherd grey and old,
In spreading mantle comes again, to gather them in fold;

The arias of running streams, the thunder's Marseillaise,
The aves and the glorias a vagrant night breeze plays
On choric harps of forest oak; wild marches of the seas,
And insects droll and singing birds — these make my melodies.

The Garden of my Choice distils rare scents from flowers unseen,
Though never meddling gard'ner delved among its arbors green;
And, save by fickle winds, unswept, its shaded walks and ways
Still bloom in constant fruitfulness, unsown thro' winter days.

The Temple of my Worship knows nor heresies nor creeds,
No pontiff walks its lofty aisles; no kneeling prelate reads
His liturgies of human wants; but all its shrines untrod
Are loud with adoration, and the Nearer Voice of God.

So would I that my days shall pass: and if this hand record,
From all the Beauties of the World, but one eternal word:
I know my days will not be vain; nor shall I weigh the cost
Of earthly riches unattained or human glories lost.
Dreamers too.

We have lived long years for a white-robed dream —
    The dream of Australia fair,
With the vine and corn by her hill and stream,
    And the sunshine in her hair;
And the plain and strand of our native land,
    They were ever calling there.

We have toiled and won from the forest's maze
    The boon of a white man's home;
We have reared our sons to their manhood days,
    And seen them settle, or roam.
And the young brood, too, as they spread and grew,
    Has dreamed 'neath the sapphire dome.

Shall we cease to dream? Not so, my son,
    Blue-eyed and Australian-born,
We will dream our dream till the signal gun
    Proclaimeth the battle morn,
Till the war cry thrills through the woods and hills,
    And the women wait forlorn.

We will dream our dream; but a waking dream
    Of the White Man, strong and free,
Full armed to meet with a strength supreme,
    The foes of his liberty,
If the loud shells sing and the rifles ring
    In the storm of the days to be.
Daughter Of The North.

'Tis pleasant where the Harbor meets
These Southern waters blue;
There's joy of life in Melbourne streets,
From Carlton unto Kew.

Fair Adelaide, beneath her hills,
In gracious splendor gleams;
And Perth with younger vigor fills
The morning of her dreams.

True hearts Australian unto each
Beat loyally and fond;
Their rival claims as cities reach
Out, over, and beyond.

But, Daughter of the North, whose eyes
Of trustful, tender brown,
Are aching for the cloudless skies
Above your native town,

Full well I know that, far away,
In day-dreams once again,
You see the tall maize nod and sway,
And hear the rustling cane.

The “silky oaks” are crowned with gold;
All purple lies the pave,
In Northern springtime where the bold,
Bare jacarandas wave;

And o'er the river flats the bees,
From out the lucerne flow'rs
Are freighting on winged argosies
Sweet plunder thro' the hours.

The dairy herds above their knees
In long, swamp grasses laze;
Or chew a clover cud at ease
Through warm September days.
From Copmanhurst to Yamba bar,
   Through all the tilth between;
From Chatsworth out to Yugilbar
   The Earth is garden green.

Beloved of the North, once more
   That symphony I hear —
The sunlit rollers to the shore
   Sang in the morning clear.

Your crow-black hair was wet with spray,
   As fresh from far Japan
A young Nor'-Easter called the Day
   On all the pipes of Pan.

Impassioned, by a summer sea
   That wooed a tropic strand,
We drained our cup of ecstasy —
   Your hand within my hand.

Yes, pleasant is this Harbor fair —
   But oh, dear heart of mine
What glory where the jungles wear
   Their virgin robes of vine!

What glamor o'er each islet green,
   The river, rich with farms,
Is holding, like a conquered queen,
   Within her lover's arms.

What hyacinthine hours we shared
   Beside the Clarence clear,
Whose water-lilies only heard
   The olden story, dear.

Some night mayhap, when Fortune's boon
   Has lent a golden ray,
We'll meet in jest beneath the moon
   And walk the lovers' way.

The wind will whisper in the maize;
   And at our trysting tree,
To bring us back remembered days,
   You'll wait again for me.

Long, anxious years have sped between,
   Since first our trysts began;
But you are still my Northern Queen,  
And I your Southern man.

Nor toil, nor care, nor age can dim  
The sunlight of the Past,  
When he with her, and she with him,  
Keeps covenant at last.

Aye, all the fruits first passion bore  
Shall from that Past come forth,  
And we will lovers be, once more  
Enraptured in the North.
The Dead Tree.

It knew a life of leaf and bough
That sapless stands, laid naked now
   To Time's cold scorning.
Once, in its deep, ambrosial shade,
The Wind, a wizard Harper, played
   By night and morning.

Once, from its branches, skyward flung,
In green and gold the parrots hung
   A spoil de-flowering
From snow-white blossoms honey-sweet;
While overnight, about its feet,
   Fell manna showering.

Red sap — that at the touch unseen
Of Spring slow-dripped — bestained the green
   Grass growing under,
As if by some sharp inward thorn
Its forest heart were pierced and torn
   In grief asunder.

Then, too, the young spring leaves became,
Like woodland virgins, red with shame
   Of Love's undoing,
And blushed in high retreat to see,
With dance of drunken ecstacy,
   A world gone wooing.

When Winter walked with prim July,
As wolf winds harried o'er the sky
   Cloud fleeces airy,
Its boughs, like penitents ashamed
Of Summer's wantoning, proclaimed
   Loud miserere.

When moonlit saplings threw their length
Of shadow 'neath its buttressed strength,
   And bush-land, gleaming
In midnight splendor, mocked the day
With silver replica, 'twould sway,
    A tired knight, dreaming,
In frosted mail, until the East
At last the Maid of Dawn released
    From night's dominion;
And home the night birds 'plaining drew
And forth the song birds gaily flew —
    On burnished pinion.
Though o'er the teeming lands and seas
The sky with its infinities
    Still bluely aches;
Though yet in golden casque and helm
The Sovran sun a daily realm
    Of azure marches;
Though round his fiery throne be whirled
This wondrous atom of a world
    Through years unending;
No more a wizard wind shall play
Aeolian songs by night or day
    On green boughs bending.
Now from its fertile height the meed
Of honeyed flower and wrinkled seed
    Fall earthward never.
This edifice that some Great Hand
For its brief tenant, nobly planned,
    Lies prone for ever.

So reads the law! Birds, bards, and bees,
Fair ladies, lions, toads and trees
    In turn must perish . . . . .
Of all the living host that pains
To live, not ONE the life retains
    That all lives cherish!
Keira.

When Youth, a callow Knight untried,
   With golden spurs to win,
Rode bright in armor at his side,
   And, all his Soul within,
Love sang him on a harp apart
   A song of young desire —
He, careless, threw another heart
   On Life's red altar fire.

On Keira rose the sun that day,
   By Illawarra green;
On grand old Keira, far away
   Beyond the Might-Have-Been.
The sun on Keira, like an earl,
   Still flaunts his banners brave;
But at his feet the dews impearl
   The grass above a grave.

Oh, whiter than the surf was she
   That breaks those coasts along;
And redder than the coral tree
   That grows by Gerringong;
And graceful as the springing palm
   On Illawarra hills;
And sweeter than the meadow balm
   By cool Shoalhaven rills.

A maiden of old fairyland,
   With dove eyes, shy and brown;
A youth with Happiness in hand,
   Who flung the rare gift down!
For he was tall and true and strong,
   In her adoring eyes;
Nor could he harbor thought of wrong,
   Be perjured or unwise.

To her he came, Love's Avatar,
   Resistless, from the West;
Upon his forehead shone the star
   Of Morning for his crest.
World-old her dream, as songs aver
   By primal poets sung;
But new and ever sweet to her
   Who trusted and who clung.

He scorned the guerdon he had won,
   And went his youthful ways;
So fame bewitched him, and anon
   He drank the cup of Praise.
Then Gold and Women snared his thought,
   And drew him to his fall;
He strove, he conquered, won and sought
   And lived — to curse it all.

Grey hairs lie on him, and his brow
   Is ploughed by Time. The goad
Is ever; but he would that now
   He took the other road;
For, often as his mem'ry brings
   Its echoes from Beyond,
One voice through all the distance rings,
   Despairing, lost and fond.

He hears it in the crowded towns;
   He hears it on the seas;
He hears it where the star-dome crowns
   The bush infinities.
"Come back to grand old Keira;
   I wait, dear heart, for thee;
Come back again to Keira,
   And Love, and Youth, and Me."

The sun on Keira, sinking yet,
   Doth furl his banners brave;
And at his feet the night-dews wet
   The grass above her grave.
Its wreath of joy, its cross of pain
   Each generation bears;
But Time shall surely reap the grain
   And sift it from the tares.

And this is true; all else is vain
   And idle at the last: —
No foot shall ever find again
   The cross roads of the Past.
Unto the Dark and Narrow Place
   Each man must bring his load;
And woe to him who turned his face
   From his appointed road!
The Quest Of No Avail.

It was starlight on Euphrates, o'er a thousand years ago,
And a Dreamer by the River watched its silken, silver flow.
“Give,” he cried, “my Idol to me, from thy voiceless Night, O Death:
I would hold again her sweetness; breathe the perfume of her breath!”

Naught the Solemn River answered, and the Silent Stars shone on.

Now 'tis starlight on a River in the new Australian night,
And the countless flow'rs of Heaven bloom in endless fields of light.
“Give me back,” a Dreamer crieth to the silken silver stream —
“Give me back my shattered Idol; give me back my vanished Dream!”

Naught the Solemn River answers, and the Silent Stars shine on.
White Rose.

Once in a garden wondrous fair —
Do you remember yet? —
We drank the sweet, seductive air
Of musk and mignonette.

For you and me the flowers and
The leaves their glories shed,
And all the world was Wonderland
Wherever we might tread.

The drooping lilacs and the stocks,
The pansies, tender-eyed,
The foolish, flaunting hollyhocks,
The maiden daisies pied,

The peony with painted face,
The star-like cornflower blue,
And blooms of tender tropic grace,
Their soft reflections threw.

The brave hibiscus burned and bled,
The gladioli flared —
Like lamps of love, to guide, you said,
Our footsteps as we fared.

Have you forgotten how we stood
Beneath an aspen tree,
To see the sun beyond the wood
Go down in royalty?

One tall white rose beside us paid
Her homage to the sun;
Till on her virgin mouth he laid
Red tribute meekly won.

Then your dear mouth I claimed in fee —
White Rose, can you forget —
Thou Flower of All-the-World to me
Who art forever yet —
That fragrance falling in the dusk,
   Those trembling aspen leaves,
The subtle languor, born of musk
   And scented-lily sheaves?

The stars above us deeply grew
   In numbers, one by one,
Your hair was jewelled with the dew . . .
   And all the world went on!

Ah not again, again, again,
   That Garden of Delight
Shall hear the footsteps of us twain
   Fall gently in the night.

The desert of our stony fate
   No fair love-fragrance knows;
We turned us from our Eden's gate . . .
   God keep us both — White Rose.
Yamba.

High Northern suns their brazen shields,
Like warriors, hang above the fields
Where Sultan Summer frankly yields
    His plenteous boon;
Like nautch girls dance the naked days
Down avenues of cane and maize,
While on his pipes the North-Wind plays
    A careless tune.

From ranges walled, through gates ajar
At Copmanhurst and Yugilbar,
Pours down the Clarence from afar
    His noble tide;
And, spreading forth in creek and arm,
Enrichens with his waters warm
A fertile land of field and farm
    In deltas wide.

But, when this vassal task is done,
With all his winding courses run,
He seeks reward for service won;
    And to his queen,
The shining Sea, whose silver shores
Are musical with rhythmic oars,
At last his singing soul outpours
    By Yamba green!

The depths of noon are rarely stirred
By restless foot or roving bird;
But in the topaz morn are heard —
    Like lutes afar,
Of suitors calling from the green
Recess of gardens Florentine —
The reed birds in their nests unseen
    By Yamba bar.

As tuneful heralds of a feast,
When Morning flaunts the conquered East,
With scarlet regiments released
    From Night's duress,
Beyond the lawns, where fall in showers
Of snow the great magnolia flowers,
The magpies from their leafy towers
    Their joys express.

By rolling marsh and rainbowed stream
The opal-tinted dewdrops gleam
And cluster in a rajah's dream;
    First spoils of Day
From hyacinth and lily swept,
They pearl the couches where they slept,
As purple princes who bewept
    The Night's delay.

Oh, Land of drowsy days sublime
Where dwelled my Heart, in rest and rhyme,
Through all a golden summertime!
    In dreams again
I see thy sunlit splendors blaze;
And, walking in a moonlit maze,
I hear the night wind where it plays
    Among the cane.

I see, untrammelled of the town,
Young Chloris in her skirt of brown,
Uplifted coyly, urging down
    The spotted kine.
White petticoats, like homing sails,
Come flutt'ring o'er the stockyard rails,
And, by the polished milking pails,
    Bring up aline.

Where netted jungles green the blue
Distractions of the hillward view,
The crested pigeons call and coo
    With ruffled throats;
And Chloris, is it right or wrong
That all the burden of their song
Is “I — love — you” the whole day long
    In pleading notes?

His floral torch in upward blaze
To light the darkened jungle ways,
In Spring the Northern flame-tree lays;
   And Chloris, fain
I'd play, as in sweet hours agone,
That quiet woodland stage upon
A warm, impassioned, Corydon
   To you again.

Alas, the dramas that have been!
The ravished musk and myrtle green
That crowned a comely country queen
   Are dead and sere:
But Mem'ry, folded like a rose
Long pressed between book pages, throws
A fragrance from the Past that shows
   Our hearts how dear

Were those enraptured hours agone,
When through the woodlands, on and on,
Sweet Chloris strayed with Corydon
   Love's pathway far;
When by the pen of seeming chance,
Was written in the Book “Romance,”
A line that flashes like a lance
   By Yamba bar.

A gallant, fed with swift desire,
Uplifted then his crest of fire
And smote upon a burning lyre
   The Northern sun;
A lady in her laces white
To be the bridesmaid of delight
Came forth the ivory-bosomed Night,
   Besought and won.

By silver sea and golden sand
We twain have wandered hand in hand,
When all the world was lovers' land,
   My Chloris dear;
Nor shall the years our mem'ries cheat
Of love that triumphs in defeat,
Though long the musk and myrtle sweet
   Be dead and sere.
South Of Gabo.

The young gales hatch below the Snares;
As fledglings wild, uncouth,
A fierce Antarctic dam prepares
Their flight of fear and ruth.

From icy nests on crags forlorn,
And bergs and glaciers bold,
They flutter forth, for aye to mourn
Their birthplace lorn and cold.

Full-pinioned, at the Tasman Sea,
They leave along the crests,
In shrieking, loud, witch revelry,
White feathers from their breasts.

They scream around the lonely isles
Like sad-voiced restless things
That sweep perforce the darkened miles
With strong, far-spreading wings.

From Wilson's up to cloud-capped Howe
Their giant playground lies,
When on each spray-drenched harbor brow
The “Stand-off” signal flies.

Then South of Gabo watch and ware
The shipmen as they go;
For o'er the hummocks, whitely bare,
The cutting sand-drifts blow;

And cruel rock-knives, hidden, wait
With edges sharp as steel,
Along a coast of Evil Fate,
Each doomed shore-driven keel.

Here lie the dead ships one by one;
Out here the surges croon
The Federal to her rest-place gone,
The sunken Ly-ee-moon.
Long kelp and seaweed, through the curl
Of combers all agleam,
The floating hair of some drowned girl
In waving tresses seem.

Here, graved beneath the golden sands
And iridescent shell,
Lost sailors out of distant lands,
Unsought, are sleeping well.

But South of Gabo, when those strong
And wayward winds are done,
'Tis all a deep, harmonious song
Of Sea and Land and Sun.

The little cutters spread their wings,
From Eden to Cape Schanck.
The coaster's rusty framework rings
The hymn of rod and crank.

The ketches, leaving in their wake
An odor of benzine,
With quick explosions noisy take
Their way across the green.

With wattle-bark and fish and maize,
From five to twenty tons,
The midget fleet goes down the bays,
And seaward, daring, runs.

With seasoned crews, of twos and threes,
To handle wheel and sheet,
Steal up and down the changing seas,
The fathers of our fleet.

Hard-fisted, lean Australians these
Who know the fickle bars,
The soundings and the mysteries
Of clouds and tides and stars.

When South of Gabo roars the brood
Of all the gales of Hell,
They — long before — for shelter stood
And anchored safe and well.

But here and there along the coast,
Sea-worn and salt with foam,
Old wreckage gives the brood to boast
   Of ships that came not home.

Oh, South of Gabo — where the Heel
   Of All Australia stands,
Their hearts are like the tested steel,
   And iron are their hands.

And South of Gabo — where no ease
   Of Capricorn they ken,
Is bred by rougher shores and seas,
   A stronger race of men.

From South of Gabo yet may track
   By sea-trail sternly forth,
The men who'll hurl Invasion back,
   Defeated, from the North
The Beach.

Like Cleopatra's neck incurved,
Or Phryne's arms of snow,
From Bastion Rock to Gabo swerved
And bended as a bow;
It offers to the Austral sun
It's miles of silvner sand,
In virgin beauty, yet unwon
By any spoiler's hand.

At night I hear the ancient seas —
White-headed seers, along
These darkened shores their memories
Pour forth in epics long
Of years primeval. And in strange,
Soft, minor chords reply
Old pilgrim winds that reef and range,
Unrested, wander by.

Deep secrets theirs — of aeons gone,
When suns and systems, worn
By endless forces, fiercely shone
In nascent strength newborn;
When gave the seventh Pleiad out,
Unshamed, her starry boon;
And glowed, o'er jungles north and south,
A tropic polar moon.

Time's burdens and the yoke of years
Have tamed their early might;
No more the cow'ring caveman hears
The storm gods in the night;
No more do chartless shallops hie
A furtive course from shore;
And in their quiet havens lie
The dead ships evermore.

But they who nursed the germ of life,
The new amoeboid cell,
From which, or Science errs, the strife
Of all that follows fell.
What marvels have they locked within
Their ocean hearts? What dreams
Of empire and of effort in
Their world-encircling streams?

* * * * *

Betimes, a-dreaming, when my camp
Fire reds the foreland, I
Can dimly hear with Titan tramp
The Ages marching by;
And, scroll by scroll, the Eras, rolled
On mighty parchments, pearled
With priceless truths, to me unfold
The Story of the World.

Then deep-sea voices faint recall,
And deep-sea echoes bring
The roar of monsters and the fall
Of preying foot and wing;
These pass and perish at a breath,
Their weaker types remain —
Slow evolution armed with death
From bulk, reduces brain!

I hear wild winds primeval fan
Volcanic mountains steep,
Where, in the quiet future, Man
His fertile tilth will reap.
I see an Everlasting Force
Re-mould, destroy, re-shape;
Give firmer foothold to the horse
And forehead to the ape.

* * * * *

Anon these songs of effort cease
And kinder themes outpour,
In turn, the diva-throated seas
Unto a listening shore.
Aye, then methinks, I hear retold
Old stories ever new,
Of Jason and the heroes bold
Red-hearted, proud, and true.
Old galleys dip their carven beaks
Into the azure brine,
That in their Delphic feasts fair Greeks
May pour the Samian wine.
In rose gondolas, silken-sailed
The royal Doges go,
And young Crusaders silver-mailed,
With bannerets of snow.

Rome's daring eagles, flaunting high
Their wings of blood, go on.
Fair burn across a sunset sky
Brave banners of St. John.
Columbus, peering through the dusk,
I see fare forth amain —
A glory harvest from the husk
Of Littleness to gain.

I glimpse John Cabot with his white
Hair rimed by northern spray;
And grandly through the awful night
I hear his courage say:
“As near to Heaven, friends, by sea —
Though Death wait either hand —
As near to Heaven now we be
As e'er we'll be on land.”

I hear Magellan dauntless cry,
“Not if we eat the hides
From off this vessels's yards shall I
Turn back, whate'er betides,
Till these new seas are conquered!” Drake,
A-roaring down the main,
With gallant ruffians in his wake
I see go out again.

Aye, out again and home again,
Along historic years,
For either glory, love, or gain,
Go forth these buccaneers;
The pirate brood, with laden chests,
Outspilling plundered toll;
The black sea eagles in their nests,
Blood-stained, but brave of soul.
The saucy sloop, the frigate gay,
    The fighting forty-four;
The oaken hulls of Nelson's day,
    The ships of trade and war —
Night long the roving waters bring
    Their ghostly memories;
Night long the ancient surges sing
    High human histories.

*      *      *      *      *

But when the east, attendant, waits
    Her mansions to adorn,
And with skilled magic decorates
    The bridal couch of Morn;
With royal purple drapes each plinth
    Of frowning rock, and fills
With topaz and with hyacinth
    The hollows of the hills.

When low the inlet and its isles,
    In Asiatic guise,
Salaam with soft and pliant smiles
    The Sultan of the Skies;
As from the lakes a silver veil
    Of mist is deftly drawn,
An Amazon in golden mail
    The Beach salutes the Dawn.

White lace of foam around her knees,
    She flutters like a girl;
And threads her blue embroideries
    With seaweed and with pearl.
The spotted cowrie and the fair,
    Frail nautilus are hers,
Rose spirals and the shining, rare
    Sea shells and mariners.

The jewel caskets of the deeps
    Lie ready to her hand,
In ev'ry tropic wave that leaps
    Foam-freighted to the sand.
And, now, in cadence, measured, slow,
    From minstrels submarine
Sweet rhymes and rondels gaily flow
Across this sunlit scene.

Of Life and *Now* these minstrels chant —
   A pagan song of old,
The song dark lovers of Levant
   Outsang in hours of gold. . . .
A radiance now, a rare delight,
   A dream of love and wine,
She lieth in the morning light
   This Austral beach of mine.
**Maid Of Gerringong.**

She was riper than a cherry on the far New England slopes;
She was brighter than the vision of a poet's virgin hopes,
And the days were all a picture, and the nights were all a song,
While I tarried and I married with the maid of Gerringong.

And the sun came up to greet us from the waters blue and wide,
And the Western hills were crimson with his glory when he died;
And the moon she queened above us 'mid her white, adoring throng,
While I drank my cup of pleasure with the maid of Gerringong.

Yea, the moon she lent her silver and the sun he lent his gold,
In the years before our sorrows and our sins had made us old —
But I'll drain another beaker, and I'll sing another song
To the love and youth that left me — like my maid of Gerringong.

Oh, my days of earth are numbered, as the days of men must be,
For our life is like the shadow of a sail upon the sea;
And 'tis idle now to wonder if that love was right or wrong,
But it haunts and haunts me ever, oh, my maid of Gerringong.
The Bushland Call.

To-night, dear heart, I hear the Call,
    The Call that never leaves me.
The old Bush lullabies and all
    The song that glads, yet grieves me.

In bitter joy, in pleasant woe,
    The wanderlust doth find me.
To stay I dare not, still to go —
    With all thy charms to bind me!

Last night, beneath the silent stars,
    Your voice compelled, enthralled me;
To-night a Voice across the bars
    From seaward places called me.

Low in my ears the Deep Seas croon:
    “Away! ere Fate defy thee!
The Waters silver with the moon
    Shall golden tresses tie thee?

    “Shall witching lips and throat of white
    For evermore proclaim you
A recreant to old delight,
    Of open ways that claim you?”

Dear Love of mine, your breath is sweet
    As wild red briar roses —
But, oh! the sward beneath the feet,
    When Night in Bushland closes!

Dear Heart of mine, if it should be
    That your fond charms prove stronger,
What will the Voices say to me
    As Summer days grow longer?

Were it not best while Love is young
    To break the chain enthralling?
For, oh! the Song the Waters sung!
    And, oh! my Bushland calling!
On Sand.

An ebb-tide, falling, bared the white,
    Hard beach; where, in the sun,
I walked betimes, in mood to write
    Of all my knowledge won,
From life and death, one song which might
    At least be finely done.

The sun, resplendent, in its sky,
    O'er-arching burned. Ablaze
With gold the hours went by,
    As, witched within their silken maze —
By life's mid fountains dreaming — I
    Drank deep that day of days.

This pageant of creation seemed
    More vivid on the scroll
Of Being writ. Like watch fires gleamed
    Great thoughts. With Amazonian roll,
Clear floods of higher vision streamed,
    Deep-watered, through my soul.

Rare words on rhythm — like to spheres
    Pearl-clustered at the springs
Of space — re-echoed in my ears;
    Or homing birds that fold their wings
When each in downward passage nears
    Its garden of glad things.

Rare thoughts befel, as moths that low
    O'er star-lit petals poise;
Or fireflies in the night which glow
    The message of their joys
In quiet groves beyond this show
    Of empty strife and noise.

Thus, to and fro on buoyant feet
    I paced to make a song
Triumphant, that for aye might beat
On eagle wings along;
The hearts of men, in couplets sweet
   And resonant and strong.

The day — one day from all the tale
   Of days that come and go —
Was ended. Now, amort, with pale,
   Spent majesty aglow;
And blood upon his golden mail,
   The kingly sun lay low.

I turned, and lo! along the laced
   Sands, creeping slow, with spite
Of seeming purpose; all my traced
   Proud steps of effort bright
The flood, incoming, had erased,
   And left me — with the night.
The Doers.

They gathered on the strand, with a hatchet in the hand —
And the same was made of stone —
They pointed mammoth spears at the Puzzle of the Years
In the primal dusk alone.

They took the hollowed bole and they nosed it to the roll
In a neolithic dawn;
And sang a cave-man's song as they crept the shores along —
Going westward with the morn.

Each new-found land they trod did they dedicate to god —
Who was fashioned out of wood;
They looted and they lied, and they devilled and they died,
And the whole result was good:

For the traders of the clan followed slowly on the van
Of the Doers who had done;
Till the merchant service grew from a single bark canoe
To a fleet of forty-one!

They bartered bone and hide for the goods of t'otherside,
And they cheated in the trade
That the daughter of a thief might be wedded to a chief —
So the hairy gossips said

When the Punic days were done and Hellenic days begun,
They were beating down the wind,
With their doers in the lead, and the crafty merchant breed
Rowing closely on behind.

And they cut, with classic oaths, many feeble foreign throats
For the benefit of Trade;
Ere they bore the wine and corn from the gateways of the morn,
That their fortunes might be made.

Then the Roman had his day, for his Doer led the way
With unfailing sword in hand;
He was valiant, and he knew that his gods would see him through
For his Roman Fatherland.
The Genoese out went, when the Pinta's sails were bent,
   On his great Immortal Quest,
And he pointed out the road for the trader and his load
   To a newer world out west.

Old Magellan and his crew found another highway through;
   They were doers in their day,
And their work on Earth was set, as the tasks appointed yet
   Of the men who lead the way.

They have left a royal name which is called in song books, “fame;”
   But their mighty hands are still,
They are resting near and far, where the quiet legions are
   In the “havens by the hill.”

*      *      *      *      *

Till the coming of the years, when the aerial cannoneers
   Sight their Krupps along the blue,
There will ever be a need for the grim and active breed
   Of the Doers — who can do.

Let the trader to his stool! Let the teacher to the school!
   Let the artist to his art!
It was ever then as now with the farmer at his plough,
   And the merchant in the mart.

But, a grim, undaunted band they will strive by sea and land;
   They will battle round and through:
And this rolling planet still shall be subject to the will
   Of the Doers who can do.

And the further seas shall hold and the desert sands enfold
   Their unconquered souls anew;
And the world shall know the sons and the galleys and the guns
   Of the Doers who can do.
Comrades.

Comrade mine, beyond the Shadow, 
Lies our Land of Eldorado, 
    Lies our Aidenn fair and free; 
All the wide Australia's glory, 
All her nature-song and story, 
    Shall belong to you and me.

Gypsy twain, across the Ranges 
We shall see the silent changes 
    Of the sunshine and the shade; 
We shall hear the songs, enthralling, 
Of the bush-birds softly calling 
    From the leafy ever-glade.

With the roads, the roads, before us, 
With our blue skies burning o'er us, 
    When the clover's wet with dew, 
We will share unending pleasure 
Of the Morning, and her treasure 
    Shall be free to me and you.

Oh, the plains, the plains, are ours, lad, 
All their herbage bright with flow'rs, lad, 
    Waving in the sunlit West, 
As our camp-fire's smoke, uplifted 
In the gloaming cool, is drifted. 
    Over lazy lands of Rest.

And our troubled souls, and saddened, 
Shall be upward borne and gladdened 
    By a music of the sea, 
Where — on moonlit beaches gleaming 
Under restless tides instreaming — 
    Gypsy twain we wander free.

Ours the Northern jungle's greenness, 
Ours a cool Monaro's keenness, 
    Ours a rolling Riverine;
And the golden wheat-lands glowing,
And the hill creeks seaward flowing
   From their Gippsland ranges green.

Gypsy twain, the World uncaring,
Ours the World shall be for sharing;
   And the Bushland wide and free,
From Cape York unto the Leeuwin,
Shall be ours to dare and do in,
   Shall belong to you and me.
The Western Road.

My camp was by the Western Road — so new and yet so old —
The track the bearded diggers trod in roaring days of old;
The road Macquarie and his wife, a hundred years ago,
With warlike guard and retinue, went down in regal show.

The moon had silvered all the Bush; now, like an arc light high,
She flickered in a scattered scud that dimmed the lower sky;
And, dreaming by my dying fire, whose embers fainter glowed,
I saw their shadows flitting by — the People of the Road.

I heard the clank of iron chains, and, as an evil blast
From some tormented nether world, the convict gangs went past
With sneering lips and leering eyes — gray ghosts of buried crime,
Who built a way for honest feet to tread in later time.

I heard the cruel click of steel; the trained and measured tread
Of soldiers of King George the Third, in coats of British red;
The moon upon their muskets gleamed, as, marching two by two,
They might have marched in better case the eve of Waterloo.

But, dreaming by my camp-fire still, uprose the merry horn;
A heavy stage came lumb’ring up from Penrith in the morn:
In beaver hats, the gentlemen their driver sat beside,
The ladies in hooped petticoats and quaint chignons inside.

Ta-ran-ta-ra! Blue Mountains hills reechoed as they sung
A lilt of love and long ago — when all the world was young.
Ta-ran-ta-ra! Their shades went by, the bravest and the best,
The first Australian pioneers — whose graves are in the West.

A night wind whispered in the gums; afar out went the cry
Of mourning curlews on the flats, as madly galloped by
A fugitive with pallid face and pistol butt to hand:
Came, hard behind with ringing hoofs, a close pursuing band.

Then — well-remembered in my dream — a picture came to me
Of bitter fruit that ripened once upon a roadside tree;
How trav’llers shunned the haunted spot and evermore forbode
To camp beside the hangman’s tree along the Western Road . . .
White-tilted in the moonlight went rough waggons, one by one,
Piled high with household goods and stores of settlers dead and gone —
Blithe British yeomen and their wives, and sons of younger sons,
Who took tradition to the West, and axes, ploughs and guns.

These new-chum settlers tramped beside their dusty, creaking teams,
Their minds were filled with marvels new and olden hopes and dreams;
Their sons' tall sons still yeomen be, but mostly in the West
They ride their silken thoroughbreds, and ruffle with the best.

A motley crowd of eager folk, with tools and tents in fold,
Came on Adventure's early quest to Gulgong, grief, or gold;
They passed me in a jostling host, with anger or with mirth,
The fortune-seekers gathered from the ends of all the earth.

Yea, sailormen and tailormen, and prostitutes and peers,
Some honest and of good intent, some rogues and buc-caneers.
Their camp-fires lit the darkened range, where, by the creeks, they lay
And dreamed of nuggets in their sleep — impatient for the day.

Came down the road a swaying coach, with troopers 'hind and fore —
The mounted escort thundered on by Lapstone Hill once more,
Their rifles at the shoulder slung, their scabbards long and bright;
They swung around the mountain side and rumbled out of sight.

Came up the road a swaying coach: his ribbons holding free,
The perfect driver tilted back his cherished cabbage-tree.
His girl will meet him at the rails to-night in Hartley Vale —
So, clear the track, and let her pass, the mid-Victorian mail!

Long shadows fell across the road; the morepokes in the still
And solemn midnight voiced aloud his warnings on the hill.
Yet, tramping slow and riding fast along that winding track,
The People of the Road went West, and coached and footed back.

My camp-fire died in ashes gray, as through my dream there went
That strange procession of the Past, on pay or plunder bent;
The teamsters, drovers, swagsmen, “lags;” the lovers and the thieves —
Until the East was red with Dawn, the dew upon the leaves.

They vanished with the haunted Night; their hope and high desire,
As ashen as the grey, cold heap that erstwhile made my fire:
Across the tree tops in the morn the golden sunlight showed;
And clearly rose another day — along the Western Road.