

Straws on the Stream

Barton, Emily Mary (1817-1909)

A digital text sponsored by
Australian Literature Gateway

University of Sydney Library
Sydney

2003



<http://purl.library.usyd.edu.au/setis/id/barstra>
© University of Sydney Library. The texts and images are not to be used for
commercial purposes without permission

Source Text:

Prepared from the print edition published by W. E. Smith Sydney 1910 100pp.

All quotation marks are retained as data.

First Published: 1910

Australian Etext Collections at poetry 1910-1939

Straws on the Stream
Sydney
W. E. Smith
1910

Straws on the Stream

Mrs. E. M. Barton: Character Read by Professor Hamilton, Phrenologist.

MADAM, it is rare to find a head so thoroughly cultivated as yours; it is equally rare to find a brain so extremely active, and it is very rare to find a lady so tenderly, devoutly, and ardently domesticated as you are; and this latter trait of your character is all the more remarkable, because it is combined with highly cultivated intelligence. Your courage, energy, industry, assiduity, punctuality, order, perseverance, and forethought are remarkable. Your strength of affection is something extreme, and your love is worshipful, and your tenderness of maternal regard very great.

“Home, Sweet Home” has its fullest response in your inner mind, and all that is merely conventional, and fashionable must give place to your passionate love for the objects of your regard, and to your sense of duty, which is ever present in your mind.

You have need for great self-reliance and firmness to balance your very powerful feelings, and you have all the more need to keep self-esteem and firmness active, as your veneration is large, making you look up to others whom you respect, and for a long time you had more confidence in their judgment than in your own. Your great practical working power, your talent to rise above difficulties, and your clearness of perception, your readiness in adapting means to ends, have all combined to strengthen the activity of your self-esteem, though you are not yet sufficiently under the influence of true self-esteem. You have wonderful quickness of perception; all your observing faculties are cultivated. Number and order, size and locality large, and your language and eventuality, combined with reasoning powers large, enable you to acquire and to communicate a large amount of general knowledge, artistic and literary, and if you were compelled to manage a large educational establishment, you could do so with great success, you could teach teachers. You are well fitted for the study of medicine, natural science, domestic chemistry and economy, human physiology, phrenology, moral and natural philosophy, and you have fine taste for literature and art, as well as good ability for languages. Fair for music, yet music must give way to philosophy and science. As a whole, you have a remarkably active, clever, practical and critical brain, ambitious to excel, and wonderfully persevering. For all the relations of daughter, sister, wife, mother, and friend, you are warm, tender, true and

sympathetic.

Take care of your extremely useful brain, and rest, and avoid for the future all hard mental work. You have a strong hold on life, see that you do not consume its fire by excess of labour. Recreate and rest, sleep, and moderate your extreme activity.

The above was found among the papers left by the authoress of this little book, having been written by Professor Hamilton, Phrenologist, 40 or 50 years ago probably.

Those who read these verses thoughtfully and intelligently may gather for themselves how wonderfully correct was the Professor's reading of her character.

Throughout life she fulfilled his words, ruling her home-circle with "Courage, Energy, Industry, Assiduity, Punctuality, Order, Perseverance, and Forethought," and above all influencing everyone who knew her by the magic power of her love and strength of affection.

Her power of imparting knowledge, as portrayed by Professor Hamilton, was abundantly in evidence, everyone of her large family obtaining from her practically all the education they received, and, in a moral sense, no family had a better training.

Bishop Barker relates how, on the occasion of one of his visits, he found her in the kitchen mixing a pudding and at the same time teaching Latin to one of her sons.

French and Italian were as familiar to her as her mother tongue; she was a fair Latin scholar, and knew enough Greek and German to teach the rudiments.

The few records existing show that had time and opportunity permitted, she would have excelled as a portrait painter.

Emily Mary Barton was born in 1817, and was educated in England and France whilst Napoleon was in exile at St. Helena. She remembered the troublous times of the Chartist Riots, and the Reform Bill, and saw the first steam boat that was built. In 1839 she came out to this country with her father. Major Darvall, marrying the following year Robert Johnstone Barton, whose station, Boree Nyranng, near Molong, was her home for more than 30 years. She saw the first Australian Parliament elected, her brother, the late Sir John Bayley Darvall, being in the Ministry; saw the States divided, and the first Australian railway built.

Few realise or appreciate the great struggle put up by the past generation of pioneers who blazed the track and laid the foundation of present prosperity. In those days flour was not always obtainable and rice was frequently used as a substitute. Wheat had to be ground by hand, clothes made without sewing machines, fires lighted with flint and steel, etc.

In 1846 the Governor, Sir Charles Fitzroy, visited Boree with Colonel

Mundy on their way to Wellington, then a military station. Colonel Mundy mentions this visit in one of his interesting books of travel. The explorers, Mitchell and Kennedy, camped there for some time on their way to explore the Lachlan district, from which expedition Kennedy never returned.

Many are the incidents connected with the writer's life at Boree. The Gold Rush in 1851 left the place absolutely without workmen or servants. She lived in the days of cattle-thieving and bushrangers, one of whom, O'Meally, was shot by Mr. Campbell, a neighbouring squatter.

A thrilling incident deserves mention. Just as day was breaking one morning the household was awakened by yells and screams, the writer opened her door and saw the Boree Blacks a few yards distant rushing towards her, pursued by another tribe which had come from near Yass. She managed to let in some of the local blacks, but as their enemies were close behind, the door had to be closed, and a number of the home tribe were killed on the spot. Mr. Barton was away, only a few servants, the children, and a young man (a jackeroo) being about. The other rooms of the small house were full of blacks, wild and tame, the former intent on slaughter, the latter endeavouring to escape. Eventually the young man referred to came out with a gun; he could not find caps, but the attacking tribe evidently recognised the deadly nature of the weapon and withdrew, after demanding tobacco and food. There are many affecting details of this raid, the enumeration of which would take up too much space.

All through this strenuous life the music that was for ever bubbling up in her heart had to a great extent to give way to the daily round of duties which occupied her time. This is described in the opening poem, "Pen." It was not until well advanced in life that the poetry, so long submerged in her heart, found vent and was able to assert its power. Most of these poems were written after she was 60 years of age, and she wrote practically up to the days of her death, August 24th, 1909, when she was almost 92 years old.

It is hoped that these verses will be read and appreciated by some of our women in their far away bush homes of Australia, and who live the life the writer ennobled and made so happy.

1 Straws on the Stream

Collected by a Mother for Some Very Dear Ones.

THE scatter'd straws from richer cargoes strown,
I've gather'd up and treasured as my own:
Yet to no robbery do I confess,
My gleanings make no shining store the less:
Free as the vivifying light and air,
Thought circulates, and each may take a share;
Immortal truth from age to age will run,
But "There is nothing new beneath the sun."

On entering now upon my ninetieth year,
The daylight fading and the harbour near,
With deprecating hand my sheaf I bind
For gentle eyes that seek not flaws to find.
To some responsive mind it may appeal,
To some fond hearts a mother's love reveal:
Pleased would she be should any chance to meet
Among the fragments one good grain of wheat.

E. M. BARTON.
January, 1907.

2 “Pen” — 60th Birthday

FROM youth to age, in calm and storm, in fine and cloudy weather,
My harmless little pen and I have safely jogged together.
When first I grasped his tiny staff, one Christmas long ago,
He lisped: “Come let us make a rhyme about the frost and snow.”
“Ah, foolish babes!” the nurse cried out, and snatched his tiny wing;
“The world is full of sweeter songs than you can write or sing.”

At school he was a sturdy wight, although I held him badly,
And many a page of classic prose we canter'd over gladly;
In leisure hours, on sunny days, he whisper'd in my ear;
“O, let us sing of all that's bright and beautiful and dear.”
“Write not, sing not, misguided pen,” the teacher wise exclaimed,
“Or write me but the names of those whose poetry is famed.”

Then, for a time, he frisk'd about, in incoherent fashion,
Longing to tell a tragic tale of hopeless love and passion;
“Wait yet,” I cried, “till time shall show if love be sweet or bitter.”
Poor Pen (he lost his feathers then) gave but a mournful twitter.
Love, when he came, was sweet and shy, and would not be portray'd;
He brought his own low melodies, and sang them in the shade.

Then Pen began a diary of household joy and sorrow,
And, steel-clad, plodded on his way for many a busy morrow.
From lists and bills he sometimes turned, at evening, with regret,
To say: “The poetry of life is hanging round me yet.”
“Put down that pen,” the babes cried out; “O, mother, do not write,
But sing us just one little song before we say ‘Goodnight.’”

The babes grew up, and faithful Pen, their copies duly set,
And we, for daughters' eyes retraced the lines where first we met;
Ere the first brood had taken wing, another race began,
And Pen and I forgot the verse while teaching boys to “scan.”
So let it be, we acquiesced. “More useful we have been
Than had our verses lived and died in ‘Fraser's Magazine.’”

And yet not so; we linger still; the gentle hand of age
Has swept across the blotted book, and turned another page;
A blessed blank for Pen, who still delights in rhyme and jingle;

No worldly cares need now intrude, no household duties mingle;
The eye is dim, the ear is dull, the limbs on sofa prone,
But Conscience whispers, with a smile, "Our time is now our own."

The mental stream thro' flow'ry meads delights no more to flow,
But, filter'd through the ash of life, its drops are clear and slow;
Baptised in these to higher aims, and willing to the end,
Pen yet may take a prize or two to help a needy friend.
For nights of rest and peaceful days a weak thanksgiving raise,
And may his latest struggle be an humble song of praise.

3 “The Defence of Rorke's Drift”: A Reverie in the Art Gallery.

“The fierceness of man shall turn to Thy praise.”

HAIL, thoughtful wanderer, to these halls of Art,
Here, let her bright conceptions glad thine heart;
Dwell with delight upon the marble grace
That emulates the human form and face,
Or lines and tints that wondrously combine
To bid the spirit from the canvas shine:
Glance from the type of Beauty, ting'd with Love,
To verdant plains, or many-tinted grove;
Mark where thro' devious boughs the sunbeams play,
Or from the upland hail the dawning day;
Trace amid western clouds the crimson streak,
Through moonlit vapours view the snowy peak;
See on the distant hills the purple gleam,
And lave thy spirits in the shadowy stream;
O'er trembling ocean lengthen out thy gaze,
While Nature's limners share their sov'reign's praise;
Then pause before “Rorke's Drift,” and earnest look
On one grand page of Art's severer book;
Gaze, till upon the magic-lusted eye
Illusion grows to dim reality,
Till, circling wreaths of lurid smoke ascend,
The flame leaps forth, the crackling rafters bend,
The savage eye intensifies its glare,
The wounded shrink and shudder in despair,
From parted lips escapes the firm command,
And fancy moves the ministering hand,
While yells of wrath, revenge, and deadly pain
Echo among the chambers of the brain;
Then turn with horror from the ghastly view,
Too keenly realised, too sternly true,
And ask (for thou art human) why mankind
Point the bright engines by their skill refined

To flash destruction on their fellow-man,
And shorten, each for each, life's little span?
Or why the Maker suffers mortal brand
Thus to deface the creatures of His hand?
Ask we the kings and princes of the earth —
“In their dissensions slaughter has its birth!”
Ask we the crippled conquerors of the plain —
“They turn aside, and own the glory vain.”
The fatherless and widows? Their reply
Is mournful echo of the question — “Why?”

Ask it of those who from celestial sphere
Beheld the conflict dimly shadow'd here,
Who heard the sounds illusion here supplies,
The rifle-crack and rattling assegais;
Who, nearer to the Throne, their Leader's will
More clearly read, more zealously fulfil.
Shrank they in loathing from the fiendish scene,
Back to eternity of bliss serene,
Deeming the planet whence such discords rise
Unworthy to be scanned by angel eyes?
On God-forsaken orbit doom'd for aye
To roll in self-made hell and agony!
No! Charity and sympathetic care,
Divine on earth, shine more divinely “there,
And Pity's sighs Seraphic souls may swell,
E'n while they recognise that “It is well,”
Perceive that Death is swallowed up in Life,
Yet feel for those who suffer in the strife.

Let, then, the Muse on rev'rent pinion fly,
And bring to Fancy's ear the soft reply;
“Think not, vain mortals, that to earth 'twere given
With war and broils to shake the peace of Heaven!
To us your dire details of blood and brand
Are as to you the emmets on the sand;
To our pure sense your orb is but a bed
Of base material, for our seedlings spread;
Beneath the mould we watch the struggling root;
Above the mould, we guide the tender shoot;
From out the mould, the plants of grace we bring,
Earth's tribute to the gardens of her King,
And richest blossoms she is wont to yield
From the fierce hot-bed of battle-field!

“We reck not of the horrors you desery:
Death is but death, though thousands meet to die,
One pang to each, a struggling soul to free
From all the bondage of mortality.
And we belong to Life!” We sought and found
Life's treasures in that consecrated ground.

“We saw a purer light arise and shine
From the red ruins of that sinking shrine,
When self-forgetting heroes rush'd to save
Despairing comrades from an ashen grave;
We mark'd the Courage blent with Fortitude,
The prompt Obedience, and the plaint subdued.
The Patriot-spirit link'd in Duty's chain,
The stern Resolve, victorious over pain.
The faithful, friendly grasp — the words of cheer
Pour'd panting forth to soothe a brother's ear.
The hand that stiffen'd o'er the small bequest,
While pity bent to catch a last request.
The sacred thought of “Home,” the silent pray'r,
That swept, magnetic, round the circle there!

“We hail'd the flow'rs of Love, and Hope, and Trust,
Springing from out those heaps of gory dust;
Aye, and a tribute of wild Virtue drew
From the dark bosom of the fierce Zulu.

We, from the Drift convuls'd by mortal strife,
Gather'd the Gold, the Glory, and the Life,
And from the furrows by war's tempest riven
Have bound a sheaf to grace the courts of Heaven.”

E. M. BARTON.

These lines obtained the Prize for Poetry at the
Exhibition of Women's Industries at Sydney, 25th
October, 1888.

Mrs. BARTON'S Latin lines won the prize at above
Exhibition, but no record of them can be found.

4 The Burning of the Garden Palace

22nd September, 1882

RUINS! Alas we have been wont to say,
With half regretful tone, that in the grace
And glory of our country's youthful day
The mystic charm of ruins had no place:
We lacked the ceric magic of the past,
The moss-grown battlement and chronic page,
Did our presumptuous folly long to cast
On form so fair the rusty garb of age?
Ah! Fate, more keen than Time, has taught us how
One cruel hour sufficed to trace a wrinkle on her brow.

We hardly knew how precious was the pile
That we had rear'd in hope, how fair, how dear,
Till swift destruction roared through every aisle,
And, wan with horror, frenzied with her fear,
Australia's white-robed daughter writhed in pain,
Her bright locks tossing in the Western breeze.
Glare in her eye, and fever in her brain,
Till, spent and choking with her agonies,
She cast herself upon an ashy bed,
Dry-lipped, dry-eyed, begrimmed and grovelling with the dead!

Her Equinox was blest with holy Peace
* Proclaimed from far by Britain's conquering might,
With visions of the time when wars shall cease,
And nations for the common good unite;
She rose 'ere dawn to hail the pilgrim star
† That harbingers the day with golden plume.
Marked ocean vapours gathering from afar.
But saw not at her feet the stealthy fume;
Prayed for the show'rs her thirsting fields require.
The answer "waves of flame and rolling floods of fire!"

Oh, young and beautiful, and sorely tried,
The sister Cities blend their sighs with thine,
And artists, scribes and sculptors wail beside

The smouldering ruins of thy glorious shrine;
Aye, cast the ashes on thy lovely head,
Beat the fair breast, convulsive with its moan;
Then, kneeling, let relieving tears be shed,
And Mercy in thy desolation own;
The troubled record with our sorrows rife,
Marks not the mournful tribute of one human life!

‡ All life was spared: not e'en the hapless brute
Fell in that holocaust of wealth and art;
The bloom has perish'd, but the silent root
Lives deep and strong in many a swelling heart;
'Twas Heav'n that reaped the harvest we had sown,
And, in its Providence, will surely save
For future years and glories of its own.

Good seed and full from this thy Garden Grave,
May kindly drops from Heaven itself be shed,
To cool thy burning brow and raise thy drooping head.

* The close of the Crimean War.

† A splendid comet was then visible.

‡ A dog had been left inside the building.

5 Lines Addressed to Sir Alfred Stephen on His 90th Birthday

FRIEND, gliding near me on life's widening stream,
In whose long wake star-spangled ripples gleam,
And from whose prow the pioneering light
Keenly dispels the gathering gloom of night;
While, with spent oars quiescent at our side,
Trustfully yielding to the ebbing tide,
On which, with gently graduated motion,
We seek the lap of the mysterious ocean,
Survivors of a gaily tuneful throng,
Shall we not hail each other with a song?
While, from each mast the time-worn pennant bends,
Salute the memory of departed friends?
Or, with our ensigns drooping in the calm,
Together raise a grateful evening psalm?

Shall we to distant followers in the race,
Sing of the radiant morn, the early grace
That robed in sunshine our excursive sails.
When first they open'd to the fav'ring gales?
Ah! not for them our tales of vanished glory,
They still are sketching out their own bright story:
Theirs is the golden dawn, the rising sun,
Theirs the light wave on which our course begun,
Theirs, soon, the rapids that we have out run.

Shall we then seek to guide some rash career,
Teaching unskilful hand and eye to steer
'Mid rocks and boulders, snags and tangled snares,
Or lightly skim above life's shallow cares?
Some strong, broad rules we doubtless may enforce,
But how anticipate each devious course?
Has our own track so watchful been and wary
Since first it wound thro' childhood's smiling prairie,
That we can warn of every dangerous spot,
Point to a chart without a blur or blot,
And, casting back experience-lightened eyes,

Say firmly: "This was right," or "That was wise?"

Alas! too oft the wisdom we have stored
Is scatter'd like the miser's cherish'd hoard;
We heap up piles of mental wealth and lore,
And know not who shall gather of our store;
Some counsel-aid we to our sons may give,
But 'tis by living they must learn to live.
Can we do nought to speed them on their way?
We can but bid them work, and watch and pray.

Touch, then, with me, the deep responding strings,
Bid memory stretch her retrogressive wings,
And, gathering sunbeams from the days gone by,
Reflect them on a placid evening sky;
Fanning our folded banners with the breeze
Whose sights awake long-slumb'ring melodies,
Raising our hearts in homage to the Giver
Who launched our barques upon His Heaven-ward river,
Freighted with comfort, blest with kindred ties,
Social endearments, kindly sympathies,
Health, and the long-tried vigour of the brain,
All gracious types to seize and to retain:
Food for the mind on Nature's ample field.
The Higher Life, on Holy page reveal'd;
The Star of Hope, that, lingering in the West,
Still seems an Eastern rising to suggest;
The atoning Cross that bids us bravely bear
Of human sorrow our appointed share;
The charge divine *some* suff'ring to allay,
Some want relieve, *some* trouble soothe away,
And, while we on our Master's bounty live,
The joy of giving, and the power to give.

6 In Memoriam

F. L. WISE.

As when Judea's widows mourned as dead
The friend who fashioned garments for the poor,
So, tribute upon tribute here we spread
To thy sweet memory — but we ask no more.

We would not see those sympathising eyes
Wake to our scenes of sorrow, sin and strife,
We would not hear again thy pitying sighs,
Nor trace thy footsteps 'mid the thorns of life.

For “Blessed are the dead” to whom the sleep
Of the beloved by the Lord is given;
Bright the memorial earth delights to keep
Of those who strove to raise her nearer heaven.

Follower of Him who, in compassion, bore
The burden of unmeasured sin and pain,
With those that weep their tears shall fall no more,
Rejoicing, may we meet thy smile again.

7 Easter Rain on the Bogan

LONG months, aye years, of dreary dearth
Have scathed the beauty of the earth;
No humblest weed, no blade of green,
For miles of level plain is seen;
The creeks are but a stagnant crust,
Our very hearts seem turned to dust
 In dull complaining.

On fields their sustenance denying,
The sheep in piteous groups are lying,
The scatter'd cattle slowly dying: —
 But, — hark! — 'tis raining!

Is it a dream? or do I feel
Some balmy drops upon me steal,
As, with uncover'd, rev'rent head,
My crumbling garden-path I tread,
The glorious fact to realise,
Uplifting heart and voice and eyes:
 Thank God! 'tis raining!

Dab, dab, it patters overhead,
Drip, drip, it ripples from the shed,
And, gurgling, to the well is led,
 New droplets gaining.

The wind is low, the skies are lead,
One growl of warning overhead,
And down it come! in waving sheets
Across the thirsty plain it beats:
Long, long delayed, profuse at last,
Yes, cool and fresh and hard and fast,
 'Tis grandly raining!

An Easter gift of priceless worth,
It dashes on the grateful earth,
Calling her genial powers forth,
 In grass and graining.

Now rushing o'er the shelving bank,

Streams gather in the clay-bound tank:
Now every stately forest tree
Bows as it weeps in ecstasy,
And from the creek a torrent's roar
Calls deep and hoarse, the drought is o'er,
 'Tis wildly raining!
Let hope once more expand her wing,
And Nature from her slumber spring:
Let careworn man arise and sing:
 “Thank God, 'tis raining.”

April, 1886 & 1901.

8 In Memory of My Father 1775–1869.

FOURSCORE and fourteen years he trod
The pilgrim path ordained by God:
The merry child, the happy boy,
The active man in full employ
Of mind and body, heart and brain,
Till, tending towards Home again,
His last fond gaze dwelt on the flowers
That oft had cheered his leisure hours,
And simple thoughts of love in heaven
Were to his peaceful spirit given.

At plenteous board, in homely state,
The patriarch of four ages sate:
Grey-headed children told their cares,
While the next race, in happy pairs
Of youth and beauth, wandered round
His neatly-planted orchard ground;
And little ones with beaming eyes,
At some new toy or glad surprise,
Sent love and kisses from afar,
With thanks to dear, great-grandpapa.

Oh! wondrous change! a vacant chair,
Silence and stillness everywhere;
A mute farewell, a dreamless sleep
O'er which the fondest dare not weep:
Awaking with unclouded eyes,
He sees a Father in the skies.
And, in the birth of joy and love
Our best conceptions far above,
Hears the glad words: "Come home, my son."
And knows that life has just begun.

9 On a Blind Girl Working for the Seamen's Union

YES, she is blind! You well might doubt her doom,
Seeing her softly move across the room:
And from the organ, in the evening calm,
Draw forth the notes of some remember'd psalm;
A "Cradle-song" or deep funereal roll
Imprinted by some angel on her soul.

Then, see the bright, swift knitting-needless go,
With interlacing wool, till, row on row,
Some little garment takes its goodly shape,
The jacket, socks, or quaintly-fashion'd cape;
To glad the eyes of some poor soul distress,
And help in feathering her humble nest.

Those are her books; upon that dotted line,
Her fingers trace the promises divine;
The mysteries of old historic day,
The pleasing tale, or sweet, poetic lay.
Touch compensates for faded visual rays,
And nurture to the hungry soul conveys.

Upon that frame, with perforating stile,
The vacant hours she oft-times will beguile,
Embossing for some sister suff'rer's hand
(In type the sightless only understand),
The thoughts that to sublimest themes belong,
The witty paragraph or cheerful song.

A threaded needle, now, her fingers hold,
In earnest tones a missionary has told
Of comfort needed for the men who keep
Their dreary vigils on the restless deep,
Pleading for help such comfort to provide,
And cast like "bread upon the waters wild."

So, at a canvas wallet now she sews,
That each man may be furnish'd as he goes
With scripture, and small literary store,

Slung with his hammock in the vessel's fore;
His mind to elevate, his thoughts to raise,
Above the toilsome clamour of his days.

O, ye whose eyes so beautiful and bright
(Gifted with God's own marvels, light and sight),
Are idly gazing at His works around,
Or cast in apathy upon the ground;
Till roused, your meed of beauty to enhance,
With gorgeous robes for festal song or dance,

Look at this girl, upon a couch of pain,
Patiently working, striving not in vain,
To glorify the God, who (much denied)
Has to her soul such spirit-power supplied;
And when her cheerful industry you view,
Think what the bright and healthy ought to do!

1896.

10 The Ides of March A.D. 1896

DEAR BOB, you tell me I must write to you,
And write in verse a pleasant recreation;
But, O, the pen that once serenely flew,
Now splutters over schedules of Taxation.
You must forgive me if I do not write
Of tennis tournaments or river race:
Or of the marriage bond soon to unite
The wit and beauty of this favour'd place.

My heart is all aglow in sympathy
With those who have to count their roods and acres,
And state their income, as it ought to be,
Not as it is, on oath, though they be Quakers.
And verily I quake, as I'm a sinner.
Lest some mysterious dodge they next contrive
To make me state the items of my dinner,
On March the fifteenth, eighteen ninety-five.

The Ides of March which scaled great Caesar's doom
Have on this country laid a burning brand:
Bringing dismay to many a peaceful home,
Spreading perplexity throughout the land.
I like a good conundrum well enough,
And so do you, but now, you will agree,
This patriotic puzzle's rather rough
On simple-minded folk like you and me.

Talk of the Inquisition? bless my soul,
They sometimes made a martyr's bones to crack,
But this abstruse and complicated toll
Has set a nation's brains upon the rack.
They say the Sphinx, when some old Greek had check'd her,
By reading her enigma, gasp'd and died;
So may this modern soul-devouring Spectre
Rush likewise to its fate by suicide.

There is a fiend that tempts the souls of men:
He has been called "the father of all lies:

Think of it, O, ye legislators, when
 You do his work, in very thin disguise.
Now let me close this useless peroration,
 And, wishing you well out of it, old man,
In spite of heat, mosquitoes and taxation,
 Remain your faithful, though bewilder'd Dan.

11 Broken Oars an Imitation.

DRIFTING with the ebbing tide, drifting with the tide,
Nevermore to stem its course with energy and pride;
Nevermore in unison with songs upon the river,
With feather'd rise and measured fall in silver spray to quiver.

No more by human grasp combined, in fellowship to glide,
Helpless, floating now apart, now clashing side by side,
Speeding round the rocky points, lingering in the bays.
Thro' chilly nights of starry sheen and sweltering summer days.

Rolling in the channel deep, or playing on its edges,
Twisting round the mangrove stems, tangled with the sedges;
Pausing in the ferny nooks among the floating rushes,
Glitt'ring in the glare of noon, or blacken'd by the bushes.

Gliding thro' the mighty arch, jostled by the stake,
Sunk beneath the paddle-wheel or tumbling in its wake;
Hurrying by the cheery homes that smile upon the crags,
Mingling with their rubbish heaps, their relics and their rags.

Not the race Hope might have won for profit or for pleasure,
Not the course by fancy steer'd in luxury and leisure;
Not the dash of early dreams, yet not a bootless motion,
To drift at last across the bar and plunge into the ocean!

“Broken Oars” are all around us, shatter'd in the strife,
By some heedless stroke disabled for the purposes of life;
Mortal skill no more can raise them, human hands no more combine,
Yet a mission may await them in the Sea of Love Divine.

A broken oar has saved a child, and broken hearts may be
Ordained for service in the waves of vast Eternity:
And sever'd aims may yet combine, and shatter'd hopes may find
Their purpose in the Mighty Scheme for the rescue of mankind.

12 Silence

DIVINELY varied are the forms of speech,
Grand are the uses that to words belong,
To win, to awe, to sooth, command, or teach,
Yet "Golden Silence" claims my humble song.

The orbs of heaven in awful silence roll,
Silent the growth of herb, and flower, and tree,
Silent the workings of the secret soul;
Silent the depths beneath the raging sea.

Expressive silence! when eye meeting eye,
Relieves the trembling lip and stricken tongue:
Courageous silence, scorning to deny
Slander, when based upon a brother's wrong.

O glorious silence of sincerity,
That lends no echo to ill-gotten fame,
Silence of ruth and blessed charity
Casting its shadow over deeds of shame.

Delicious silence! when the waves of life
Ebb from the weary brain and aching sight,
When strident joy, loud grief, and harrowing strife
Are lull'd to slumber in the shades of night.

Religious silence! born of Faith and Love,
What earthly music can with thee compare!
Surely the anthems of the Saints above
Are spirit-praise and deep, unuttered prayer!

13 Home after a Short Absence

MY home in the desert, my beautiful home!
How bright the first glimpse of thy vine-cover'd rail!
How gladly once more to thy shelter I come,
How joyfully all thy lov'd precincts I hail!
The trees that we planted, the flowers that we sowed,
Peeping bright o'er the hedge, one by one, I can trace:
And each little shrub by the side of the road
Seems to welcome me home with familiar face.

The home of my fathers was lovely and blest,
And brightly thro' life shall its memory shine;
But for me the wide world owns no mansion of rest
Like the hut where I came, my beloved, as thine!
Where we rough'd it together for many a day,
With little to cheer us but each other's smile;
Where our first rosy babes with their innocent play
Full many a long, sultry hour could beguile.

O, proud are the halls of our own British land,
And fair are the cottages round them that rise;
And oft, in my dreams, on the green hills I stand,
Whence in childhood I gazed on the pale northern skies.
I was blest. I was blest! yet I would not retrace
Even youth's buoyant step on the steep mountain side.
No, my husband, I gaze on thy bright, honest face,
And I love the wild land that has made me thy bride.

And, O, should kind Heaven our barque ever steer
O'er the wide rolling waves to our home in the West,
To dwell in the mansions to memory dear,
Or sleep by the graves where our forefathers rest,
My pray'r shall be still to the Ruler above.
That wherever in future our dwelling shall be,
It may be the abode of Content, Peace and Love,
Like our first little home on the plains of Boree.

14 In Memoriam

GRIEF laid her hand upon a stately head,
And streams of silver were around it shed;
Care o'er the brow her long, lean fingers drew,
And lines of thoughtful love beneath them grew.
Pain smote the features with distorting brand,
And curves of patience formed beneath her hand.
Toil bowed the weary limbs to rustic chair,
And resignation sat beside him there.
Conscience assailed his soul with poisoned dart,
Faith sucked the rankling venom from his heart.
Age cast a veil upon the searching eyes.
And softened to their gaze the sun and skies.
In muffled ears subdued earth's clashing chimes
To the low melody of distant times.
Oblivion's cloud obscured the feeble brain,
While memory plucked its childhood's flow'rs again.
Hope lent a smile on pallid lips to play,
Peace kissed and sealed it for the Coming Day!

15 Spring-Time

LIGHT and short our Winter's sleeping,
Dreaming still of sunny hours:
In his bosom safely keeping
Germs of beauty, folded flow'rs.

At the touch of Spring awaking,
Faint he smiles, her smile to greet;
Then, his southward pinions shaking
Casts his treasures at her feet.

She, with skilful hands and tender,
Models, paints, combines, renews,
Bids each fibre, slight and slender,
Seek the soil and suck the dews.

From the bulb draws forth the lily,
From its sheath the grassy blade;
Dyes the ripened lillipilly —
Frets the fern leaf in the glade.

Tissues of artistic weaving,
Now she spreads o'er plant and tree,
Endless miracles achieving,
With her cunning chemistry.

Best of all her bright bestowing
Is the fount of Hope and Love,
That o'er human spirits flowing,
Links her joys with those above.

16 A Leaf

OH Mother Linden, hold me fast,
I tremble in the vernal blast,
Lest, with its ice-drops cold and keen,
It rend my new-made robe of green;
Rudely it threatens to divide
The link that binds me to thy side.
“Fear not, my child, the Hand that made
The breeze and sunshine, light and shade,
Has bid thee on my branch to grow,
And taught me not to let thee go.”

A summer storm obscures the skies,
The thunder growls, the lightning flies,
Nature lets loose in sudden ire,
Her streams of water and of fire;
And, wildly flutt'ring in the strife.
Mother, I cling to thee for life.
“Be comforted, this whirling blast
But cleanses as it hurries past;
The Voice that bids the tempest blow
Will tell me when to let thee go.”

Now Autumn, with her rustling train,
Has swept the fields of golden grain,
And tinted me with amber hues,
And spangled me with diamond dews;
My stem is weak, my veins are dry,
My crimson brethren round me fly.
In bright attire they hover round,
Or dance in circles on the ground;
Caressing breezes whisper low,
“Mother, sweet mother, let me go!”

We know not where the leaflet lies,
But we believe that genial skies
Are bending o'er her mossy bed,
With kindred relies overspread.

We brush them in our morning ride,
And o'er them muse at eventide.

We marvel why so gaily drest
The children left their mother's breast,
But not in sorrow, for we know
The wither'd leaf was glad to go!

17 31st December, 1883

OPEN the beautiful gates of the West,
A chariot of gold is waiting the guest
Who, for twelve rolling moons, has been faithfully ours,
Has brought us his harvest, his fruits, and his flowers,
Has borne us thro' trial, temptation, and tears.
Partaken our pleasures, our hopes, and our fears.

In mantle of crimson his bosom enshroud,
Pillow his head on a feathery cloud,
Smooth the grey locks of his labours that speak,
Kiss off the wrinkles that curl round his cheek;
Let breezes of Heaven attend on his flight,
And the chiming of vespers intone his good night!

Treasure the truths that his lessons have taught,
Prize the experience his presence has brought,
Cherish the hopes that at parting he gave,
Bury his sins in oblivion's grave;
Lock up his jewels in memory's cell,
Tenderly, tearfully, bid him farewell!

Then rest, with a pray'r on the lip and the heart,
Till the portals of Orient, bursting apart,
A pathway of light open up to the skies,
Calling nature, in music and incense, to rise
And proclaim, as the day-star of glory draws near,
That the world is awake to another New Year.

18 How the Match Was Made

WHILE young Christmas, long ago,
Tossed about his balls of snow,
Skated on the frozen mere,
Closely wrapped in wintry gear,
Or in firelight's ruddy glow
Danced beneath the mistletoe

Midsummer, a blooming maid,
Sat beneath the hazel shade,
Weaving garlands, making posies
Of the lilies and the roses;
Plucked the poppies from the corn
Or danced at sunset on the lawn.
Neither shared the other's joy,
He was cold, and she was coy;
Neither knew the other's heart.
Fate had kept them far apart.

Then a wise enchantress came —
Austral Almanac her name —
“Ah!” she cried, “this must not be,”
“Fate must yield to my decree;”
“Love the barrier would remove,”
“And I will take the part of Love!”
She waved her wand, and while the sign
Of Argo crossed the mystic line
That equalises night and day,
Muttered her cabalistic lay,
Till Christmas, yielding to the spell,
At Summer's feet rejoicing fell,
O'er him a flowery wreath she cast,
In twining tendrils bound him fast,
And here upon our sunny shore,
The twain have met to part no more.

19 Autumn in England

1st November, 1837.

Another bright summer for ever has fled.
And the song of the warblers is silent and dead;
The heavens are weeping, the breezes are sighing
O'er the cold earth where Beauty's frail children are lying;
The leaves that fall round them are wither'd and sear,
And the white shroud of mourning shall cover their bier —
The breezes may sigh, for they're passing away,
The heavens may weep, for they, too, must decay;
But why should I mourn for the joys that are gone,
While I feel that new blessings are hastening on?
Though the tokens of Beauty, lie dead on the ground,
The Spirit of loveliness hovers around;
Though the music of Nature no longer we hear,
New harmonies ever shall sound in my ear.
My sails are full set, and my barque is at sea,
Each wave that I pass has a glory for me;
To the breezes of Heaven my pennant I raise.
Faith is my pilot, my watchword is Praise;
Onward I drive through the glitt'ring spray
Of Eternity's Ocean, away and away!
Nought can arrest my unfolding career,
On my heart is no cloud, in my bosom no fear;
By all Power created, all Goodness expressed,
By all Mercy redeemed, I am Heaven's own guest,
And a spark from Divinity glows in my breast.
Go then, bright summer, depart lovely flowers,
Proceed sun of nature, roll on happy hours,
There is Beauty around me that will not decay,
And Life brings in Life as the hours roll away,
The Land of Infinitude opens before me.
The Eye of Omniscience only is o'er me:
Time is my courser, he bears me along,
O'er plains of existence, for ever and ever,
And blent with the whispers of Hope is the song
Of flowers that perish, and friends that must sever,

Forward I bound with unwearying pace,
My portion is Life, my inheritance Space;
The tomb that awaits me throws open its portal,
My Guide is Almighty, my spirit immortal;
The passage is dark, but I slack not my speed,
The gateway is low, yet I bow not my head;
The brow that was made to aspire to the skies,
Smiles calmly on death, and its power defies,
For a season, in sin and disgrace it bent low,
It has risen again, and shall never more bow,
Except to the Mercy that washed off its stain,
And the Might that restored it to Glory again.

20 My Mother's Birthday

1st November, 1840.

Happy the babe that closes its young eyes
'Ere they have looked on sorrow, and defies
The hand of Time to quench the spark divine,
Created for Eternity to shine.

It shall never mourn in pain
Over earthly loss or pain;
Never face temptation's snares,
Hidden among worldly cares,
All untried, and yet forgiven,
It has reached its home in Heaven.

Happy, perchance, the bride who, in that hour
When earthly love assumes its utmost power,
When, turning from her early friends away,
She leans upon an arm that is but clay;
May pass from lower scenes to those above.
And find the secret of Eternal Love.

She shall never know the smart
Of a bruised or broken heart;
Never hear an altered tone
From the lips that press her own;
Nor see a frown upon the brow
Gently gazing 'pon her now.

Blest the young mother who but clasps her child
One moment to her breast, in accents mild
Praises the God who such a gem has given,
Then with her treasure takes her flight to Heaven.

Never shall she mourn alone
O'er a sick or dying one:
Never see his ardent youth
Wand'ring from the paths of Truth,
Or his manhood stain'd with crime,
Gifts misused or wasted time.

But, oh! thrice blessed, who on life's dull stage,

Through childhood, wedlock, womanhood and age,
Has meekly trod the path by Heaven designed,
Meekly received the good by Heaven assigned,
Train'd up her offspring in the ways of truth,
Their prop in infancy, their guide in youth:

They shall rise and call her blest,
Crown her in her day of rest;
And with cheerful songs of mirth
Consecrate her day of birth;
Loving notes from far away
Greet her on her festal day.

Mother! can I ever be
To mine what thou hast been to me?
Feebly, slowly, must I tread
In the path where thou hast led;
Yet, on this returning day,
Humbly hoping, let me pray,
That, where'er my course be run,
I may do as thou hast done,
And long a living source may be
Of comfort and of joy to thee.

Triumph yet o'er grief and pain,
Thou hast not lived in vain!
Let not worldly cares distress thee,
Hear'st thou not thy children bless thee?
From various parts their voices rise,
They shall mingle in the skies.
Long may this festal morning shed
Its yearly honours on thy head;
Long may its sacred dawning prove
An anniversary of Love;
Long may thy gentle presence bless
A household filled with thankfulness;
While round thy couch thy children's children play,
And weave fresh garlands for thy natal day!

21 Aborigines

Scorn not the race who once in native right
 Marched fearless o'er Australia's sunny plain;
Darkness must sink before the breaking light,
 And of those sons of Nature few remain.
O! while we pluck the flow'rs that bloomed for them,
 And reap our harvests where they careless trod,
To this poor remnant let us still proclaim
 The works of Nature are the gifts of God.

1842.

22 Song of Christmas to the Australian Emigrant, 1839.

I am coming! I am coming! with my joyous tones of mirth.
I am coming! I am coming! to gladden all the earth:
The Sabbath of the Old Year, the Herald of the New,
O'er Present, Past and Future, I shed a golden hue:
I come to Memory's picture-book to add another page,
I bring a thought of age for youth, a youthful smile for age.
I may not come as once I came, with music and with song,
When Hope and Love went hand in hand the merry dance along,
I may not pain with curious hand your sparkling window-pane.
Or meet you lightly skimming o'er the smooth and level plain.
Or, with the round red sun, come peeping o'er the hill,
'Ere the icicles are weeping, while the snow is trackless still.
I may not wear my holly crown, my wreath of mistletoe,
My zone of crystal spangles, or my drapery of snow:
I may not bring the school-boy, with ruddy face of mirth,
Or assemble all your loved ones around the blazing hearth:
I may not find you in the halls where I found you oft of yore.
And some whom there I greeted once I now shall greet no more;
But yet, I come in thankfulness, in beauty and in love,
I bring you joyful tidings, and a message from Above,
I yet will shed my cheering light upon your social ring,
And o'er the hues of southern skies a home-like lustre fling:
And, while beneath each lowly roof resounds my hymn of praise,
I whisper of the stately fanes your wealthier sons shall raise,
When Hope fulfill'd shall rest her wing, and Labour's due reward
Call forth the pealing organ-strains of "Glory to the Lord."
I will tell you many a pleasing tale to cheer your exil'd way,
And in each loving bosom keep my festive holiday:
My mingled hopes and memories upon your hearts shall shine.
As ye sit before your huts, beneath the fig-tree and the vine.
And your children's healthy voices upon the breeze shall come.
While I sing to you of happiness, and talk to you of home,
I will bring you hearty greetings from the friendly and the dear,
The blessings of the absent, and the wishes of the near,
For many a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

23 Spring Morning in the Bush

1843

THE birth of the day in the prime of the year,
Rousing to glory the slumb'ring sphere,
Paradise peeping through roseate clouds,
Mountains of majesty doffing their shrouds:
Nature, obedient to instinct divine,
Tuning her choristers, dressing her shrine,
Draping her minister, embalming the air,
Robing her children with motherly care.

On gaunt Eucalyptus a turban of snow,
While golden-plumed wattle is waving below;
The slender Kennedia with crimson is fleck'd,
Clematis with spangles of silver bedeck'd;
Velvet and gems to embroider the plain,
Emerald patches of garden and grain:
Feathery ferns in the shadowy dell,
Pink for the Aster and blue for the bell.

Diamonds are dropping from goblets of sheen,
Laces of gossamer veiling the green:
Incense arising from forest and flower,
Bursts of thanksgiving from thicket and bower;
The plaint of the lambs in the rush-cover'd pen,
The cry of the "Hope — sweet Hope" deep in the glen;
Notes of rejoicing intoned by the breeze,
Whispers of praise in the quivering trees.

Sunbeams are stealing o'er hamlet and hall,
Life on the station, and stir in the stall:
Youth in the saddle, impatient to roam,
Maidens of ministry decking the home:
Infant arousings to pleasure and play,
Manhood forecasting the toils of the day:
The prayer without words which with Nature takes part.
And the psalm that is sung to the chords of the heart.

24 An Evening Psalm

Written Just Before Leaving England.

THERE are bright mountains in the happy West;
The sun's last rays upon their summits rest;
Above their peaks the feathery clouds are spread
In crimson streaks upon a saffron bed;
And purple forests clothe their reverend sides;
While the pale moon far in the distance glides
In meekness through a clear, cold atmosphere,
Gazing on glories that she may not share,
As age beholds the revels of the young.
Smiling upon the brightness o'er them flung;
Cheerful, not glad, content unmark'd to be,
And graceful in her deep tranquillity.
Beneath her glance the sparkling streamlets roll,
Like the world's troubles, which some gentle soul
Has risen above, and pities sheltering trees
Wave their black branches in the rustling breeze —
The sounds of labour in the golden fields
Are sinking now, the hum of voices yields
To the night-beetle's drowsy serenade,
As in the winding shrubbery's fragrant shade,
It wheels its ceaseless flight, with lazy drone,
Round the dark woodbine ever and anon
Dashing, in reckless blindness, on the face
Of the intruder, who, with musing pace,
Presses the dewy turf. How bright, how fair,
This world of Thine, O, God! The Heavens declare
Thy glory, and the floods lift up their voice;
The waters dance, the little hills rejoice,
The meadows smile, the laughing flow'rts creep
O'er the green turf, and thro' the hedges peep;
And all is joy. For true, for lasting bliss,
Say, need we seek a fairer home than this?
We need no bluer skies, no greener trees,
No brighter waters, and no fresher breeze;
No smoother path, no softer bed of rest;

We only need a pure and thankful breast;
An ear to joy in Nature's thrilling voice,
An eye in all Creation to rejoice,
An earnest soul, their Author to adore.
A tongue to praise, a heart to love Him more.

1839.

25 True Repentance

(Suggested By A Fine Horse, Restive In Youth, But Useful In Age.)

IN the cool of a summer evening,
 'Mid pleasant sights and sounds,
Thro' cornfield, paddock and pasture,
The Master is going his rounds.
Will he notice me, I wonder,
 As I stand idly near,
Thinking how well he has fed me
 For many a useless year?

And how I would like to thank him.
 And long to catch his eye;
For my heart is sore within me
 When he silently goes by.
Will he pass me now unnoticed?
 No, his kindly voice I hear.
With a friendly pat on the shoulder,
 And words of hearty cheer.

“Come up! you foolish fellow,
 You've been idle long enough;
But your temper is improving,
 And your sinews still are tough.
You've missed your chance, old Beauty,
 Of winning a prize or two;
But I'll find you another duty,
 To see what you can do.”

“Oh, Master, put me in harness,
 Oh, Master, guide me aright;
Give me the closest screeners,
 And let the curb be tight!
I remember when they roped me,
 How I spurned the bit and rein;
How I threw my boyish rider,
 And bounded o'er the plain.

“I have sniffed the morning breezes,
I have roll'd upon the grass.
And watch'd with careless apathy,
The weary workers pass.
I have canter'd round the paddock,
And dreamed that I was free;
And done, with all my galloping,
Not one day's work for thee.

“Now, clap the saddle on me,
Or put me to the dray;
Tho' the burden be the meanest,
And stoniest the way.
If I shy at passing visions,
Or stumble in the night.
Or kick at barking, snapping things,
Oh, hold me, hold me tight!

“Thro' bogs and ruts and miry holes
I'll pull at thy command,
And then step soberly down hill,
Directed by thy hand.
I've but another year or two,
To flounder on below,
Shall I work again on higher ground?
Oh, Master, thou do'st know.

“My joy is thy controlling rein,
My pride thy care for me:
My hope that if I work again,
It still may be for thee!
My future lot is in thy hand,
Yet whatsoe'er betide.
I should like to die in harness,
With my Master by my side.”

26 The Dying Year

CROWN our dying year with flowers,
Luscious fruits around him spread
Tokens of the toilsome hours
That have bowed his stately head;
O'er him sing the Passing Hymn.
"Lo! his works have follow'd him!"

Crown not yet the rising year;
Hot and dry the path before him;
Bid him walk in hope and fear,
Heaven's protecting shadow o'er him.
Sing in all his new-born glee.
"Yea, thy works shall follow thee!"

Chains of years, O let your stories
Compass earth with links of light!
Each surpass the other's glories,
Each than each more purely bright!
Till Eternity proclaim,
"Lo! their works have followed them."

27 Old and New Year

BEAUTIFUL our passing year;
He is not "old," he is not grey;
Lay for him a flow'ry bier
Summer sheds her warmest tear,
As he melts away.

He resigns in parting pride
The field on which he wrought,
To the stripling at his side,
Girding on a sword untried,
To light as he has fought.

Youthful heir! the task decreed thee,
Bids thee arm for patient strife;
Think, O think! while thousands greet thee,
All those trusting thousands meet thee,
With the burden of their life!

Rejoicing let thy chasten'd mirth
Sustain our hopes, allay our fears.
Revere the dead, and let thy birth
Shed its first blessing on our earth
In showers of grateful tears!

28 Time

TIME is not the cruel master,
 Slavish souls have sometimes thought;
Faster driving us and faster,
 Till our work is good for nought.

Time enjoys a day of leisure
 With the artists and the bards:
And in summer takes his pleasure
 Musing over Christmas cards.

A happy method we have found.
 Wisely to control his powers;
And when he brings a Birthday round,
 Envelop it in verse and flowers.

29 Christmas Greetings

WE saw thee from the mountain tops, we hailed thee from the strand,
And the murmur of thy coming was like music in the land;
We led thee to our rocky heights, to place thee on thy throne,
And the benison was spoken that has scaled thee as our own.
Arise, immortal Christmas; re-baptised in our seas,
In the glory of the sunshine, and the freshness of the breeze.
Arise in new-born blessedness, while yet the hallow'd dews
In rainbow tints fall over thee, and clothe thee with their hues;
We sign thee with the diamond Cross that glitters in our sky,
And gird thee with the golden chains our teeming fields supply:
We melt the snows from off thy head, the furrows from thy brow,
And bid thine eye, thy voice, thy smile be ever bright as now.
We ask not for thy holly branch, or mystic mistletoe,
The yule log is not needed here upon the hearth to glow;
We reek not of thy costly cheer or bowl of sparkling wine,
To sickness, age, and poverty such tribute we assign.
We only bid thee sing us yet thy glorious strains of old;
The tidings of "Goodwill to man," by wond'ring angels told:
We only ask that while to us this pleasant land is given,
Thy sceptre shining over us may point the way to Heaven!

30 Australian Homes

WHAT is the spell that, to each human heart,
Bids Memory's tide in sweetest ripples come?
While tear and smile, in bright collision start,
One word contains the Charm, that word is "Home."

Let each some heart-warm epithet supply,
Pure, loving, beautiful, secure or free,
Combine them all beneath Australian sky,
Such are our homes, such may they ever be!

31 Midnight

THE waves of care that round me crept at morn,
 Rolled high at noon, then sank with vesper chime,
Have left me stranded on their silent bourne,
 One ripple further on the shore of Time.

The forms that flit around my onward way,
 The eyes that brightly gleam or sadly weep,
The tones that chill or cheer the busy day,
 Are sever'd from me by the gulf of sleep.

And while in mystic calm the senses lie.
 Usurping Fancy dons their wonted gear:
Grand are the sights that come not from the eye,
 Wondrous the sounds that cheat the slumbering ear.

Darkness is glory, solitude a maze,
 Silence a preacher of immortal zest;
Repose is rapture, and the fount of praise,
 Wells from the soul while quivering voices rest.

Raise not the fallen burden of my care,
 Break not the spell by note of joy or strife;
Still let the anxious thought and din and glare
 That men call living be absorbed in Life.

32 New Year Greeting

CAST thy cloudy mantle round thee,
Weep to leave us, good old Year!
Kind and hopeful we have found thee,
Shall we part without a tear?

While that tear yet glitters o'er us,
New Year! may thy dawning bright,
Gild th' uncertain path before us,
With the rainbow hues of light!

33 The Coming Year

LAY the Old Year in the tomb,
Bury with him all our care;
All the toil, and all the gloom
Let it be forgotten there!
He is passing while we sing,
“What may not the New Year bring?”

Child of Hope, with fruit and flowers,
We crown thee in thy summer glow;
Give us sunshine, give us showers,
Teach us all we long to know!
Tune our voices, while we sing,
“What will not the New Year bring?”

Friends, of whom these days remind us,
All our loving hopes we send;
Leave we all our woes behind us,
With the Old Year let them end!
We are parted, yet we sing,
“What may not a New Year bring?”

34 To an Early Friend in Great Distress

Oh, CAN it be that space and years
Have so divided thee and me,
That thou art weeping bitter tears
While round me all is mirth and glee!
A stranger's voice by chance confessed,
Thy lot, alas! is not so blessed.

I think upon the smile of joy
And look serene I've seen thee wear,
And grieve that time should e'er destroy
The lines that made thy youth so fair.
Not Time alone could mar that face,
But what will sorrow not deface?

Within my heart I sing thy songs,
In quiet hours, and ofttime sigh,
That not to me the voice belongs
That sweetened every melody.
Ah! sadder still to think that thou
Hast not the heart to sing them now!

Shall I, the erring, wayward child,
Still glide along my path of flowers,
While thou, the meek, the pure, the mild,
Dost spend in grief the lonely hours?
No, this is not our final rest,
Or thou hadst been supremely blest.

Yet, oh, 'mid all thy woes and fears,
Think that the least which from thine eyes
Takes the fond hope of infant years
To bloom above thee in the skies.
Thine earthly home is not so fair
That thou should'st wish to keep him there.

And that last sleep by foolish fears
Peopled with phantoms dark and grim;
Haunted by restless sighs and tears,

Has no significance for him.
While yet beneath our earthly load,
We linger on a lengthened road.

35 The Song of Life

I AROSE to depart when the dew of my dawning
Yet shone in thine eyes and thine infantile mirth:
A dark little grave for the baby was yawning.
And death seemed to tread on the track of thy birth.
I had come as a burden, thou couldst not sustain me,
And calmly thy pulse would have throbb'd its farewell,
But parents in anguish strove hard to detain me,
And I stayed, while I tried to believe "It is well."

I flutter'd my pinions, when brighter and dearer
I seemed in thine eyes as a pearl of great worth;
When youth was thy pastime, and hope ever nearer
Brought triumph, success, and the jewels of earth;
But friends were around thee, thy spirit enchaining,
O'er all thy bright prospects, lamenting, they prayed:
Their sighs and their tears my departure detaining,
I stayed, though in doubt and misgiving, I stayed.

Once more I arose, and when manhood's full glory
Encompassed thy course, would have murmured "Farewell."
'Ere blight and decay had embitter'd the story
Thine angel would stand at the judgment to tell:
The arms of thy children around thee were pressing,
The tears of thy wife were like rain on the sod;
I folded my wings with a sigh and a blessing,
And staying, committed thy way to thy God.

Now, careworn and aged, I seek not to leave thee,
Thy glory has perished, thy friendships have flown,
Thy task has been taught, and, though trials may grieve thee,
Thy Saviour has found thee and made thee His own.
The tears of contrition have water'd the flowers
That wildly had sprung 'mid the briar and weed,
The clouds are not wasted that sprinkle with showers
The dust-cover'd road to the mortal decreed.

I await thy responses of humble thanksgiving,
And cheerful submission to Heaven's decree:

Thou yet hast to learn the full value of living,
 'Ere meet to enjoy it in higher degree.
Nor yet is the joy of relieving denied thee,
 The poor are still with thee, the lame and the blind;
Thou canst speak to the heart of the suff'rer beside thee,
 And pray for all desolate types of mankind.

Thus, thus do I linger, I seek not to speed thee
 Along the dark valley that looms in thy sight:
Together we pause on the pathway decreed thee,
 Together to rise at the dawning of light.
Then bid me not hasten while mercy hangs o'er thee,
 But pray that thy strength to thy day may suffice,
O, yet run with patience the race set before thee,
 Tho' we part at the goal, I return with the prize.

36 A Mother's Prayer

“SUFFER the little ones to come to Me,”
“Forbid them not,” the Saviour said: and we,
Remembering His words, sure comfort take
That these, our dear ones. He will not forsake:
But through their infancy so safely guide
The little ones He sheltered at His side,
That when He reigns in universal sway.
His kingdom shall consist of “such as they,”
And those whom death has snatch'd from earthly care,
An Angel band, await to greet us there.
We give them up in tears, then turn again
To clasp more closely those that yet remain,
But, ah! when they are little ones no longer,
When limbs grow strong, and earthly passions stronger.
When by their parents' care no more defended,
And by unblest example oft “offended.”
The world's temptations all around them rise,
And what seems good is evil in disguise,
When Love divine is shatter'd and o'erthrown,
While a base counterfeit usurps its throne;
When scepticism and sophistry combine
To lure them from the straight and narrow line,
And such the complication of the ways
That even conscience fails to thread the maze;
O then, when most they need Thee, Lord of Life,
Be with them in the struggle and the strife;
With skill divine their erring feet direct,
From vice restrain them, and from harm protect:
Lay on the doubting heart a strengthening hand,
And lead them through the sin-bewilder'd land;
Within Thine arms still let their refuge be,
And let them still be “little ones” to Thee!
And should it please Thee to prolong their span,
Ev'n to the utmost term of mortal man,
That time of trouble soon to pass away.
The tearful evening of a changeful day.

When trembling limbs and failing ear and eye
Attest the truth that "all is vanity."
When music charms no more the fainting soul,
So frail the "silver cord" and "golden bowl,"
When sins that once seemed trivial as the light
Grass-springing insect, haunt the sleepless night,
In monstrous guise, and to the aggregate
Of life's sore burden bring an added weight:
When all the things that "might have been" arise
Like goods unclaimed before regretful eyes,
And golden opportunities gone by,
And lost for ever, mock the memory.
O, Thou, to Whom all time is but a span,
Whose reckoning is not that of finite man,
Who, to Thine easy yoke and restful home
Didst bid the weary and o'erladen come,
Look with compassion on their feebleness,
Stoop once again the lowly heads to bless,
Then from all earthly bondage set them free,
And make them ever "little ones" with Thee!

37 Convalescence

November, 1853.

THE poultry yard is all astir, the cock has ceased to crow,
And though I cannot see the light, 'tis morning bright I know.
For, one by one, the sounds of life salute my waking ear,
The cracking whip, the whistled tune, the hearty morning cheer.
As each goes forth to shed or pen, his labours to begin,
No care have I, save here to lie, a darken'd room within.

The stealthy nurse creeps here and there, lest she my slumbers break:
I do not care to say a word to tell her I'm awake:
She's going to make my cup of tea, a very welcome dose;
One ruddy beam just now crept in, but she pinn'd the curtain close:
Good woman, how she trots about, what care she takes of me,
While here in bed I rest my head and wait my early tea.

The children in the nursery to chatter now begin,
And through the wall I hear them call, with loud and merry din,
For shoes and socks, and hats and frocks, for trousers and for coats,
And they are off, with shout and laugh, to milk the nanuy goats.
These early cares and dewy walks have lost their charm for me,
For snugly I in bed may lie and sip my early tea.

Now, many mingling voices rise, the breakfast hour is near,
"What's this? no eggs, no mustard mixed, and no white sugar here."
"See knives uncleaned, and dirty forks," where is that Kitty gone?
She's o'er the creek and far away, with Larry, Dick, or John.
I hope they'll settle down at last, but it's little thanks to me,
For calmly I in bed may lie, I've got my early tea.

Now, last not least, the master's voice is heard the house around:
He stamps, he swears, his hat is gone, and nowhere to be found:
The keys are lost, the ink is dry, and not a pen will write,
The worries of domestic life are killing him outright:
I might set things a little straight, and cheer him up again,
But in my nest I have to rest and hear him groan in vain.

Another and another morn, the time goes slowly o'er,

A day will come at last when I shall lie in bed no more:
When I shall walk out in the sun, and draw a long, deep draught
Of pure, fresh air among the flowers, the sweetest ever quaff'd,
And take my share of all the care, whatever it may be,
No longer blest with morning rest, and an early cup of tea.

I'll face the thousand little ills, the eggs, the milk, the meat,
The steak that's never tender, and the tea that's never sweet,
And find the keys, and mend the pens, and fight and scold once more
O'er the rough-book and the ledger, and the cheque-book and the store:
But this I know, come weal, come woe, come sunshine or come rain,
I'll never ask to leave my task and lie in bed again!

38 The Weekly Mail

A CHEERY note the horn is ringing,
Scarlet glimmers through the trees:
What may not the post be bringing
From our friends beyond the seas?>

Yesterday the Orizona
Glided safely to the quay:
Did the bulky bags upon her
Hold a line for you or me?

You would like a foreign letter
In a neat Italian hand:
British stamps would please me better,
Tidings from the dear old land.>

Mother's hopes that seldom fail her,
Stretch from Egypt to Japan,
For she knows her absent sailor
"Flies his kite" whene'er he can.>

Father's wishes, sad and sober,
To a circular extend:
He wants to know if mines at Cobar
Mean to pay a dividend.>

Shall we spike the wheel of fortune,
Shall we rush upon our fate?
Or with boding of misfortune
Meekly for our portion wait?>

Now, from leathern wallet drawing,
Who shall make the lucky hit?
"Nay, my girls, no clapper-clawing,
Wait till I can empty it.">

"There, that's all: there's not another."
Really now 'tis very hard:
Bills for father, stamps for mother,
And for me a Christmas card!!!

39 The Annual Wedding Christmas Card.

IN the pride of her beauty a dear one is shining,
The year that so gracefully grew by our side:
The white and the green on her brow are entwining,
The summer is decking her out as a bride.

Come to her, Christmas! on wings of the morning,
Dwell with her here for a week of delight:
Then proudly, with jewels her chaplet adorning,
Bear her away in the chariot of Night.

40 A Birthday Epitaph

HERE they lie, of graduate ages,
All the Birthdays of the Past:
Here, upon life's closing pages
Let their gentle doom be cast.

Many a feast and merry-making
Owed to them its genial hours:
Many a gift and many a greeting
Sleeps with them beneath the flowers.

Ghosts of evil, come not near them!
Memory's record kindly runs:
All had Hope and Love to cheer them:
Most of them were happy ones.

12th November, 1906.

41 Birthday Card

SOFT is the tread of Time to those
Whose minds in gentle mould are cast:
He loves to fling a Birthday rose,
To greet them as he hurries past.

With gracious words he counts their hours,
And marks their days with deeds of love,
Bestrews the yearly step with flow'rs,
And leaves the rest to One above.

42 Optima

IN a rough little nook stands my weatherboard shed,
 But its curtains of living green,
And the lamps of lustre that hang over head,
 Are the same that shine for the Queen.
And the breath that rustles the sheltering trees
 At my noon-tide hour of rest.
Is fresh and pure as the balmy breeze
 That fans a hero's breast.

I ply my work by the river-side,
 While the music-laden boat
Sweeps by in mirth and banner'd pride,
And sweetly over the dimpled tide
 Its strains around me float:
Each minstrel's gift, though all his own.
 A joy to all must be,
While every cheer and every tone
 Is wafted over to me.

No time have I for the culture of flowers,
 No coin for a gardener's fee,
But the scent and bloom of my lady's bowers
 Come over the hedge to me;
And, thanks to the Master who laid the plan
 Of what has been and has to be,
The grandest blessings He gives to man
 To every man are free!

43 Holly and Mistletoe on a Christmas Card from England

IN a weary land of exile there has come to me a token,
A wreath of pearly mistletoe around a holly spray:
O, whose the fond remembrance? What message is unspoken?
Say, darlings of my childhood, whence came ye here to-day?

We grew within a shrubbery where little ones were playing,
As we glisten'd in the ice-drops, or bent beneath the snow:
And we lingered in the lanes where the village maids were straying,
Adding lustre to their golden hair, and crimson to their glow.

We have shaken to the peal when the merry bells were ringing,
And nodded from the casements whence we greeted you of yore;
Have hush'd us to the cradle-hymn a mother's voice was singing.
And danced among the little feet that patter there no more.

We have trotted with the schoolboy when, gaily homeward riding,
Have splash'd us in his light canoe, or flutter'd with his kite,
Have rush'd upon the railway car, and waited at the siding,
Have peep'd into the gloomy mine, and climbed the mountain-height.

We have watch'd together in the ward where skilful hands were tending
The wounds of work and war among the steadfast and the bold:
And have deck'd the homely basket in which sympathy was sending
The clothing for the new-born, and the cordial for the old.

We have cast us on the lowly grave where pious hands were laying
The Cross that tells of victory, the Crown that hallows pain;
We have bowed beside the altar where earnest hearts were praying,
And twining formed the text of the grand angelic strain.

Then, when good Father Christmas went sailing o'er the ocean,
With store of earthly comfort and a more than earthly smile,
We waved upon his topmast and bent to his devotion
As he poured a hearty blessing on his new-adopted isle.

He has planted here his footstep, and his banner floating o'er us
Speaks health to the laborious, and honour to the true:
And homes of love and leisure in the sunny years before us,

Where with kindred bloom we mingle for your children and for you.

1850.

44 Let Us Pray

IN earnest expectation the sons of God remain,
While all Creation groaneth and travaileth in pain;
Then shall not man, with deepest needs, his eager tribute pay
To the universal cry for help? Aye, brethren, let us pray!

Beneath the raging billows oft a perfect calm is found,
Beneath all jarring discord, a sweet and solemn sound,
Beneath the world's wild laughter, beneath its choking care,
Beneath its sin and sorrow is the underflow of prayer.

Imperfectly, from baby lips, it ripples at its source,
Then surging through the ripening soul in deep and steady course:
It gushes from the mourner as he bends him o'er the grave,
And purifies the yearnings of the noble and the brave.

It overflows from mothers' hearts, and sinks into the sand
That drifts upon life's harren shore, or heaps its crowded strand.
Thence oft, perchance, to spring again with half unconscious start,
And hear a secret blessing to the sin-bewildered heart.

Few are the souls that have not prayed, though, lacking outward sign,
They scorn the kneeling devotee, the priesthood and the shrine;
Some sudden burst of happiness, of triumph or of love,
Has surely flashed a grateful spark to the bounteous Hand above!

Some startling fear, or sickening pang, or grief that lacks a word.
Has sent a thrill along the line that links us with our Lord:
Nay, tell me not you never pray, ye hungry souls and dry,
Like infants craving for their food, a prayer is in your cry.

The eagle skims through wintry skies to feed its senseless brood,
The lion and the wolf supply their thankless cubs with food,
So may the blessed Spirit-Dove our famished souls relieve,
And teach our foolish, fainting hearts new mercies to receive.

You cannot kindly greet a friend, or speed a parting guest,
Without the wish which is a prayer uprising in your breast;
O, say not then you cannot pray while yet you live and move.
And while your pulse has still a throb of hope and trust and love!

Say, rather, "all our need is prayer," and may the Almighty One
Accept each drop that joins the stream onrushing to His Throne!
And may that tide yet heave and swell beneath our world of care,
For the Kingdom of our Lord shall come in an overflow of prayer.

45 Ask, and Ye Shall Receive

WHAT shall we ask? A Father hears,
Who weighs our blessings, counts our tears,
And when for bread we pray,
We leave it to His Sovereign will
With wine or gall the cup to fill,
That steeps it day by day.

Ask we for Faith, and Love and Grace,
To hold our post, or run our race,
In Duty's lowly way.
Like thrills along the electric wire,
These strike the note of our desire,
We have them when we pray.

For pardon? Yes, God knows our need.
Did He not let a Victim bleed
To take our sins away?
The Judge and Advocate the same,
We whisper but the Holy Name,
And trust Him when we pray.

But what of those who never heard,
Or, hearing, still reject the word,
And turn from Light away?
The weak, the wild, the inly blind,
The reasoning brain, the doubting mind,
That have not learned to pray?

What of the man by conscience taught
To dance before a Juggernaut.
And kneel to gods of clay;
Or harsh fanatic, trained from youth
To stifle Pity, Love and Truth,
A dogma to obey?

What of the thousands born to sin,
Whom parent never strove to win,
Or guide in Virtue's way?

The drunkard, dead to sense of shame,
The thief? We might have been the same:
For them, O, let us pray!

Pray that our Father and our Friend
In His own wise, mysterious end,
May yet provide a way.
The blot of suffering to remove,
And from His universe of Love
To take the curse away.

That mercy may extend to all,
And Hell with its terrific thrall
Be lost in Endless Day;
And, if it be decreed on High
That sinful spirits may not die,
They may be taught to pray!

46 Reminiscence

KIND old memory, softly stealing,
Come and soothe our vacant hours,
All the rugged past concealing
In thy drapery of flowers.

Gentle memory, brood not over
Wreck or ruin, sin or strife,
Let thine ivy mantle cover
All the scaffolding of life.

Now, while wearied hopes are sleeping.
Watch'd by Faith, in Love secure,
Bring the jewels in thy keeping,
Friendship's tokens, bright and pure.

Touch of corresponsive pleasure.
Glint of comprehending eyes:
Steps with music in their measure
Bringing oft a glad surprise.

Faithful tones of solemn warning,
Genial converse, frank and free,
Skilful taste our homes adorning,
Smiles of cheer and sympathy.

Honest counsel whispered kindly,
Greetings that were spirit prayers.
Pearls of patience gathered blindly,
“Looks,” like “Angels unawares.”

All thy magic power confessing,
Here a grateful prayer I send:
Thou hast brought one bounteous blessing,
Gracious memory, bless my friend.

47 To-Day

A GEM is ours that never shone before,
A sweet white flower that will not bloom again:
An open page whereon all lives must score
Thoughts, words and actions steeped in joy or pain.

It brings its duties, closely packed and bound
In circumstance, experience and care;
It brings its blessings, lightly floating round
Affection's circle on the wings of prayer.

Despise it not, though brighter came before,
Alive it stands upon the buried past:
Boast not that fairer ones are yet in store,
This is not thine own, and it may be thy last.

Sufficient to itself is all its care,
Beyond itself its purest joys extend;
Its gifts to all, life, beauty, light and air,
Hope is its guest, and Memory its friend.

'Twas born in silence, 'ere our sleep was o'er,
'Twill sink in darkness with the midnight chime;
Enjoy and use it, though it comes no more,
It leaves its record on the scrolls of Time.

48 Christmas Dreamerie

1893.

OVER the waves that were seething in glory.
Past the horizon of landscape and lea.
Round the steep mountain heights steadfast and hoary,
Down through the depths of the fathomless sea.
Up to a firmament shining in light.
My spirit was wafted in dreams of the night:
Through mazes of darkness and marvels of light
I wandered and wavered in dreams of the night.

Though soaring in regions of infinite space,
I knew that my anchor still held to the earth,
And on features seraphic methought I could trace
Some likeness to those which had smiled on my birth;
While she, who for years was my comfort and pride,
On the wing of an angel still flew at my side:
Together we breasted life's changeable tide.
And still as an angel she flew at my side.

We gazed on the spot where, in bitterness weeping,
One gem from our circlet was mournfully stored,
And lo, o'er our treasure a cherub was keeping
His guard with the watchword of "Safe with the Lord,"
And we were aware of a promise that told
How the Shepherd was bringing His flock to the fold,
Yes, the Shepherd was there, in His arms to enfold
The lambs as He guided His flock to the fold.

Anon, by a whirlwind of sorrow o'ertaken,
All helpless I seemed in the billows to roll:
My spirit, methought, by the tempest was shaken,
And all the deep waters went over my soul,
Till, on rainbow of glory, there fell from the sky
The whisper of "Be not afraid, it is I";
"Lord, save us, we perish," and swift to the cry
Came the whisper of "Be not afraid, it is I."

Then, over the rocky heights, misty and grey,
The Song of the Future saluted mine ear.
The prophets, transfigured, appeared on the way,
And I said in my heart. "It is good to be here,"
For the sounds that we hear, and the sights we beheld
Are the same that inspired the sages of old;
And the voices of Nature, in language untold,
Still echo the words of the teachers of old.

The waters of Galilee mingled with those
That ripple all night in our beautiful bay,
And an Anthem of Hope on the breezes arose
To blend with the voices of children at play;
While a whisper of love to my spirit expressed
That such were the infants the Master had blessed,
And ever more deeply the thought was impressed
That those very children the Master had blessed.

49 Super Flamina

BY the dark rolling tide of the world's troubled waters,
I sat down and wept on the willowy shore;
For the sin of her sons, and the pride of her daughters,
Had sullied the torrent and deepened its roar.

For rapine and murder the billows had dyed,
And their sound was of cursing, destruction, and woe;
On the surface, ambition, profusion, and pride,
While ignorance darkly was lurking below.

The foul blast of envy was fanning the strife,
Greed and contention and malice were there;
And I saw through the glittering bubble of life,
A void, and a pang, and a burst of despair.

And frail seem'd the barque in which Virtue was gliding,
When Faith flutter'd wildly, and pale was Hope's star;
For I knew not the Hand that the light skiff was guiding,
I saw not the Beacon that glimmer'd afar.

O Zion! as lonely I sat 'neath the willows,
I thought of thy haven of peace and delight;
And sigh'd o'er the thousands borne on by those billows,
Far, far from that harbour of glory and light.

50 Earth

LET us not scorn the Mother Earth from whom we all proceed:
The garden planted by our Lord with vivifying seed;
Whose various growth the Angels viewed with wonderlighted eyes.
And in whose bowers linger yet stray gleams of Paradise.
The pure, fresh, germinating earth that once enraptured stood,
And blush'd to loveliness when God "looked" and pronounced her
"good,"
Then, drawing round her thrilling form a drapery of green,
Rolled meekly on her destined course, the sister orbs between,
And joining with the morning stars in joyful harmony,
Bid all her hills and vales proclaim Creation's Jubilee.

Nay, scorn her not, though once she swerved with shameaverted face,
When on her breast the serpent-fang had left its deadly trace:
Redemption came the wound to heal, the drooping head to raise.
And on the Sun of Righteousness she fixes still her gaze.
Her dust our Father deigned to use when, in creation's plan,
His quick'ning Spirit blent with it to mould the frame of man:
And we must love the sacred earth that clothed the form divine
Of the pure and perfect Sacrifice once offer'd on her shrine;
The hallowed earth on which He trod who came to seek and save.
To take the bitterness from death and sanctify the grave.

The grateful earth that breathes her thanks for Heaven's refreshing
showers,
The anchor of the waving trees, the mother of the flowers;
The trustful earth that patient lies beneath a torrid sky,
And carries on her works of love in blessed secresy:
The smiling earth that opens wide her fair and ample breast.
A field of emprise to the young, and to the weary rest:
The kindly nurse to whom the care of infant souls is given,
To feed and cherish while they learn the alphabet of Heaven;
The cradle where we toss and fret, our whims to gratify,
And throw our simple toys aside while for the moon we cry.

The court whereon we march and shout, and make our small display.
The arena where, with hand or brain, our cunning games we play:

The sod on which we toil and groan our dole of bread to earn.
While still for larger share of cake and choicer fruit we yearn:
The chart on which we daily trace our vacillating course
That tends through folly's pleasant fields to chasms of remorse:
The breast on which we cast ourselves when tempests loom and lower.
And weep out all our bitter tears in retribution's hour:
The lap where aching head and heart may nestle to repose,
The gentle hand beneath whose touch the weary eyelids close.

And when, her long, long travail o'er, her children shall arise,
And all the blessedness of life more clearly realise,
When mighty ocean's sepulchres their mysteries unfold,
And many sheep from other flocks are gather'd to the fold:
Though distant worlds pour forth their sons in glorious array.
And all the planets yield their dead to meet the judgment day.
The ransom'd millions she has rear'd may rally round her yet.
Nor in the universal bliss her agonies forget:
And though to nobler work assign'd, in more exalted sphere.
We shall not leave our clay-built home without a grateful tear:
We'll lay the cross upon her breast, the lily at her side,
In trust that this, our Mother Earth, shall yet be glorified.

E.M.B.

51 My Angels

1899

OF those who minister to sons of earth,
Three Angels were assigned me at my birth:
The first was Life, strong, earnest, sweet and bright,
Guarding my steps by day, my sleep at night:
Troubled at times, though oftener serene,
Yet not a staff on which my soul could lean:
Rather a handmaid, whom I should employ
Distilling from my daily grief or joy,
Such pure and potent essences as might
Preserve my spirit-garments fresh and white.
Alas! the soil of earth upon them lies,
And with bedraggled wings my Angel flies.

The next, a Seraph of delight, who threw
O'er Life's white robe a veil of rosy hue:
Love was her name, half human, half divine,
Who, with the former Angel, did combine
To lull my soul in dreams of ecstasy,
And build an earthly paradise for me;
Lo! now it crumbles as the years go by,
The trees are felled, the blossoms fade and die,
Till even Love has lost her early grace,
That Angel too has falter'd in the race;
Rent is her veil, her robes in disarray.
Her footsteps are imprinted in the clay.

The third awaits me yet, in sable gear.
Solemn in majesty, with look severe.
And keenly searching eye that seems to ask
If Life and Love have well performed their task,
And Life and Love can but confess defeat.
And cast themselves as victims at her feet,
But though her brow be stern, her aspect dark,
She wears upon her breast a brilliant spark:
The light of Hope, which like the electric ray,

Pierces the gloom to regions far away:
Cheer'd by that gleam, I grasp the cold, white hand
Outstretch'd to lead me to that Promised Land:
Strong are the wings she spreads my soul to bear,
And Life and Love are sure to meet me there!

52 The War Cry

1901.

FROM sun-scorch'd plain and craggy hill Australia's sons come forth.
From stall and station, hut and hall, East, West, and South and North,
To join the ranks and take up arms for England's "might and right."
For men are ever ready when the duty is to fight;
But wives and mothers join in prayer that war and woe may cease:
They dimly hope for victory, but deeply long for peace.

The churches pray in David's lines for triumph o'er the foe,
Forgetful of the misery, the slaughter and the woe;
They seek the God of Heaven to avenge an earthly wrong,
And believe the "Lord of Hosts" will give the battle to the strong.
They sing with rapture of the time when sin and pain shall cease.
But claim an earthly victory 'ere they can ask for peace.

"But ye shall love your enemies, shall pray for those who hate,"
So spake the Master, as upon the mountain foot He sate:
"Bless them that curse," and fill your hearts with brother love for all.
O, that all human hearts and hands should muster at His call!
For then shall come the glorious time when war and woe shall cease,
Be Thine, O Christ, the victory, and ours the joy of Peace.

53 Going to Church

THE prayers of saints on clouds of incense rise,
Rejoicing angels bear them to the skies,
And store them in the treasury of Heaven,
Where, "Unto those that have shall more be given,"
In golden bowls their fragrant offerings shine,
But is there not some Angel less divine,
And yet, perchance, more pitiful, whose way
Lies among those who know not bow to pray?
Whose orisons are as the sobs and sighs
Of the lone child whom darkness terrifies?

Methinks, he gathers in his silver bowl
The dumb upheavings of the troubled soul;
The scraps and shreds of incoherent prayer,
Torn from the outcast wrestling with despair;
The mute appear of conscience-stricken eyes
For mercy that the human code denies;
The sin-besmirch'd petition, setting forth,
In form uncouth, the wants and woes of earth;
The half-despairing cry of fuller light,
The wailing of the wanderer in the night.

The daily writhing, 'neath contemptuous sneer,
"Where is your Deity, and does He hear?"
The gleam of hope that, flashing to the skies,
Fades in the earthly mists that veil our eyes;
The wordless moan that stirs the passive air,
Pressed from the heart by overwhelming care;
The feeble fount that intermittent springs,
Then sinks, or dribbles over common things;
The touch of gratitude, akin to Grace,
The pleading of the vanquish'd in the race.
O, may that Angel walk with me to-day,
And gather up the fragments while I pray.

54 Confession and Absolution

I WILL arise, and from this earthly plane,
To Thee, my Spirit-Father, I will go,
Revealing all my suffering, sin, and pain,
The secret wounds that Thou alone canst know;
The husks, the swine, the rags, the hungry heart,
Thou knowest all, Omniscient as Thou art.

Yet Thou art Love, and e'er my tale be told,
The ring of pardon on my hand is laid,
The robes of righteousness my soul enfold,
My aching wounds are healed, my debt is paid:
Thou com'st to greet me, rescued and forgiven,
To vibrate with the joy that is in Heaven.

55 The Prayer

Day by day the due provision, mortal wants to satisfy,
Day by day the bread from Heaven, none but Heaven can supply.
Day by day the wholesome labour still decreed to Adam's race.
Day by day the earnest striving after spiritual grace.
Day by day the rest permitted for the wearied earthly frame.
Day by day the calm reposing on the great Redeemer's Name.
Day by day the fresh ablution in the pure and cooling wave.
Day by day the Living Waters wherewithal our souls to lave;
Day by day the needful raiment, perishable limbs to dress.
Day by day the snowy robing of a Saviour's righteousness.
Day by day the pure enjoyment of our nearest social ties.
Day by day the blest communion with our Guardian in the skies.
Father, Son and, Holy Spirit, be these blessings on us shed;
Give us now, and give us ever, day by day our daily bread.

56 A Psalm

I WILL not seek the comfort of my bed
Or press the pillow with my troubled head;
I will not let my weary limbs repose,
Or, lull'd in sleep my drooping eyelids close,
Till I an altar find whereon to raise
In grateful clouds the incense of my praise.
Where shall that shrine be sought? "Lo here, lo there."
The gorgeous temple — the confessor's chair —
The feast of love — the low responsive psalm,
The wayside Bethel, or conventual calm —
The loud Salvationist — the chapel bare,
The long-drawn chant or soft, reiterate prayer?
Or shall I, in the wilderness alone,
Pillow my head like Jacob on a stone?
Or ask of desert plains and rugged rock,
"Where does the Gracious Shepherd tend His flock?"
Shall sultry noon attest my panting prayer,
Or midnight start their silent witness bear?
Shall fast and scourge prepare my trembling soul
To meet Thee when Thy Judgment thunders roll?

God of the Universe! Dwell Thou with me,
And let my heart Thy tabernacle be.
With love and wisdom all my thoughts control,
With Light and Truth irradiate my soul;
Nor mine alone; make Thou Thy Holy Shrine
In every breast that yearns for Love Divine;
Arise, O Lord, into Thy resting-place,
And bless Thy poor with bread, Thy saints with grace;
Let all Thy Priests be clothed with righteousness,
And every tongue Thy Majesty confess;
Within our gates may Peace and Truth abide —
And all our counsels may Thy wisdom guide;
Into Thy fold the wandering sinners bring,
And let them with Thy saints rejoice and sing."

57 The Lesson

E'EN as a little child, with open book,
Will to his teacher go and meekly say,
In humble guise, yet wistful, earnest look,
“Teacher, what lesson shall I learn to-day?”

So to my God I daily would repair,
My open heart before Him I would lay,
Ask for the Index of His Spirit there,
And say: “What lesson shall I learn to-day?”

Oh, gracious Master, wilt Thou teach Thine own,
E'en as we school our dear ones here below;
Rebuke, control, assist and lead them on,
All the deep myst'ries of Thy love to know?

Then, let me be a learner in Thy school,
And day by day, take up the task assign'd;
Submissive bow me to Thy rod and rule,
And write Thy precepts on a willing mind.

Yes, precept upon precept, line on line;
The lawgiver, the psalmist, and the seer,
The Gospel chronicle of Love Divine,
The influence of Spirit ever near.

So may my life its due experience gain
From circumstance, anxiety and care,
All the stern teachers Thou dost here ordain.
The soul for deeper knowledge to prepare.

So may I still go on from strength to strength,
Till kindly called to higher tasks above;
To find the breadth and height and depth and length,
The Alpha and Omega of Thy Love.

58 The Hymn

As mortals, we feel that this world is but dreary,
As Christians, we cannot, we would not remain;
As pilgrims, how soon we grow wayworn and weary,
O, who would retrace the long journey again?

To a land we are hast'ning where none shall be strangers,
Where the children shall meet at their Father's own call,
To a haven of peace after troubles and dangers,
Where the Saviour prepares a kind welcome for all.

Here we are hoping, there shall we receive;
Here we are praying, but there we shall praise;
There shall we see clearly what here we believe,
There is endless reward for a few troubled days.

Here we are dying, to live there for ever,
Here we are losing, but there we shall gain;
There we shall meet again; here we must server;
There is no sickness or sorrow or pain.

That prospect is brightest when this world grows dreary,
And fairest that hope when most grievous our load;
And sweetest that word to the wayworn and weary,
"There remaineth a rest for the people of God!"

59 The Litany

WHEN rejoicing in the light of our Salvation,
With the Covenant of Peace upon the mind,
We reach the crowning joy of supplication
In prayer for all conditions of mankind.

Yes, sinful and weak-hearted fellow-mortal,
Yes, toiling brother convict on the chain;
We are kneeling at the throne of the immortal
For solace to your sorrows and your pain.

Ah! babes and little children, all unheeding
The trials that await you on the way,
You are smiling in your sleep while we are pleading
That your strength may be extended as your day.

Youths and maidens, now so hopefully surveying
The love-illuminated avenue of life,
Raise your grateful hearts to Heaven while we are praying,
For your guidance in the struggle and the strife.

Oh, sadly crippled manhood, vainly yearning
For the action and the glory of the fray,
Will some angel check the torrent of your mourning
With a whisper that we pray for you to-day?

Ye aged men and women, sadly biding
The summons that shall lay you in the dust,
Look beyond the feeble barrier of dividing,
To the mansions of the Saviour whom we trust.

O, travellers by land and over ocean,
Where perils unsuspected may be near,
You are not beyond the range of our devotion —
Though strangers, we are praying for you here.

Idolaters and heathen, vainly shrieking
To a blood-besprinkled demon of the night,
From the Father of all mercy we are seeking
For help to lead your spirits to the Light.

Interceding for all types of tribulation,
The fatherless, the widow, the opprest,
Each breast will heave in secret supplication
For some dear one to be comforted and blest.

Friend of youth and fellow-pilgrim to the turning
By the devious paths of knowledge pointed out.
Thou hast gather'd in thy wider field of learning
A harvest of uncertainty and doubt.

Will the murmur of my pleading wake an echo
In a soul once turned to harmony with mine?
Will the striving of my spirit lift a shadow
From that warm but unbelieving heart of thine?

'Tis not by distance only we are parted,
The troubled waves of doubt between us roll;
But God, who hears the prayer of the true-hearted,
May answer it in blessings on thy soul.

60 The Sermon

LET us, my brethren, deeply meditate
Upon the glorious teachings of our Lord;
How sweet His invitations, “and how great
His promises to them that love His word.”

We now have prayed in faithful love and trust,
Asked to be numbered with His “blessed ones.”
The meek, the pure, the merciful, and just,
The brave in righteousness, God's holy sons.
We've asked for freedom from the chain of sin,
From selfishness, hypocrisy, and pride,
Asked for the Spirit Power that dwells within
Whereby the soul is cleansed and purified.

Do we believe that “what we ask we have?”
That what we yearn for is indeed our own?
And that through Him who came to seek and save,
We are the children of the Eternal one?
That “God is Love.” and those who dwell in love,
Abide in God, and He in them abides,
That in His Life we live and breathe and move,
While His most holy law our spirit guides?

Then let us never cease from earnest prayer,
Nor fail to claim the blessing of His grace;
Uplift our hearts from earthly dark and care,
Aspiring but to seek and know His face.

61 Address of Spirit to Body

MANSION assigned me by Eternal Love,
While on this lower stage I play my part,
In prelude to the harmonies above,
How wonderful and excellent thou art.

A stately tower, built on a perfect plan,
Whence to survey Creation's varied scenes;
With telescopic lens to search and scan,
And photograph them on thy silken screens.

Chambers and corridors, and cells replete
With mental storage for progressive years:
A phonograph whose vibrant tones repeat
At my command the music of the spheres.

An ever-beating engine to supply
The stream of life to each remotest cell:
Appliances of subtle chemistry,
Electric threads to touch my spirit bell.

A secret cabinet of object lore,
Tokens and records of an earlier stage;
Where in creative silence I explore
Symbols of glory for the coming age.

A temple meet and sacred for His praise
Who shaped the wondrous organ that awaits
My thrilling touch its anthem to upraise,
And sing the glory of the Golden Gates.

Not long in thee, fair mansion, must I dwell:
When I depart I leave thee to decay:
Thy pulse of harmony shall cease to swell,
And all thy beauty mingle with the clay.

But, while in thee my sojourn shall endure,
Thou shalt not be neglected nor defiled;
Thou shalt be swept and garnish'd sweet and pure,
Fitting abode for God's immortal child.

There shall be no confusion in thy halls,
Dust shall not gather on thy polished stone;
There shall be lovely pictures on thy walls,
They shall not echo one discordant tone.

Shade from the Tree of Life shall cover thee,
Beneath thine eaves the flow'rs of Love shall bloom,
Banners of Honour shall float over thee,
And germs of Truth shine forth in every room.

Because, methinks, a goodly type thou art
Of future residence prepared for me,
By the same Hand that did those gifts impart,
Which made thy frame so beautiful for me.

Nearer, and ever nearer, must I press,
Stage after stage, towards the Source of Light:
Yet never shall I cease to praise and bless
The God who made my earthly home so bright.

62 Invocation

MASTER Spirit of vibration,
Strike the note, adjust the key,
Tune the tones of all Creation
Into harmony with Thee.
Let no wail of anguish linger,
Bid discordant echoes cease,
Lay Thy strong and loving finger
On the string that thrills for Peace.

Vast Designer of the courses
Where the radiant planets roll,
Let Thy vital fire and forces
Permeate the human soul:
Painter of the arch of Heaven,
Tinge the thought with hues divine,
Rule the Will that Thou hast given
Ever parallel with Thine.

Framer of the laws of Nature,
Author of the book of Truth,
Print Thine image on Thy creature
In a type of Love and Ruth.
Luminate the old tradition,
Sanctify the songs of men;
Clarify the inner vision,
And inspire the ready pen.

Healer of the sick and sighing,
Good Physician, lay Thine hands
On the flesh for comfort crying,
While beneath Thy throne it stands:
And when, earth to earth restoring,
It shall in her bosom lie,
May the spirit, heavenward soaring,
Comprehend Eternity!

63 Schools and Scholars

BONNIE wee laddies, and rosy-check'd lassies,
Joyfully trotting to Kindergart classes,
How gaily you march to the music of duty;
Pictures and poems your emblems of beauty.
The words you are singing in infantine play
May resound in your hearts till the close of your day.

Light-hearted school-boys, reluctantly turning
Your lingering steps to the ladder of learning,
Rouse up your energies, open your eyes,
At every step you may pick up a prize;
Aim at the highest while reading the story
Of all the mind-heroes emblazoned in glory.

Chattering damsels with loose flowing tresses,
Tripping to school in your short-skirted dresses,
Leaflets of interest flutter around you.
Poetry, painting and music surround you,
Ever aspiring and ever progressing,
O may each quarter-day bring you a blessing.

Young men and maidens in graduate college,
Turning the key in the temple of knowledge,
Pages of wisdom still open before you,
The light of the Future is hovering o'er you:
Mazes of mystery you may unravel;
Bright is the pathway your footsteps may travel.

All ye of maturity, plodding through life,
Husband or brother, spinster or wife,
Cease not to study the chapter of thought;
Practice the precepts that chapter has taught;
So when your school closes for summer vacation,
You may joyfully welcome complete recreation.

64 Thoughts in Sickness

MY poor old body, I am sorry for you,
Shatter'd and shaken as you needs must be,
'Ere you attain the only goal before you —
Rest, dissolution, and non-entity.

Yet, while you linger I will care for you,
Build up your failing nerve with food and wine;
Cleanse, clothe, and comfort you the long night through,
Lull you to sleep with melodies divine.

For you and I have had good times together,
Playing pretence with Nature's lovely things,
When oft a crimson leaf or glowing feather
Would send us flutt'ring on ideal wings.

We have built castles on the sandy plain,
And planted roses on a stony soil;
Have fail'd, and wept, and failing tried again,
And gather'd comfort even from our toil.

We have seen spectres in the shadowy grove,
And track'd out angels on the sweepy skies;
Have made believe to live, and learn, and love,
And dreamed a dream of Hope that never dies.

I've dressed you oft in fanciful array,
And garnish'd you with gay and glitt'ring things;
Now, all your gaudy trappings fall away,
And not a shred of tinsel round you clings.

And so, dear playmate, when we say "Good-bye,"
Sleep well till Nature dresses you again;
Perchance in feathery garb to sing and fly,
Or draped in gold to deck the smiling plain.

I shall be girded with a robe of white,
Meet for the higher service of our King;
I shall be taught with winged pen to write,
And in angelic chorus learn to sing.

We have play'd our part on this our infant stage,
Of vast Futurity the type and token,
But, when I enter on mine heritage.
I shall not cry because my toys are broken.

1905.

65 The School of Life

I LEARNED the Alphabet of Love,
Beside my mother's knee;
She told me of the God above,
And wisely counselled me.
In monosyllables the Church
Next taught my soul to pray.
And in the Holy Scriptures search
For wisdom day by day.

The writings of the good and wise
Charmed my aspiring mind,
My thoughts with theirs could sympathise,
And genial converse find.
On larger pages now I learn,
In clearer type to read,
And to the Great Eternal turn
For help in every need.

The early tasks I need no more;
Apart from worldly strife,
I dwell upon the pleasant shore
That skirts the Sea of Life.
For now the Comforter has come
With Peace and Pardon shod,
All else I leave to walk upon
The nearest path to God.

That higher road I gladly meet;
Yet will I not despise
The steps on which my infant feet
Were early taught to rise.
For still I know that God is Love,
And still I seek His face,
And in the sacred writings prove
His goodness and His grace.

And still I hope, in future days,
To greater heights to rise.

And in the light of spirit rays
His Peace to realise.
O! mother, dear! you sought for Truth,
You taught me first to pray;
The words that guided me in youth
Will cheer my closing day.

1905.

66 Omnipresence

WHERE are they all, those once so fondly cherished,
Whose lips respond no more, whose forms have perish'd,
 On whom we vainly call,
To tell us of the scenes that now surround them,
If sin has wreck'd, or Heavenly mercy crowned them —
 Where are they all?

Where are the wise and learned ones who saw
God in His works, and recognised His law
 Of perfect Love in all?
Where are the meek and lowly ones who strove
To follow on a Saviour's steps of love —
 Where are they all?

Where are the victims of the raging wave,
And those who hurried to a fiery grave,
 At patriotic call?
Where are the ardent souls of every age,
The saint, the sot, the sinner, and the sage? —
 Where are they all?

Where is the babe that struggled out of life
Unblest by ritual and unscathed by strife,
 From hamlet, hut, or hall?
Where are the erring millions who made
Their gods of clay, and reached no higher grade —
 Where are they all?

Where are “we” all, hopeless and heavy-hearted,
Waiting until to follow our departed
 We hear the solemn call?
Are we in bondage to all earthly evils,
The scorn of angels, or the sport of devils? —
 Where are we all?

Where are we all? Is there a “where” unknown
To Omnipresent Love that shines upon
 All beings, great and small?

Can "Infinite" be overstept by man?
Or changing atoms mar the mighty plan
Of good in all?

From out the boundless circle of Creation,
From the Eternal Mercy of Salvation,
Who shall for ever fall?
There are no limits to our Father's mansion,
No measure to celestial expansion,
For God is all.

Grasping the hand of Christ the Mediator,
Into the arms of a divine Creator
In humble trust we fall;
No more we trembling ask of our departed,
None from Eternal Presence can be parted,
There are they all; there are we all! — Amen.

67 Responses

The Parents

YOUR father still walks in a garden of roses,
Praising the gracious Creator of all;
In comfort and rapture your mother reposes,
Ready and eager to answer your call.
We tell you that Love is the means of advancing,
Love is the link between every sphere;
Daughter, your spirit is heavenward glancing,
Be brave and be patient, we wait for you here.
For guidance and help in the lesson of love,
Go, as we do, to the Father above.

The Husband

I read a thought by the lips unspoken,
Clear in the light of my spirit life;
Memory's records are still unbroken,
“Yes” is the answer I send to my wife.
Though all our offences lie open before us.
All our mistakes unto seventy times seven,
The dictum of Mercy avails to restore us;
We are forgiving, and we are forgiven!
Life is progressive; we still must prepare
For fuller enjoyment by service and prayer.

The Children.

Mother, dear mother, we are not sleeping,
We are awake in a bright new day,
Oft by your pillow a love-watch keeping,
Breathing your thoughts when you rise to pray.
We remember the touch of your loving hand
In the dear, lone home where your lot was cast;
We prepare for you now in the “Better Land”
Of which you sang in the days gone past;

And Oh! what a wonderful blessing to find,
That in spirit we still can converse with your mind!

A Friend.

I slept, I woke, and over me was bending
The loving mother of my early days;
She told me of my earthly journey's ending,
And bid me join with her in thanks and praise.
Here, in our spirit home, I realise
The love I dreamed of when to earth confined;
With missionary souls I sympathise,
Seeking to help the helpers of mankind;
And when in tuneful tones you harmonise,
My friend, I read the music in your mind!

68 Union of Spirit

THE Angel of the Lord encampeth round
The souls that seek His Truth in hope and faith,
Whose ears are open to the trumpet sound,
Proclaiming: "God is Life; there is no death!
A thousand years are with the Lord one day":
Two such, well nigh, since Jesus rose from earth;
The third day dawns; shall we not gladly pray
For the fulfilment of the spirit-birth?
Farewell, dear friends, rejoicing we have come
To tell you of a life that will not cease,
When the frail body sinks into the tomb:
May God Almighty bless you, go in peace!

69 My Diary

First Entry — 1832.

WITH eager hand I ope' the book,
And on a smooth, white series look,
Of shrines for thoughts of coming years,
Enwreathed in flowers, unsoiled by tears;
I turn the gilded margins o'er,
Shining types of future store;
Boldly now inscribe the page,
Prologue to life's opening stage;
May good spirits here convene,
To glorify each passing scene;
Health and energy supply
Fountains of Festivity;
Sweet affection touch the string,
Peaceful joys of home to sing;
Verse with melody combine
To lend a charm to every line;
Art with liberal hand display
Something glorious every day;
Love and sympathy unite
To scatter stars on darkest night;
So may all life's story be
A Diary of Joy to me.

Last Entry.

“Father,” turn the closing page,
Seal the Diary of age;
All the memories of years,
Steep'd in penitential tears,
With the shame that dares not look
Back upon the blotted book,
Of its early tinsel shorn,
Creased and crumpled, worn and torn,
Take the knife and thence erase

Erring lines of thoughtless days;
Cut from out the record all
That conscience trembles to recall;
Take the self-accusing sheet
Lying humbly at Thy feet;
And across it clearly trace
The Signet-manual of Thy Grace;
Take the pen that vainly strove
To raise some tribute to Thy Love;
The voice unequal to express
The music of its thankfulness;
The eye that longs Thy Face to see,
The trusting heart upraised to Thee!

70 A Song of Recognition

WHEN at early morn I feel
Healthful air around me steal:
Mark upon the curtains white
The slow gradation of the light,
And the features of the room
One by one emerge from gloom,
Till the sunbeams round them play,
I hail the glory of the day.

When in cushioned chair I sit,
And fitful read and muse and knit:
Basking when the sun is low,
In its mitigated glow:
Or beside the cheerful blaze,
Dream of former wintry days:
I own my lot with blessings rife,
And am not weary of my life.

When a daughter takes my arm,
To guard my feeble steps from harm,
Or a grandchild runs to bring
Some forgotten useful thing:
Or a neighbour calls to say
“Good morning” in a friendly way,
And all around are kind and dear,
I am thankful to be here.

When to this my cottage home,
Sons from distant stations come,
When each well-known voice I hear
Speaking words of hearty cheer:
And the sunburnt hands I hold
Or the stalwart frames enfold,
While loving looks around I see,
Life has still a charm for me.

When from youthful voices flow
Simple songs of “long ago,”

And the organ in its wail
Tells me many a soothing tale,
Or the swelling of a psalm
Intensifies the evening calm,
I too add my note of praise
For the measure of my days.

When at night I rest my head
In the shelter of my bed:
On the pillow close my eyes,
All my comforts realise:
Look behind and look before,
Count my blessings o'er and o'er,
Truthfully I yet can say,
"Life has many a pleasant day."

When the good ship comes for me
Over the mysterious sea,
And you see me glide away,
Think not I am gone for aye.
Waving you a last farewell
To the sound of passing bell,
Only hope that I may be
Where life and love are still with me.

JUNE, 1907.

71 Immanuel — “God with Us”

THE sleeping infant lies content
 Beneath adoring mother's eyes —
While o'er him linger yet the secent
 And sights and sounds of Paradise:
His dreams are hers, she walks with him.
 The gardens of the Heavenly King,
And Cherubim and Seraphim
 Hover around her while they sing:
 No human word her joy can tell,
 Her soul cries out “IMMANUEL!”

The infant, grown to riper years,
 Forgets the glory of his birth,
Absorbed by mortal hopes and fears,
 He casts his anchor to the earth:
He needs the good that gold will bring
 And turns his steps to seek for gold,
Or, aiming at some nobler thing,
 He bids his intellect unfold,
 In human knowledge to excel,
 Ignoring his “IMMANUEL!”

Some angel, clad in human guise,
 But missioned from the Throne above,
Awakes his soul, unveils his eyes,
 Revealing all the wealth of love:
Care for the wife, the child, the home,
 Puts self aside, and purifies
The mists and vapours that had come
 To cloud his early Paradise:
 Some sordid thoughts may yet rebel,
 But he has his “IMMANUEL!”

Yet must he bravely still contend
 With mortal care, perchance with grief,
The loss of earthly love may end
 The dream so pleasing, yet so brief,

And failing strength, and slow decay,
 May test his spiritual power.
The light must fade at close of day,
 And clouds will mar the evening hour;
 Oh! may no darkest depths dispel
 The light of his "IMMANUEL!"

And now, the giddy whirlwind o'er,
 He floats into the calm of sleep,
And from a fast receding shore
 Is wafted o'er the mighty deep:
Again his infant Paradise
 Looms over transient doubts and fears,
Again he meets a mother's eyes,
 Again her jubilee he hears:
 It mingles with the passing bell,
 "IMMANUEL! IMMANUEL!"

APRIL, 1908.

72 Manifestations “God Manifests Himself in Many Ways.”

1 — The Savage.

YE spirits, hovering near the skies,
Or walking awful in the night;
O make our old men good and wise,
Our young men valiant for the fight;
Direct the spear, and bend the bow
To speed the arrow's deadly flight,
Strike with dismay the stealthy foe,
That fires of joy our gins may light.
We worship you in victory's hour,
And so proclaim our “God is Power.”

2 — The Philosopher

Mysterious energy, primeval source
Of universal and continuous birth,
Guiding the golden planets in their course,
Filling the generous bosom of the earth;
Creator of the daisy and the star,
Giver of all intelligence and mind,
Author of all the miracles that are
A daily spring of blessing to mankind.
We learn from all in earth and skies
The Power that men call “God is wise.”

3 — The Buddhist.

Mighty Buddha, ‘throned on high,
Of all creation is the breath;
Maker of giant and of fly,
He is the lord of life and death;
The poor, the weary, and the weak,
Are all in his compassion blest,
By deeds of charity we seek

The Nirvana of our rest.
When war and weariness shall cease,
And all confess that "God is Peace."

4 — The Mahomedan.

Beneath the Crescent flag we fight
For Mahomet, the strong and brave,
Ready to arm us with his might,
Or lead us to a holy grave.
He guides the deadly arrow's flight,
When for the faithless bosom bound,
He leads the pilgrim's steps aright,
When turned to Mecca's sacred ground.
And prompts the Muezzin's daily call,
"Allah! el Allah! God is all."

5 — The Jew

For our first father's sin we pray
To an offended Deity,
Yet Moses' law we still obey,
And bow before His majesty;
Hated and scorned in every land,
Still to our father's faith we cling,
Submit to His almighty hand,
And hope for a triumphant King,
To arm our legions for the fight,
And teach the world that "God is Light."

6 — The Christian.

The love of God has been made manifest
In Christ, the great Redeemer of mankind,
And in His Truth rejoicing, we are blest,
Our great Exemplar in His life we find;
He sought the sinner and He seeks him now,
He healed the sufferer, and He heals him still,
The crown of victory is on His brow,
In that He came to do His Father's Will:
That Will is peace and pardon from above,
To all who realise that "God is Love."

7 — All Mankind.

We all are wonderfully made,
Endowed with every needful sense,
Our earthly pilgrimage to aid,
And gifted with intelligence;
But higher yet our souls can rise
Above all mortal thoughts and things,
When opening our spirit eyes,
We glorify the King of kings:
When all His works are understood,
And all proclaim that “God is Good.”

Prize Poems

Australian Statesmen Prize for “S. F. News,” May, 1883.

LIKE clings to like — the aged nations sit
In solemn conclave, with the hoary head
Of vast experience, seeking less to form
New views and aims, than to preserve the old
Time-honour'd laws and customs from decay,
Their nicely-organised machinery
Requiring but the cleansing and repair
Of daily supervision, while they reap
The peaceful joys their ancestors have sown.
But young Australia's guardian should be young
In strength, if not in years; he must have suck'd
The breasts of Wisdom — drawing in the breath
Of pure Integrity — and early fed
On truths that mould the mind to lofty aims;
He must have courage to rebuke or bear
The taunts of slander, scorn and ridicule,
And diligence to fence with righteous laws,
The sapling of our liberty, unlopp'd
By hideous execution, and unscorch'd
By persecuting fire. In triple guise
His eloquence must flow, a sparkling spray
For Erin's children, for the British mind
A classic crystal smoothly flowing on,
And for his Austral brethren, a deep flood
Of clear, convincing common sense — even now
He may be growing in our midst: the time is ripe,
Urgent the need, and we shall cry “God bless him!”

The Alphabet of the Land Act

A WAS the Act, Antecursor of strife,
B was the Bill that had brought it to life,
C was the Court, overcrowded with law,
D was the Dummy, a creature of straw,
E was the Enmity sown among neighbours,
F was the Folly that baffled their labours:
G was the Grazier whose cattle were poor,
H was the Homestead he sought to secure:
I the Improvements to please the Inspector,
J was John Jenkins, a bold free-selector:
K was the Knot that in Red Tape was tied,
L the Legality lurking inside:
M was a Mortgage for money effected,
N was Non-residence clearly detected:
O is the Oath that was sacred of yore,
P is the Perjury, shameful no more:
Q is the Question that never was solved,
R is the Ruin that Question involved:
S was the Station selected upon,
T was the Thursday when Tenure was gone:
U was the Upland where nothing would grow,
V was the Valley where streams overflow:
W was the Wife, who with worry went mad,
X was Xantippe, whose temper she had:
Y was the Yell that in frenzy she gave,
Z is the Zamia that shadows her grave.

The Alphabet of Drought

All these months of heat and drought,
Baked within, and burnt without;
Cattle dying in our regions,
Drifts of dust and insect legions;
Every pool a mass of mire.
Fogs that mock each morn's desire;
Groups of clouds, suggesting rain,
Heaven-attracted, off again;
I, one cheerful plant have seen,
Just as ever bright and green;
Keeping still its steady bloom,
Lightsome leaf and keen perfume —
My morning shower, treasured well,
Never upon its leaflets fell;
On fern and fuchsia all was shed,
Perchance to save them; they are dead.
Quiescent Nature lies asleep.
Refusing o'er their dust to weep;
So that my heart was faint with grief,
Till, musing o'er that shining leaf,
Untiring, ever-spreading root,
Virtue-laden flow'r and fruit;
With types of love and trust combined.
Xylographed my anxious mind —
Yes, like thee I would endure,
Zygophillum, the brave and pure.

Acrostic on New South Wales the Fairies' Scheme.

Now will we to these sunny lands invite
Each Master Spirit with us to unite,
Weaving a spell of wonder and delight;
Sobriety shall be our social guest,
Our laws by justice and by mercy plann'd,
Unflagging Zeal, with honest toil shall rest,
Truth shall repeat the records we love best,
Honour shall act, and Courage shall command,
Wisdom shall echo through our Senate halls,
And pure Religion grace the sacred walls.
Love with artistic hand the wreath shall frame,
Each rival Bard spell out an honour'd name,
Scutcheon'd in gold upon the Shield of Fame.

Reply to the Question: "What is the Wealth of Australia?"

AUSTRALIA'S Wealth? Has she not mines of gold,
Tin, copper, iron; silver, gems untold?
Coal, whose dark lustre makes our dwellings bright,
The shale from which we press the liquid light?
Fleeces to clothe the shivering northern brother,
Refrigerate cargoes for the grand old Mother?
Are not her mansions rear'd of quarried stone,
With timbers on her forest ranges grown?
Does not the tree of health its boughs expand
O'er miles and miles of yet uncultured land?
And will not future Science joy to find
The sanatory herbs around it twined?
Will not the orange, vine, and luscious cane
Luxuriant spread o'er many a teeming plain.
And coming races bless her fields of grain?

Aye! these and more, for had a stalwart band
Ne'er moor'd their barque beside her flowery strand,
Had not the keen explorers of the waste
Their lines in want and danger nobly traced,
Had British skill ne'er open'd to the day
The vast resources that within her lay,
Inertly yet her bosom she might spread
To the marsupial leap or dingo's tread;
Her scanty denizens a clay-daub'd train,
In wild corrobbery howling o'er the plain.
The secret of her wealth is in the men
Who roused to energy her sleeping glen,
Brought her their strength, their knowledge and their arts,
The wondrous mechanism mind imparts,
And made her rich in brave and honest hearts.

Australian Christmas 1882.

IN other lands we welcomed thee from out the drifting snow,
With yule-log blazing on the hearth, beneath the mistletoe,
The hoarse wind mingled with thy chime, among the branches hoar,
And garden spectres grimly waved thy welcome to our door.

We took the wallet from thine arm in furry mantle roll'd,
And all the warmer seemed thine heart because thy hand was cold.
We took the trinkets from thy tree, and fondly yet enshrine
Full many a dear familiar name by memory link'd with thine.

To youthful eyes thy cheery face all wrinkled seemed to be,
Now Time, while aging us, has brought his evergreens for thee,
And Summer, from her treasury, holds out thy crown of flowers,
While, ah! thy yearly snows are shed on these poor heads of ours.

More warmly now we welcome thee, more thankfully we prize
The blessings that descend with thee from pure and genial skies;
Thy tread is on the crinkling hay, thy canopy the vine,
Thy carol is our "harvest-home," the early fruits are thine.

Thro' myrtle groves and orange bowers we love thee with to stray,
And mountain-ferns and greenery we scatter on thy way:
Right heartily we welcome thee, and joyfully we cheer
The golden days mark'd out by thee from every toiling year.

The pleasure skill with gleaming sail within the harbour glides.
The tourist gazes with delight from Ziz-zag's stony sides,
The foot-race and the bicycle our glowing youth beguile,
And grandsires view the cricket match with patronizing smile.

The driver comes from out the dust, the miner from the clay,
The bushman spreads his homely feast and bids the trav'ler stay,
In wards of sickness, deck'd for thee, resounds thy holy strain.
And love and mercy speak of thee beside the bed of pain.

And while thy joyful tidings fill each sacred aisle and dome.
Thy tokens bring a silent pray'r to lonely heart and home;
O! may they ever be to us a pledge of Love divine,
Goodwill the watchword of our lives, while Peace on earth is thine.

Early Bush Home: “What Constitutes the Charm of Australian Home Life”

THE tenderness and sanctity of Home
Pervade the haunts of men from pole to pole;
While cottage, castle, and imperial dome
Alike demand the tribute of the soul.

Australian homes a special charm possess,
When the brave builder is the pioneer,
Whom energy and hope combine to bless,
While Love and wild Romance are smiling near.

The hut, at first, just large enough for two,
But clean and cheerful in its rustic grace,
Then, room by room, enlarged, as children grow,
Till loftier walls the cabin group replace.

There blaze the golden crops in summer sheen,
And flocks prolific seek the grassy plain;
While through the tangled wilderness of green
The labouring oxen draw the toppling wain.

There, baby feet will harden on the sward,
And chubby limbs bestride the shaggy steed;
There “mother's lassies” deck the frugal board,
Or shyly tend some weary wanderer's need.

There, scant of books, the earnest mother strives,
With daily text and well-remembered rhyme,
To graft on infant hearts and budding lives
The holy precepts of a Faith sublime.

And how the garden thrives! The treasured seeds
From other lands spring kindly where they fall:
Geranium and Campanula are weeds,
And Morning Glories cluster on the wall.

Such are, perchance, the early homes of those
By Fortune mark'd to reach a higher goal;
In memory long their image shall repose,

The cradle and the mooring of the soul.

An Ancient Fable

(Twelve Lines of Rhymed Verse, in Words of One Syllable. Prize.
“Illus. S. News.”)

O'ER the vast main, through fields of air,
A drop of dew fell pure and fair.
“Ah, me! “she cried,” sad fate is mine,
My life to merge in waves of brine!
Waft me, oh winds! on you I call,
To earth at least I fain would fall;
Or by thy rays, oh Sun! be drawn
To join my kin in mists of morn!”
The winds and sun heard not her quest;
The kind sea took her to its breast;
Hid in a shell from sense and sight,
Then cast her forth — a pearl of light!

A Camp beneath the Stars

(Prize Offered By the “Illustrated S. News” for Best Rhymed Verse, Each Line Beginning with One of the Words in the Couplet: “Perhaps it was Right to Dissemble Your Love, But Why Did You Kick Me Downstairs?”)

PERHAPS no bed more near to heaven on earth is ever found,
It seems to me so, than beneath the stars on camping ground!
“Was not our ride a jolly one? — our muster of the best?”
Right, lad, the pace was fine! but now we'll watch the stars and *rest*.

To see our Maker in the skies in early life we learn —
Dissemble as you will, the thought at night will oft return:
Your infant pray'rs will mingle then with whisperings of the trees,
Love will look down from every star and speak in every breeze.

But why are many days so dark, and many nights so drear?
Why do we leave our childhood's heaven still further every year?
Did Nature mean to grant us but that one short glimpse of light?
You ask in vain by day — the stars bring their reply at night!

Kick, strive and struggle for our lives, as we poor fellows must.
Methinks a glorious sky like this restores the simple trust;
Down here on earth the glare of day shuts out the spirit light,
Stairs such as Jacob saw will rise among the stars at night;

Enigmas

Wind-Lass

WITH awful howls I sometimes come
To mar the peaceful scenes of home,
But oftener bring a soothing balm
On summer evenings warm and calm.
Though deaf and blind I seem to be,
I have an eye for men at sea,
And I can catch a tuneful sound
And breathe the melody around,
When men of wealth to earth return
From noun to active verb I turn,
And with the lawyers sit up late
To gauge their assets and estate;
I teach the clock to tell the hour,
And help to name an English flower.

My mate and I together play
When I am fair and she is gay;
I guide and cheer her when perplexed
With many knots and tangles next.
And when she rises with the day,
Help her to sweep the dust away;
But if she's cross, or I'm contrary,
I send it straight into the dairy;
Apart we whistle, sigh or whine,
But when our forces we combine
We prove in vast expanding length
A problem of mechanic strength,
And turn, with motion swift and kind,
To raise the burdens of mankind,
And give them after toil or strife
A draught from out the well of life!

The Letter V.

I BREATHE in every ardent vow by faithful lovers spoken,
As well as in the vainer ones by faithless lovers broken;
And in forgiveness, too, I dwell, from seven to seventy-seven;
I make no claim on earth, but find a peaceful home in Heaven.
Men know me not, but find me oft in good and loving wives,
And I can give a softening touch to many human lives;
I crown the heads of volunteers, the valiant and the brave,
With those who strive the improvident from poverty to save.
In varied forms of verse I sing, and while you live and move
I hope that you will never fail to see my face in love.
With mournful voice. I must confess, I may be found in evil,
And on some very woeful day was captured by the devil.
The vile and vicious claim my aid, which I may not deny,
Though still on virtue I can call their efforts to defy.
And when the class is called to move, in rank and order due,
Just after tea with empty cups, I always follow you;
Your double marches to a cross from which the wise will run
To seek the sign that ends the line; and now my story's done.

Three Mosquito Songs

(Prize. Each Line to Commence with the Letter S. — S.I.N.)

Spring.

SINGING our vespers, we spin round the railings,
Sounding Réveillée we startle the night,
Stealthily sliding through nettings and veilings,
Softly on somnolent heads we alight.
Shall we not smile while the season is ours?
Striking the sleepers with fury and fear!
Short is our winter! Returning with flowers,
Springtime salutes us, and summer is near.

Summer.

Sound is the sleep, unsurprised at our singing,
Shameful the oaths at our serenade hurled;
Sore is the strife that ensues on our stinging
Sudden the slaps that around us are swirl'd.
Soaring serenely, we sail through the gloaming,
Seeking revenge for the swarms that are slain,
Saying, while sinners are sighing and foaming,
Sweet is the summer! supreme is her reign!

Autumn.

Shaken by Spring from her wallet of flowers,
Sprinkling the summer with silvery spray,
Shed through the Autumn in simmering showers,
Soon shall the southerlies sweep us away!
Slowly we sink to the sorrowful River —
Styx is surrounded with shades of our dead;
Surely, then, someone will say with a shiver,
Sunshine and song with mosquitoes have fled.

Prize, July. 1882.

A Photograph

YOU silly old lady! why did you consent
To pose for your photo, and thus to present
Your wither'd old visage to short-sighted eyes
That see not the soul in its mortal disguise.

With the seams and the furrows of eighty-eight years,
With your dimness of sight and your dulness of ears,
How could you allow your good grandson to try
The effect of your looks on his camera's eye?

You know you were never adapted to win
The artist's approval for delicate skin,
For regular feature or classical brow.
How could you expect to be passable now?

Go, wrap yourself up in your mantle of black,
And muse on the days that will never come back;
Be content to retire from the vista of light.
And leave its pure lens to the youthful and bright.

But, happy old lady, you know it is true
That in your long story there have been a few,
Some long since departed, and others still near,
To whom those poor outlines were pleasant and dear.

For they looked in the roughly-bound volume to find
On its pages the stamp of a reasoning mind:
They dived for the soul its emotions to prove,
And touched on a heart overflowing with love.

Ye, homely old ladies, be thankful if they
Among whom you have sojourned in hovels of clay,
When no longer they look on a weatherworn face,
May think of a spirit enshrouded in grace.

Let them speak to a soul that is yearning to bless,
To a heart still more loving than words can express;
And to eyes that were dim'd by humanity's woe,
Now shining in glory that earth cannot know.

My Doctor

A WORD I now for my Doctor must say,
Who does not visit me every day,
With doses and leeches and medical speeches,
To pass the wearisome time away;
But with talks of things we have done in our youth,
Of things we have learned in wisdom and truth,
Of Spirit Eternal, and Love Universal.
The Rich without envy, the Poor without ruth;
He drops in at times my mind to amuse,
With a tale of delight, and a budget of news.

21st August, 1909.

Last Words

As each poor wanderer bids the earth farewell,
Friends come in kindness their regrets to tell:
Let not my spirit pass in such a mood,
Let my last thoughts be of the great and good,
Let the last tones that in my ear shall sing.
Echo the praises of my Saviour King!

21st August, 1909.

Songs of Angels “To Hear the Angels Sing.”

YES, we will hear the Angels sing,
And will not only hear —
Our thankful notes with theirs shall ring
Around the earthly sphere;
Yes, we will join the tuneful song
That swells the choir above,
And sing with that harmonious throng
Of Wisdom, Truth and Love.

Rejoicing, we will sing with those
Who hailed Creation's day,
When at His mandate Light arose
And swept the night away;
And we will with the chorus sing
That hailed the starry night,
To glorify the newborn King
Of Wisdom, Love and Light,
So shall we join that joyful throng
That tells of death laid low,
And with a Resurrection song
Will meet our latest foe.

No sweeter note can Angels raise
To glad the courts of Heaven
Than that which tells their thankful praise
For erring man forgiven.
But while our gratitude to prove
Our human voices soar,
We touch one higher note of Love:
“Go, thou, and sin no more!”

1909.

Au Revoir

FAREWELL to the sense that has guided my way,
Through changes of darkness and scenes of delight,
My blessing by night, and my solace by day,
Revealing the beauty and glory of light.

Farewell to the pleasure, farewell to the power
That quick'ned my fancy, and nourished my brain;
The help and the balm of adversity's hour,
The joy of my life, and my comfort in pain.

Farewell to the eyes that for many long years
Have open'd with daylight and closed with the night,
Have sparkled with pleasure and shed a few tears,
The dew-drops of nature to make herself bright.

Farewell, oh! a tender farewell to the pen
That has aided my feeble endeavours to write
Of the joys and the griefs of the children of men.
Of the shadow of death, and the glory of light.

But I know that it is not forever farewell,
I shall waken some day from the slumber of night
On lines of celestial sweetness to tell
Of the love and the glory of Infinite Light.
