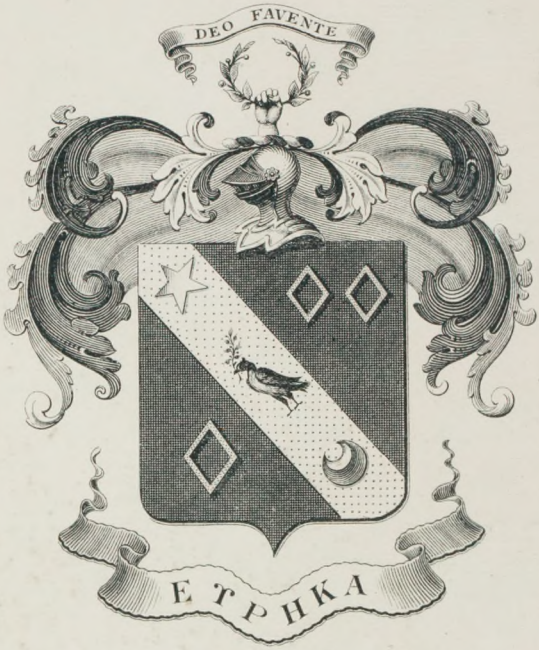
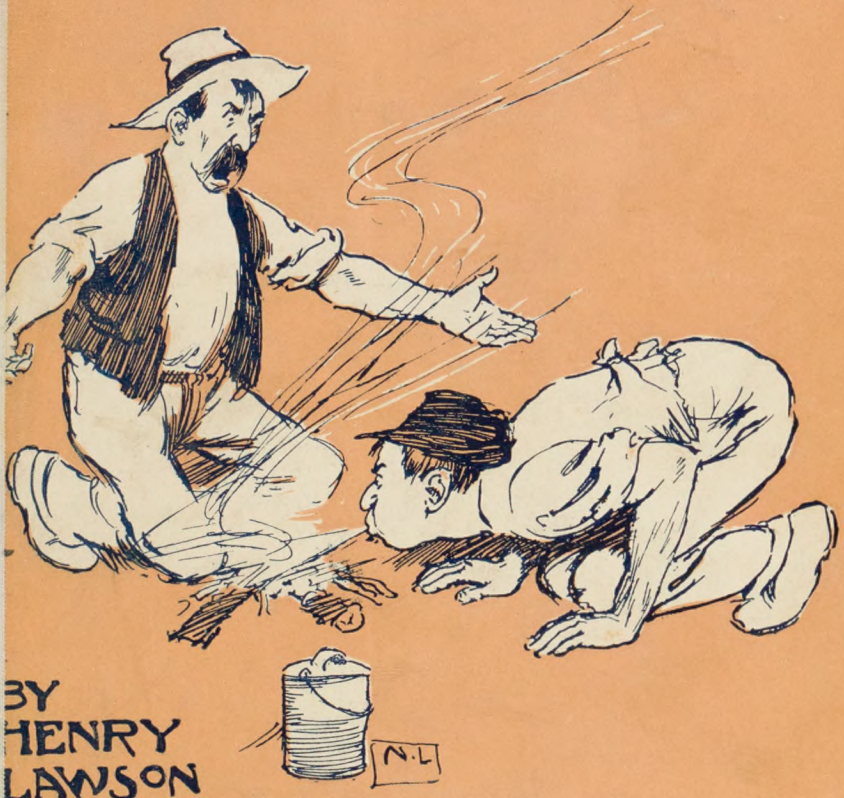
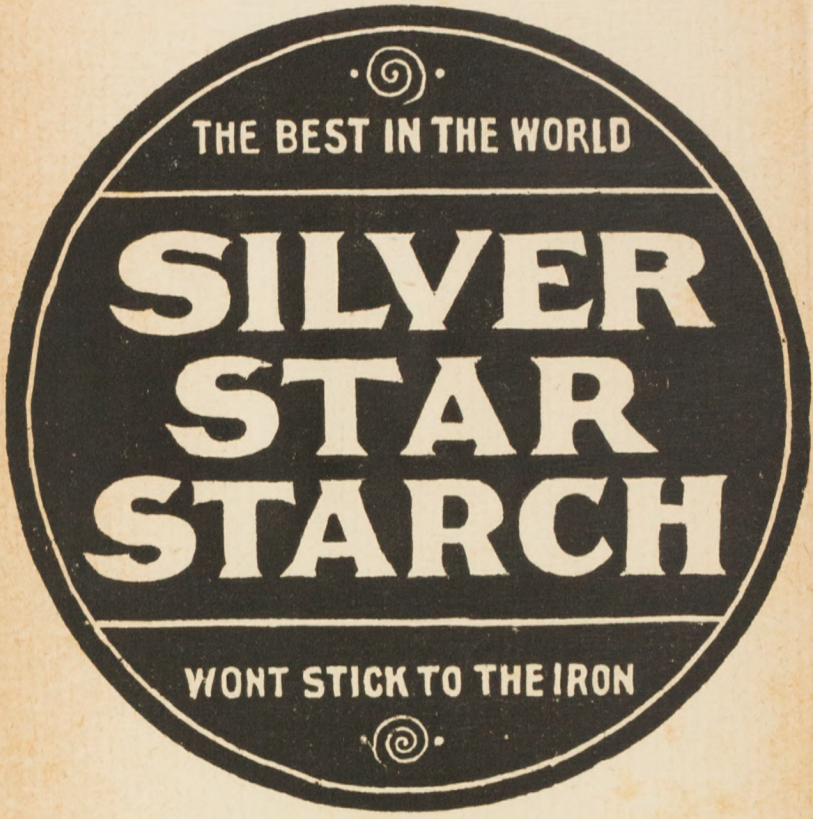


David Scott Mitchell.

HUMOUROUS VERSES



BY
HENRY
LAWSON


THE BEST IN THE WORLD
SILVER
STAR
STARCH
WONT STICK TO THE IRON

HUMOROUS VERSES

I desire to thank the editor and proprietors of the Sydney *Bulletin* for the privilege of reprinting the verses in this volume.

H. L.

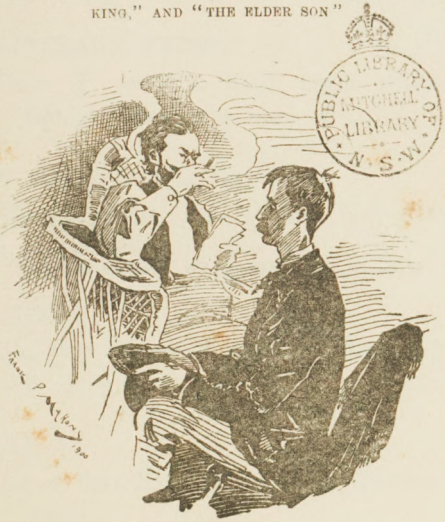
Sydney, March 17th, 1900.

HUMOROUS VERSES

BY

HENRY LAWSON

"WHILE THE BILLY BOILS," "WHEN THE WORLD WAS WIDE, AND OTHER VERSES,
"JOE WILSON," "JOE WILSON'S MATES," "OVER THE SLIPRAILS,"
"ON THE TRACK," "POPULAR VERSES," "WHEN I WAS
KING," AND "THE ELDER SON"



"Once I wrote a little poem which I thought was very fine,
And I showed the printer's copy to a critic friend of mine."

SYDNEY

ANGUS AND ROBERTSON

89 CASTLEREAGH STREET

1906

Websdale, Shoosmith and Co. Printers, Sydney.

CONTENTS.

MY LITERARY FRIEND

Once I wrote a little poem which I thought was very
fine,
And I showed the printer's copy to a critic friend of
mine,
First he praised the thing a little, then he found a
little fault;
'The ideas are good,' he muttered, 'but the rhythm
seems to halt.'

So I straighten'd up the rhythm where he marked it
with his pen,
And I copied it and showed it to my clever friend
again.
'You've improved the metre greatly, but the rhymes
are bad,' he said,
As he read it slowly, scratching surplus wisdom from
his head.

So I worked as he suggested (I believe in taking time),
And I burnt the 'midnight taper' while I straightened up the rhyme.
'It is better now,' he muttered, 'you go on and you'll succeed,
'It has got a ring about it—the ideas are what you need.'

So I worked for hours upon it (I go on when I commence),
And I kept in view the rhythm and the jingle and the sense,
And I copied it and took it to my solemn friend once more—
It reminded him of something he had somewhere read before.

. . . . . .

Now the people say I'd never put such horrors into print
If I wasn't too conceited to accept a friendly hint,
And my dearest friends are certain that I'd profit in the end
If I'd always show my copy to a literary friend.

MARY CALLED HIM 'MISTER'

THEY'D parted but a year before—she never thought
he'd come,
She stammer'd, blushed, held out her hand, and called
him '*Mister* Gum.'
How could he know that all the while she longed to
murmur 'John.'
He called her 'Miss le Brook,' and asked how she was
getting on.

They'd parted but a year before; they'd loved each
other well,
But he'd been to the city, and he came back *such* a
swell.
They longed to meet in fond embrace, they hungered
for a kiss—
But Mary called him 'Mister,' and the idiot called
her 'Miss.'

He stood and lean'd against the door—a stupid chap
was he—
And, when she asked if he'd come in and have a cup
of tea,
He looked to left, he looked to right, and then he
glanced behind,
And slowly doffed his cabbage-tree, and said he
'didn't mind.'

She made a shy apology because the meat was
tough,
And then she asked if he was sure his tea was sweet
enough;
He stirred the tea and sipped it twice, and answer'd
'plenty, quite;'
And cut the smallest piece of beef and said that it
was 'right.'

She glanced at him at times and cough'd an awkward
little cough;
He stared at anything but her and said, 'I must
be off.'
That evening he went riding north—a sad and lonely
ride—
She locked herself inside her room, and there sat
down and cried.

They'd parted but a year before, they loved each other well—
But she was such a country girl and he was such a swell;
They longed to meet in fond embrace, they hungered for a kiss—
But Mary called him 'Mister' and the idiot called her 'Miss.'

REJECTED

She says she's very sorry, as she sees you to the gate;
You calmly say 'Good-bye' to her while standing
off a yard,
Then you lift your hat and leave her, walking mighty
stiff and straight—
But you're hit, old man—hit hard.

In your brain the words are burning of the answer
that she gave,
As you turn the nearest corner and you stagger
just a bit;
But you pull yourself together, for a man's strong
heart is brave
When it's hit, old man—hard hit

You might try to drown the sorrow, but the drink
has no effect;
You cannot stand the barmaid with her coarse and
vulgar wit;
And so you seek the street again, and start for home
direct,
When you're hit, old man—hard hit.

You see the face of her you lost, the pity in her
smile—
Ah! she is to the barmaid as is snow to chimney
grit;
You're a better man and nobler in your sorrow, for a
while,
When you're hit, old man—hard hit.

And, arriving at your lodgings, with a face of deepest
gloom,
You shun the other boarders and your manly brow
you knit;
You take a light and go upstairs directly to your
room—
But the whole house knows you're hit.

You clutch the scarf and collar, and you tear them
from your throat,
You rip your waistcoat open like a fellow in a fit;
And you fling them in a corner with the made-to-
order coat,
When you're hit, old man—hard hit.

You throw yourself, despairing, on your narrow little
bed,
Or pace the room till someone starts with 'Skit!
cat!—skit!'
And then lie blindly staring at the plaster overhead—
You are hit, old man—hard hit.

It's doubtful whether vanity or love has suffered
worst,
So neatly in our nature are those feelings interknit,
Your heart keeps swelling up so bad, you wish that
it would burst,
When you're hit, old man—hard hit.

You think and think, and think, and think, till you
go mad almost;
Across your sight the spectres of the bygone seem
to flit;

The very girl herself seems dead, and comes back as a ghost,
When you're hit, like this—hard hit.

You know that it's all over—you're an older man by years,
In the future not a twinkle, in your black sky not a split.
Ah! you'll think it well that women have the privilege of tears,
When you're hit, old man—hard hit.

You long and hope for nothing but the rest that sleep can bring,
And you find that in the morning things have brightened up a bit;
But you're dull for many evenings, with a cracked heart in a sling,
When you're hit, old man—hard hit.

O'HARA, J.P.

James Patrick O'Hara, the Justice of Peace,
He bossed the P.M. and he bossed the police ;
A parent, a deacon, a landlord was he—
A townsman of weight was O'Hara, J.P.

He gave out the prizes, foundation-stones laid,
He shone when the Governor's visit was paid ;
And twice re-elected as Mayor was he—
The flies couldn't roost on O'Hara, J.P.

Now Sandy M'Fly, of the Axe-and-the-Saw,
Was charged with a breach of the licensing law—
He sold after hours whilst talking too free
On matters concerning O'Hara, J.P.

And each contradicted the next witness flat,
Concerning back parlours, side-doors, and all that;
'Twas very conflicting, as all must agree—
'Ye'd betther take care!' said O'Hara, J.P.

But 'Baby,' the barmaid, her evidence gave—
A poor, timid darling who tried to be brave—
'Now, *don't* be afraid—if it's frightened ye be—
'Speak out, my good girl,' said O'Hara, J.P.

Her hair was so golden, her eyes were so blue,
Her face was so fair and her words seemed so true—
So green in the ways of sweet women was he
That she jolted the heart of O'Hara, J.P.

He turned to the other grave Justice of Peace,
And whispered, 'You can't always trust the police;
'*I'll visit the premises during the day,*
'*And see for myself*,' said O'Hara, Jay Pay.

(Case postponed.)

. . . . . .

'Twas early next morning, or late the same night—
'Twas early next morning' we think would be right—
And sounds that betokened a breach of the law
Escaped through the cracks of the Axe-and-the-Saw.

And Constable Dogherty, out in the street,
Met Constable Clancy a bit off his beat;
He took him with finger and thumb by the ear,
And led him around to a lane in the rear.

He pointed a blind where strange shadows were seen—
Wild pantomime hinting of revels within—
'We'll drop on M'Fly, if you'll listen to me,
'And prove we are right to O'Hara, J.P.'

But Clancy was up to the lay of the land,
He cautiously shaded his mouth with his hand—
'Wisht, man! Howld yer whisht! or it's ruined we'll be,
'It's the justice himself—it's O'Hara, J.P.'

They hish'd and they whishted, and turned themselves round,
And got themselves off like two cats on wet ground;
Agreeing to be, on their honour as men,
A deaf-dumb-and-blind institution just then.

Inside on a sofa, two barmaids between,
With one on his knee was a gentleman seen;
And any chance eye at the keyhole could see
In less than a wink 'twas O'Hara, J.P.

The first in the chorus of songs that were sung,
The loudest that laughed at the jokes that were sprung,
The guest of the evening, the soul of the spree—
The daddy of all was O'Hara, J.P.

And hard-cases chuckled, and hard-cases said
That Baby and Alice conveyed him to bed—
In subsequent storms it was painful to see
Those hard-cases side with the sinful J.P.

Next day, in the court, when the case came in sight,
O'Hara declared he was satisfied quite;
The case was dismissed—it was destined to be
The final ukase of O'Hara, J.P.

The law and religion came down on him first—
The Christian was hard but his wife was the worst!
Half ruined and half driven crazy was he—
It made an old man of O'Hara, J.P.

Now, young men who come from the bush, do you hear?
Who know not the power of barmaids and beer—
Don't see for yourself! from temptation steer free,
Remember the fall of O'Hara, J.P.

BILL AND JIM FALL OUT

Bill and Jim are mates no longer—they would scorn
the name of mate—
Those two bushmen hate each other with a soul-con-
suming hate ;
Yet erstwhile they were as brothers should be (tho'
they never will) :
Ne'er were mates to one another half so true as Jim
and Bill.

Bill was one of those who have to argue every day or
die—
Though, of course, he swore 'twas Jim who always
itched to argufy.
They would, on most abstract subjects, contradict
each other flat
And at times in lurid language—they were mates in
spite of that.

Bill believed the Bible story *re* the origin of him—
He was sober, he was steady, he was orthodox ; while
Jim,
Who, we grieve to state, was always getting into
drunken scrapes,
Held that man degenerated from degenerated apes.

Bill was British to the backbone, he was loyal
through and through ;
Jim declared that Blucher's Prussians won the fight
at Waterloo,
And he hoped the coloured races would in time wipe
out the white—
And it rather strained their mateship, but it didn't
burst it quite.

They battled round in Maoriland—they saw it
through and through—
And argued on the rata, what it was and how it
grew ;
Bill believed the vine grew downward, Jim declared
that it grew up—
Yet they always shared their fortunes to the final
bite and sup.

Night after night they argued how the kangaroo was
born,
And each one held the other's stupid theories in
scorn,
Bill believed it was 'born inside,' Jim declared it was
born out—
Each as to his own opinions never had the slightest
doubt.

They left the earth to argue and they went among the
stars,
Re conditions atmospheric, Bill believed 'the hair of
Mars
'Was too thin for human bein's to exist in mortal
states.'
Jim declared it was too thick, if anything—yet they
were mates.

Bill for Freetrade—Jim, Protection—argued as to
which was best
For the welfare of the workers—and their mateship
stood the test!
They argued over what they meant and didn't mean
at all,
And what they said and didn't—and were mates in
spite of all.

Till one night *the two together* tried to light a fire in
camp,
When they had a leaky billy and the wood was scarce
and damp.
And . . . No matter: let the moral be distinctly
understood:
One alone should tend the fire, while the other brings
the wood.

THE PAROO

It was a week from Christmas-time,
As near as I remember,
And half a year since in the rear
We'd left the Darling Timber.
The track was hot and more than drear;
The long day seemed forever;
But now we knew that we were near
Our camp—the Paroo River.

With blighted eyes and blistered feet,
With stomachs out of order,
Half mad with flies and dust and heat
We'd crossed the Queensland Border.
I longed to hear a stream go by
And see the circles quiver;
I longed to lay me down and die
That night on Paroo River.

'Tis said the land out West is grand—
I do not care who says it—
It isn't even decent scrub,
Nor yet an honest desert;
It's plagued with flies, and broiling hot,
A curse is on it ever;
I really think that God forgot
The country round that river.

My mate—a native of the land—
In fiery speech and vulgar,
Condemned the flies and cursed the sand,
And doubly damned the mulga.
He peered ahead, he peered about—
A bushman he, and clever—
'Now mind you keep a sharp look-out;
'We must be near the river.'

The 'nose-bags' heavy on each chest
(God bless one kindly squatter!)
With grateful weight our hearts they pressed—
We only wanted water.
The sun was setting (in the west)
In colour like a liver—
We'd fondly hoped to camp and rest
That night on Paroo River.

A cloud was on my mate's broad brow,
And once I heard him mutter :
'I'd like to see the Darling now,
'God bless the Grand Old Gutter!'
And now and then he stopped and said
In tones that made me shiver—
'It cannot well be on ahead,
'*I think we've crossed the river.*'

But soon we saw a strip of ground
That crossed the track we followed—
No barer than the surface round,
But just a little hollowed.
His brows assumed a thoughtful frown—
This speech he did deliver :
'I wonder if we'd best go down
'Or up the blessed river?'

'But where,' said I, ''s the blooming stream?'
And he replied, 'We're at it!'
I stood awhile, as in a dream,
'Great Scott!' I cried, 'is *that* it?
'Why, that is some old bridle-track!'
He chuckled, 'Well, I never!
'It's nearly time you came out-back—
'This *is* the Paroo River!'

No place to camp—no spot of damp—
No moisture to be seen there;
If e'er there was, it left no sign
That it had ever been there.
But ere the morn, with heart and soul
We'd cause to thank the Giver—
We found a muddy water-hole
Some ten miles down the river.

THE GREEN-HAND ROUSEABOUT

Call this hot? I beg your pardon. Hot!—you don't know what it means.
(What's that, waiter? lamb or mutton! Thank you—mine is beef and greens.
Bread and butter while I'm waiting. Milk? Oh, yes—a bucketful.)
I'm just in from west the Darling, 'picking-up' and 'rolling wool.'

Mutton stewed or chops for breakfast, dry and tasteless, boiled in fat;
Bread or brownie, tea or coffee—two hours' graft in front of that;
Legs of mutton boiled for dinner—mutton greasy-warm for tea—
Mutton curried (gave my order, beef and plenty greens for me.)

Breakfast, curried rice and mutton till your innards sacrifice,
And you sicken at the colour and the smell of curried rice.
All day long with living mutton—bits and belly-wool and fleece ;
Blinded by the yoke of wool, and shirt and trousers stiff with grease,
Till you long for sight of verdure, cabbage-plots and water clear,
And you crave for beef and butter as a boozer craves for beer.

. . . . . .

Dusty patch in baking mulga—glaring iron hut and shed—
Feel and smell of rain forgotten—water scarce and feed-grass dead.
Hot and suffocating sunrise—all-pervading sheep-yard smell—
Stiff and aching green-hand stretches—'Slushy' rings the bullock-bell—
Pint of tea and hunk of brownie—sinners string towards the shed—
Great, black, greasy crows round carcass—screen behind of dust-cloud red.

Engine whistles. 'Go it, tigers!' and the agony
begins,
Picking up for seven devils out of Hades—for my
sins;
Picking up for seven devils, seven demons out of
Hell!
Sell their souls to get the bell-sheep—half a-dozen
Christs they'd sell!
Day grows hot as where they come from—too damned
hot for men or brutes;
Roof of corrugated iron, six-foot-six above the shoots!

Whiz and rattle and vibration, like an endless chain
of trams;
Blasphemy of five-and-forty — prickly heat — and
stink of rams!
'Barcoo' leaves his pen-door open and the sheep
come bucking out;
When the rouser goes to pen them, 'Barcoo' blasts
the rouseabout.
Injury with insult added—trial of our cursing
powers—
Cursed and cursing back enough to damn a dozen
worlds like ours.

'Take my combs down to the grinder, will yer?'
'Seen my cattle-pup?'
'There's a sheep fell down in my shoot—just jump down and pick it up.'
'Give the office when the boss comes.' 'Catch that gory sheep, old man.'
'Count the sheep in my pen, will yer?' 'Fetch my combs back when yer can.'
'When yer get a chance, old feller, will yer pop down to the hut?
'Fetch my pipe—the cook 'll show yer—and I'll let yer have a cut.'

Shearer yells for tar and needle. Ringer's roaring like a bull:
'Wool away, you (son of angels). Where the hell's the (foundling) WOOL!!'

. . . . . .

Pound a week and station prices—mustn't kick against the pricks—
Seven weeks of lurid mateship—ruined soul and four pounds six.

. . . . . .

What's that? waiter? *me?* stuffed mutton! Look
here, waiter, to be brief,
I said beef! you blood-stained villain! Beef—moo-
cow—Roast Bullock—BEEF!

THE MAN FROM WATERLOO

(With kind regards to "Banjo.")

It was the Man from Waterloo,
When work in town was slack,
Who took the track as bushmen do,
And humped his swag out back.
He tramped for months without a bob,
For most the sheds were full,
Until at last he got a job
At picking up the wool.
He found the work was rather rough,
But swore to see it through,
For he was made of sterling stuff—
The Man from Waterloo.

The first remark was like a stab
That fell his ear upon,
'Twas—'There's another something scab
'The boss has taken on!'

They couldn't let the towny be—
They sneered like anything;
They'd mock him when he'd sound the 'g'
In words that end in 'ing.'

There came a man from Ironbark,
And at the shed he shore;
He scoffed his victuals like a shark,
And like a fiend he swore.
He'd shorn his flowing beard that day—
He found it hard to reap—
Because 'twas hot and in the way
While he was shearing sheep.
His loaded fork in grimy holt
Was poised, his jaws moved fast,
Impatient till his throat could bolt
The mouthful taken last.
He couldn't stand a something toff,
Much less a jackaroo;
And swore to take the trimmings off
The Man from Waterloo.

The towny saw he must be up
Or else be underneath,
And so one day, before them all,
He dared to clean his teeth.

The men came running from the shed,
And shouted, 'Here's a lark!'
'It's gone to clean its tooties!' said
The man from Ironbark.
His feeble joke was much enjoyed;
He sneered as bullies do,
And with a scrubbing-brush he guyed
The Man from Waterloo.

The Jackaroo made no remark
But peeled and waded in,
And soon the Man from Ironbark
Had three teeth less to grin!
And when they knew that he could fight
They swore to see him through,
Because they saw that he was right—
The Man from Waterloo.

Now in a shop in Sydney, near
The Bottle on the Shelf,
The tale is told—with trimmings—by
The Jackaroo himself.
'They made my life a hell,' he said;
'They wouldn't let me be;
'They set the bully of the shed
'To take it out of me.

'The dirt was on him like a sheath,
'He seldom washed his phiz;
'He sneered because I cleaned my teeth—
'I guess I dusted his!
'I treated them as they deserved—
'I signed on one or two!
'They won't forget me soon,' observed
The Man from Waterloo.

SAINT PETER

Now, I think there is a likeness
'Twixt St. Peter's life and mine,
For he did a lot of trampin'
Long ago in Palestine.
He was 'union' when the workers
First began to organise,
And—I'm glad that old St. Peter
Keeps the gate of Paradise.

When the ancient agitator
And his brothers carried swags,
I've no doubt he very often
Tramped with empty tucker-bags;
And I'm glad he's Heaven's picket,
For I hate explainin' things,
And he'll think a union ticket
Just as good as Whitely King's.

He denied the Saviour's union,
Which was weak of him, no doubt;
But perhaps his feet was blistered
And his boots had given out.
And the bitter storm was rushin'
On the bark and on the slabs,
And a cheerful fire was blazin',
And the hut was full of 'scabs.'

. . . . . .

When I reach the great head-station—
Which is somewhere 'off the track'—
I won't want to talk with angels
Who have never been out back;
They might bother me with offers
Of a banjo—meanin' well—
And a pair of wings to fly with,
When I only want a spell.

I'll just ask for old St. Peter,
And I think, when he appears,
I will only have to tell him
That I carried swag for years.
'I've been on the track,' I'll tell him,
'An' I done the best I could,'
And he'll understand me better
Than the other angels would

He won't try to get a chorus
  Out of lungs that's worn to rags,
Or to graft the wings on shoulders
  That is stiff with humpin' swags.
But I'll rest about the station
  Where the work-bell never rings,
Till they blow the final trumpet
  And the Great Judge sees to things.

THE STRANGER'S FRIEND

THE strangest things, and the maddest things, that a man can do or say,
To the chaps and fellers and coves Out Back are matters of every day ;
Maybe on account of the lives they lead, or the life that their hearts discard—
But never a fool can be too mad or a 'hard case' be too hard.

I met him in Bourke in the Union days--with which we have nought to do
(Their creed was narrow, their methods crude, but they stuck to 'the cause' like glue).
He came into town from the Lost Soul Run for his grim half-yearly 'bend,'
And because of a curious hobby he had, he was known as 'The Stranger's Friend.'

It is true to the region of adjectives when I say that
the spree was 'grim,'
For to go on the spree was a sacred rite, or a heathen
rite, to him,
To shout for the travellers passing through to the
land where the lost soul bakes—
Till they all seemed devils of different breeds, and his
pockets were filled with snakes.

In the joyful mood, in the solemn mood—in his
cynical stages too—
In the maudlin stage, in the fighting stage, in the
stage when all was blue—
From the joyful hour when his spree commenced,
right through to the awful end,
He never lost grip of his 'fixed idee' that he was the
Stranger's Friend.

'The feller as knows, *he* can battle around for his
bloomin' self,' he'd say—
'I don't give a curse for the "blanks" I know—send
the hard-up bloke this way;
'Send the stranger round, and I'll see him through,'
and, e'en as the bushman spoke,
The chaps and fellers would tip the wink to a casual,
'hard-up bloke.'

And it wasn't only a bushman's 'bluff' to the fame
of the Friend they scored,
For he'd shout the stranger a suit of clothes, and he'd
pay for the stranger's board—
The worst of it was that he'd skite all night on the
edge of the stranger's bunk,
And never got helplessly drunk himself till he'd got
the stranger drunk.

And the chaps and the fellers would speculate—by
way of a ghastly joke—
As to who'd be caught by the 'jim-jams' first—the
Friend or the hard-up bloke?
And the 'Joker' would say that there wasn't a doubt
as to who'd be damned in the end,
When the Devil got hold of a hard-up bloke in the
shape of the Stranger's Friend.

It mattered not to the Stranger's Friend what the
rest might say or think,
He always held that the hard-up state was due to the
curse of drink,
To the evils of cards, and of company: 'But a young
cove's built that way,
'And I was a bloomin' fool meself when I started out,'
he'd say.

At the end of the spree, in clean white 'moles,' clean-
shaven, and cool as ice,
He'd give the stranger a 'bob' or two, and some
straight Out Back advice ;
Then he'd tramp away for the Lost Soul Run, where
the hot dust rose like smoke,
Having done his duty to all mankind, for he'd 'stuck
to a hard-up bloke.'

They'll say 'tis a 'song of a sot,' perhaps, but the
Song of a Sot is true.
I have 'battled' myself, and *you* know, you chaps,
what a man in the bush goes through ;
Let us hope when the last of his sprees is past, and
his cheques and his strength are done,
That, amongst the sober and thrifty mates, the
Stranger's Friend has *one*.

THE GOD-FORGOTTEN ELECTION

Pat M'Durmer brought the tidings to the town of
God-Forgotten :
'There are lively days before ye—commin Parly-
mint's dissolved !'
And the boys were all excited, for the State, of
course, was 'rotten,'
And, in subsequent elections, God-Forgotten was
involved.
There was little there to live for save in drinking
beer and eating ;
But we rose on this occasion ere the news appeared
in print,
For the boys of God-Forgotten, at a wild, uproarious
meeting,
Nominated Billy Blazes for the commin Parly-
mint.

Other towns had other favourites, but the day before the battle
Bushmen flocked to God-Forgotten, and the distant sheds were still ;
Sheep were left to go to glory, and neglected mobs of cattle
Went a-straying down the river at their sweet bucolic will.
William Spouter stood for Freetrade (and his votes were split by Nottin),
He had influence behind him and he also had the tin,
But across the lonely flatlands came the cry of God-Forgotten,
'Vote for Blazes and Protection, and the land you're living in !'

Pat M'Durmer said, 'Ye schaymers, please to shut yer ugly faces,
'Lend yer dirty ears a momint while I give ye all a hint :
'*Keep ye sober till to-morrow and record yer vote for Blazes*
'If ye want to send a ringer to the commin Parlymint.

'As a young and growin' township God-Forgotten's
been neglected,
'And, if we'd be ripresinted, *now's* the moment to
begin—
'Have the local towns encouraged, local industries
purtected :
'Vote for Blazes, and Protection, and the land ye're
livin' in.

'I don't say that William Blazes is a perfect out-an'
outer,
'I don't say he have the larnin', for he never had
the luck ;
'I don't say he have the logic, or the gift of gab, like
Spouter,
'I don't say he have the practice—BUT I SAY HE
HAVE THE PLUCK!
'Now the country's gone to ruin, and the Govern-
ments are rotten,
'But he'll save the public credit and purtect the
public tin ;
'To the iverlastin' glory of the name of God-Forgotten
'Vote for Blazes and Protection, and the land ye're
livin' in!'

Pat M'D. went on the war-path, and he worked like salts and senna,
For he organised committees full of energy and push ;
And those wild committees riding through the whisky-fed Gehenna
Routed out astonished voters from their humpies in the bush.
Everything on wheels was 'rinted,' and half-sobered drunks were shot in ;
Said M'Durmer to the driver, 'If ye want to save yer skin,
'Never stop to wet yer whistles—drive like hell to God-Forgotten,
'Make the villains plump for Blazes, and the land they're livin' in.'

Half the local long-departed (for the purpose resurrected)
Plumped for Blazes and Protection, and the country where they died ;
So he topped the poll by sixty, and when Blazes was elected
There was victory and triumph on the God-Forgotten side.

Then the boys got up a banquet, and our chairman, Pat M'Durmer,
Was next day discovered sleeping in the local baker's trough—
All the dough had risen round him, but we heard a smothered murmur,
'Vote for Blazes—and Protection'—then a splutter and a cough.

Now the great Sir William Blazes lives in London, 'cross the waters,
And they say his city mansion is the swellest in West End,
But I very often wonder if his toney sons and daughters
Ever heard of Billy Blazes who was once the 'people's friend.'
Does his biassed memory linger round that wild electioneering
When the men of God-Forgotten stuck to him through thick and thin?
Does he ever, in his dreaming, hear the cry above the cheering:
'Vote for Blazes and Protection, and the land you're livin' in?'

. . . . . .

Ah, the bush was grand in those days, and the Western boys were daisies,
And their scheming and their dodging would outdo the wildest print;
Still my recollection lingers round the time when Billy Blazes
Was returned by God-Forgotten to the 'Commin Parlymint':
Still I keep a sign of canvas—'twas a mate of mine that made it—
And its paint is cracked and powdered, and its threads are bare and thin,
Yet upon its grimy surface you can read in letters faded:
'Vote for Blazes and Protection, and the Land you're livin' in.'

THE BOSS'S BOOTS

THE shearers squint along the pens, they squint along
the 'shoots;'
The shearers squint along the board to catch the
Boss's boots;
They have no time to straighten up, they have no
time to stare,
But when the Boss is looking on, they like to be
aware.

The 'rouser' has no soul to save. Condemn the rouse-about!
And sling 'em in, and rip 'em through, and get the bell-sheep out;
And skim it by the tips at times, or take it with the roots—
But 'pink' 'em nice and pretty when you see the Boss's boots.

The shearing super sprained his foot, as bosses sometimes do—
And wore, until the shed cut out, one 'side-spring' and one shoe;
And though he changed his pants at times—some worn-out and some neat—
No 'tiger' there could possibly mistake the Boss's feet.

The Boss affected larger boots than many Western men,
And Jim the Ringer swore the shoe was half as big again;
And tigers might have *heard* the boss ere any harm was done—
For when he passed it was a sort of dot and carry one.

But now there comes a picker-up who sprained his ankle, too,
And limping round the shed he found the Boss's cast-off shoe.
He went to work, all legs and arms, as green-hand rousers will,
And never dreamed of Boss's boots—much less of Bogan Bill.

Ye sons of sin that tramp and shear in hot and dusty scrubs,
Just keep away from 'headin' 'em,' and keep away from pubs,
And keep away from handicaps—for so your sugar scoots—
And you may own a station yet and wear the Boss's boots.

And Bogan by his mate was heard to mutter through his hair :
'The Boss has got a rat to-day ; he's buckin' everywhere—
'He's trainin' for a bike, I think, the way he comes an' scoots,
'He's like a bloomin' cat on mud the way he shifts his boots.'

Now Bogan Bill was shearing rough and chanced to cut a teat ;
He stuck his leg in front at once, and slewed the ewe a bit ;
He hurried up to get her through, when, close beside his shoot,
He saw a large and ancient shoe, in mateship with a boot.

He thought that he'd be fined all right—he couldn't
turn the 'yoe;'
The more he wished the boss away, the more he
wouldn't go;
And Bogan swore amenfully—beneath his breath he
swore—
And he was never known to 'pink' so prettily
before.

And Bogan through his bristling scalp in his mind's
eye could trace,
The cold, sarcastic smile that lurked about the Boss's
face;
He cursed him with a silent curse in language known
to few,
He cursed him from his boot right up, and then down
to his shoe.

But while he shore so mighty clean, and while he
screened the teat,
He fancied there was something wrong about the
Boss's feet:
The boot grew unfamiliar, and the odd shoe seemed
awry,
And slowly up the trouser went the tail of Bogan's eye.

Then swiftly to the features from a plaited green-hide belt –
You'd have to ring a shed or two to feel as Bogan felt—
For 'twas his green-hand picker-up (who wore a vacant look),
And Bogan saw the Boss outside consulting with his cook.

And Bogan Bill was hurt and mad to see that rouse-about;
And Bogan laid his 'Wolseley' down and knocked that rouser out;
He knocked him right across the board, he tumbled through the shoot—
'I'll learn the fool,' said Bogan Bill, 'to flash the Boss's boot!'

The rouser squints along the pens, he squints along the shoots,
And gives his men the office when they miss the Boss's boots.
They have no time to straighten up, they're too well-bred to stare,
But when the Boss is looking on they like to be aware.

The rouser has no soul to lose—it's blarst the rouseabout!
And rip 'em through and yell for 'tar' and get the bell-
sheep out,
And take it with the scum at times or take it with the
roots,—
But 'pink' 'em nice and pretty when you see the Boss's
boots.

'Rouseabout' and 'picker-up' are interchangeable terms in above rhymes, as also 'boss' and 'super'; the shed-name for the latter is 'Boss-over-the-board.' The shearer is paid by the hundred, the rouser by the week. 'Pink 'em pretty': to shear clean to the skin. 'Bell-sheep': shearers are not supposed to take another sheep out of pen when 'Smoke-ho,' breakfast or dinner bell goes, but some time themselves to get so many sheep out, and *one as the bell goes*, which makes more work for the rouser and entrenches on his 'smoke-ho,' as he must leave his 'board' clean. Shearers are seldom or never fined now.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE PUSH

As the night was falling slowly down on city, town and bush,
From a slum in Jones' Alley sloped the Captain of the Push ;
And he scowled towards the North, and he scowled towards the South,
As he hooked his little finger in the corners of his mouth.
Then his whistle, loud and shrill, woke the echoes of the 'Rocks,'
And a dozen ghouls came sloping round the corners of the blocks.

There was nought to rouse their anger ; yet the oath that each one swore
Seemed less fit for publication than the one that went before.

For they spoke the gutter language with the easy flow
that comes
Only to the men whose childhood knew the brothels
and the slums.
Then they spat in turns, and halted ; and the one
that came behind,
Spitting fiercely on the pavement, called on Heaven
to strike him blind.

Let us first describe the captain, bottle-shouldered,
pale and thin,
For he was the beau-ideal of a Sydney larrikin ;
E'en his hat was most suggestive of the city where we
live,
With a gallows-tilt that no one, save a larrikin, can
give ;
And the coat, a little shorter than the writer would
desire,
Showed a more or less uncertain portion of his strange
attire.

That which tailors know as 'trousers'—known by
him as 'bloomin' bags'—
Hanging loosely from his person, swept, with tattered
ends, the flags ;

And he had a pointed sternpost to the boots that peeped below
(Which he laced up from the centre of the nail of his great toe),
And he wore his shirt uncollar'd, and the tie correctly wrong ;
But I think his vest was shorter than should be in one so long.

And the captain crooked his finger at a stranger on the kerb,
Whom he qualified politely with an adjective and verb,
And he begged the Gory Bleeders that they wouldn t interrupt
Till he gave an introduction—it was painfully abrupt—
'Here's the bleedin' push, me covey—here's a (something) from the bush !
'Strike me dead, he wants to join us !' said the captain of the push.

Said the stranger : 'I am nothing but a bushy and a dunce ;
'But I read about the Bleeders in the WEEKLY GASBAG once :

'Sitting lonely in the humpy when the wind began to
"whoosh,"
'How I longed to share the dangers and the pleasures
of the push!
'Gosh! I hate the swells and good 'uns—I could
burn 'em in their beds;
'I am with you, if you'll have me, and I'll break
their blazing heads.'

'Now, look here,' exclaimed the captain to the
stranger from the bush,
'Now, look here suppose a feller was to split upon
the push,
'Would you lay for him and fetch him, even if the
traps were round?
'Would you lay him out and kick him to a jelly on
the ground?
'Would you jump upon the nameless—kill, or cripple
him, or both?
'Speak? or else I'll—SPEAK!' The stranger answered,
'My kerlonial oath!'

'Now, look here,' exclamed the captain to the stranger
from the bush,
'Now, look here—suppose the Bleeders let you come
and join the push,

'Would you smash a bleedin' bobby if you got the blank alone?

'Would you break a swell or Chinkie—split his garret with a stone?

'Would you have a "moll" to keep yer—like to swear off work for good?'

'Yes, my oath!' replied the stranger. 'My kerlonial oath! I would!'

'Now, look here,' exclaimed the captain to that stranger from the bush,

'Now, look here—before the Bleeders let yer come and join the push,

'You must prove that you're a blazer—you must prove that you have grit

'Worthy of a Gory Bleeder—you must show your form a bit—

'Take a rock and smash that winder?' and the stranger, nothing loth,

Took the rock and—smash! They only muttered 'My kerlonial oath!'

So they swore him in, and found him sure of aim and light of heel,

And his only fault, if any, lay in his excessive zeal;

He was good at throwing metal, but we chronicle with pain
That he jumped upon a victim, damaging the watch and chain,
Ere the Bleeders had secured them ; yet the captain of the push
Swore a dozen oaths in favour of the stranger from the bush.

Late next morn the captain, rising, hoarse and thirsty from his lair,
Called the newly-feather'd Bleeder, but the stranger wasn't there !
Quickly going through the pockets of his 'bloomin' bags,' he learned
That the stranger had been through him for the stuff his 'moll' had earned ;
And the language that he muttered I should scarcely like to tell
(Stars ! and notes of exclamation ! ! blank and dash will do as well).

In the night the captain's signal woke the echoes of the 'Rocks,'
Brought the Gory Bleeders sloping thro' the shadows of the blocks ;

And they swore the stranger's action was a blood-escaping shame,
While they waited for the nameless, but the nameless never came.
And the Bleeders soon forgot him ; but the captain of the push
Still is 'laying' round, in ballast, for the nameless 'from the bush.'

BILLY'S 'SQUARE AFFAIR'

Long Bill, the captain of the push, was tired of his
estate,
And wished to change his life and win the love of
something 'straight';
'Twas rumour'd that the Gory B.'s had heard Long
Bill declare
That he would turn respectable and wed a 'square
affair.'

He craved the kiss of innocence; his spirit longed to
rise;
The 'Crimson Streak,' his faithful 'piece,' grew
hateful in his eyes;
(And though, in her entirety, the Crimson Streak
'was there,'
I grieve to state the Crimson Streak was not a
'square affair.')

He wanted clothes, a masher suit, he wanted boots
and hat;
His girl had earned a quid or two—he wouldn't part
with that;
And so he went to Brickfield Hill, and from a draper
there
He 'shook' the proper kind of togs to fetch a 'square
affair.'

Long Bill went to the barber's shop and had a shave
and singe,
And from his narrow forehead combed his darling
Mabel fringe;
Long Bill put on a 'square cut' and he brushed his
boots with care,
And roved about the Gardens till he mashed a 'square
affair.'

She was a tony servant-girl from somewhere on 'the
Shore;'
She dressed in style that suited Bill—he could not
wish for more.
While in her guileless presence he had ceased to chew
or swear,
He knew the kind of barrack that can fetch a square
affair.

To thus desert his donah old was risky and a sin,
And 'twould have served him right if she had caved
his garret in.
The Gory Bleeders thought it too, and warned him
to take care
In case the Crimson Streak got scent of Billy's square
affair.

He took her to the stalls; 'twas dear, but Billy said
'Wot odds!'
He couldn't take his square affair amongst the crimson
gods.
They wandered in the park at night, and hugged
each other there—
But, ah! the Crimson Streak got wind of Billy's
square affair!

'The blank and space and stars!' she yelled; 'the
nameless crimson dash!
'I'll smash the blanky crimson and his square affair,
I'll smash'—
In short, she drank and raved and shrieked and tore
her crimson hair,
And swore to murder Billy and to pound his square
affair.

And so one summer evening, as the day was growing dim,
She watched her bloke go out and foxed his square affair and him.
That night the park was startled by the shrieks that rent the air—
The 'Streak' had gone for Billy and for Billy's square affair.

The 'gory' push had foxed the Streak, they foxed her to the park,
And they, of course, were close at hand to see the bleedin' lark;
A cop arrived in time to hear a 'gory B.' declare
'Gor blar-me! here's the Red Streak foul of Billy's square affair.'

. . . . . .

Now Billy scowls about the Rocks, his manly beauty marr'd,
And Billy's girl, upon her 'ed, is doin' six months 'ard;
Bill's swivel eye is in a sling, his heart is in despair,
And in the Sydney 'Orspital lies Billy's square affair.

A DERRY ON A COVE

'Twas in the felon's dock he stood, his eyes were black and blue ;
His voice with grief was broken, and his nose was broken, too ;
He muttered, as that broken nose he wiped upon his cap—
'It's orful when the p'leece has got a derry on a chap.

'I am a honest workin' cove, as any bloke can see,
'It's just because the p'leece has got a derry, sir, on me ;
'Oh, yes, the legal gents can grin, I say it ain't no joke—
'It's cruel when the p'leece has got a derry on a bloke.'

'Why don't you go to work?' he said (he muttered,
'Why don't you?').
'Yer honer knows as well as me there ain't no work
to do.
'And when I try to find a job I'm shaddered by a
trap—
'It's awful when the p'leece has got a derry on a
chap.'

I sigh'd and shed a tearlet for that noble nature
marred,
But, ah! the Bench was rough on him, and gave him
six months' hard.
He only said, 'Beyond the grave you'll cop it hot, by
Jove!
'There ain't no angel p'leece to get a derry on a
cove.'

RISE YE! RISE YE!

Rise ye ! rise ye ! noble toilers ! claim your rights
with fire and steel !
Rise ye ! for the cursed tyrants crush ye with the
hiron 'eel !
They would treat ye worse than sl-a-a-ves ! they
would treat ye worse than brutes !
Rise and crush the selfish tyrants ! ku-r-rush them
with your hob-nailed boots !
Rise ye ! rise ye ! glorious toilers !
Rise ye ! rise ye ! noble toilers !
Erwake ! er-rise !

Rise ye ! rise ye ! noble toilers ! tyrants come across
the waves !
Will ye yield the Rights of Labour ? will ye ? *will* ye
still be sl-a-a-ves ? ! ! !

Rise ye! rise ye! mighty toilers! and revoke the rotten laws!
Lo! your wives go out a-washing while ye battle for the caws!

Rise ye! rise ye! glorious toilers!
Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers!
Erwake! er-rise!

Our gerlorious dawn is breaking! Lo! the tyrant trembles now!
He will sta-a-rve us here no longer! toilers will not bend or bow!
Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers! rise! behold, revenge is near;
See the leaders of the people! come an' 'ave a pint o' beer!

Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers!
Rise ye! rise ye! glorious toilers!
Erwake! er-rise!

Lo! the poor are starved, my brothers! lo! our wives and children weep!
Lo! our women toil to keep us while the toilers are asleep!

Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers! rise and break the tyrant's chain!
March ye! march ye! mighty toilers! even to the battle plain!
Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers!
Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers!
Erwake! er-r-rise!

THE BALLAD OF MABEL CLARE

Ye children of the Land of Gold,
I sing a song to you,
And if the jokes are somewhat old,
The main idea 's new.
So be it sung, by hut and tent,
Where tall the native grows;
And understand, the song is meant
For singing through the nose.

There dwelt a hard old cockatoo
On western hills far out,
Where everything is green and blue,
Except, of course, in drought;
A crimson Anarchist was he—
Held other men in scorn—
Yet preached that ev'ry man was free,
And also 'ekal born.'

He lived in his ancestral hut—
His missus wasn't there—
And there was no one with him but
His daughter, Mabel Clare.
Her eyes and hair were like the sun;
Her foot was like a mat;
Her cheeks a trifle overdone;
She was a democrat.

A manly independence, born
Among the trees, she had,
She treated womankind with scorn,
And often cursed her dad.
She hated swells and shining lights,
For she had seen a few,
And she believed in 'women's rights'
(She mostly got 'em, too).

A stranger at the neighb'ring run
Sojourned, the squatter's guest,
He was unknown to anyone,
But like a swell was dress'd;
He had an eyeglass to his eye,
A collar to his ears,
His feet were made to tread the sky,
His mouth was formed for sneers.

He wore the latest toggery,
The loudest thing in ties—
'Twas generally reckoned he
Was something in disguise.
But who he was, or whence he came,
Was long unknown, except
Unto the squatter, who the name
And noble secret kept.

And strolling in the noontide heat,
Beneath the blinding glare,
This noble stranger chanced to meet
The radiant Mabel Clare.
She saw at once he was a swell—
According to her lights—
But, ah! 'tis very sad to tell,
She met him oft of nights.

And, strolling through a moonlit gorge,
She chatted all the while
Of Ingersoll, and Henry George,
And Bradlaugh and Carlyle:
In short, he learned to love the girl,
And things went on like this,
Until he said he was an Earl,
And asked her to be his.

'Oh, say no more, Lord Kawlinee,
'Oh, say no more!' she said;
'Oh, say no more, Lord Kawlinee,
'I wish that I was dead:
'My head is in a hawful whirl,
'The truth I dare not tell—
'I am a democratic girl,
'And cannot wed a swell!'

'Oh love!' he cried, 'but you forget
'That you are most unjust;
''Twas not my fault that I was set
'Within the upper crust.
'Heed not the yarns the poets tell—
'Oh, darling, do not doubt
'A simple lord can love as well
'As any rouseabout!

'For you I'll give my fortune up—
'I'd go to work for you!
'I'll put the money in the cup
'And drop the title, too.
'Oh, fly with me! Oh, fly with me
'Across the mountains blue!
'Hoh, fly with me! *Hoh, fly with me!*——'
That very night she flew.

They took the train and journeyed down—
Across the range they sped—
Until they came to Sydney town,
Where shortly they were wed.
And still upon the western wild
Admiring teamsters tell
How Mabel's father cursed his child
For clearing with a swell.

'What ails my bird this bridal night,'
Exclaimed Lord Kawlinee;
'What ails my own this bridal night—
'O love, confide in me!'
'Oh now,' she said, 'that I am yaws
'You'll let me weep—I must—
'I did desert the people's cause
'To join the upper crust.'

O proudly smiled his lordship then—
His chimney-pot he floor'd—
'Look up, my love, and smile again,
'For I am not a lord!'
His eye-glass from his eye he tore,
The dickey from his breast,
And turned and stood his bride before
A rouseabout—confess'd!

'Unknown I've loved you long,' he said,
'And I have loved you true—
'A-shearing in your guv'ner's shed
'I learned to worship you.
'I do not care for place or pelf,
'For now, my love, I'm sure
That you will love me for myself
'And not because I'm poor.

'To prove your love I spent my cheque
'To buy this swell rig-out;
'So fling your arms about my neck
'For I'm a rouseabout!'
At first she gave a startled cry,
Then, safe from care's alarms,
She sigh'd a soul-subduing sigh
And sank into his arms.

He pawned the togs, and home he took
His bride in all her charms;
The proud old cockatoo received
The pair with open arms.
And long they lived, the faithful bride,
The noble rouseabout—
And if she wasn't satisfied
She never let it out.

CONSTABLE M'CARTY'S INVESTIGATIONS

Most unpleasantly adjacent to the haunts of lower orders
Stood a 'terrace' in the city when the current year began,
And a notice indicated there were vacancies for boarders
In the middle house, and lodgings for a single gentleman.
Now, a singular observer could have seen but few attractions
Whether in the house, or 'missus, or the notice, or the street,
But at last there came a lodger whose appearances and actions
Puzzled Constable M'Carty, the policeman on the beat.

He (the single gent) was wasted almost to emaciation,
And his features were the palest that M'Carty ever saw,
And these indications, pointing to a past of dissipation,
Greatly strengthened the suspicions of the agent of the law.
He (the lodger—hang the pronoun!) seemed to like the stormy weather,
When the elements in battle kept it up a little late;
Yet he'd wander in the moonlight when the stars were close together,
Taking ghostly consolation in a visionary state.

He would walk the streets at midnight, when the storm-king raised his banner,
Walk without his old umbrella,—wave his arms above his head:
Or he'd fold them tight, and mutter, in a wild, disjointed manner,
While the town was wrapped in slumber and he should have been in bed.

Said the constable-on-duty: 'Shure, Oi wonther phwat
his trade is?'
And the constable would watch him from the
shadow of a wall,
But he never picked a pocket, and he ne'er accosted
ladies,
And the constable was puzzled what to make of
him at all.

Now, M'Carty had arrested more than one notorious
dodger,
He had heard of men afflicted with the strangest
kind of fads,
But he couldn't fix the station or the business of the
lodger,
Who at times would chum with cadgers, and at
other times with cads.
And the constable would often stand and wonder how
the gory
Sheol the stranger got his living, for he loafed the
time away
And he often sought a hillock when the sun went
down in glory,
Just as if he was a mourner at the burial of the
day.

Mac. had noticed that the lodger did a mighty lot of
smoking,
And could 'stow away a long 'un,' never winking,
so he could ;
And M'Carty once, at midnight, came upon the lodger
poking
Round about suspicious alleys where the common
houses stood.
Yet the constable had seen him in a class above
suspicion—
Seen him welcomed with effusion by a dozen
'toney gents'—
Seen him driving in the buggy of a rising politician
Thro' the gateway of the member's toney private
residence.

And the constable, off duty, had observed the lodger
slipping
Down a lane to where the river opened on the
ocean wide,
Where he'd stand for hours gazing at the distant
anchor'd shipping,
But he never took his coat off, so it wasn't
suicide.

For the constable had noticed that a man who's filled with loathing
For his selfish fellow-creatures and the evil things that be,
Will, for some mysterious reason, shed a portion of his clothing,
Ere he takes his first and final plunge into eternity.

And M'Carty, once at midnight—be it said to his abasement—
Left his beat and climbed a railing of considerable height,
Just to watch the lodger's shadow on the curtain of his casement
While the little room was lighted in the listening hours of night.
Now, at first the shadow hinted that the substance sat inditing;
Now it indicated toothache, or the headache; and again,
'Twould exaggerate the gestures of a dipsomaniac fighting
Those original conceptions of a whisky-sodden brain.

Then the constable, retreating, scratched his head and muttered 'Sorra

'Wan of me can undershtand it. But Oi'll keep me Oi on him,

'Divil take him and his tantrums; he's a lunatic, begorra!

'Or, if he was up to mischief, he'd be sure to douse the glim.'

But M'Carty wasn't easy, for he had a vague suspicion

That a 'skame' was being plotted; and he thought the matter down

Till his mind was pretty certain that the business was sedition,

And the man, in league with others, sought to overthrow the Crown.

But, in spite of observation, Mac received no information

And was forced to stay inactive, being puzzled for a charge.

That the lodger was a madman seemed the only explanation,

Tho' the house would scarcely harbour such a lunatic at large.

His appearance failed to warrant apprehension as a
vagrant,
Tho' 'twas getting very shabby, as the constable
could see ;
But M'Carty in the meantime hoped to catch him in
a flagrant
Breach of peace, or the intention to commit a
felony.

(For digression there is leisure, and it is the writer's
pleasure
Just to pause a while and ponder on a painful legal
fact,
Being forced to say in sorrow, and a line of doubtful
measure,
That there's nothing so elastic as the cruel Vagrant
Act.)
Now, M'Carty knew his duty, and was brave as any
lion,
But he dreaded being 'landed' in an influential bog—
As the chances were he would be if the man he had
his eye on
Was a person of importance who was travelling
incog.

Want of sleep and over-worry seemed to tell upon
M'Carty :
He was thirsty more than ever, but his appetite
resigned ;
He was previously reckoned as a jolly chap and
hearty,
But the mystery was lying like a mountain on his
mind.
Tho' he tried his best, he couldn't get a hold upon
the lodger,
For the latter's antecedents weren't known to the
police—
They considered that the 'devil' was a dark and
artful dodger
Who was scheming under cover for the downfall
of the peace.

'Twas a simple explanation, though M'Carty didn't
know it,
Which with half his penetration he might easily
have seen,
For the object of his dangerous suspicions was a poet,
Who was not so widely famous as he thought he should
have been.

And the constable grew thinner, till one morning, 'little dhramin'
'Av the sword of revelation that was leapin' from its sheath,'
He alighted on some verses in the columns of the FRAYMAN,
'*Wid the christian name an' surname av the lodger onderneath !*'

Now, M'Carty and the poet are as brother is to brother,
Or, at least, as brothers should be ; and they very often meet
On the lonely block at midnight, and they wink at one another—
Disappearing down the by-way of a shanty in the street.
And the poet's name you're asking ?—well, the ground is very tender,
You must wait until the public put the gilt upon the name,
Till a glorious, sorrow-drowning, and, perhaps, a final 'bender,'
Heralds his triumphant entrance to the thunder-halls of Fame.

AT THE TUG-OF-WAR

'Twas in a tug-of-war where I—the guvnor's hope and pride—
Stepped proudly on the platform as the ringer on my side ;
Old dad was in his glory there—it gave the old man joy
To fight a passage through the crowd and barrack for his boy.

A friend came up and said to me, 'Put out your muscles, John,
'And pull them to eternity—your guvnor's looking on.'
I paused before I grasped the rope, and glanced around the place,
And, foremost in the waiting crowd, I saw the old man's face.

My mates were strong and plucky chaps, but very soon I knew
That our opponents had the weight and strength to pull them through ;
The boys were losing surely and defeat was very near,
When, high above the mighty roar, I heard the old man cheer !

I felt my muscles swelling when the old man cheer'd for me,
I felt as though I'd burst my heart, or gain the victory !
I shouted, 'Now ! Together !' and a steady strain replied,
And, with a mighty heave, I helped to beat the other side !

Oh ! how the old man shouted in his wild, excited joy !
I thought he'd burst his boiler then, a-cheering for his boy ;
The chaps, oh ! how they cheered me, while the girls all smiled so kind,
They praised me, little dreaming, how the old man pulled behind.

. . . .

He barracks for his boy no more—his grave is old
and green,
And sons have grown up round me since he vanished
from the scene;
But, when the cause is worthy where I fight for
victory,
In fancy still I often hear the old man cheer for me.

HERE'S LUCK!

Old Time is tramping close to-day—you hear his bluchers fall,
A mighty change is on the way, an' God protect us all;
Some dust'll fly from beery coats—at least it's been declared.
I'm glad that wimin has the votes—but just a trifle scared.

I'm just a trifle scared—For why? The wimin mean to rule;
It makes me feel like days gone by when I was caned at school.
The days of men is nearly dead—of double moons and stars—
They'll soon put out our pipes, 'tis said, an' close the public bars.

No more we'll take a glass of ale when pushed with
care an' strife,
An' chuckle home with that old tale we used to tell
the wife.
We'll laugh an' joke an' sing no more with jolly beery
chums,
An' shout 'Here's luck!' while waitin' for the luck
that never comes.

Did we prohibit swillin' tea clean out of common-
sense
Or legislate on gossipin' across a backyard fence?
Did we prohibit bustles—or the hoops when they was
here?
The wimin never think of this—they want to stop
our beer.

The track o' life is dry enough, an' crossed with many
a rut,
But, oh! we'll find it long an' rough when all the
pubs is shut,
When all the pubs is shut, an' gone the doors we
used to seek,
An' we go toilin', thirstin' on through Sundays all the
week.

For since the days when pubs was 'inns'—in years
gone past 'n' far—
Poor sinful souls have drowned their sins an' sorrers
at the bar;
An' though at times it led to crimes, an' debt, and
such complaints—
I scarce dare think about the time when all mankind
is saints.

'Twould make the bones of Bacchus leap an' break
his coffin lid;
And Burns's ghost would wail an' weep as Bobby
never did.
But let the preachers preach in style, an' rave and
rant—'n' buck,
I rather guess they'll hear awhile the old war-cry:
'Here's Luck!'

The world might wobble round the sun, an' all the
banks go bung,
But pipes'll smoke an' liquor run while Auld Lang
Syne is sung.
While men are driven through the mill, an' flinty
times is struck,
They'll find a private entrance still!
Here's Luck, old man—Here's Luck!

THE MEN WHO COME BEHIND

THERE'S a class of men (and women) who are always
on their guard—
Cunning, treacherous, suspicious—feeling softly—
grasping hard—
Brainy, yet without the courage to forsake the
beaten track—
Cautiously they feel their way behind a bolder spirit's
back.

If you save a bit of money, and you start a little
store—
Say, an oyster-shop, for instance, where there wasn't
one before—
When the shop begins to pay you, and the rent is off
your mind,
You will see another started by a chap that comes
behind.

So it is, and so it might have been, my friend, with
me and you—
When a friend of both and neither interferes between
the two ;
They will fight like fiends, forgetting in their passion
mad and blind,
That the row is mostly started by the folk who come
behind.

They will stick to you like sin will, while your
money comes and goes,
But they'll leave you when you haven't got a shilling
in your clothes.
You may get some help above you, but you'll nearly
always find
That you cannot get assistance from the men who
come behind.

There are many, far too many, in the world of prose
and rhyme,
Always looking for another's 'footsteps on the sands
of time.'
Journalistic imitators are the meanest of mankind ;
And the grandest themes are hackneyed by the pens
that come behind.

If you strike a novel subject, write it up, and do not fail,
They will rhyme and prose about it till your very own is stale,
As they raved about the region that the wattle-boughs perfume
Till the reader cursed the bushman and the stink of wattle-bloom.

They will follow in your footsteps while you're groping for the light ;
But they'll run to get before you when they see you're going right ;
And they'll trip you up and baulk you in their blind and greedy heat,
Like a stupid pup that hasn't learned to trail behind your feet.

Take your loads of sin and sorrow on more energetic backs !
Go and strike across the country where there are not any tracks !
And—we fancy that the subject could be further treated here,
But we'll leave it to be hackneyed by the fellows in the rear.

THE DAYS WHEN WE WENT SWIMMING

The breezes waved the silver grass,
Waist-high along the siding,
And to the creek we ne'er could pass
Three boys on bare-back riding;
Beneath the sheoaks in the bend
The waterhole was brimming—
Do you remember yet, old friend,
The times we 'went in swimming?'

The days we 'played the wag' from school—
Joys shared—and paid for singly—
The air was hot, the water cool—
And naked boys are kingly!
With mud for soap the sun to dry—
A well planned lie to stay us,
And dust well rubbed on neck and face
Lest cleanliness betray us.

And you'll remember farmer Kutz—
Though scarcely for his bounty—
He leased a forty-acre block,
And thought he owned the county;
A farmer of the old world school,
That men grew hard and grim in,
He drew his water from the pool
That we preferred to swim in.

And do you mind when down the creek
His angry way he wended,
A green-hide cartwhip in his hand
For our young backs intended?
Three naked boys upon the sand—
Half buried and half sunning—
Three startled boys without their clothes
Across the paddocks running.

We've had some scares, but we looked blank
When, resting there and chumming,
One glanced by chance along the bank
And saw the farmer coming!
And home impressions linger yet
Of cups of sorrow brimming;
I hardly think that we'll forget
The last day we went swimming.

THE OLD BARK SCHOOL

It was built of bark and poles, and the floor was full
of holes
Where each leak in rainy weather made a pool ;
And the walls were mostly cracks lined with calico
and sacks—
There was little need for windows in the school.

Then we rode to school and back by the rugged gully
track,
On the old grey horse that carried three or four ;
And he looked so very wise that he lit the master's
eyes
Every time he put his head in at the door.

He had run with Cobb and Co.—'that grey leader, let him go!'
There were men 'as knowed the brand upon his hide,'
And 'as knowed it on the course' . Funeral service: 'Good old horse!'
When we burnt him in the gully where he died.

And the master thought the same. 'Twas from Ireland that he came,
Where the tanks are full all summer, and the feed is simply grand;
And the joker then in vogue said his lessons wid a brogue—
'Twas unconscious imitation, let the reader understand.

And we learnt the world in scraps from some ancient dingy maps
Long discarded by the public-schools in town;
And as nearly every book dated back to Captain Cook
Our geography was somewhat upside-down.

It was 'in the book' and so—well, at that we'd let it go,
For we never would believe that print could lie;
And we all learnt pretty soon that when we came out at noon
'The sun is in the south part of the sky.'

And Ireland! *that* was known from the coast-line to Athlone:
We got little information *re* the land that gave us birth;
Save that Captain Cook was killed (and was very likely grilled)
And 'the natives of New Holland are the lowest race on earth.'

And a woodcut, in its place, of the same degraded race
Seemed a lot more like a camel than the blackfellows we knew;
Jimmy Bullock, with the rest, scratched his head and gave it best;
But his faith was sadly shaken by a bobtailed kangaroo.

But the old bark-school is gone, and the spot it stood upon
Is a cattle-camp in winter where the curlew's cry is heard ;
There's a brick-school on the flat, but a schoolmate teaches that,
For, about the time they built it, our old master was 'transferred.'

But the bark-school comes again with exchanges 'cross the plain—
With the OUT-BACK ADVERTISER ; and my fancy roams at large
When I read of passing stock, of a western mob or flock,
With 'James Bullock,' 'Grey,' or 'Henry Dale' in charge.

And I think how Jimmy went from the old bark school content,
With his 'eddication' finished, with his pack-horse after him ;
And perhaps if I were back I would take the self-same track,
For I wish my learning ended when the Master 'finished' Jim.

TROUBLE ON THE SELECTION

You lazy boy, you're here at last,
You must be wooden-legged;
Now, are you sure the gate is fast
And all the sliprails pegged
And all the milkers at the yard,
The calves all in the pen?
We don't want Poley's calf to suck
His mother dry again.

And did you mend the broken rail
And make it firm and neat?
I s'pose you want that brindle steer
All night among the wheat.
And if he finds the lucerne patch,
He'll stuff his belly full;
He'll eat till he gets 'blown' on that
And busts like Ryan's bull.

Old Spot is lost? You'll drive me mad,
You will, upon my soul!
She might be in the boggy swamps
Or down a digger's hole.
You needn't talk, you never looked;
You'd find her if you'd choose,
Instead of poking 'possum logs
And hunting kangaroos.

How came your boots as wet as muck?
You tried to drown the ants!
Why don't you take your bluchers off,
Good Lord, he's tore his pants!
Your father's coming home to-night;
You'll catch it hot, you'll see.
Now go and wash your filthy face
And come and get your tea.

THE PROFESSIONAL WANDERER

When you've knocked about the country—been away
from home for years ;
When the past, by distance softened, nearly fills
your eyes with tears—
You are haunted oft, wherever or however you may
roam,
By a fancy that you ought to go and see the folks at
home.
You forget the family quarrels—little things that
used to jar—
And you think of how they'll worry—how they
wonder where you are ;
You will think you served them badly, and your own
part you'll condemn,
And it strikes you that you'll surely be a novelty
to them,

For your voice has somewhat altered, and your face
has somewhat changed—
And your views of men and matters over wider fields
have ranged.
Then it's time to save your money, or to watch it
(how it goes!);
Then it's time to get a 'Gladstone' and a decent suit
of clothes;
Then it's time to practise daily with a hair-brush and
a comb,
Till you drop in unexpected on the folks and friends
at home.

When you've been at home for some time, and the
novelty's worn off,
And old chums no longer court you, and your friends
begin to scoff;
When 'the girls' no longer kiss you, crying 'Jack!
how you have changed!'
When you're stale to your relations, and their manner
seems estranged;
When the old domestic quarrels, round the table
thrice a day,
Make it too much like the old times—make you wish
you'd stayed away,

When, in short, you've spent your money in the fulness of your heart,
And your clothes are getting shabby . . . Then it's high time to depart.

A LITTLE MISTAKE

'Tis a yarn I heard of a new-chum'trap'
On the edge of the Never-Never,
Where the dead men lie and the black men lie,
And the bushman lies for ever.

'Twas the custom still with the local blacks
To cadge in the 'altogether'—
They had less respect for our feelings then,
And more respect for the weather.

The trooper said to the sergeant's wife:
'Sure, I wouldn't seem unpleasant;
'But there's women and childer about the place,
'And—barrin' a lady's present—

'There's ould King Billy wid niver a stitch
'For a month—may the drought cremate him!—
'Bar the wan we put in his dhirty head,
'Where his old Queen Mary bate him.

'God give her strength!—and a peaceful reign—
'Though she flies in a bit av a passion
'If ony wan hints that her shtoyle an' luks
'Are a trifle behind the fashion.

'There's two of the boys by the stable now—
'Be the powers! I'll teach the varmints
'To come wid nought but a shirt apiece
'And wid dirt for their nayther garmints.

'Howld on, ye blaggards! How dare ye dare
'To come widin sight av the houses?—
'I'll give ye a warnin' all for wance
'An' a couple of ould pair of trousers.'

They took the pants as a child a toy,
The constable's words beguiling
A smile of something beside their joy;
And they took their departure smiling.

And that very day, when the sun was low,
Two blackfellows came to the station;
They were filled with the courage of Queensland rum
And bursting with indignation.

The constable noticed, with growing ire,
They'd apparently dressed in a hurry;
And their language that day, I am sorry to say,
Mostly consisted of 'plurry.'

The constable heard, and he wished himself back
In the land of the bogs and the ditches—
'You plurry big tight-britches p'liceman, what for
'You gibbit our missuses britches?'

And this was a case, I am bound to confess,
Where civilisation went under;
Had one of the gins been *less* modest in dress
He'd never have made such a blunder.

And here let the moral be duly made known,
And hereafter signed and attested:
We should place more reliance on that which is shown
And less upon what is suggested.

A STUDY IN THE "NOOD"

'A SAILOR named Grice was seen by the guard of a goods train lying close to the railway-line near Warner Town (S.A.) in a nude condition. He was unconscious, and had lain there three days, during one of which the glass registed 110 in the shade. *Grice expressed surprise that the train did not pick him up.*'—Daily paper. In consequence, the muse :—

HE was bare—we don't want to be rude—
(His condition was owing to drink)
They say his condition was nood,
Which amounts to the same thing, we think
(We mean his *condition*, we think,
'Twas a naked condition, or *nood*,
Which amounts to the same thing, we think)

Uncovered he lay on the grass
That shrivelled and shrunk ; and he stayed
Three hot summer days, while the glass
Was one hundred and ten in the shade.

(We nearly remarked that he *laid*,
But that was bad grammar we thought—
It *does* sound bucolic, we think
It smacks of the barnyard—
Of farming—of *pullets* in short.)

Unheeded he lay on the dirt;
Beside him a part of his dress,
A tattered and threadbare old shirt
Was raised as a flag of distress.
(On a stick, like a flag of distress—
Reversed—we mean that the tail-end was up
Half-mast—on a stick—an evident flag of distress.)

Perhaps in his dreams he persood
Bright visions of heav'nly bliss;
And artists who study the nood
Never saw such a study as this.
The 'luggage' went by and the guard
Looked out and his eyes fell on Grice—
We fancy he looked at him hard,
We think that he looked at him twice.

They say (if the telegram's true)
When he woke up he wondered (good Lord !)
'Why the engine-man didn't heave to—
'Why the train didn't take him aboard.'
And now, by the case of poor Grice,
We think that a daily express
Should travel with sunshades and ice,
And a lookout for flags of distress.

A WORD TO TEXAS JACK

Texas Jack, you are amusin'. By Lord Harry, how
I laughed
When I seen yer rig and saddle with its bulwarks
fore-and-aft ;
Holy smoke ! In such a saddle how the dickens can
yer fall ?
Why, I seen a gal ride bareback with no bridle on at
all !
Gosh ! so-help-me ! strike-me-balmy ! if a bit o'
scenery
Like ter you in all yer rig-out on the earth I ever see !
How I'd like ter see a bushman use yer fixins, Texas
Jack ;
On the remnant of a saddle he can ride to hell and
back.

Why, I heerd a mother screamin' when her kid went tossin' by
Ridin' bareback on a bucker that had murder in his eye.

What? yer come to learn the natives how to squat on horse's back!
Learn the cornstalk ridin'! Blazes!—w'at yer giv'n' us, Texas Jack?
Learn the cornstalk—what the flamin', jumptup! where's my country gone?
Why, the cornstalk's mother often rides the day afore he's born!

You may talk about your ridin' in the city, bold an free,
Talk o' ridin' in the city, Texas Jack, but where'd yer be
When the stock horse snorts an' bunches all 'is quarters in a hump,
And the saddle climbs a sapling, an' the horse-shoes split a stump?

No, before yer teach the native you must ride without a fall
Up a gum or down a gully nigh as steep as any wall—

You must swim the roarin' Darlin' when the flood is
at its height
Bearin' down the stock an' stations to the great
Australian Bight.

You can't count the bulls an' bisons that yer copped
with your lassoo—
But a stout old myall bullock p'raps 'ud learn yer
somethin' new ;
Yer'd better make yer will an' leave yer papers neat
an' trim
Before yer make arrangements for the lassooin' of
him ;
Ere you'n' yer horse is catsmeat, fittin' fate for sich
galoots,
And yer saddle's turned to laces like we put in blucher
boots.

And yer say yer death on Injins ! We've got some-
thin' in yer line—
If yer think your fitin's ekal to the likes of Tommy
Ryan.
Take yer karkass up to Queensland where the ally-
gators chew
And the carpet-snake is handy with his tail for a
lassoo ;

Ride across the hazy regins where the lonely emus wail
An' ye'll find the black'll track yer while yer lookin' for his trail ;
He can track yer without stoppin' for a thousand miles or more—
Come again, and he will show yer where yer spit the year before.
But yer'd best be mighty careful, you'll be sorry you kem here
When yer skewered to the fakements of yer saddle with a spear—
When the boomerang is sailin' in the air, may heaven help yer !
It will cut yer head off goin', an' come back again and skelp yer.

P.S.—As poet and as Yankee I will greet you, Texas Jack,
For it isn't no ill-feelin' that is gettin' up my back,
But I won't see this land crowded by each Yank and British cuss
Who takes it in his head to come a-civilisin' us.

So if you feel like shootin' now, don't let yer pistol cough—
(Our Government is very free at chokin' fellers off) ;
And though on your great continent there's misery in the towns
An' not a few untitled lords and kings without their crowns,
I will admit your countrymen is busted big, an' free,
An' great on ekal rites of men and great on liberty ;
I will admit yer fathers punched the gory tyrant's head,
But then we've got our heroes, too, the diggers that is dead —
The plucky men of Ballarat who toed the scratch right well
And broke the nose of Tyranny and made his peepers swell
For yankin' Lib.'s gold tresses in the roarin' days gone by,
An' doublin' up his dirty fist to black her bonny eye ;
So when it comes to ridin' mokes, or hoistin' out the Chow,
Or stickin' up for labour's rights, we don't want showin' how.

They come to learn us cricket in the days of long ago,
An' Hanlan come from Canada to learn us how to row,
An' 'doctors' come from 'Frisco just to learn us how to skite,
An' 'pugs' from all the lands on earth to learn us how to fight;
An' when they go, as like or not, we find we're taken in,
They've left behind no larnin'—but they've carried off our tin.

THE GROG-AND-GRUMBLE STEEPLECHASE

'Twixt the coastline and the border lay the town of
Grog-and-Grumble
In the days before the bushman was a dull and
heartless drudge,
And they say the local meeting was a drunken rough-
and-tumble,
Which was ended pretty often by an inquest on the
judge.
And 'tis said the city talent very often caught a
tartar
In the Grog-and-Grumble sportsman, and retired
with broken heads,
For the fortune, life, and safety of the Grog-and-
Grumble starter
Mostly hung upon the finish of the local thorough-
breds.

Pat M'Durmer was the owner of a horse they called the Screamer,
Which he called the 'quickest shtepper 'twixt the Darlin' and the sea;'
And I think it's very doubtful if the stomach-troubled dreamer
Ever saw a more outrageous piece of equine scenery;
For his points were most decided, from his end to his beginning,
He had eyes of different colour, and his legs they weren't mates.
Pat M'Durmer said he always came 'widin a flip av winnin','
And his sire had come from England, and his dam was from the States.

Friends would argue with M'Durmer, and they said he was in error
To put up his horse the Screamer, for he'd lose in any case,
And they said a city racer by the name of Holy Terror
Was regarded as the winner of the coming steeple-chase;

But he said he had the knowledge to come in when
it was raining,
And irrelevantly mentioned that he knew the time
of day,
So he rose in their opinion. It was noticed that the
training
Of the Screamer was conducted in a dark,
mysterious way.

Well, the day arrived in glory; 'twas a day of jubila-
tion
With careless-hearted bushmen for a hundred miles
around,
And the rum and beer and whisky came in waggons
from the station,
And the Holy Terror talent were the first upon the
ground.
Judge M'Ard—with whose opinion it was scarcely
safe to wrestle—
Took his dangerous position on the bark-and-sapling
stand:
He was what the local Stiggins used to speak of as a
'wessel
'Of wrath,' and he'd a bludgeon that he carried in
his hand.

'Off ye go!' the starter shouted, as he shot a stupid jockey—
Off they started in disorder—left the jockey where he lay—
And they fell and rolled and galloped down the crooked course and rocky,
Till the pumping of the Screamer could be heard a mile away.
But he kept his legs and galloped; he was used to rugged courses,
And he lumbered down the gully till the ridge began to quake:
And he ploughed along the siding, raising earth till other horses
And their riders, too, were blinded by the dust-cloud in his wake.

From the ruck he'd struggled slowly—they were much surprised to find him
Close abeam of Holy Terror as along the flat they tore—
Even higher still and denser rose the cloud of dust behind him,
While in more divided splinters flew the shattered rails before.

'Terror!' 'Dead heat!' they were shouting—
'Terror!' but the Screamer hung out
Nose to nose with Holy Terror as across the creek they swung,
And M'Durmer shouted loudly, 'Put yer tongue out! put yer tongue out!'
And the Screamer put his tongue out, and he won by half-a-tongue.

BUT WHAT'S THE USE

But what's the use of writing 'bush'—
Though editors demand it—
For city folk, and farming folk,
Can never understand it.
They're blind to what the bushman sees
The best with eyes shut tightest,
Out where the sun is hottest and
The stars are most and brightest.

The crows at sunrise flopping round
Where some poor life has run down;
The pair of emus trotting from
The lonely tank at sundown,
Their snaky heads well up, and eyes
Well out for man's manœuvres,
And feathers bobbing round behind
Like fringes round improvers.

The swagman tramping 'cross the plain ;
Good Lord, there's nothing sadder,
Except the dog that slopes behind
His master like a shadder ;
The turkey-tail to scare the flies,
The water-bag and billy ;
The nose-bag getting cruel light,
The traveller getting silly.

The plain that seems to Jackaroos
Like gently sloping rises,
The shrubs and tufts that's miles away
But magnified in sizes ;
The track that seems arisen up
Or else seems gently slopin',
And just a hint of kangaroos
Way out across the open.

The joy and hope the swagman feels
Returning, after shearing,
Or after six months' tramp Out Back,
He strikes the final clearing.
His weary spirit breathes again,
His aching legs seem limber
When to the East across the plain
He spots the Darling Timber !

But what's the use of writing 'bush'—
  Though editors demand it—
For city folk and cockatoos,
  They do not understand it.
They're blind to what the whaler sees
  The best with eyes shut tightest,
Out where Australia's widest, and
  The stars are most and brightest.

December, 1908.

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