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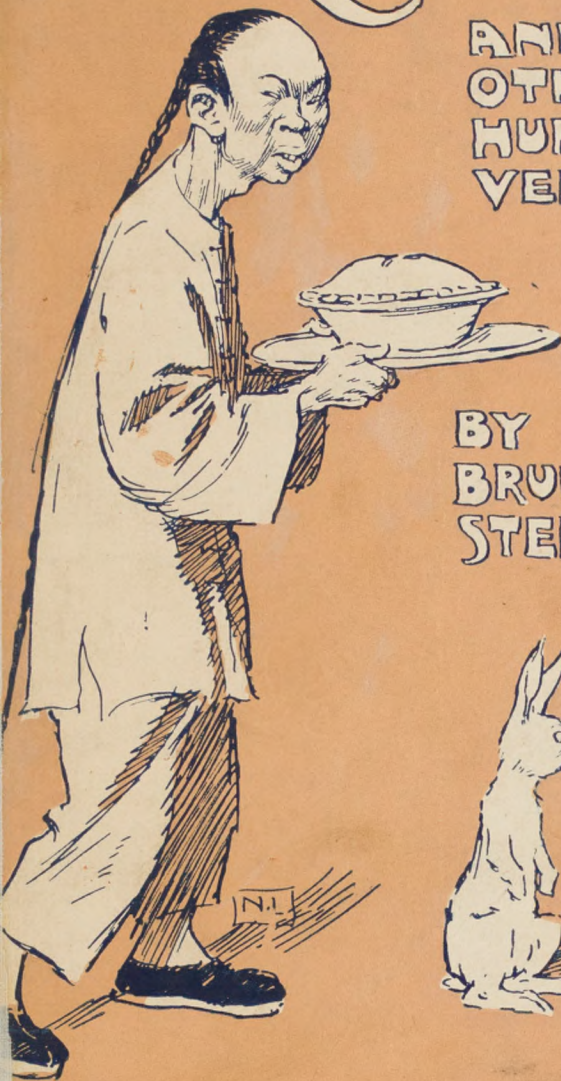






# MY CHINESE COOK:

AND  
OTHER  
HUMOROUS  
VERSES.



BY  
BRUNTON  
STEPHENS











MY CHINEE COOK  
AND OTHER HUMOROUS VERSES



# MY CHINEE COOK

AND OTHER HUMOROUS VERSES



BY

BRUNTON STEPHENS

SYDNEY

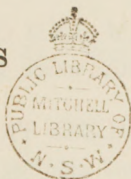
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### MY CHINEE COOK.

THEY who say the bush is dull are not so very far  
 astray,  
 For this eucalyptic cloisterdom is anything but gay ;  
 But its uneventful dulness I contentedly could brook,  
 If I only could get back my lost, lamented Chinee  
 cook.

We had tried them without number—cooks, to wit—my  
 wife and I ;  
 One a week, then three a fortnight, as my wife can  
 testify ;  
 But at last we got the right one ; I may say 'twas by a  
 fluke,  
 For he dropped in miscellaneous-like, that handy Chinee  
 cook.

He found the kitchen empty, laid his swag down, and  
commenced ;

My wife, surprised, found nothing to say anything  
against ;

But she asked him for how much a year the work he  
undertook—

“Me workee for me ration,” said that noble Chinee  
cook.

Then right off from next to nothing such a dinner he  
prepared,

That the Governor I'm certain less luxuriously fared ;  
And he waited, too, in spotless white, with such respect-  
ful look,

And bowed his head when grace was said, that pious  
Chinee cook.

He did the work of man and maid—made beds and  
swept out rooms ;

Nor cooled he in his zeal, as is the manner of new  
brooms :

Oh, he shed celestial brightness on the most sequestered  
nook,

For his mop and pail were everywhere—my cleanly  
Chinee cook.

We got fat upon his cooking ; we were happy in those  
days,  
For he tickled up our palates in a thousand pleasant  
ways.  
Oh his dinners ! Oh his dinners ! they were fit for any  
duke !  
Oh delectable Mongolian ! Oh celestial Chinese cook !

There was nothing in creation that he didn't put to  
use,  
And the less he got to cook with, all the more he could  
produce,  
All nature was his kitchen range, likewise his cook'ry  
book—  
Neither Soyer nor Meg Dod could teach that knowing  
Chinese cook.

And day by day upon my wife and me the mystery  
grew,  
How his virtues were so many and his earnings were so  
few ;  
And we laid our heads together to find out by hook or  
crook,  
The secret of the cheapness of that priceless Chinese  
cook.

And still the sense of mystery grew on us day by  
day,  
Till it came to be a trouble, and we wished him well  
away ;  
But we could not find a fault in one so far above  
rebuke—  
Ah, we didn't know the value of that valuable cook.

But one day when I was out he brought my wife a lot  
of things,  
Turquoise earrings, opal bracelets, ruby brooches,  
diamond rings,  
And he ran their various prices o'er as glibly as a  
book,  
And dirt cheap, too, were the jewels of that jewel of a  
cook.

I returned, and just in time to stop the purchase of the  
lot,  
And to ask him where on earth those costly jewels he  
had got,  
And when I looked him in the face, good gracious how  
he shook !  
And he says, says he, "Me bought him"—did that  
trembling Chinee cook.

And I a justice of the peace! O Fortune! how un-  
kind!

For a certain Sydney robbery came rushing to my  
mind.

“You bought them! Ah, I fear me, John, you paid  
them with a hook!

I am bound to apprehend you, oh unhappy Chinese  
cook!”

So the mystery was solved at length; the secret now we  
saw;

John had used us as a refuge from the clutches of the  
law;

And, now, alas, too late would I his frailty over-  
look!

He is gone, and I am left without my skilful Chinese  
cook.

Oh, could I taste again of those delicious luscious  
things,

I could pardon him the robbery of other people's  
rings;

I exaggerated principle, my duty I mistook,

When I handed over to the law my peerless Chinese  
cook.

What would I give just now for one of his superb  
ragouts,  
His entremets, his entrées, his incomparable stews?  
Oh, art and taste and piquancy my happy board forsook,  
When I came the J.P. over my lamented Chinee cook.

Take away the hated letters. 'Twas my "justice"  
robbed my "peace";  
Take my name from the commission, and my matchless  
cook release.  
But I fear my Johnny's dead, for I am haunted by a  
spook,  
With oblique eyes and a pigtail, like my lost, my Chinee  
cook.



### MY OTHER CHINEE COOK.

YES, I got another Johnny; but he was to Number  
 One  
 As a Satyr to Hyperion, as a rushlight to the sun;  
 He was lazy, he was cheeky, he was dirty, he was sly,  
 But he had a single virtue, and its name was rabbit  
 pie.

Now those who say the bush is dull are not so far  
 astray,  
 For the neutral tints of station life are anything but  
 gay;  
 But, with all its uneventfulness, I solemnly deny  
 That the bush is unendurable along with rabbit pie.

We had fixed one day to sack him, and agreed to moot  
the point  
When my lad should bring our usual regale of cindered  
joint,  
But instead of cindered joint we saw and smelt, my wife  
and I,  
Such a lovely, such a beautiful, oh ! such a rabbit pie !

There was quite a new expression on his lemon-coloured  
face,  
And the unexpected odour won him temporary grace,  
For we tacitly postponed the sacking-point till by-and  
bye,  
And we tacitly said nothing save the one word, "rabbit  
pie !"

I had learned that pleasant mystery should simply be  
endured,  
And forebore to ask of Johnny where the rabbits were  
procured !  
I had learned from Number One to stand aloof from  
how and why,  
And I threw myself upon the simple fact of rabbit pie.

And when the pie was opened, what a picture did we  
see !

They lay in beauty side by side, they filled our home  
with glee !

How excellent, how succulent, back, neck, and leg, and  
thigh !

What a noble gift is manhood ! What a trust is rabbit  
pie !

For a week the thing continued, rabbit pie from day to  
day ;

Though where he got the rabbits John would ne'er  
vouchsafe to say ;

But we never seemed to tire of them, and daily could  
descry

Subtle shades of new delight in each successive rabbit  
pie.

Sunday came ; by rabbit reckoning, the seventh day of  
the week ;

We had dined, we sat in silence, both our hearts (?) too  
full to speak,

When in walks Cousin George, and, with a sniff, says  
he, " Oh my !

What a savoury suggestion ! what a smell of rabbit  
pie !"

“Oh, why so late, George?” says my wife, “the rabbit pie is gone ;

But you *must* have one for tea, though. Ring the bell, my dear, for John.”

So I rang the bell for John, to whom my wife did signify,

“Let us have an early tea, John, and another rabbit pie.”

But John seemed taken quite aback, and shook his funny head,

And uttered words I comprehended no more than the dead ;

“Go, do as you are bid,” I cried, “we wait for no reply ;

Go ! let us have tea early, and another rabbit pie !”

Oh, that I had stopped his answer ! But it came out with a run :

“Last-a week-a plenty puppy ; this-a week-a puppy done !”

Just then my wife, my love, my life, the apple of mine eye,

Was seized with what seemed “mal-de-mer,”—“sick transit” rabbit pie !

And George! By George, he laughed, and then he  
howled like any bear!

The while my wife contorted like a mad "convulsion-  
naire;"

And I—I rushed on Johnny, and I smote him hip and  
thigh,

And I never saw him more, nor tasted more of rabbit  
pie.

And the childless mothers met me, as I kicked him from  
the door,

With loud maternal wailings and anathemas galore;

I must part with pretty Tiny, I must part with little  
Fly,

For I'm sure they know the story of the so-called  
"rabbit pie."

THE SQUATTER'S BACCY FAMINE.

IN blackest gloom he cursed his lot ;  
 His breath was one long weary sigh ;  
 His brows were gathered in a knot  
 That only baccy could untie.  
 His oldest pipe was scraped out clean ;  
 The deuce a puff was left him there ;  
 A hollow sucking sound of air  
 Was all he got his lips between.  
 He only said, " My life is dreary.  
 The Baccy's done," he said.  
 He said, " I am aweary, aweary ;  
 By Jove, I'm nearly dead."

The chimney-piece he searched in vain,  
 Into each pocket plunged his fist ;  
 His cheek was blanched with weary pain,  
 His mouth awry for want of twist.  
 He idled with his baccy-knife ;  
 He had no care for daily bread :—  
 A single stick of Negro-head  
 Would be to him the staff of life.

He only said, "My life is dreary.  
The Baccy's done," he said.  
He said, "I am aweary, aweary  
I'd *most as soon* be dead."

Books had no power to mend his grief ;  
The magazines could tempt no more ;  
"Cut Gold-Leaf" was the only leaf  
That he had cared to ponder o'er.  
From chair to sofa sad he swings,  
And then from sofa back to chair ;  
But in the depth of his despair  
Can catch no "bird's-eye" view of things.  
And still he said, "My life is dreary.  
No Baccy, boys," he said.  
He said, "I am aweary, aweary ;  
I'd *just as soon* be dead."

His meals go by he knows not how ;  
No taste in flesh, or fowl, or fish ;  
There's not a dish could tempt him now,  
Except a cake of Caven-dish.  
His life is but a weary drag ;  
He cannot choose but curse and swear,  
And thrust his fingers through his hair,  
All shaggy in the want of shag.

And still he said, "My life is dreary.  
No Baccy, boys," he said.  
He said, "I am aweary, aweary ;  
I'd *rather far* be dead."

To him one end of old cheroot  
Were sweetest root that ever grew.  
No honey were due substitute  
For "Our Superior Honey-Dew."  
One little fig of Latakia  
Would buy all fruits of Paradise ;  
"Prince Alfred's Mixture" fetch a price  
Above both Prince and Galatea.  
Sudden he said, "No more be dreary !  
The dray has come !" he said.  
He said, "I'll smoke till I am weary—  
And then, I'll go to bed."

## OFF THE TRACK.

OH where the deuce is the track, the track?  
 Round an' round, an' forrard, an' back!  
 "Keep the sun on yer right," they said—  
 But, hang it, he's gone an' got over my head!

"Make for a belt of apple trees;"—  
 Jist so. But where's yer belt, if ye please?  
 By gum, it's hot! This child 'll melt,  
 An' there ain't no apples, nor ain't no belt.

"Keep clear o' the timber-getters' tracks,"  
 But wich is wich, I'd beg to ax?  
 They forks and jines, the devil knows how—  
 I wish I'd a sight o' either now!

"Leave the track," sez they, "when you sees  
 Some yards to the right two big grass trees."  
 Two! It's dozens on dozens I pass—  
 Most on 'em big, an' all on 'em grass.

Oh where the deuce is the track, the track ?  
 I'm fairly taken aback, aback.  
 "Keep tow'rd the river. You can't go wrong."  
 Whew? Can't I, though! That was rayther strong.

"Follow the lay o' the land," sez they ;  
 But, Lord, this flat ain't got no lay!  
 Whew! Ain't it hot on the pint o' the nose?  
 An' the more I mops the hotter I grows.

"An' when you comes to the foot o' the range"—  
 WHEN! That's the pint. But ain't it strange,  
 That the further I goes, to left or right,  
 The more there ain't no range in sight.

Gum trees, gum trees, slim an' high,  
 Timber green an' timber dry.  
 Blackened stumps an' fallen logs—  
 Lively work as on we jogs!

Oh the devil an' all take the flat, the flat!  
 I'm one myself for the matter o' that.  
 I'm mazed, an' so is the brute I rides,  
 An' the sun's getting over the left besides.

Dash it, I'll follow my nose, my nose !  
Step out, straight forrard, here goes, here goes !  
Let the sun be left, or the sun be right,  
Summat or other must come in sight.

\*

\*

\*

\*

Well, well ! If this ain't too bad by half !  
Lor', how the beggars 'll laugh an' chaff !  
Back to my startin' point ? Yes ; tis so.  
I put up them slip-rails six hours ago.

## DROUGHT AND DOCTRINE.

COME, take the tenner, doctor . . . yes, I know the bill  
says "five,"

But it ain't as if you'd merely kep' our little 'un alive ;  
Man, you saved the mother's reason when you saved  
that babby's life,

An' it's thanks to *you* I ha'n't a ravin' idiot for a wife.

Let me tell you all the story, an' if then you think it  
strange

That I'd like to fee ye extry—why, I'll take the  
bloomin' change.

If yer bill had said a hunderd . . . I'm a poor man, doc,  
an' yet

I'd 'a' slaved till I had squared it ; ay, an' still been in  
yer debt.

Well, you see the wife's got notions on a heap o' things  
that ain't

To be handled by a man as don't pretend to be a saint ;  
So I minds "the cultivation," smokes my pipe, an'  
makes no stir,

An' religion an' such p'int's I lays entirely on to her.

Now, she's got it fixed within her that, if children die  
afore

They've been sprinkled by the parson, they've no show  
for evermore ;

An' though they're spared the pitchforks, an' the brim-  
stun', an' the smoke,

They ain't allowed to mix *up there* with other little folk.

So when our last began to pine, an' lost his pretty smile,  
An' not a parson to be had within a hunder mile—

(For though there is a chapel down at Bluegrass Creek,  
you know,

The clargy's there on dooty only thrice a year or so)—

Well, when our yet unchristen'd mite grew limp an' thin  
an' pale,

It would 'a' cut you to the heart to hear the mother  
wail

About her "unregenerate babe," an' how, if it should go,  
'Twould have no chance with them as had their registers  
to show.

Then awful quiet she grew, an' hadn't spoken for a  
week,

When in came brother Bill one day with news from  
Bluegrass Creek.

"I seen," says he, "a notice on the chapel railin' tied ;  
They'll have service there this *evenin'*—can the young-  
ster stand the ride ?

“ For we can’t have parson here, if it be true, as  
 I’ve heard say,  
 There’s a dyin’ man as wants him more’n twenty mile  
 away ;  
 So —He hadn’t time to finish ere the child was out  
 of bed  
 With a shawl about its body an’ a hood upon its head.

“ Saddle up,” the missus said. I did her biddin’ like a  
 bird.  
 Perhaps I thought it foolish, but I never said a word ;  
 For though I have a vote in what the kids eat, drink,  
 or wear,  
 Their sperritual requirements are entirely *her* affair.

We started on our two hours’ ride beneath a burnin’  
 sun,  
 With Aunt Sal and Bill for sureties to renounce the  
 Evil One ;  
 An’ a bottle in Sal’s basket that was labelled “ Fine Old  
 Tom ”  
 Held the water that regeneration was to follow from.

For Bluegrass Creek was dry, as Bill that very day had  
 found,  
 An’ not a sup o’ water to be had for miles around ;  
 So, to make salvation sartin for the babby’s little soul,  
 We had filled a dead marine, sir, at the fam’ly waterhole.

Which every forty rods or so Sal raised it to her head,  
An' took a snifter, "just enough to wet her lips," she  
said ;

Whereby it came to pass that when we reached the  
chapel door

There was only what would serve the job, an' deuce a  
dribble more.

The service had begun—we didn't like to carry in

A vessel with so evident a carritur for gin ;

So we left it in the porch, an,' havin' done our level best,

Went an' owned to bein' "mis'erable offenders" with the  
rest.

An' nigh upon the finish, when the parson had been told

That a lamb was waitin' there to be admitted to the  
fold,

Rememberin' the needful, I gets up an' quietly slips

To the porch to see—a swagsman—with our bottle at his  
lips !

Such a faintness came all over me, you might have then  
an' there

Knocked me down, sir, with a feather, or tied me with  
a hair.

Doc, I couldn't speak nor move ; an' though I caught  
the beggar's eye,

With a wink he turned the bottle bottom up an' drank  
it dry.

An' then he flung it from him, bein' suddintly aware  
 That the label on't was merely a deloosion an' a snare ;  
 An' the crash cut short the people in the middle of  
     " A-men,"  
 An' all the congregation heard him holler " Sold again!"

So that christ'nin' was a failure ; every water-flask was  
     drained ;  
 Ev'n the monkey in the vestry not a blessed drop  
     contained ;  
 An' the parson in a hurry cantered off upon his mare,  
 Leaving baby unregenerate, an' missus in despair.

That night the child grew worse, but all my care was  
     for the wife ;  
 I feared more for her reason than for that wee spark o'  
     life. . . .  
 But you know the rest—how Providence contrived that  
     very night  
 That a doctor should come cadgin' at our shanty for a  
     light. . . .

Baby? Oh, he's chirpy, thank ye—been baptized—his  
     name is Bill.  
 It's weeks an' weeks since parson came an' put him  
     through the mill ;  
 An' his mother's mighty vain upon the subjick of his  
     weight,  
 An' reg'lar cook-a-hoop about his sperritual state

So now you'll take the tenner. Oh, confound the  
bloomin' change !

Lord, had Billy died !—but, doctor, don't you think it  
summut strange

That them as keeps the Gate would have refused to let  
him in

Because a fool mistook a drop of Adam's ale for gin ?

## MARSUPIAL BILL.\*

## A CHRISTMAS STORY.

## 1

It was the time when geese despond,  
 And turkeys make their wills ;  
 The time when Christians, to a man,  
 Forgive each other's bills ;  
 It was the time when Christmas glee  
 The heart of childhood fills.

## 2

Alas ! that, when the changing year  
 Brings round the blessed day,  
 The hearts of little Queensland boys  
 Wax keen to hunt and slay—  
 As if the chime of Christmas time  
 Were but a call to prey.

\* See note at the end of the volume.

## 3

Alas! that when our dwellings teem  
 With comfits and with toys—  
 When bat and ball and wicket call  
 To yet sublimer joys—  
 Whatever can't be caught and killed  
 Is stale to certain boys.

## 4

Strange that, with such instructive things  
 From which to pick and choose,  
 With moral books and puzzle maps  
 That "teach while they amuse,"  
 Some boys can find no pleasure save  
 In killing kangaroos.

## 5

Where Quart Pot Creek to Severn's stream  
 Its mighty tribute rolls,  
 There stands a town—the happiest town,  
 I think, betwixt the poles ;  
 And all around is holy ground ;  
 In fact, it's *full* of holes.

## 6

And there, or thereabouts, there dwelt  
 (Still dwells, for aught I know)  
 A little boy, whose moral tone  
 Was lamentably low ;  
 A shocking scamp, with just a speck  
 Of good in embryo.

## 7

His name was Bill. To wallabies  
 He bore an evil will ;  
 All things that hop on hinder legs  
 His function was to kill,  
 And from his show of scalps he won  
 The name, Marsupial Bill.

## 8

His face and form were pinched and lean,  
 And dim his youthful eye :  
 'Tis well that growing Queensland boys  
 Should know the reason why ;—  
 My little lads, 'twas all along  
 Of smoking on the sly.

## 9

Through this was William small and lean,  
 Through this his eye was dim,  
 Nor biceps rose on nerveless arm,  
 Nor calf on nether limb ;—  
 Ye growing boys and hobbledehoys,  
 Be warned by me—and him.

## 10

His elevated shoulders stood  
 But little way apart ;  
 His elbow joints—Oh, poor avail  
 Of mere descriptive art !  
 I would I had an artist man  
 To show them William's "carte !"

## 11

And should you ask how such a one  
A mighty hunter grew,  
So many flying does outsped,  
So many boomers slew—  
Bill owned a canine mate, to which  
His victories were due.

## 12

A brute so complex that he set  
“The fancy” all agog;  
Of breed that ne'er found name in ex-  
hibition catalogue!  
Oh, would I had an artist man  
To show them William's dog!

## 13

On Christmas-eve, at set of sun,  
A hollow tree he sought;  
A match, a scratch, a puff, and Bill  
Was lost in smoke and thought,  
And “all his battles o'er again”  
In fervid fancy fought.

## 14

No ha'penny thing, no penny thing,  
No thing of common clay  
Such brilliant memories evoked,  
With hopes as bright as they—  
It was his father's Sunday pipe  
That Bill had stolen away.

## 15

For many a time and oft had he  
Admired the wondrous bowl,  
The stem, the mouthpiece, and the *tout*  
*Ensemble* of the whole,  
Until desire of it had grown  
A portion of his soul—

## 16

Until desire o'ergrew the fear  
Of kick, or cuff, or stripe.  
That eve, when Bill stepped forth from home  
The guilty scheme was ripe—  
His right-hand trouser-leg concealed  
His father's Sunday pipe.

## 17

And now within a heaven of smoke  
Against the tree he leant,  
The while the mellow influence  
Through all his vitals went,  
And for the first time in his life  
He knew what meerschaum meant.

## 18

So subtly stole the influence  
His inmost being through,  
He did not mark the sudden bark  
That signalled kangaroo,  
Nor noted that his constant mate  
Had vanished from his view.

## 19

His mind and eye were on the pipe  
 And he had just begun  
 To count how many scalps would go  
 To purchase such a one,—  
 When turning round his head, he saw,  
 Against the setting sun,



## 20

A Boomer! . . . and, as when the waves  
 Close o'er a drowning head,  
 Sudden the whole forgotten past  
 Before the soul lies spread,  
 And all the charge-sheet of a life  
 In one brief glance is read—

## 21

Ev'n so in instant tumult thronged,  
 About his wildered mind,  
 A thousand shapes of wounded things,  
 Of every size and kind ;  
 And some were scalped, and some were maimed  
 And some were docked behind.

## 22

The kangaroo, the wallaroo,  
 The wallaby was there ;  
 The 'possum jabbered in its fright,  
 Sore wept the native bear ;  
 The stricken paddamelon moaned  
 Its ineffectual prayer ;

The battered 'guana fixed on him  
 Its dull remonstrant stare ;  
 While tail-less lizards swarmed and crawled  
 About him everywhere ;  
 And limbless frogs denounced him with  
 The croaking of despair ;  
 And tortured bats with ghostly wings  
 Clung to his stiffened hair ;—  
 But suddenly the vision passed,  
 And Bill became aware  
 That he was in the Boomer's arms,  
 And bounding through the air.

## 23

Hop, hop, they went, o'er broken wilds,  
 Where, stacked in many a mound,  
 The hoards of clay-embedded ore  
 Rose grimly all around :—  
 Unheeding miners' rights, they jumped  
 A claim at every bound.

## 24

Then on o'er wastes so very bare  
 That even "stripping" ceased ;  
 And as they neared the hill countrie  
 The frightful pace increased ;  
 Nor granite slope nor timbered ridge  
 Told on the tireless beast.

The sun went down, the full-orbed moon  
Came swimming up the East,  
Nor yet the "old man" slackened speed,  
Nor yet his prey released.

## 25

Still on and on, till from a cliff  
A sentry challenged near,—  
Though what the challenge or reply  
No mortal man may hear ;  
We only know that for a sign  
Each drooped his dexter ear.

## 26

Whate'er it meant, the "old man" checked  
His onward course thereat,  
Dropped Bill, and dragged him by the wrists  
Across a wooded flat,  
To where the KANGAROO-GEMOT  
In full assembly sat.

## 27

Ringed by the fathers of the tribe,  
Surrounded yet alone,  
The Bossaroo superbly posed  
Upon a granite throne—  
A very old "old man" who had  
Four generations known.

## 28

Upon his mournful eye the woes  
Of all his race were writ ;  
Yet age and sorrow had not dimmed  
His majesty a whit ;  
And, oh, his metatarsal bones  
Displayed the real grit !

## 29

Nor unattended sat the sires ;  
Behind them crouched their mates ;  
Nor kangaroos alone composed  
The Congress of the States,  
But all proscribed marsupial breeds  
Had sent their delegates.

## 30

Lo, at a signal from the boss  
The serried ring gave way,  
And through an opening in the throng  
The captor dragged his prey,  
Bowed to the chair, then called to aid  
A strapping M.L.A.

## 31

And thus, betwixt a double guard,  
The prisoner found his place ;  
And all around were wrathful eyes  
Without a gleam of grace ;—  
One wild concatenated scowl  
Was focussed in his face.

## 32

Now hitherto poor Bill had been  
As dumb as dumb could be,  
But at that pandemoniac scowl  
His struggling tongue got free ;  
He lifted up his voice and cried,  
“ Oh, please, it wasn't me ! ”

## 33

A tumult rose ; but with a sign  
The boss the riot checked,  
Then cleared his throat and bade the guard  
The prisoner's clothes inspect :—  
“ Ay, ay, Sir ! ” came the prompt reply,  
Or words to that effect.

## 34

They spake the language that was heard  
While yet the world was young ;  
And he who knows it knows all speech  
That out of it hath sprung :—  
(With compliments to Dr. Hearn,  
It was the Aryan tongue).

## 35

And should you ask how Bill was up  
To every word they said,  
And how such antiquated lore  
Had got into his head—  
’Twas his pre-natal memory  
That served him in such stead.

## 36

They searched the prisoner's clothes, and first  
 They brought the pipe to view,—  
 For though it is a mystery  
 To me as well as you,  
 It is a solemn fact that Bill  
 Had stuck to it all through.

## 37

Then one by one his poor effects  
 Were collared by his guards,—  
 Peach-stones, fig-chew, a catapult,  
 A greasy pack of cards,  
 A half-cut cake of cavendish  
 (Prime quality—Gaujard's);

## 38

But when from out a leathern sheath  
 A blood-stained knife they drew,  
 All round the court, from hand to hand,  
 They passed it in review :  
 Each sniffed the blade in turn, and each  
 In turn said—"Kangaroo!"

## 39

And last, a printed document  
 Their simple souls perplexed :  
 Each eyed the paper learnedly,  
 And passed it to the next ;  
 But not an Aryan of them all  
 Could even guess the text.

## 40

At length they summoned to their aid  
 An old and learnèd clerk,  
 Who, as tradition told, had been  
 With Noah in the ark—  
 Though possibly tradition here  
 Had overshot the mark.

## 41

And while a murmur of applause  
 Through all the Congress ran,  
 Bowed with the weight of many years  
 Hopped forth that gray "old man,"  
 Mounted his ancient spectacles,  
 Sneezed thrice, and thus began :—

## 42

"Whereas it is expedient to  
 Encourage the destruc-  
 tion of marsupial animals—  
 (Sensation and a ruc-  
 tion in the court, with groans and cries  
 From joey, doe, and buck)—

## 43

"Be it enacted therefore by  
 The Queen's most Excellènt  
 —er—Majesty—er—by and with  
 The advice and the consent  
 Of Council and Assembly of  
 Queensland in Parliamènt—

## 44

“In the construction of this Act—”  
 But here arose a sort  
 Of interruption from the Right,  
 Betwixt a cough and snort ;  
 While from the less fastidious Left  
 Came cries of “Cut it short !”

## 45

Then clause on clause, with careless haste,  
 The learnèd clerk despatched ;  
 But when he read, “The scalps when shown  
 Must have the ears attached,”  
 The whole assembly rushed the guard  
 And at the prisoner snatched.

## 46

But when the reader raised his voice,  
 And thus gave forth the sense,  
 “For kangaroo scalps ninepence each,  
 For wallabies’ *three* pence,”  
 Division rose amongst his foes,  
 And stayed their violence.

## 47

For those at ninepence each, elate  
 At such a mark of fame,  
 Drew back, and left the threepenny mob  
 To do the deed of shame ;  
 But the low-quoted wallabies,  
 Disgusted, dropped the game.

## 48

Bill strove to speak ; his voice was drowned  
With catcall, groan, and hiss,  
Until the Bossaroo, with slow  
Judicial emphasis,  
Said, " Capias-nisi-prius—Boy,  
What say you to all this ? "

## 49

Then silence fell upon the peers,  
And on the threepenny mob,  
The while this wicked little boy  
Said, snivelling through a sob,  
" Oh please, I never done it, sir—  
No, never ; sepmebob !

## 50

" I am a gentle orphan boy,  
Nor never jines no row :  
My father is a tributer,  
My mother keeps a cow :  
We always lives respectable :  
We tries it, anyhow :  
The bill as that old bloke has read  
I never seen till now ;  
And that 'ere blood 's on that 'ere knife  
Since father killed the sow. "

51

Then spake the Boss :—“ The quality  
 Of mercy is not strained ;  
 Yet there is still a point or two  
 We'd like to have explained,  
 Ere we absolve you from the charge  
 Whereon you stand arraigned.

52

“ But since the law is merciful,  
 And hastes not to condemn,  
 If witnesses to character  
 Exist, go, fetch us them :  
 The court will sit to-morrow night  
 At nine fifteen, p.m.

53

“ And since without your father's pipe  
 You dare not home return,—  
 (Our ancient brother with the specs  
 Has twigged the whole concern ;  
 And, truly, what he doesn't know  
 Ain't worth your while to learn) :—

54

“ And further, since the oath of man  
 Is but of scant avail,  
 And few like Regulus return  
 Spontaneously to jail—

(My fit is coming on ; I feel  
 The symptoms in my tail)—  
 We will dispense with oaths, and keep  
 The meerschaum as your bail.

## 55

“To-morrow—(oh my vertebræ !)  
 To-morrow night at eight,  
 At the Wheal Edith, by the flume,  
 A corp’ral’s guard will wait ;  
 These shall escort your witnesses,  
 Blindfolded. Don’t be late.

## 56

“ And this remember—(oh my joints !)—  
 Not one of all the race  
 Whose leaders boss this scalping job  
 May stand before my face ;  
 The witness of a Britisher  
 Will prejudice your case.

## 57

“ Now he who brought you will reverse  
 The process—(oh my toe !)—  
 Your downward path is up above,  
 Your upward down below :  
 Stand not upon the order of  
 Your going, sir ; but go.

58

“And take this for thy dowry, boy,  
‘Existence is a sell,’  
I once was bitten by a dog,  
Since which I am not well.  
Methinks my speech already shows  
Symptoms of doggerel.”

*PART SECOND.*

## 1

FAST flew the hours. We may not tell  
Of William's weary quest,  
How round the outskirts of the town  
He roamed like one possessed—  
Nor with what guileful arts he plied  
The foreign interest.

## 2

Enough that at the appointed hour,  
With backers at his back,  
He faced the noble Bossaroo,  
(Still hypochondriac)—  
And introduced his witnesses,  
A yellow and a black ;

## 3

A placid-eyed Mongolian  
From sandy Pechelee,  
Who'd stimulate an inch of soil  
To do the work of three,  
Or make a metamorphic rock  
Sprout into cabbagee ;

## 4

A big buck nigger next ; who once  
 Bowed down to stocks and stones  
 (For years digested captives formed  
 The tissue of his bones),  
 But now he is an Anglican,  
 Who a live " Bissop " owns,  
 Besides a gorgeous suit of slops,  
 And the proud name of Jones.

## 5

Slow rose the lordly Bossaroo,  
 And bade unveil their eyes ;  
 And, when those aliens gazed around  
 On all that dread assize,  
 They howled in unison and made  
 Night hideous with their cries.

## 6

For Bill had lured them lyingly—  
 But why should we explain ;  
 The whole thing was exceptional,  
 And can't occur again.  
 Besides, to poke at mysteries  
 Is wanton and profane.

## 7

With single will they turned on Bill,  
 And blazed his evil name ;  
 With double tongue their charge they flung,  
 And swore unto the same ;

With treble spite did both unite  
To spoil his little game.

## 8

“ Me see him catchee kangaloo,”  
Deponed on oath Ah Chee ;  
“ Me see him—hi ! hst !—soolem dog,  
No mind my cabbage—  
Me lose hap clown, him knockee down  
Ten twenty lettucee ! ”

## 9

“ Massoopy Bill, him wicked boy,”  
Deponed the South Sea swell ;  
“ Two moon, come Bissop preach in church,  
Him loaf outside an' yell ;  
Me run—him run—me catch—him say  
' Tree scalp if you no tell. '

## 10

So, when the learnèd clerk had both  
Their depositions read,  
The judge drew forth his judgment cap,  
And put it on his head,  
And sentenced poor Marsupial Bill  
To hang till he was dead.

## 11

“ But since ”—so spake the Bossaroo—  
“ From evidence we know  
That many a scalped and gory head  
This night through him lies low,

We'll scalp him first!"—and all the house,  
*Nem. con.*, cried "Be it so?"  
 And as a sign and seal of doom,  
 Turned down the right thumb-toe.

## 12

"With his own knife," the Boss resumed,  
 "Ah Chee shall do the deed—  
 The gods poetic justice love—  
 And make the assassin bleed  
 By his own proper instrument.  
 Mongolian, proceed."

## 13

What followed next, who gave the word  
 For mate to link with mate,  
 Nor Bill, nor Jones, nor yet Ah Chee  
 Can very clearly state;  
 But that 'twas a corroboree  
 All three corroborate.

## 14

In vain poor William prayed—in vain  
 His suppliant knees he bowed,  
 And by a pile of sacred names  
 For mercy cried aloud—  
 The point was at his occiput,  
 When, lo! from out the crowd

## 15

Stepped forth a rare and radiant dame,  
 The Boss's pride and stay,

(The dam of Bossárovitch,  
 Still young, though somewhat gray,  
 An elegant marsupial,  
 Well-mannered, *bien née*)—  
 Stepped forth before them, and remarked  
 Seductively, “Belay !”  
 Then, kneeling by the judgment seat,  
 Thus sweetly said her say :—  
 “Most Noble Grand, have you forgot  
 That this is Christmas Day ?

## 16

“Beseech you, bid that heathen hand  
 Withhold the bloody knife !  
 Recall your fearful words of doom—  
 Nay, turn not from your wife,  
 But give me as a Christmas Box  
 The little captive’s life.”

## 17

Then quickly from his granite throne  
 Down leaped the Noble Grand,  
 And, kneeling, kissed right courteously  
 His royal lady’s hand ;  
 Then, as he raised her up, pronounced  
 The joyful countermand ;  
 Whereat the rest turned up their toes,  
 That Bill might understand  
 The Congress willed his days should yet  
 Be long upon the land.

## 18

Then raged the revelry anew,  
 With sound of drum and fife ;  
 The Boss himself forgot his woes,  
 And danced as if for life ;  
 While the old clerk forgot *himself*,  
 And kissed the Boss's wife.

## 19

And when there fell a weariness  
 On all the panting throng,  
 And Bossaroo and ancient clerk  
 Alike had nigh "gone bong"—  
 Amid a jaded pause was heard  
 A call for "Joey's Song !"

## 20

And presently a little head,  
 As from a little nest,  
 Peeped o'er a snug maternal pouch,  
 And sang its little best,  
 (The song is very rare, and full  
 Of antique interest) :—  
 "What does little Joey say  
 In his pouch at peep-of-day ?  
 'Let me hop,' says little Joey ;  
 'Mother, let me hop away.'  
 'Joey, rest a little longer,  
 Till the little legs are stronger.'  
 So he rests a little longer,  
 Then he gaily hops away."

## 21

He ceased ; the pre-diluvian clerk  
Rose on his quivering shanks,  
And with a well-turned compliment  
Proposed a vote of thanks—  
Just then a breathless picket broke  
All gory through the ranks !

## 22

But ere his trembling tongue had time  
To tell his tale of woe,  
And why thus grimly he disturbed  
The happy *status quo*,—  
With giant bound Bill's faithful hound  
Leaped madly on the foe !

## 23

Ah, then and there was sudden scare,  
The swiftest took the lead ;  
Ah, there and then—but oh, the pen  
Is impotent indeed !  
Oh, would I had an artist man  
To show the Great Stampede !

## 24

What next befell may somewhat strain  
The limits of belief ;  
But where so many marvels are,  
Why boggle at the chief ?  
'Twere shame if lack of faith should cause  
Our moral come to grief.

## 25

From all the flying ruck the dog  
 Had singled out the Queen ;  
 Another instant and the Boss  
 A widower had been,  
 When—(that's a pithy saw that bids  
 Expect the unforeseen)—

## 26

BILL CALLED HIM OFF! The dog drew back,  
 And on a boulder leant.  
 'Twas months ago, and still that dog  
 Is pondering the event,  
 And even to this very hour  
 Can't fathom what it meant ;  
 It was a thing so utterly  
 Without a precedent.

## 27

But Bill, the Chinaman, and Jones,  
 The Queen, and you, and I,  
 We know the secret of the change,  
 We know the reason why ;  
 And—may I be allowed to add?—  
 The moral hangs thereby.

## 28

But since nor boy nor man receives  
 Advice without a pang,  
 And this narrator's muse has failed  
 To catch the proper twang,—  
 The moral hanging plainly there,  
 Suppose we let it—hang.

## A PICCANINNY.

Lo by the "humpy" door a smockless Venus!  
 Unblushing bronze, she shrinks not, having seen us,  
 Though there is nought but short couch-grass between us.

She hath no polonaise, no Dolly Varden;  
 Yet turns she not away, nor asketh pardon;  
 Fact is, she doesn't care a copper "farden."

Ah yet, her age her reputation spareth;  
 At three years old pert Venus little careth,  
 She puts her hand upon her hip and stareth;

All unabashed, unhaberdashed, unheeding,  
 No Medicean, charmingly receding,  
 But quite unconscious of improper breeding.

'Tis well; it smacks of Eden ere came sin in,  
 Or any rag of consciousness or linen,  
 Or anything that one could stick a pin in.

Could boundaries be neater? posture meeter?  
 Could bronze antique or terra cotta beat her?  
 Saw ever artist any thing completer?

A shade protuberant, beyond contesting,  
 Where this day's 'possum is just now digesting,  
 But otherwise, all over interesting;

Trim without trimming, furbelow, or bow on;  
 Was ever sable skin with such a glow on?  
 So darkly soft, so softly sleek, and—so on?

Was ever known so dark, so bright an iris,  
 Where sleep of light, but never play of fire is—  
 Where not a soupçon of a wild desire is?

O swarthy statuette! hast thou no notion  
 That life is fire and war and wild commotion?  
 A burning bush, a chafed and raging ocean?

Hast thou no questioning of what's before thee?  
 Of who shall envy thee, or who adore thee?  
 Or whose the jealous weapon that shall score thee?

Hast thou no faint prevision of disaster—  
 Of dark abduction from thy lord and master—  
 Of aliens fleeing, kindred following faster?

No faint forehearing of the waddies banging,  
Of club and heelaman together clanging,  
War shouts, and universal boomeranging?

And thou the bone of all the fierce contention—  
The direful spring of broken-nosed dissension—  
A Helen in the nigger apprehension?

Nay, my black tulip, I congratulate thee,  
Thou canst not guess the troubles that await thee,  
Nor carest who shall love or who shall hate thee:

Recking as little of the human passions  
As of the very latest Paris fashions,  
And soaring not beyond thy daily rations!

Die young, for mercy's sake! If thou grow older,  
Thou shalt grow lean at calf and sharp at shoulder,  
And daily greedier and daily bolder;

A pipe between thy savage grinders thrusting,  
For rum and everlasting 'baccy lusting,  
And altogether filthy and disgusting;

Just such another as the dam that bore thee—  
That haggard Sycorax now bending o'er thee!  
Die young, my sable pippin, I implore thee!

Why shouldst thou live to know deterioration ?  
 To walk a spectre of emaciation ?  
 To grow, like that, all over corrugation ?

A trifle miscellaneous like her, too,  
 An object not "de luxe" and not "de vertu"—  
 A being odious even to refer to ?

Her childhood, too, like thine, was soft and tender ;  
 Her womanhood hath nought to recommend her ;  
 At thirty she is not of any gender.

Oh, dusky fondling, let the warning teach thee !  
 Through muddiest brain-pulp may the lesson reach thee.  
 Oh, die of something fatal, I beseech thee !

While yet thou wear'st the crown of morning graces,  
 While yet the touch of dawn upon thy face is—  
 Back, little nigger, to the night's embraces !

Hope nought : each year some new defect discloses ;  
 As sure as o'er thy mouth thy little nose is,  
 Thy only hope is in metempsychosis.

Who knows but after some few short gradations,  
 After a brace or so of generations,  
 We two may have exchanged our hues and stations ?

Methinks I see thee suddenly grow bigger,  
White in the face and stately in the figure,  
And I a miserable little nigger !

Should this be thus—oh come not moralising !  
Approach not thou my humpy poetising !  
Spare thine Iambics and apostrophising !

Let subtle nature, if it suit her, black me,  
Let vesture lack me, bigger niggers whack me,  
Let hunger rack me, let disaster track me,  
And anguish hoist me to her highest acme—

Let me bear all thine incidental curses,  
Nor share the smallest of thy scanty mercies,  
But put me not—oh, put me not in verses !

She grins. She heedeth not advice or warning,  
Alike philosophy and triplets scorning.  
Adieu, then. Fare thee well. Ta-ta. Good morning

## TO A BLACK GIN.

DAUGHTER of Eve, draw near—I would behold thee.  
 Good Heavens! Could ever arm of man enfold thee?  
 Did the same Nature that made Phryne mould thee?

Come thou to leeward; for thy balmy presence  
 Savoureth not a whit of *mille-fleurescence*:—  
 My nose is no insentient excrescence.

Thou art not beautiful, I tell thee plainly,  
 Oh! thou ungainliest of things ungainly;  
 Who thinks thee less than hideous doats insanely.

Most unæsthetical of things terrestrial,  
 Hadst thou indeed an origin celestial?—  
 Thy lineaments are positively bestial!

Yet thou my sister art, the clergy tell me ;  
 Though, truth to state, thy brutish looks compel me  
 To hope these parsons merely want to *sell* me.

A hundred times and more I've heard and read it ;  
 But if Saint Paul himself came down and said it,  
 Upon my soul I could not give it credit.

"God's image cut in ebony," says someone ;  
 'Tis to be hoped some day thou may'st become one ;  
 The present image is a very rum one.

*Thy* face "the human face divine!" . . . Oh, Moses !  
 Whatever trait divine thy face discloses,  
 Some vile Olympian cross-play pre-supposes.

Thy nose appeareth but a transverse section :  
 Thy mouth hath no particular direction,—  
 A flabby-rimmed abyss of imperfection.

Thy skull development mine eye displeases ;  
 Thou wilt not suffer much from brain diseases ;  
 Thy facial angle forty-five degrees is.

The coarseness of thy tresses is distressing,  
 With grease and raddle firmly coalescing,  
 I cannot laud thy system of "top-dressing."

Thy dress is somewhat scant for proper feeling ;  
 As is thy flesh, too,—scarce thy bones concealing :  
 Thy calves unquestionably want re-vealing.

Thy rugged skin is hideous with tattooing,  
 And legible with hieroglyphic wooing—  
 Sweet things in art of some fierce lover's doing.

For thou some lover hast, I bet a guinea,—  
 Some partner in thy fetid ignominy,  
 The *raison d'être* of this piccaninny.

What must *he* be whose eye thou hast delighted ?  
 His sense of beauty hopelessly benighted !  
 The canons of his taste how badly sighted !

What must his gauge be, if thy features pleased him ?  
 If lordship of such limbs as thine appeased him,  
 It was not “*calf-love*” certainly that seized him.

And is he amorously sympathetic ?  
 And doth he kiss thee ? . . . Oh my soul prophetic !  
 The very notion is a strong emetic !

And doth he smooth thine hours with oily talking ?  
 And take thee conjugally out-a-walking ?  
 And crown thy transports with a tom-a-hawking ?

I guess his love and anger are combined so ;  
 His passions on thy shoulders are defined so ;  
 "His passages of love" are *underlined* so.

Tell me thy name. What? . . . Helen? . . . (Oh, ~~C~~Enone,  
 That name bequeathed to one so foul and bony  
 Avengeth well thy ruptured matrimony !)

Eve's daughter ! with that skull ! and that complexion ?  
 What principle of "Natural Selection"  
 Gave thee with Eve the most remote connection ?

Sister of L. E. L. . . . of Mrs. Stowe, too !  
 Of E. B. Browning ! Harriet Martineau, too !  
 Do theologians know where fibbers go to ?

Of great George Eliot, whom I worship daily !  
 Of Charlotte Brontë ! and Joanna Baillie !—  
 Methinks that theory is rather "scaly."

Thy primal parents came a period later—  
 The handiwork of some vile imitator ;  
 I fear they had the devil's *imprimatur*.

This in the retrospect.—Now, what's before thee ?  
 The white man's heaven, I fear, would simply bore thee ;  
 Ten minutes of doxology would floor thee.

Thy Paradise should be some land of Goshen,  
Where appetite should be thy sole devotion,  
And surfeit be the climax of emotion ;—

A land of Bunya-bunyas towering splendid,—  
Of honey-bags on every tree suspended,—  
A Paradise of sleep and riot blended ;—

Of tons of 'baccy, and tons more to follow,—  
Of wallaby as much as thou couldst swallow,—  
Of hollow trees, with 'possums in the hollow ;—

There, undismayed by frost, or flood, or thunder,  
As joyous as the skies thou roamest under,  
There shouldst thou . . . Cooey! . . . Stop! She's off.  
. . . No wonder.

## NEW CHUM AND OLD MONARCH.

“Story ! God bless you ! I have none to tell, sir.”

—CANNING.

“CHIEFTAIN, enter my verandah ;  
 Sit not in the blinding glare ;  
 Thou shalt have a refuge, and a  
 Remnant of my household fare.

“Ill becomes thy princely haunches  
 Such a seat upon the ground :  
 Doubtless on a throne of branches  
 Thou hast sat, banana-crowned.

“By the brazen tablet gleaming  
 On the darkness of thy breast,  
 Which, unto all outward seeming,  
 Serves for trousers, coat, and vest ;—

“By the words thereon engraven,  
 Of thy royal rank the gage,  
 Hail ! true King, in all things save in  
 Unessential acreage.

“Such divinity doth hedge thee,  
I had guessed thy rank with ease—  
Such divinity—(but edge thee  
Somewhat more to leeward, please).

“Though thy lineage I know not,  
Thou art to the manner born ;  
Every inch a king, although not  
King of one square barleycorn.

“Enter, sire ; no longer linger ;  
Cease thy signals grandly dumb :  
Point not thus with royal finger  
To thy hungry vacuum.

“Though thy pangs are multifarious,  
Soon they all shall pass away :  
Come, my begging Belisarius—  
Belisorous I should say.

“Fear not ; I am the intruder ;  
I, and white men such as I :  
Simpler though thou art, and ruder,  
Thou art heir of earth and sky.

“Thine the mountain, thine the river,  
Thine the endless miles of scrub :  
Shall I grudge thee, then—oh never !—  
Useless ends of refuse grub ?

- “Lay aside thy spears—(I doubt them),  
Lay aside thy tomahawk ;  
I prefer thee, sire, without them,  
By a somewhat longish chalk.
- “Lay aside thy nullah-nullahs ;  
Is there war betwixt us two ?  
Soon the pipe of peace shall lull us—  
Pipe a-piece, *bien entendu*.
- “Seat thee in this canvas chair here ;  
Heed not thou the slumbering hound ;  
Fear not ; all is on the square here,  
Though thou strangely lookest round.
- “Or if thou, my chair deriding,  
Follow thine ancestral bent,  
To the naked floor subsiding  
Down the groove of precedent,—
- “If the boards have more temptation,  
Wherefore should I say thee No,  
Seeing caudal induration  
Must have set in long ago ?
- “Take thou now this refuse mince-meat ;  
Pick this bone, my regal guest :  
Shall a fallen warrior-prince meet  
Other welcome than the best ?

“Treated like a very rebel,  
 Chased from town at set of sur,  
 Wert thou ev’n the debbil-debbil,  
 Thou shouldst eat—when I am done.”

On the bare floor sat the sable  
 Chieftain of a fallen race,  
 Two black knees his only table,  
 “Wai-a-roo” his simple grace.

Stood I by and ruminated  
 On the chief’s Decline and Fall,  
 While his highness masticated  
 What I gave him, bone and all.

“Chief,” said I, when all had vanished,  
 “Fain am I thou shouldst relate  
 Why thou roam’st discrowned and banished  
 From thy scrub-palatinatè.”

Stared the chief, and wildly muttered,  
 As if words refused to come ;  
 “Want him rum,” at length he uttered ;  
 “Black f’lo plenty like him rum !”

“Nay ! ’Twill make thee mad—demoniac !  
 Set thee all a-fire within !  
 Law forbids thee rum and cognac,  
 Though in mercy spares thy gin.

“Come ; thy tale, if thou hast any.”—

Forth the chieftain stretched his hand,  
Stood erect, and shouted “Penny !”  
In a voice of stern command.

“Out upon thee ! savage squalid !

Mine ideal thus to crush,  
With thy beggary gross and solid,  
All for money and for lush !

“Out upon thee ! prince degenerate !

Get thee to thy native scrub !  
Die a dog’s death !—or, at any rate,  
Trouble me no more for grub !

“At him, Ginger ! Up and at him !

Go it, lad ! On, Ginger, on !  
King, indeed ! the beggar ! . . . Drat him !  
One more fond illusion gone.”

## THE HEADLESS TROOPER.

"No ; not another step, for all  
     The troopers out of hell !  
 I'll camp beside this swamp to-night,  
     Despite the yarns you tell.  
 I'm dead beat, that's a solid fact ;  
     The other thing's a sell."

And Ike gave in—good, easy Ike ;  
     Though now and then he stole  
 A glance across that dismal swamp,  
     Lugubriously droll ;  
 'Twas plain that Headless Trooper lay  
     Heavily on his soul.

And, ere he slept, again he told  
     That tale of bloody men ;  
 And how the Headless Trooper still  
     Rode nightly in the fen ;  
 And then he slept, but in his sleep  
     He told it all again.

I cannot rest beside a man  
Who mutters in his sleep ;  
It makes the chilly goose-flesh rise,  
The epidermis creep—  
(’Tis no objection in a wife—  
You get her secrets cheap).

I put a hundred yards between  
The muttering Ike and me :  
I lay and thought of things that were,  
And things that yet might be :  
I could not sleep ; I know not why ;  
My hair rose eerily.

I rose and sat me on a log,  
And tried to keep me cool ;  
I thought of “ Hume on Miracles,”  
And called myself a fool ;  
But still the proverb racked my soul,  
“ Exceptions prove the rule.”

The moon was full ; the stars were out ;  
I tried to fix my eye  
Where Night laid shining love-gifts  
On the bosom of the sky ;—  
But well I knew that all the while  
The Thing was standing by.

How tall this pine tree on my left !  
 How graceful in its height !  
 Its topmost branches seem to touch  
 The very brow of Night ;—  
 But all the while I knew the Thing  
 Was panting at my right.

The 'possum leaves his hollow tree ;  
 The bandicoot is glad ;  
 It is the human heart alone  
 The still night maketh sad ;—  
 And all the while the Headless Thing  
 Was wheezing there like mad.

How ghostly is the mist that crawls  
 Along the swampy ground !  
 The Headless Thing here cleared its throat  
 With most unearthly sound !  
 And then I heard a gurgling voice,  
 But dared not glance around.

“ They shot me ; Was it not enough ?  
 Look, darn you ! Here's the hole !  
 Was this not passage amply wide  
 For any human soul ?  
 But, no ! the blasted convict gang  
 Must likewise take my poll ! ”

I turned ; looked up ; and at the sight  
 My heart within me sunk :  
 'Twas new to me to find myself  
 In such a mortal funk ;—  
 But newer still to fraternise  
 With a bifurcated trunk !

Above the neck no trooper was ;  
 But formless void alone ;  
 There physiognomy was *nil*,  
 Phrenology unknown ;  
 Where head had been there but remained  
 The frustum of a cone !

Nay ; I retract the “ formless void ; ”  
 The case was otherwise ;  
 For on the clotted marge there spun  
 A living globe of flies !  
 When one is dealing with the truth  
 One can't be too precise.

The loathsome whirling substitute  
 Buzzed in the vacant space,  
 And a thousand thousand little heads  
 Of one head took the place :—  
 And oh, the fly expression  
 Of that rotatory face !

The breast was bare ; the shirt thrown back  
 Exposed the wound to view :  
 The bullet, in its course of death,  
 Had cleared an avenue :—  
 Oh Gemini ! I saw the Twins  
 Distinctly shining through !  
 And those same Twins are shining still  
 To prove my story true.

In breeches, boots, and spurs arrayed  
 The nether Trooper stood ;  
 The soundless phantom of a horse  
 Grazed in his neighbourhood,—  
 At all events went through the form  
 Of hoisting in his food.

“ What would'st thou, Headless Trooper,  
 On the night's Plutonian shore ?”  
 I took it from Poe's Raven  
 I had read not long before ;  
 And I more than half expected  
 He would answer “ Nevermore !”

But the Trooper only answered  
 By a perfect storm of sighs,  
 Which, through his crater issuing,  
 Played Hades with the flies,—  
 As I have seen Vesuvius  
 Blow ashes to the skies.

“ O wherefore, Headless Trooper,  
 With the living intermix ?  
 Since thou art dead, and hast no head,  
 Why kick against the pricks ?  
 Why dost thou not, as others do,  
 Get clear across the Styx ? ”

The Trooper cleared his cone of flies,  
 And through his crater said,  
 “ ’Tis true I have no business here ;  
 ’Tis true that I am dead ;  
 And yet I cannot cross the Styx—  
 They’ve fixed a fare ‘ *per head* ! ’

“ Fain would I cross as others do—  
 Fain would I pay my shot !  
 They only mock me when I ask  
 For leave to go to Pot !  
 How *can* I pay so much ‘ *per head* ’  
 When I no head have got ?

“ Yet what could I, thus headless, do  
 In that last Land of Nod ?  
 It is not that the thing is dear,  
 So much as that it’s odd ;—  
 They only charge an obolus,  
 A sort of Tommy Dodd.

“ I’ve tried the ferryman with gold—  
 With every coin that goes :  
 He merely cries, ‘ Oh, go *a-head* !’  
 And, laughing, off he rows.  
 He can’t twit me, at all events,  
 With paying through the nose !

“ A drachma once I offered him,  
 Six times the fare in Greek ;  
 He merely cursed my ‘ impudence,’  
 And pushed off in a pique :—  
 I didn’t think a faceless man  
 Could be accused of cheek.

“ From day to day, from night to night,  
 My prayer the wretch denies ;  
 Yet even in this headless breast  
 Some grateful thoughts arise—  
 For though he’s blasted all my hopes,  
 He cannot blast my eyes.

“ I know not where the convict crew  
 My missing head consigned,  
 But I am doomed to walk the earth  
 Till that same head I find.  
 Oh, could I come across it,  
 I would know it though I’m blind,—  
 The bump of amativeness sticks  
 So strongly out behind !

“The mouth extends from ear to ear ;  
The hair is fiery red ;  
Perchance it might attract thine eye  
Who art not blind or dead ;  
I pray thee help me to obtain  
My disembodied head !”

“Oh Headless Trooper, fain would I  
With thee the search begin,  
But ere the day I must away,  
And trudge through thick and thin ;  
For I am bound to Stanthorpe town,  
And time with me is tin.

“But ere upon my pilgrimage  
With dawn’s first streak I go,  
I fain would do what in me lies  
To mitigate thy woe.  
If I can serve thee anywise,  
I pray thee let me know.”

The Trooper thought a little space,  
His body forward bowed,  
With plenteous sighs dispersed the flies,  
And once more spoke aloud :—  
“’Tis long since I have tried the weed ,  
I’d like to blow a cloud.”

“How canst thou, headless man, who hast  
 No lips wherewith to puff?”  
 Here deprecatingly he waved  
 His hand, and said, “Enough.  
 Myself will guarantee the how,  
 If thou supply the stuff.”

I took a meerschaum from my pouch,  
 A meerschaum clean and new,  
 As white as is undoctored milk,  
 As pure as morning dew:—  
 I pray you mark that it was white,  
 ’Twill prove my story true.

I passed it to him, filled and lit,  
 Still wondering in my mind.  
 “Thanks, generous colonial,  
 Thou art very, very kind.  
 Now pick a thickish waddy up,  
 And plug my wound behind.”

I picked a thickish waddy up,  
 And did as I was bid;  
 And right into the bullet-hole  
 The amber mouth he slid;  
 And then!—You never saw the like;  
 At least *I* never did.

Like a forge bellows went his chest,  
And upward from his cone  
There shot a vaporous spire, like that  
From Cotopaxi blown.  
The flies unglobed themselves, and fled  
With angry monotone.

So fierce the blast, the pipe was void  
Ere one might reckon ten ;  
And then with gesture wild he signed  
To fill the bowl again ;  
The which I did, till he had smoked  
Enough for fifty men.

Hour after hour he drew and blew,  
Till twist began to fail,  
Till all the sky grew dim with smoke,  
And all the stars grew pale ;  
Till even the seasoned stomach turned  
Of him who tells the tale.

The smoke mixed darkly with the mists  
On the adjacent bogs,  
And roused the hoarse remonstrant wail  
Of semi-stifled frogs,  
The 'possums all within a mile  
Went home as sick as dogs.

But suddenly the phantom steed  
    Neighed with sepulchral sound,  
And where both man and horse had been  
    Nor man nor horse was found !  
I stood alone ; the meerschaum lay  
    Before me on the ground.

The meerschaum lay upon the ground—  
    This much I may avouch ;  
I took it, and with trembling hand  
    Replaced it in my pouch ;  
And, overcome with nausea,  
    I sought my grassy couch.

The sun was up when I awoke,  
    And in his gladsome beams  
I mocked the things of yesternight,  
    And laughed away my dreams :  
Disciples of the School of Doubt  
    Are always in extremes.

But when I roused me from my couch  
    To take my morning smoke,  
Like lightning flash the verity  
    Upon my laughter broke ;—  
The scarcity of 'baccy proved  
    The thing beyond a joke.

And when my pouch I opened next—  
    (Now check the wanton jeer)—  
My pipe, my new, fresh meerschaum pipe—  
    ('Tis true as I am here)—  
My pipe was "*coloured!*" as if I  
    Had smoked it for a year.

My pipe was coloured!—no, not brown,  
    But black, as black as jet.  
You don't believe it?—Man alive,  
    The pipe is coloured yet!  
Look here—why, here's the best of proofs—  
    The pipe, videlicet.

NONSUITED.

“DEAR Richard, come at once ;”—so ran her letter ;  
 The letter of a married female friend :  
 “She likes you both, and really knows no better  
 Than I myself do, how her choice will end.  
 Be sure of this, the first who pops will get her.  
*He’s here for Chris——*” Whatever else was penned  
 Dick never knew : nor knows he to this day  
 How he got drest, and mounted—and away !

Like arrow from the bow, like lightning-streak,  
 Including thunder following fierce and quick,  
 By ridge and flat, through scrub and foaming creek  
 Dick galloped like a very lunatic ;  
 Whipped, jerked, and spurred, but never word did  
 speak,

Although his thoughts rushed furious and thick,  
 Headed by one he strove in vain to wipe out,  
 The fear that this same “he” might put his pipe out.

And faster yet, and ever faster grew  
 The maddening music of the pace, until  
 The station-roofs gleamed suddenly in view,  
 Quivering in noon-heat on the vine-clad hill :  
 When all at once his bridle-rein he drew,  
 But not from craven fear or flagging will,—  
 Though, truth to tell, his heart a moment sank  
 To see the river nearly “bank and bank.”

For Bowstring was the choice of all his stud,  
 And *he* at least had no fair bride to win ;  
 And wherefore should he risk *him* in the flood ?—  
 A question Bowstring also asked within :  
 For though he was a squatter’s horse by blood,  
 And held the grazing interest more than kin,  
 He eyed the huge logs wheeling, bobbing, bowling,  
 As if his soul objected to “log-rolling.”

And by that curious telegraphic force,  
 Outspeaking half-a-dozen formal speeches,  
 That works its quick inexplicable course  
 Through saddle-cloth, pigskin, and buckskin breeches,  
 Until the dumb opinion of a horse  
 Its sympathetic rider’s spirit reaches—  
 Dick, feeling under him the strong flanks quiver,  
 Knew that his thoroughbred would funk the river.

A moment more, Dick from his seat had leapt,  
Ungirthed, uncurbed, unreined his trembling steed ;  
Who straightway vanished from his sight, nor kept  
The high tradition of a loyal breed,  
But quickened by no stimulus except  
His own unbridled (and unsaddled) greed,  
Before a man had time to reckon two,  
Was gorging in fresh fields and pastures new.

Then Dick threw off his boots, undid his belt,  
Doffed—here we shirk particulars. In brief,  
When nought remained but his primeval pelt,  
He tied his garments in his handkerchief ;  
Then feeling as “ the grand old gardener ” felt  
(After the apple), crouching like a thief,  
Down to the stream did this lorn lover slink,  
And threw his bundle to the further brink.

Nor longer paused, but plunged him in the tide,  
A hero and Leander both in one ;  
Struck the entangling boughs from either side,  
And held his head up bravely to the sun ;  
Dodged the huge logs, the torrent’s strength defied ;—  
To cut it short, did all that could be done ;  
Touched land, and uttering a fervent “ Thank . . .  
—Just then his bundle floated by, and sank.

Take Yarra-bend, take Bedlam, Colney Hatch,  
 And Woogaroo, and mix them weight for weight,  
 And stir them well about—you could not match  
 Dick's madness with the whole conglomerate.  
 If the Recording Angel did but catch  
 One half his ravings against Heaven and Fate,  
 And rising creeks and slippery banks, some day  
 Poor Dick will have a heavy bill to pay.



Was ever lover in so torn a case?  
 Was ever lover in so wild a mood?  
 He nearly pulled the beard from off his face;  
 He would have rent his garments, if he could.  
 How could he woo a dame his suit to grace  
 Who had *no* suit, save that wherein he stood?  
 Oh! what were youth, wealth, station in society,  
 Without the textile adjuncts of propriety!

When oaths and half-an-hour were spent in vain,  
 It dawned on Dick that he might slyly crawl  
 From tree to tree across the wooded plain,  
 And gain "the hut," that stood a mile from all  
 The other buildings—whence some labouring swain,  
 Unscared by nudity, might come at call,  
 And lend, for thanks or promissory payment,  
 Whatever he could spare of decent raiment.

From one variety of Eucalypt  
 Unto another, blue gum, spotted gum,  
 Black-butt, etcetera, Dick crawled or skipped,  
 Bitten and blistered like the newest chum ;  
 Till, marking where the open level dipped,  
 Distracted with mosquito-martyrdom,  
 He rushed and plunged—and not a bit too soon—  
 Into the coolness of a quiet lagoon.

No, not a bit too soon ; for something white,  
 Topped by a parasol of lustrous pink,  
 At this same perilous moment hove in sight,  
 And glided gently to the water-brink ;  
 The while in thickest sedge the rueful wight  
 Hid his diminished head, and scarce did wink—  
 No more a gallant daringly erotic,  
 But consciously absurd and idiotic.

'Twas she—his love ; and never had he thought  
 Her face so beautiful, her form so stately ;  
 Ophelia-like she moved, absorbed, distraught ;  
 'Twas plain to Dick she had been weeping lately ;  
 And now and then a weary sigh he caught,  
 And once a whisper that disturbed him greatly,  
 Which said, unless his ears played him a trick,  
 " What in the world can have come over Dick ? "

And presently, through his aquatic screen,  
 His hated rival he beheld advance,  
 With airy grace and captivating mien,  
 And all the victor in his countenance :  
 And too, too late he learned what *might have been*,  
 When at her watch he saw the lady glance,  
 And heard her say, " Here's Fred. The die is cast !  
 I gave poor Dick till two ; 'tis now half-past."

And then Dick closed his eyes, his ears he stopped ;  
 Yet somehow saw and heard no whit the less,—  
 Saw that the lover on his knees had dropped,  
 And heard him all his tale of love confess ;  
 And when the question had been duly popped,  
 He heard the kiss that sealed the answering " Yes !"—  
 'Twas rough on Dick : ah me ! 'twas mighty rough :  
 But he remained true blue (though all in buff),—

And never winced, nor uttered word or groan,  
 But gazed upon the treasure he had lost,  
 In agony of soul, yet still as stone,  
 The saddest man since first true love was crossed :  
 And when at length the mated birds had flown,  
 He waited yet another hour, then tossed  
 His modesty unto the winds, and ran  
 Right for the hut, and found—thank Heaven !—a man.

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On that same evening, in his rival's coat,  
Waistcoat, and things, Dick sat among the rest,  
And though he could have cut their owner's throat,  
He kept his feelings underneath his vest,  
And proved by some mendacious anecdote  
That he was there by chance—a passing guest.  
One boon at least stern Fate could not refuse :  
He stood that evening *in his rival's shoes.*

## THE GREAT PIG STORY OF THE TWEED.

“HANDS off, old man !” the young man cried—  
 They stood beside the Tweed,  
 Where still the name of Murder Creek  
 Records some bloody deed.

The old man seized the hapless youth,  
 With frantic grasp and rough,  
 By what is popularly called  
 (But vulgarly) the scruff ;

And shouted as he twirled him round,  
 And shook him to and fro,  
 “ Was them consignments pigs ? . . . Great Scott !  
 Was them things pigs or no ? ”

Wild-eyed and gaunt, and grim he stood,  
 Beneath the scorching noon,—  
 Cantharides P. Roebuck, late  
 Of the steamboat Arakoon.

He was an ancient mariner,  
 A Yankee skipper he,  
 Whom winds of adverse destiny  
 Had blown across the sea ;—

Whom hither still had Fate pursued,  
 And served with many a trick,  
 Till now he roamed the Tweed a one-  
 Idea'd lunatic ;—

Whom all men shunned, for whosoe'er  
 Upon his beat might chance,  
 Was bound to hear his tale in each  
 Minutest circumstance.

A tale that haunted such as heard,  
 Nor left them night or day ;  
 A torturing enigma, too,  
 That turned their wits astray ;—

For ofttimes they, like him who told,  
 Would vaguely wandering go,  
 And cry, “ Was them consignments pigs ?  
 Was them things pigs or no ? ”

“ Hands off ! ” again the young man cried.  
 “ It's this way, boss, you see,  
 We've come a stretch of thirty mile,  
 Her uncle, her, an' me.

“ You see it’s this way. Parson comes  
Our road but once a year—  
We lives at Yougerbungaree,  
Just thirty mile from here ;—

“ At sundown yesterday I spied  
The parson ridin’ past ;  
I runs to Sue’s, an’ ‘ Sue,’ says I,  
‘ Our chance is come at last !’

“ This morning to his camp we goes,  
Us three, an’ mother, four ;  
‘ Splice us,’ says we, but parson, he  
Puts in his blessed oar.

“ ‘ Fill up this form,’ says he. We fills.  
‘ Hullo !’ he cries, ‘ my dear !  
Father alive ? You under age ?  
Me marry ye ! No fear.’

“ (Don’t throttle, boss !)—Says parson then,  
‘ Go, seek a magistrate ;  
Get his consent ; an’ hurry back ;  
I leave to-night at eight.’

“ So off we starts, ten mile an hour—  
(For heav’n’s sake let me speak !)  
You see, it’s this way, boss ; they’ve gone  
To square it with the beak.

“ I’m only hangin’ round. I fixed  
 To meet them there at one ;  
 An’ if I fail, my pretty Sue  
 Will think I’ve cut an’ run.”—

“ Was them things pigs ? ”—“ Oh drat the pigs !  
 It’s this way, boss,—we’re late.  
 Think, thirty mile ! the mokes dead beat !  
 An’ parson off at eight ! ”

’Twas all in vain ; and when at length,  
 Exhausted, limp, and pale,  
 He gave reluctant ear, ’twas thus  
 The skipper told his tale.

“ I took the things on board as pigs,  
 As pigs I signed for them ;  
 I passed an entry on them—pigs !  
 Pigs, sar, from starn to stem.

“ Wal, wal ; I little guessed that Fate  
 Would play it down so low.  
 Was them things pigs, d’ye hear ! . . . But how  
 The [Hades] should you know !

“ It was the steamboat Arakoon,  
 A craft of coasting fame ;  
 Cantharides P. Roebuck, sar,  
 Was skipper of the same.

“ The iserlated cusses here  
Was runnin’ all to seed  
When first the steamboat Arakoon  
Come tradin’ to the Tweed.

“ Pigs, pigs, all sprung (mark that) from two,  
They fetched them by the score,  
An’ nary strain had crossed the breed  
For twenty year an’ more.

“ I cleaned the settlement of pigs,  
Upp’d steam an’ tore for town,  
Nor guessed that them all-fired galoots  
Had been and done me brown.

“ An’ sech a voyage ! grunt and squeak !  
(Pard, never load with swine.)  
Whate’er the durned abortions wur,  
The grunt was genu-ine.

“ A hundred thousand times I swore  
To drown them in the sea ;  
But, lord, they had an idgiot look  
That fairly gravelled me.

“ We made the port. Upon the wharf  
A Brisbane butcher sot,  
An’ through the roarin’ of the steam,  
He hollered, ‘ What ye got ? ’

“ ‘Got pigs,’ sez I, ‘like bullocks, sar!’  
 Cries butcher, ‘I’m your man,’  
 An’ clewin’ up his apron, slick  
 Along the plank he ran.”—

(But here the youth renewed his plaint;  
 “Have mercy on me mate!  
 It’s thirty miles! the mokes dead beat!  
 An’ parson leaves at eight!”)

“He eyed the brutes,” the tale flowed on,  
 “An’ tossed his cussèd head;  
 An’ turnin’ on his heel, sez he,  
 ‘I thought ’twas *pigs* you said.’

“ ‘An’ ain’t *them* pigs?’—but he was gone.  
 Wal, though I biled at this,  
 I tried my level best to see  
 The p’int he took amiss.

“But ’cep’ a kinder cur’ous smile  
 That squintin’ didn’t mend,  
 An’ an appealin’ way they had  
 Of settin’ up on end,—

“An’ cept’ about the snout a tech  
 Of Native Porkypine,  
 I couldn’t see no reason why  
 That parcel wasn’t swine.

“Wal, stranger, just as I had cussed  
My liver into tune,  
Another bloomin’ butcher stepped  
On board the Arakoon.”

(But here, at sound of distant hoofs,  
The captive writhed anew ;  
“That’s them !” he cried, “They’ve given me up !  
Oh curse your pigs and you !”)

“No, pard—it ain’t no use to squirm.  
Whar was I ? le’mme see.  
Another butcher jumps aboard ;  
‘ Good marnin’, sar,’ sez he.

“Got any p—— ?’ But here he stuck.  
The critturs caught his eye.  
Sakes ! how he stared as one by one  
The things meandered by.

“At length sez he, astoopin’ down,  
The better to survey,  
‘ I wonder now what day o’ the week  
The Lord created they !

“‘What name, mate ?’ ‘Pigs, sar, PIGS !’ I yelled,  
‘ As prime as ever growed !  
D’ye know pigs when you see them, sar ?’  
‘ Oh, *pigs*,’ sez he, ‘ be blowed.’

“Pard, should you come across him, say  
That I apologize ;  
For, oh ! I banged that butcher’s head  
Agin the smokestack guys !

“I sought an old an’ trusted friend,  
A butcher in the town ;  
I struck his diggin’s, seized him, hailed  
A shay, and yanked him down.

“I carried him aboard—he was  
A heavy man and slow—  
‘Now on your naked oath,’ sez I,  
‘Air them things pigs or no?’

“He made no sign, he made no sound,  
But something in his eye,  
As plain as signal lights, declared  
The contract was awry.

“At last sez he, consid’rin’ like,  
An’ strokin’ down his jaws,  
‘Cantharides P., it seems to me  
Them pettitoes is claws !’

“‘Great Neptune!’—that was all I said,  
And fell down in a swoon,  
A broken wreck, upon the deck  
Of the steamboat Arakoon.

“ But twurn’t Finis yet, old hoss,  
For at the smell of gin  
Cantharides P. Roebuck’s soul  
Jumped back into his skin.

“ ‘ Go, fetch me a zew-ologist !’  
I thundered as I rose.  
‘ Let’s see what larnèd science makes  
Of them ’ere pettitoes !

“ ‘ Who knows of one ?’—The fireman’s son  
Sez, ‘ Captain, if you please,  
If what you mean stuffs beastises,  
I’ll fetch you wan o’ these.’

“ ‘ Go, bub !’ I cried. ‘ Make tracks to onst,  
An’ ketch him out or in !—  
This butcherin’ conspiracy  
Is just a trifle thin.’

“ Wal, pard, the great man came. I slipped  
A sov’rin in his hand,  
Which, though he ’peared almighty skeered,  
He seemed to understand.

“ Sez I then, as he stooped an’ spread  
His hands upon his knees,  
‘ Illustrious zew-ologist,  
What articles air these ?’

“ A wild surprise lit up his eyes  
 As through his specs he blinked,—  
 ‘ Dear me,’ sez he, ‘ I always thought  
 That griffins wur extinct !’

\*            \*            \*            \*

“ From that to this is blank—all blank ;  
 But if ’tis true they say,  
 I ordered round the vessel’s head,  
 An’ ran her down the Bay.

“ An’ there, in spite of mate an’ crew,  
 An’ cook an’ fireman’s son,  
 I slung the critturs overboard,  
 An’ drowned them every one.

“ An’ now beside this blessèd Tweed  
 I wander day an’ night,  
 An’ vainly ask of airth an’ heaven  
 To read the riddle right.

“ I ask the sea, I ask the skies,  
 I ask it high an’ low,—  
 Was them ’ere shipments pigs? . . . Great Scott !  
 Was them things pigs or no ?”

\*            \*            \*            \*

That night at Yougerbungaree,  
The house clock striking ten,  
Into a maiden's presence burst  
The most distraught of men.

"Oh, Ned, he's gone!" the maiden wailed.

"How could you treat me so?"—

For all reply there came the cry,

"Was them things pigs or no?"

## BORN BEFORE HIS TIME.

BROWN was weeping ; likewise cursing ; and with amplitude of reason ;

For a letter had been handed him that very afternoon  
Which proved he had been cruelly begotten out of season,  
That, in fact, he had been born a hundred centuries too  
soon.

From the day a friendly hint had told of coal on his  
selection,  
In the house, the street, the office Brown had revelled in  
a dream,  
Wherein himself and family and all the Brown connection  
Figured floating in a golden barge adown a silver stream.

Now he wept ; and little wonder ; all his gorgeous hopes  
had faded

With the letter of the expert, lying crumpled at his feet,  
Which reported, with a wealth of scientific terms  
paraded,

That the " coal " was hardly lignite, though a little more  
than peat.

“But some day,” so ran the missive, “it is bound to  
prove a treasure.”

(Here a moment's re-awakened hope had cheered the  
reader's soul)

“What with gas elimination and accumulated pressure,  
“In ten thousand years or so it will be marketable  
coal.”

Such the wherefore of the change from exultation to  
lamenting—

And he lifted up his voice and cursed the author of his  
birth,

Through whose rash precipitation, unconsulted, un-  
consenting,

He had thus been dumped ten thousand years too soon  
upon the earth.

Not alone his sire and mother he denounced and  
execrated,

On their parents and fore-parents his anathemas he  
hurled,

As one and all, in series, or in concert, implicated  
In his premature appearance on this carboniferous world.

For a change he cursed himself, as the untimely culmina-  
tion

Of the whole precocious family that bore the name of  
Brown;

Till, exhausted of ferocity, the rage of imprecation  
Into unavailing optatives broke impotently down.

“ Oh that things,” he raved, “ had always been as in the  
early ages,

“ Before the human race had lost the art of going slow,

“ When the life of man proceeded at such very easy  
stages

That the proper age for wedlock was a hundred years  
or so !

“ Would that each of my forefathers, like Methusalem,  
had waited,

“ Who till nigh upon two hundred shirked the matri-  
monial rôle !

“ Then I had not been ten thousand years unduly  
antedated,

“ But would doubtless in the future be co-eval with my  
coal.

“ Now not for me shall this potential wealth be resur-  
rected ;

“ This bottled sunshine immature shall mellow not for  
me !

“ Now another hand shall reap where I have—where I  
have selected,

“ And another lap receive the fruit that ripens on my  
tree !

“ Oh that I had been consulted ere the world was set in  
movement,

“ When Providence was mapping out the future course of  
time,

“ I had certainly suggested as a manifest improvement  
“ That a coal-seam and its owner should together reach  
their prime.

“ I shall be a blessed fossil when the land shall yield its  
treasure,  
“ I who registered the area and paid the money down—  
“ Paid the money, little recking of another’s gain and  
pleasure—  
“ Oh that I could sleep ten thousand years and wake  
again John Brown ! ”

## PART II.

And the gods whom he had railed at in his petulant  
misprision  
Heard the prayer and sent such answer as appeared to  
meet the case :  
Heavy slumber fell upon him, and ’twas given him in a  
vision  
At the date himself had named to re-awake to time and  
space.

On his treasure-ground he stood ; for though his data  
were deficient,  
The old land-marks being down, and every feature new  
and strange,  
Yet, as dreamers are at moments unaccountably  
omniscient,  
He was ’ware of his selection in despite of time and  
change.

And, behold, a crowd of workers, working leisurely and  
coolly,  
Who with marvellous machinery were scooping up his  
coal,  
Which an aeronautic vehicle received, and, freighted  
fully,  
Soared away with at the touch of some invisible control.

Then within the soul of Brown did grievous sense of  
wrong awaken,  
And on one who made to pass him he imposed a sudden  
hand—

“Tell me, tell me,” he demanded, “where my coal is  
being taken.

“At whose order has this trespass been committed on  
my land?”

To whom in turn, the other, when a moment he had  
pondered,

As if dubious how to grapple with an ignorance so great,  
“From what planet in formation have you innocently  
wandered?”

“‘*My coal.*’ ‘*My land.*’ . . . Poor waif, you’ve come  
ten thousand years too late.

“In this world where every man an altruistic democrat is,  
“We avoid as much as possible the use of my’s and  
thy’s :

“Up in Saturn or in Neptune or where’er your habitat is  
“I presume you still are wallowing in the stage of  
merchandise.

“You should have timed your visit for that earlier dispensation

“When the individual flourished, reaping where he did not sow,

“When *he* was counted wisest in his day and generation

“Who made the largest profit with the smallest quid pro quo.

“*Now* a man reaps what he sows, and when his measure overfloweth

“He who lacks may freely take, as each for each and all doth live,

“Here are neither rich nor poor, no man exacteth, no man oweth,

“And the zest of labour groweth with the vital need to give.

“And as touching this same mineral, whose multifarious uses

“By our prodigal progenitors were only half divined,

“Wheresoever to man's comfort or his pleasure it conduces,

“There—his want his only title—there the owner you will find.”

\*

\*

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\*

Brown awoke another man, the situation now surveying  
In the light of such new knowledge as prophetic vision  
brings ;

"Twas a chastened Brown who mopped his forehead,  
tremulously saying,  
"By the Lord, I must anticipate that frightful state of  
things!"

So he went and squared the expert, who indited a  
voluminous  
Report upon the merits of the hypothetic coal,  
While relays of goodly samples most seductively  
bituminous,  
Judiciously distributed, beguiled the public soul.

Then a Company was floated and . . . the rest needs  
no relating,  
Brown, of course, sold out in time, nor have his riches  
taken wings.  
Brown is happy and respected; and he doesn't mind  
narrating  
How he managed to anticipate "that frightful state of  
things."

## PROGRESS IN THE PACIFIC.

LAPP'D in blue Pacific waters lies an isle of green and  
gold,—

A garden of enchantment such as Eden was of old ;  
And the innocent inhabitants, pure children of the  
sun,  
Resembled those of Eden, too—in more respects than  
one.

But included in its list of charms this peaceful isle  
possessed

A feature that seemed rather out of keeping with the  
rest ;

A huge volcano frowned above palm-grove and taro-  
patch

That ev'n for Krakatoa might have proved an equal  
match.

“Might *have* proved,” I say advisedly,—for ages now had  
past

Since this passion-worn volcano in a fit had breathed its  
last ;

Now flowery vegetation draped its shoulders like a shawl—

Only the sullen cone stood unapparelled over all.

To this happy bower of innocence, this Island of the Blest,

Came two Melbourne Presbyterians—no matter on what quest—

Leading men in Church and Market, always found within the ring,

John McTaggart, William Wallace, Agents for—for everything.

How glowed their weary hearts before the beauty of the scene,

The palm-groves, the acacia-groves, and all the varied green!

How swelled their souls with sentiment when, swarming from their huts,

Came the simple natives wooing them with pigs and cocoa-nuts!

“Eh, man, but this is sweet!” said John, and wiped away a tear.

“It is good for us (I say with the apostle) to be here.

The islands are God’s handiwork, their beauties are His own—

And, Weelyum—man, there should be lots of sulphur in that cone!

“These natives are a guileless folk, as we can well discern,  
But how to make gunpowder is a thing they yet may learn.  
Now, gunpowder leads to homicides, and other sinful scenes,  
And I feel it is our duty to deprive them of the means.

“So lest some flagitious traders should come fossicking about,  
This very day we’ll purchase that volcano out and out.  
Lest guilt should stain these blameless souls we’ll form  
a Sulphur Co.”—  
And, William, though a silent man, replied to him,  
“Juist so.”

Then they summoned their interpreter and made their wishes known,  
And before the day was over that volcano was their own,  
And the chiefs were paid the price in costly axes, hooks  
and knives,  
While invaluable necklaces were showered upon their wives.

But not before McTaggart had impressed the native mind  
With a solemn deed of transfer of a strictly legal kind,

Which Scripture, fraught, as was supposed, with threats  
and terrors dark,  
Was attested by the signature of "Na-Galoo, His  
Mark."

Then home they sailed, nor thought again for many and  
many a day  
Of their potential riches in that island far away :  
They had other fish to fry and other irons in the fire,  
And success upon success but seemed to multiply  
desire.

But at length there came a season when their wealth  
developed wings,  
And their hearts grew sad within them at the general  
look of things,  
But most of all they sorrowed at the worldliness and  
pride  
Of the smarter men who bested them and hustled them  
aside.

Said McTaggart, "Let us quit this sordid sphere, and  
for a while  
Let us bathe our souls in innocence in yon sequestered  
isle ;  
The aims of men are vanity ; life's but a fleeting  
show—  
And the *Argus* says that sulphur's up."—And William  
said "Juist so."

So they raised, and raised with credit, all the necessary  
plant,  
Nor forgot amid their haste that solemn league and  
covenant ;  
And thus and thus it came to pass ere many days had  
fled  
That the island lay before them, and the grey cone  
towered o'erhead.

But where—where were the simple folk that greeted  
them of yore  
And who were these red-shirted swells that met them on  
the shore,  
And covered them with muskets of a fashion obsolete,  
But possibly still lethal if discharged at twenty feet ?

Alas, too soon they gathered from their semi-English  
speech  
That the sixty three Kanaka bucks who blocked them  
on the beach  
Were time-expired "Returns," enlightened men, who  
not in vain  
Had spent the intervening years in Queensland trashing  
cane.

"You come take solfa," cried a Chief, who recognised  
the two,  
"Flenchman Comp'ny buy him solfa. Solfa no belonga  
you

We sell him Comp'ny thing man call in Queensland  
mineral lease"—

And sixty-three Kanaka smiles broke up the evening  
peace.

Then McTaggart, white with godly ire, yet calm in sense  
of right,

Drew forth the sacred covenant and spread it to the  
light,—

“I bought your hill entire,” he said; “the whole  
volcano's mine!”

But the Chieftain took the document and read it line by  
line

Read it word by word and line by line, date, signature  
and all,

As one who fain would do the right although the  
heaven's should fall,

Then delivered this decision, “Hill belonga you all right.  
But paper no say solfa. Flenchman buy him *that*.  
Goo' night.”

\* \* \* \*

“Is this the land,” McTaggart cried, “where we had  
fondly thought

To bathe our souls in innocence and bag what we had  
bought!

Sawtan hath made this isle his own! Arise and let  
us go.

Weelyum, Progress is a curse! a curse!” And William  
said “Juist so.”

## A SON OF THE SOIL.

SAID the Preacher "All is Vanity!"—appending as a  
reason

That the things we find our pleasure in are bound to  
pass and pall ;

But it seems to me that whatso'er endureth for a season  
Isn't half as vain as whatso'er hath never been at all.

When you find that what you've hitherto been wont to  
make a boast of

Must be numbered with the ejects that from muddled  
brains proceed—

When you find that in respect thereof there isn't ev'n a  
ghost of

Fact to back it up—ah, then, you may cry "Vanity,"  
indeed.

From my tend'rest years I've plumed myself on being an  
Australian—

An Australian pure and simple, of the most authentic  
brand ;

Scotchman, Englishman, and Irishman alike to me were  
alien ;

I was sibber to King Billy through our common  
mother-land.

To the pride of local genesis my being was surrendered,  
 The worthiest of immigrants I looked upon with  
 scorn

As exotic interlopers under foreign skies engendered,  
 Though transplanted to my country fifty years ere I  
 was born.

What although they wove the fabric of Australia's starry  
 banner

From the fibre of their being till the tissue was  
 complete,—

'Twas for *us*, the young, to wave it in our own emphatic  
 manner

In the face of all things ancient, European and effete!

“Ours the fitter hand to hold the reins,” I sedulously  
 boasted;

And whenever at the festal board occasion would  
 allow,

“Australia for the Australians!” with a hip-hooray I  
 toasted. . . .

And to-day I learn I'm no more an Australian than a  
 Chow.

Would to heav'n I'd been content to play the “Native”  
 single-handed,

Nor sought to be enrolled in that accursèd A.N.A.,\*

But the vain ambition seized me to be registered and  
 branded

As an *organised* Australian—and I gave myself  
 away.

\* Australian Natives' Association.

Not long to crush my fondest pride the ruthless Council  
tarried ;

Yester eve I made my overtures, the answer came at  
morn—

“Dear Sir, at last night’s meeting ’twas unanimously  
carried

“That a person born at Battersea is *not* Australian-  
born.”

“At Battersea?” “At Battersea?”—Unwitting of  
objection

I had hardly even looked at my certificate of birth,  
Which, now “Returned herewith,” brought dimly back  
to recollection

A tale of my nativity on t’other side the earth.

How my mother (rest her soul) by wayward appetences  
fretted

Cried aloud for the Old Country and a breath of  
English air ;

How my father, ripe for holiday, her last caprice  
abetted. . . .

And I, a mere expectancy, went them unaware.

And though the self-same year in shining dells of myrtle  
found me,

Where the wattle shed its perfume and the lories  
flashed their gems,

And the white acacia blossoms flaked the verdure all  
around me—

I had been born in London, on the Surrey side of  
Thames.

Oh, vanity of vanities, the birth I made a boast  
of!

Oh, unsubstantial eject of an inadvertent brain!  
And the self-confounding sentiment I made so brave a  
toast of

Gr-r. I danced on my certificate—and even that was  
vain.

\*            \*            \*            \*

I have slept upon the question. I have faced the  
problem squarely

At the favoured hour of wisdom when the darkness  
turns to grey.

I have reckoned up “nativity” impartially and fairly,  
And I’ve come to the conclusion they are fools, the  
A N.A.

If begotten *of* and *from* the soil, what lack I to be  
native?

What matters where my skin first felt the chill of  
mundane airs,

If my origin was here, in this alluvium procreative  
Whose substance reached me through two generations  
of forbears?

That an accidental deviousness in time of incubation  
Should make my whence irrelevant, and pin me to  
Whereat—

Do they really mean to play on me with calm delibera-  
tion

A pyramidal, orbicular absurdity like that!

But no matter. Let them hug their narrow canons of admission :

The A.N.A. are not the only natives in the land.

There is yet another outlet for my dominant ambition ;

I will hie me to King Billy ; he will take me by the hand.

He will lead me to his tribe, on slight preliminary payment ;

As a resurrected ancestor my status shall be fixed ;

As a native of the natives I will rid me of my raiment ;

I will rub me with goanna grease and charcoal intermixed.

I'll adorn my head with feathers, and to decorate my body

I will grave it o'er with diagrams, and fill the grooves with clay.

I will capture me a lubra by the suasion of a waddy—

And who'll be native, then, my high and mighty  
A.N.A. ?

“UNIVERSALLY RESPECTED.”

I.

BIGGS was missing : Biggs had vanished ; all the town  
was in a ferment ;

For if ever man was looked to for an edifying end,  
With due mortuary outfit, and a popular interment,  
It was Biggs, the universal guide, philosopher, and  
friend.

But the man had simply vanished ; speculation wove no  
tissue

That would hold a drop of water ; each new theory  
fell flat.

It was most unsatisfactory, and hanging on the issue  
Were a thousand wagers, ranging from a “pony” to  
a hat.

Not a trace could search discover in the township or  
without it,

And the river had been dragged from morn till night  
with no avail.

His continuity had ceased, and that was all about it,  
And there wasn't even a grease-spot left behind to  
tell the tale.

That so staid a man as Biggs was should be swallowed  
up in mystery  
Lent an increment to wonder—he who trod no  
doubtful paths,  
But stood square to his surroundings, with no cloud  
upon his history,  
As the much-respected lessee of the Corporation  
Baths.

His affairs were all in order : since the year the alligator  
With a startled river bather made attempt to  
coalesce,  
The resulting wave of decency had greater grown and  
greater,  
And the Corporation Baths had been a marvellous  
success.

Nor could trouble in the household solve the riddle of  
his clearance,  
For his bride was now in heaven, and the issue of the  
match  
Was a patient drudge whose virtues were as plain as her  
appearance—  
Just the sort whereto no scandal could conceivably  
attach.

So the Whither and the Why alike mysterious were  
counted ;

And as Faith steps in to aid where baffled Reason  
must retire,

There were those averred so good a man as Biggs might  
well have mounted

Up to glory like Elijah in a chariot of fire !

For indeed he was a good man ; when he sat beside the  
portal

Of the Bath-house at his pigeon-hole, a saint within a  
frame,

We used to think his face was as the face of an immortal,

As he handed us our tickets, and took payment for  
the same.

And, oh, the sweet advice with which he made of such  
occasion

A duplicate detergent for our morals and our limbs—  
For he taught us that decorum was the essence of salva-  
tion,

And that cleanliness and godliness were merely  
synonyms ;

But that open-air ablution in the river was a treason

To the purer instincts, fit for dogs and aborigines,  
And that wrath at such misconduct was the providential  
reason

For the jaws of alligators and the tails of stingarees.

But, alas, our friend was gone, our guide, philosopher,  
and tutor,  
And we doubled our potations, just to clear the inner  
view ;  
But we only saw the darklier through the bottom of the  
pewter,  
And the mystery seemed likewise to be multiplied by  
two.

And the worst was that our failure to unriddle the enigma  
In the "rags" of rival towns was made a by-word  
and a scoff,  
Till each soul in the community felt branded with the  
stigma  
Of the unexplained damnation of poor Biggs's taking off.

So a dozen of us rose and swore this thing should be no  
longer :  
Though the means that Nature furnished had been  
tried without result,  
There were forces supersensual that higher were and  
stronger,  
And with consentaneous clamour we pronounced for  
the occult.

Then Joe Thomson slung a tenner, and Jack Robinson  
a tanner,  
And each according to his means respectively disbursed ;

And a letter in your humble servant's most seductive  
manner

Was despatched to Sludge the Medium, recently of  
Darlinghurst.

## II.

"I am Biggs," the spirit said ('twas through the  
medium's lips he said it ;

But the voice that spoke, the accent, too, were Biggs's  
very own,

Be it, therefore, not set down to our unmerited discredit  
That collectively we sickened as we recognized the  
tone).

"From a saurian interior, Christian friends, I now  
address you"—

(And "Oh heaven!" or its correlative, groaned shud-  
deringly we)—

"While there yet remains a scrap of my identity, for,  
bless you,

This ungodly alligator's fast assimilating me.

"For although through nine abysmal days I've fought  
with his digestion,

Being hostile to his processes and loth to pulpify,  
It is rapidly becoming a most complicated question  
How much of me is crocodile, how much of him is I.

“ And, oh, my friends, 'tis sorrow's crown of sorrow to  
remember

That this sacrilegious reptile owed me nought but  
gratitude,

For I bought him from a showman twenty years since  
come November,

And I dropped him in the river for his own and  
others' good.

“ It had grieved me that the spouses of our townsmen,  
and their daughters,

Should be shocked by river bathers and their in-  
decorous ways

So I cast my bread—that is, my alligator—on the  
waters,

And I found it, in a credit balance, after many days.

“ Years I waited, but at last there came the rumour long  
expected,

And the out-of-door ablutionists forsook their wicked  
paths,

And the issues of my handiwork divinely were directed  
In a constant flow of custom to the Corporation  
Baths.

‘ ’Twas a weakling when I bought it ; ’twas so young  
that you could pet it ;

But with all its disadvantages I reckoned it would do ;

And it did : Oh, lay the moral well to heart and don't  
forget it—

Put decorum first, and all things shall be added unto  
you.

“Lies ! all lies ! I've done with virtue. Why should *I*  
be interested

In the cause of moral progress that I served so long  
in vain,

When the fifteen hundred odd I've so judiciously in-  
vested

Will but go to pay the debts of some young rip who  
marries Jane ?

“But the reptile overcomes me ; my identity is sinking ;  
Let me hasten to the finish ; let my words be few and  
fit.

I was walking by the river in the starry silence, thinking  
Of what Providence had done for me, and I had done  
for it ;

“I had reached the saurian's rumoured haunt, where oft  
in fatal folly

I had dropped garotted dogs to keep his carnal crav-  
ing up”

(Said Joe Thomson, in a whisper, “That explains my  
Highland collie !”

Said Bob Williams, *sotto voce*, “That explains my  
Dandy pup !”)

“I had passed to moral questions, and found comfort in  
the notion

That fools are none the worse for things not being  
what they seem,

When, behold, a seeming log became instinct with life  
and motion,

And with sudden curvature of tail upset me in the  
stream.

“Then my leg, as in a vice”—But here the revelation  
faltered,

And the medium rose and shook himself, remarking  
with a smile

That the requisite conditions were irrevocably altered,  
For the personality of Biggs was lost in crocodile.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now, whether Sludge's story would succeed in holding  
water

Is more, perhaps, than one has any business to expect ;  
But I know that on the strength of it I married Biggs's  
daughter,

And I found a certain portion of the narrative correct.

“BIG BEN.”

DIED AT YAAMBA CREEK, JULY, 1872

DE mortuis nil ni-  
 Si bonum : R.I.P. :—  
                   No more upbraid him :—  
 Nay, rather plead his cause,  
 For Ben exactly was  
                   What Nature made him.

Not radically bad,  
 He naturally had  
                   No leaning sinwards ;  
 But Nature saw it good  
 One life-long crave for food  
                   Should rack his inwards.

According to his lights,  
 And to the appetites  
                   In him implanted,  
 He did his level best  
 To feed—and all the rest  
                   He took for granted.

Ere birth he was *laid* low,  
And yet no man I know  
    For high birth matched him :  
Apollo was his sire,  
Who with life-giving fire  
    *Ab ovo* hatched him.

Just over Capricorn  
This same Big Ben was born,  
    A feeble lizard ;  
But with the years came strength,  
And twenty feet of length—  
    The most part gizzard.

By Fitzroy's rugged crags,  
Its “sawyers” and its snags,  
    He roamed piscivorous ;  
Or watching for his prey,  
By Yaamba creek he lay,  
    In mood carnivorous.

Unthinking little hogs,  
And careless puppy-dogs  
    Fitzroy-ward straying,  
Were grist unto his mill. . . .  
His grinders now are still,  
    Himself past preying.

## "BIG BEN."

Whether in self-defence,  
 Or out of hate *prepense*,  
                   Or just for fun shot,  
 Are things beyond my ken—  
 I only know Big Ben  
                   Died of a gunshot.

It was a sorry case ;  
 For Ben loved all our race,  
                   Both saint and sinner ;  
 If he had had his way,  
 He would have brought each day  
                   One home to dinner :—

Loved with that *longing* love,  
 Such as is felt above  
                   The Southern Tropic :—  
 Small chance was ever his,  
 But his proclivities  
                   Were philanthropic.

There are who would insist  
 He was misogynist—  
                   'Tis slander horrid ;  
 For every nymph he saw,  
 He would have liked her— raw,  
                   From toe to forehead.

Then let his memory be ;  
No misanthrope was he ;  
    No woman-hater ;  
But just what you may call,  
Take him for all in all,  
    An *alligator*.



You alone I can anchor my eye on,  
 Of you and you only I'll write :  
 And I now look awry on Orion,  
 That once was my chiefest delight.  
 Ye exalt me high over the petty  
 Conditions of pleasure and pain—  
 Oh Heaven ! here are these *maladetti*  
Mosquitos again !

The poet should ever be placid.  
 Oh vex not his soul or his skin !  
 Shall I scare them with sulphurous acid ?  
 It is done, and afresh I begin.  
 Lucid orbs !—that last sting very sore is ;  
 I am fain to leave off, I am fain ;  
 It has given me uncommon dolores—  
*Simpliciter*, pain.

Not quite what the shape of a cross is—  
 A little lop-sided, I own—  
 Confound your infernal proboscis,  
 Inserted well nigh to the bone !  
 Queen-lights of the heights of high heaven,  
 Ensconced in the crystal inane—  
 Oh me ! here are seventy times seven  
Mosquitos again !

Oh horns of a mighty trapezium !  
 Quadrilateral area, hail !  
 Oh bright as the light of magnesium !—  
 Oh hang them all, female and male !  
 At the end of an hour of their stinging,  
 What shall rest of me then, what remain ?  
 I shall die as the swan dieth, singing,  
 Mosquitos again !

Shock keen as the stroke of the levin !  
 They sting, and I change in a flash  
 From the peace and the poppies of heaven  
 To the flame and the fuel of—dash !  
 O Cross of the South ! I forgot you,  
 These demons have addled my brain.  
 Once more I look upward. . . . Od rot you !  
 You're at it again

There ! stick in your pitiless brad-awl,  
 And do your malevolent worst !  
 Dine on me, and when you have had all,  
 Let others go in for a burst !  
 O silent and pure constellation,  
 Can you pardon my fretful refrain ?  
 Forgive, oh forgive my vexation—  
 They're at it again !

Oh imps that provoke to mad laughter,  
Winged fiends that are fed from my brow,  
Bite hard ! let your neighbours come after,  
And sting where you stung me just now !  
Red brands on it smitten and bitten,  
Round blotches I rub at in vain !  
Oh Crux ! Whatsoever I've written,  
I've written in pain !

Ye chrysolite crystalline creatures,  
Wan watchers the fairest afield,  
Stars—and garters, are these my own features  
In the merciless mirror revealed !  
They are mine, even mine, and none other,  
And my hands how they slacken and strain !  
Oh my sister, my spouse, and my mother !  
I'm going insane !

## QUART POT CREEK.

ON an evening ramble lately, as I wandered on  
sedately,  
Linking curious fancies, modern, mediæval, and  
antique—  
Suddenly the sun descended, and a radiance ruby-  
splendid,  
With the gleam of water blended, thrilled my sensitive  
physique—  
Thrilled me, filled me with emotion to the tips of my  
physique,  
Fired my eye, and flushed my cheek.

Heeding not where I was going, I had wandered, all  
unknowing,  
Where a river gently flowing caught the radiant ruby-  
streak ;  
And this new-found stream beguiling my sedateness  
into smiling,



Set me classically styling it with Latin names and  
Greek,

Names Idalian and Castalian, such as lovers of the  
Greek

Roll like quids within their cheek.

On its marge was many a burrow, many a mound, and  
many a furrow,

Where the fossickers of fortune play at Nature's hide-  
and-seek ;

And instead of bridge to span it, there were stepping-  
stones of granite,

And where'er the river ran, it seemed of hidden wealth  
to speak.

Presently my soul grew stronger, and I, too, was fain to  
speak :—

I assumed a pose plastique.

“Stream,” said I, “I’ll celebrate thee! Rhymes and  
rhythms galore await thee !

In the weekly ‘poet’s corner’ I’ll a niche for thee  
bespeak :

But, to aid my lucubration, thou must tell thine appella-  
tion,

Tell thy Naiad-designation—for the journal of next  
week—

Give thy sweet Pactolian title to my poem of next  
week.

Whisper, whisper it—in Greek !”

But the river gave no token, and the name remained  
 unspoken,  
 Though I kept apostrophising till my voice became a  
 shriek ;—  
 When there hove in sight the figure of a homeward  
 veering digger,  
 Looming big, and looming bigger, and ejecting clouds  
 of reek—  
 In fuliginous advance emitting clouds of noisome reek  
 From a tube beneath his beak.

“Neighbour mine,” said I, “and miner,”—here I  
 showed a silver shiner—  
 “For a moment, and for sixpence, take thy pipe from  
 out thy cheek.  
 This the guerdon of thy fame is ; very cheap indeed the  
 same is ;  
 Tell me only what the name is—(’tis the stream whereof  
 I speak)—  
 Name the Naiad-name Pactolian ! Digger, I adjure  
 thee, speak !”  
 Quoth the digger, “Quart Pot Creek.”

Oh, Pol ! Edepol ! Mecastor ! Oh most luckless  
 poetaster !  
 I went home a trifle faster in a twitter of a pique ;  
 For we cannot help agreeing that no living rhyming  
 being

Ever yet was cursed with seeing, in his poem for the  
week,  
Brook or river made immortal in his poem for the week,  
With such name as "Quart Pot Creek!"

\* \* \* \*

But the river, never minding, still is winding, still is  
winding,  
By the gardens where the Mongol tends the cabbage and  
the leek ;  
And the ruby radiance nightly touches it with farewell  
lightly,  
But the name sticks to it tightly,—and this sensitive  
physique,  
The already-mentioned (*vide supra*) sensitive physique,  
Shudders still at "Quart Pot Creek!"



One glance of *those* bright eyes, and all was o'er :

I wished to die ; at least I cared no more

For life without her :—

*These*, glancing on me now, are quite as fair ;

Yet, strange to say, I do not seem to care

One bit about her.

I wished I were a glove upon that hand—

The eardrop in her ear, the zone that spanned

Her waist so trimly ;

And now, in view of equal charms, the bliss

Of such astounding metamorphosis

I see but dimly.

Well I recall the mad desire to hear

*Her* name who turned the common atmosphere

To heavenly ether :—

Why is it that I do not now, as then,

Care twopence if the name be M. or N.,

Or both, or neither ?

Well I remember how I longed to pay

Her fare, or in some other lordly way

Impress her duly :—

Why is it, then, though not less generous grown,

I'm better pleased this nymph should pay her own

Than mulct "yours truly" ?



Is it the place ! Still, no ; this threepenny 'bus  
 Is much the same as rolled the twain of us  
   Through Piccadilly ;  
 And fitter place, when all is said and done,  
 There could not be for "bussing." (Pass the pun ;  
   I know it's silly.)

Is it that I have learned their sweetest smiles  
 And airs and graces are but "wanton wiles,"  
   And mere pretences ?  
 Or is it that the naked eye of youth  
 Sees all through glamour, while I see the truth  
   Through convex lenses ?

But wherefore beat about the bush, old man ?  
 You know that you can give, if any can,  
   Reasons in plenty.  
 Must I, then, own it ? . . . 'Tis—because—because—  
 I am not quite—not quite—the man I was  
   At five-and-twenty !

An empty socket shows where passion burned ;  
 My sense of beauty now, alas, has turned  
   Pure intellectual,  
 And to arouse a tumult in the brain,  
 Or thrill the system with delicious pain,  
   Quite ineffectual.



## A BRISBANE REVERIE.

MARCH, 1873.

As I sit beside my little study window, looking down  
 From the heights of contemplation (attic front) upon  
 the town—

(Attic front, per week — with board, of course — a  
 sov'reign and a crown) ;—

As I sit—(these sad digressions, though, are much to be  
 deplored)—

In my lonely little attic—(it is all I can afford ;  
 And I should have mentioned, washing *not* included in  
 the board) ;—

As I sit—(these wild parentheses my very soul abhors)—  
 High above the ills of life, its petty rumours, paltry  
 wars—

(The attic back is cheaper, but it wants a chest of  
 drawers) ;—

In the purpling light of half-past six before the stars  
 are met,  
 While the stricken sun clings fondly to his royal mantle  
 yet,  
 Dying glorious on the hill-tops in reluctant violet,—

Just the time that favours vision, blissful moments that  
 unbar  
 The inner sight (assisted by a very mild cigar),  
 To behold the things that are not, side by side with  
 those that are,—

Just the very light and very time that suit the bard's  
 complaint,  
 When through present, past, and future, roams his soul  
 without restraint—  
 When no clearer are the things that are than are the  
 things that ain't;—

With a dual apperception, metaphysical, profound,  
 Past and present running parallel, I scan the scene  
 around—  
 (Were there two of us the attic front would only be a  
 pound).—

Beneath mine eyes the buried past arises from the  
tomb,  
Not cadaverous or ghostly, but in all its living  
bloom—  
(I would rather pay the odds than have a partner in  
my room).

How the complex *now* contrasteth with the elemental  
*then!*  
Tide of change outflowing flow of ink, outstripping  
stride of pen!  
(Unless it were . . . . but no . . . . they only take in  
*single men*).

Where trackless wilderness lay wide, a hundred ages  
through—  
I can see a man with papers, from my attic point of  
view,  
Who for gath'ring house assessments gets a very decent  
screw.

Where forest-contiguity assuaged the summer heats,  
It is now an argued question, when the City Council  
meets,  
If we mightn't buy a tree or two to shade the glaring  
streets.

Where no sound announced the flight of time, not even  
crow of cock,  
I can see the gun that stuns the town with monitory  
shock,  
And a son of that same weapon hired to shoot at one  
o'clock.

Where the kangaroo gave hops, the "old man" fleetest  
of the fleet,  
Mrs. Pursy gives a "hop" to-night to all the town's  
*élite*,  
But her "old man" cannot hop because of bunions on  
his feet.

Where the emu, "at its own sweet will," went wander-  
ing all the day,  
And left its bill-prints on whate'er came handy in its  
way,  
There are printed bills that advertise "The Emu for  
the Bay."

Where of old, with awful mysteries and diabolic din,  
They "kippered" adolescents in the presence of their  
kin,  
There's a grocer selling *herrings* kippered, half-a-crown  
per tin.

Where the savage only used his club to supplement his  
fist,  
The white man uses his for friendly intercourse and  
whist,  
Not to mention sherry, port, bordeaux, et cetera—see  
list.

Where dress was at a discount, or at most a modest  
“fall,”  
Rise “Criterion,” “Cosmopolitan,” and “City Clothing  
Hall,”  
And neither men nor women count for much—the dress  
is all.

Where a bride’s trousseau consisted of an extra coat of  
grease,  
And Nature gave the pair a suit of glossy black apiece,  
Now the matrimonial outfit is a perfect golden fleece.

Where lorn widows wore the knee-joints of the late  
lamented dead,  
We have dashing wives who wear their living husbands’  
joints instead—  
Yea, their vitals, for embellishment of bosom, neck, and  
head.

Where the blacks, ignoring livers, lived according to  
 their wills,  
 Nor knew that flesh is heir to quite a lexicon of ills,  
 Five white chemists in one street grow rich through  
 antibilious pills.

Where the only bell was the bell-bird's note, now many  
 mingling bells  
 "Make Catholic the trembling air," as famed George  
 Eliot tells  
 Of another town somewhere between more northern  
 parallels.

(But in case the name of Catholic offend protesting ear,  
 Let Wesleyan or Baptist be interpolated here,  
 Or that bells make Presbyterian the trembling atmos-  
 phere.)

Where the savage learned no love from earth, nor from  
 the "shining frame,"  
 And merely feared the devil under some outlandish  
 name,  
 There are heaps of Britishers whose creed is—very  
 much the same!

Where the gin was black—(methinks 'tis time the bard  
were shutting up :  
The bell is ringing for the non-inebriating cup,  
And even attic bards must have their little “bite and  
sup.”)

## FROM AN UPPER VERANDAH.

WHAT happier haunt could the gods allot  
 For loftiest musing to sage or bard?—  
 Yet I would that this upper verandah did *not*  
 Look down on my beautiful Neighbour's Back-yard!

I stir the afflatus : Descend, O ye Nine!  
 Let the crystalline gates of the soul be unbarred!  
 No. My thoughts *will* keep running in one fixed line—  
 The clothes-line that hangs in my Neighbour's Back-  
 yard!

Let me gaze on the hills ; let me think of the sea ;  
 Of the dawn rosy-fingered—the night silver-starred :—  
 (What dear little feet must the owner's be  
 Of those stockings that hang in my Neighbour's  
 Back-yard!)

Let me tune my soul to a measure devout :—  
 Ah, the musical mood is all jangled and jarred,  
 While things with borders, and things without,  
 Keep flutt'ring down there in my Neighbour's Back-  
 yard!

Are the True and the Good and the Beautiful dead,  
 That I win not one gleam of Pierian regard?  
 (Does she suffer, I wonder, from cold in the head?—  
 Such a lot of *mouchoirs* in my Neighbour's Back-  
 yard!)

Comes the fit. While it sways me, high themes would  
 I sing!  
 Prometheus! Achilles! Have at you! *En garde!*  
 Alexander the Great—(oh that *I* were a string  
 On that apron hung out in my Neighbour's Back-  
 yard!)

I will shut my eyes fast—I have hit it at last,  
 Now my purest Ideals flit by me unmarred;  
 And odours of memory rise from the past,  
 (And an odour of suds from my Neighbour's Back-  
 yard!)

Ah, yes! when the eyelids together are prest,  
 Every vestige of earth we throw off and discard.  
 (These are flannels, I think. Is she weak in the chest?—  
 There! I'm looking again at my Neighbour's Back-  
 yard!)

Since the Muses back out, let Philosophy<sub>2</sub> in:  
 Let me ponder its problems cold and hard.  
 Ah! Philosophy dies in a celibate grin  
 At that bolster-case down in my Neighbour's Back-  
 yard!

Oh shame on my rapidly silvering hairs !

Oh shame on this veteran battered and scarred !

*I* to be witched with these frilled—affairs !

Confound my neighbour ! Confound her Back-yard !

Why seek for the blossoms of Auld Lang Syne,

When the boughs where they budded are blasted and  
charred ?—

Faugh ! the whole concern's too alkaline—

It's washing day in my Neighbour's Back-yard !

## ON A FORK OF BYRON'S.

[One of a set in the possession of the late C. W. Pitts, Esq.,  
Stanthorpe.]

LIKE any other fork.—No mark you meet with  
To point some psychological conceit with.  
An ordinary fork. A fork to eat with.

No individuality of fashion :  
No stamp of frenzy fine, or poet-passion ;  
An article in no respect Parnassian.

No muse "with ivy never sere" hath decked it :  
In fact, it would be foolish to expect it.  
I question if the muses recollect it.

A plain straightforward fork ; yet interesting,  
As to the world in general attesting  
That poetizing hinges on digesting.

A fork not standing on its merits merely,  
But, being Byron's, testifying clearly  
That verse and victuals are related nearly.

Quite genuine ; crest and all ; a fork to swear by ;  
Some poet-stories doubtless hanging thereby,—  
Associations such as gold can ne'er buy.

For 'twixt the fork and the divine afflatus  
The links are perfect ; there is no hiatus ;  
Fork, stomach, brain, pen,—all one apparatus.

So when the food that on the fork ascended  
Grew into verse as with the brain it blended,  
The fork wrote just as truly as the pen did.

For though the fork the earlier resource is,  
Between the two no violent divorce is,—  
I hold them to be correlated forces.

Perchance the unsuspected ministration  
Of this same fork first set in circulation  
The coinage of his rich imagination.

Perchance this very fork could give the clue to  
What many of the famous thoughts were due to,  
That now are part of me, and part of you too.

And if its prongs administered the fuel  
That working duly unto brain-renewal  
Kindled the thoughts that even yet fire *you* all,—

This very fork—(unless I quite astray be,  
And you of unimpressionable clay be)—  
A factor in *your* moral product may be.

And musing thus, does not this fork begin to you  
To seem as consanguineously akin to you  
As if the bard himself had stuck it into you ?

'Tis ever thus : what Genius consecrateth  
The nearest with the most remote collateth,  
Till meanest use on highest issue waiteth.

This salad, now, in which the fork I'm pressing,  
Wherein are all sweet savours coalescing—  
What subtle shoot of genius efflorescing  
Flowered in the flavour of so rich a blessing ?  
Is it that Byron's fork, some charm possessing,  
Transmutes the—stop a bit—Who did the dressing ?

### THE POWER OF SCIENCE.

“ ALL thoughts, all passions, all delights,  
 Whatever stirs this mortal frame.”  
 Are but the legacies of apes,  
 With interest on the same.

How oft in studious hours do I  
 Recall those moments, gone too soon,  
 When midway in the hall I stood,  
 Beside the Dichobune.

Through the Museum-windows played  
 The light on fossil, cast, and chart ;  
 And she was there, my Gwendoline,  
 The mammal of my heart.

She leaned against the Glyptodon,  
 The monster of the sculptured tooth ;  
 She looked a fossil specimen  
 Herself, to tell the truth.

She leaned against the Glyptodon ;  
 She fixed her glasses on her nose ;  
 One Pallas-foot drawn back displayed  
 The azure of her hose.

Few virtues had she of her own—  
 She borrowed them from time and space ;  
 Her age was eocene, although  
 Post-tertiary her place.

The Irish Elk that near us stood,  
 (Megaceros Hibernicus),  
 Scarce dwarfed her ; while I bowed beneath  
 Her stately overplus.

I prized her pre-diluvian height,  
 Her palæozoic date of birth,  
 For these to scientific eye  
 Had scientific worth.

She had some crotchets of her own,  
 My sweet viviparous Gwendoline ;  
 She loved me best when I would sing  
 Her ape-descent and mine.

I raised a wild pansophic lay  
    (The public fled the dismal tones) ;—  
I struck a chord that suited well  
    That *entourage* of bones.

I sang the very dawn of life,  
    Cleared at a bound the infinite chasm  
That sunders inorganic dust  
    From sly-born protoplasm.

I smote the stiffest chords of song,  
    I showed her in a glorious burst  
How universal unity  
    Was dual from the first.

How primal germs contained in one  
    The beau-ideal and the belle ;  
And how the "mystery of life"  
    Is just a perfect cell.

I showed how sense itself began  
    In senseless gropings after sense ;—  
(She seemed to find it so herself,  
    Her gaze was so intense.)

And how the very need of light  
Conceived, and visual organs bore ;  
Until an optic want evolved  
    The spectacles she wore.

How headless molluscs making head  
    Against the fashions of their line,  
On pulpy maxims turned their backs,  
    And specialized a spine.

How landward longings seized on fish,  
    Fretted the type within their eggs,  
And in amphibian issue dif-  
    ferentiated legs.

I hopped the quaint marsupials,  
    And into higher mammals ran,  
And through a subtle fugue I stole  
    From Lemurs up to Man.

How tails were lost—but when I reached  
    This saddest part of all my lay,  
She dropped the corners of her mouth,  
    And turned her face away.

And proud to see my lofty love  
So sweetly wince, so coyly shrink,  
I woke a moving threnody—  
I sang the missing link.

And when I spake of vanished kin,  
Of Simian races dead and gone,  
The wave of sorrow from her eyes  
Half-drowned the Glyptodon.

I turned to other, brighter themes,  
And glancing at our different scales,  
I showed how lady beetles are  
Robuster than the males.

I sang the Hymenoptera ;  
How insect-brides are sought and got ;  
How stridulation of the male  
First hinted what was what.

And when—perchance too fervently—  
I smote upon the chord of sex,  
I saw the tardy spark of love  
Blaze up behind her specs.

She listened with a heightened grace,  
She blushed a blush like ruby wine,  
Then bent her stately head and clinked  
Her spectacles on mine.

A mighty impulse rattled through  
Her well-articulated frame;  
And into one delighted ear  
She breathed my Christian name.

And whispered that my song had given  
Her secret thought substantial shape,  
For she had long considered me  
The offshoot of an ape.

She raised me from the enchanted floor,  
And, as my lips her shoulder met,  
Between two asthmas of embrace  
She called me marmosette.

I strove to calm her down ; she grew  
Serener and serener ;  
And so I won my Gwendoline,  
My vertebrate congener.

## THE COURTSHIP OF THE FUTURE.

(A PREVISION.)

(A. D. 2876.)

HE.

"WHAT is a kiss?"—Why, long ago,  
 When pairs, as we, a-wooing sat,  
 They used to put their four lips . . . . so . . . .  
 And make a chirping noise . . . . like that.  
 And, strange to say, the fools were pleased ;  
 A little went a long way then :  
 A cheek lip-grazed, a finger squeezed,  
 Was rapture to those ancient men.

Ah, not for us the timid course  
 Of those old-fashioned bill-and-cooers !  
 One unit of *our* psychic force  
 Had squelched a thousand antique wooers.  
 For us the god his chalice dips  
 In fountains fiercer, deeper, dearer,  
 Than purling confluence of lips  
 That meet, but bring the Souls no nearer.

Well; 'twas but poverty at worst :  
    Poor beggars, how could they be choosers !  
Not yet upon the world had burst  
    Our Patent Mutual Blood-Transfusers.  
Not yet had Science caught the clue  
    To joy self-doubling, -squaring, -cubing,—  
Nor taught to draw the whole soul through  
    A foot of gutta-percha tubing.

Come, Lulu, bare the pearly arm ;—  
    Now, where the subtle blue shows keenest,  
I hang the duplex, snake-like charm,  
    (The latest, by a new machinist).  
And see, in turn above my wrist  
    I fix the blood-compelling conduits . . .  
Ah, this is what the old world missed,  
    For all the lore of all its pundits !

I turn the tap—I touch the spring—  
    Hush, Lulu, hush ! our lives are blending.  
(This new escapement's quite the thing,  
    And very well worth recommending.)  
Oh circuit of commingling bliss !  
    Oh bliss of mingling circulation !  
True love alone can merge like this  
    In one continuous pulsation.

Your swift life thrills me through and through :

    I wouldn't call the Queen my mother :

Now you are I, and I am you,

    And each of us is one another.

Reciprocally influent

    The wedded love-tide flows between us :—

Ah, this is what the old fables meant,

    For surely, love, our love is venous.

Now, now, your inmost life I know,

    How nobler far than mine and grander ;

For through *my* breast *your* feelings flow,

    And through my brain your thoughts meander.

I feel a rush of high desires

    With sweet domestic uses blending,

As now I think of angel-choirs,

    And now of stockings heaped for mending.

And see—myself ! in light enshrined !

    An aureole my hat replacing !

Now, amorous yearnings half-defined,

    With prudish scruples interlacing,

Next, cloudlike floats a snowy veil,

    And—heavens above us !—what a trousseau ! . .

Come, Lulu, give me tale for tale ;

    I'll keep transfusing till you do so.

SHE.

Oh, love, this never *can* be you !

The stream flows turbid, melancholic ;  
And heavy vapours dull me through,  
Dashed with a something alcoholic.  
The elective-forces shrink apart,  
No answering raptures thrill and quicken ;  
Strange feelings curdle at my heart,  
And in my veins *viie* memories thicken.

I feel an alien life in mine !

It isn't I ! It isn't you, Sir !  
This is the mood of Caroline !  
Oh, don't tell *me* ! I know the brew, Sir !  
Nay, nay,—it isn't "the machine" !  
This isn't you—this isn't I, Sir !  
It's the old story—you have been  
Transfusing elsewhere on the sly, Sir.

## THE GENTLE ANARCHIST.

[*From an Unpublished Opera Libretto.*]

I AM a gentle Anarchist,  
 I couldn't kick a dog,  
 Nor ever would for sport assist  
 To pelt the helpless frog.  
 I'd shoot a Czar, or wreck a train,  
 Blow Parliament sky-high,  
 But none could call me inhumane ;  
 I wouldn't hurt a fly.  
     I wouldn't hurt a fly,  
 And why indeed should I ?  
     It has neither land nor pelf  
     That I covet for myself,  
 Then wherefore should I hurt a fly ?

I am a gentle Anarchist,  
 I live on herbs and fruits ;  
 It don't become a communist  
 To eat his fellow-brutes.

I'd fire a town, upset a state,  
    Make countless widows weep,  
Yet I am so compassionate  
    I wouldn't kill a sheep.  
        I wouldn't hurt a fly ;  
        And why indeed should I ?  
            If it doesn't interfere  
            With my personal career,  
        Why the dickens should I hurt a fly ?

I'm such a gentle Anarchist  
    I hate all hunting men ;  
I couldn't hook a fish, or twist  
    The neck of cock or hen.  
I'd level gaols, let scoundrels loose,  
    Blow priests and churches up—  
But, oh, my pity's so profuse  
    I couldn't drown a pup.  
        I wouldn't hurt a fly ;  
        And why indeed should I ?  
            Unless, that is to say,  
            I found it in my way,  
        And then it's all up with the fly.

## MACAULAY'S NEW ZEALANDER.

It little profits that, an idle man,  
 On this worn arch, in sight of wasted halls,  
 I mope, a solitary pelican,  
 And glower and glower for ever on Saint Paul's :—  
 Will no soft-hearted mortal be so very  
 Obliging as to row me o'er the ferry ?

Here three-and-thirty years\* I've stood estranged,  
 A dream of ruin all around me stretching ;  
 And centuries shall see me yet unchanged,  
 Ever in act to sketch, but nothing sketching ;  
 Mutely immutable, constrain'dly still,  
 With nought to stand against, except my will.

A wondrous lot is mine ; ye bide your doom  
 Till men say Vixit : mine begins ere birth ;  
 A lonely ghost projected from the womb  
 Of Time-to-come, I linger now on earth.  
 Ye vertebrates date back, while I commence  
 My weary present in the future tense.

\* Macaulay's New Zealander dates from 1840.

A weird eidolon ; a born paradox ;  
 A fixture framed of incorporeal particles ;  
 Yet dropped in many an Editorial box,  
 Blown thence in squibs, or hurled in Leading Articles ;  
 A Nomad, though my permanent address is  
 In Volume Second of Macaulay's Essays.

I was not born of woman (see Macduff—  
 Nor stare to hear my lore so far extends ;  
 The sire who bore me trafficked in such stuff,  
 And had his Shakespeare at his finger-ends :  
 The quitch is in the blood—such blood as ghost has ;  
 I know as much as he ; at least, almost as).

I was not born of woman ; gave no pain ;  
 Through no preliminary stage did pass ;  
 But sprang, a Pallas, from Macaulay's brain,  
 Though not like her, with spear and helm of brass ;  
*My* spear, a pencil of Queensland plumbago ;  
*My* casque, a felt one—latest from Otago.

And therein lies the sting of all I bear—  
 That after brooding ages on mine arch,  
 And treasuring what the centuries prepare,  
 And noting what ye proudly term the March  
 Of Progress, and assimilating all  
 “The long result of Time,” see “Locksley-hall ;”—

That after seeing all that mortal can,  
 That after learning all that man can learn,  
 This forecast shade, already more than man,  
 Must go and be a baby in its turn !  
 I've got to go and be a little kid,  
 When old perhaps as Cheops' Pyramid !

I've got to wear a little purfled cap ;  
 Pass through, perchance, some brutal mode of  
 swaddling ;  
 To gather tissue from a bowl of pap ;  
 To undergo no end of molly-coddling ;  
 To be brought up by hand, or, worse and worse,  
 To be a parasite upon a nurse.

And in due course this cultured soul of mine  
 Must learn its Catechism by easy stages ;  
 And sundry rods shall yet be steeped in brine,  
 To stimulate the heir of all the ages ;  
 And men shall file away with prose and rhyme  
 To sharpen *me*, the foremost file of time.

I pray you, purist, faint not at the word ;  
 For in the distant day whereof I speak,  
 Your chastened phrases shall be held absurd ;  
 What you call slang shall be our Attic Greek ;  
 And every man be file, or bloke, or cove ;  
 And bloods make oath by Gum, instead of Jove !

For standing here, immovable and dumb,  
 An arch-Stylites, birth, not death, awaiting,  
 Faint inklings reach me of the time to come,  
 Beneath the loud To-day reverberating ;  
 And I could tell of things so strange and wild,  
 Your wisest don would feel himself a child ;—

Could show up many a now-belauded quackery ;  
 Could play the deuce with half your saints and sages ;  
 Could settle for you whether Boz or Thackeray  
 Shall be the admiration of the ages ;  
 And whether Morris, Swinburne, and Rossetti  
 Shall number with the great, or with the petty ;—

Could tell how empire shall have changed its place,  
 But must not “blow,” *although* an Australasian ;  
 Could tell you which shall be the ruling race,  
 But may not shock the orthodox Caucasian,  
 Nor dare your curiosity assuage,  
 Lest I should make half-castes become the rage ;—

Could tell you quite a fairy tale of science,  
 And wonders in Political Economy,  
 That set your time-worn statutes at defiance,  
 And hold them out of date as Deuteronomy :  
 The darky, boss ; the trashy white, a “brudder ;”  
 Man at the prow, and woman at the rudder ;—

How all shall go by natural selection ;  
No man allowed to live unless good-looking ;  
How love shall vent itself in vivisection,  
And charms be rated subsequent to cooking ;  
How girls instead of knitting sofa-covers,  
Shall spend their leisure in tattooing lovers ;

And how magnetic belts with dazzling hues  
Shall draw unwilling arms around the waist ;  
How damsels to enhance their lips shall use  
Odylic force condensed into a paste ;  
And woo the bashful from his slow simplicity  
With cakes of desiccated electricity ;—

How education, as a general rule,  
Shall be conducted by familiar spirits ;  
How "circles" shall be formed in every school,  
And rappings shall reward superior merits ;  
And how the spectroscope, applied to spectres,  
Shall re-enact all history, on reflectors ;—

And how your vaunted patents and inventions  
Shall be for playthings to the great hereafter  
And all your philosophical pretensions  
Be themes of inextinguishable laughter  
Your engineering form for future times  
The droll machinery of pantomimes.

Your steam—your boast ! What is it but a vapour ?

Or what more fleeting simile will do :

'Twill be effete as—let me see—what paper ?

Eureka !—say, the “Saturday Review !”

Whose name, indeed, shall live—simply because

These lines give token such a paper *was*.

For there be those whose memory shall rot,

And pass, and be as it had never been ;

Of such my famed progenitor's is not ;

Valhalla holds him in the high serene :—

My Prospero ! Oh may he prosper where he is,

Untouched by that unenviable caries !

For though I dumbly execrate the day

When first he chained me here, a lorn eidolon,

To be a literary popinjay,

And market-stock for every sucking Solon,

Be Hyperborean calm his long reward !

I'm proud of him ; you know, he was a lord.

Mundanes, I say Good-bye, as on ye march ;

I fain would shake your hands, but can't get at you,—

My prison-ruin waiting in the arch,

As in the marble waits the future statue.

I hate you, London-bridge ! And if Saint Paul is

A name I loathe, the fault is Lord Macaulay's.

Witlings, a word : bring me no more to book ;  
And take not any more my name in vain ;  
Cast, if ye will, one final, loving look,  
As upon one ye ne'er shall see again.  
Behold me—let it be the last occasion—  
Served up in verses for “ The Australasian.”



## NOTE.



“MARSUPIAL BILL” was preceded in the *Queenslander* by the following paragraph, which is here quoted in order to show that the story is not altogether without foundation in fact:—

“We (*Stannum Miner*) are indebted to Mr. James Warrell, of Sugarloaf, a gentleman on whose veracity we place the best reliance, for the following account of a most extraordinary occurrence. We give the statement as nearly as possible in Mr. Warrell’s own words:—‘I give you the details of a very rare occurrence. A boy of mine, about 11 years old, was sent a message last Saturday week, about 1 o’clock p.m. About half-way between my place and Connolly’s, on a well-used road, a kangaroo came from behind, took him up, and carried him, without stopping, to the Maryland Company’s ground—about a mile-and-a-half—over some very rough country. The lad got back home about dusk, his face bloody, and seemingly half mad. He soon became sensible, however, and by the time I got home—an hour afterwards—he was sufficiently recovered to be interviewed. “Well, Willie, did you not see the kangaroo before he caught you?” “No, he was just on to me before I knew.” “Were there any more kangaroos?” “Not then, but about half-way there was a big mob of kangaroos, and we all went together.” “I suppose you were crying?” “Yes, all the way.” “When he dropped you, what did he do?” “Nothing; stood and looked at me for a minute, and then went off with the mob.” “What did you do then?” “I don’t remember anything after that. After sundown I found myself at the Lincolnshire mine, near where the engine was, and then I made for home.” I think the lad must have been crazy for a while; his coat was split open down the back, but, although his face was covered with blood

when he got home, there was not a scratch on him. The kangaroo must have been a good-sized one to carry him (about 65 lbs. weight) so far, and without a spell; and it seems strange that in the act of jumping he did not strike the boy with his feet. I have not the slightest reason to doubt the truth of the boy's statement. What was the motive that prompted the action? Some say that if there had been any water convenient he would have drowned the boy. I have a notion that the kangaroo was one that had lost its joey, and was making an attempt to adopt one.' Moral: When a child of tender years goes alone where kangaroos may be, a dog, large or small, is very good company."



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July, 1908.

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